

# **Bannock Transportation Planning Organization**

## **Safety and Security Plan**

### **An Addendum to the 2006 Long Range Transportation Plan**



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## **Introduction**

Safety and security are two topics which have risen to the forefront of our collective consciences in recent years. Natural disasters and acts of terrorism seem to be more frequent and severe. These changes have resulted in a greater focus on what is being done to ensure communities are prepared for unpredictable events. Isolation between emergency service providers and other government and non-government providers of public services can no longer exist if we are to prepare for these potential emergency situations.

Additionally, the costs of accidents and others incidents are also growing in importance. Along with the real cost to individual people and their property, there are other society costs including medical, lost wages, and police and fire services. The State of Idaho Strategic Highway Safety Plan indicated the economic cost of traffic crashes in Idaho in 2005 was 1.8 billion dollars. Furthermore, traffic crashes continue to be the leading cause of death in people from 3 to 33.

Bannock Transportation Planning Organization (BTPO) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Pocatello urbanized area. MPO's are federally required organizations which act as a forum for transportation decision making at a regional level. Federal legislation lists eight focus areas for each MPO with two related to safety and security of the transportation system and its users. Code of Federal Regulations is specific in the areas each MPO must consider in the development of transportation plans, projects, and programs to serve the MPO areas over a twenty-year period. These include:

- 23 CFR 450.306 (a)(2) Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- 23 CFR 450.306 (a)(3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users

There are over 330 MPOs across the country ranging in size from the minimum of 50,000 people to New York City and Houston metropolitan areas. The roles and responsibilities vary widely and are dependent upon legislative authority, institutional history, political situation, and size. Whatever roles an MPO may take, its role as a cooperative transportation decision making body for the metropolitan area, and its responsibility for allocating financial resources to the transportation system gives the MPO vested interest in the transportation system security, safety programs, and disaster planning.

## **Role in Safety and Security Planning and Operation**

BTPO takes a very traditional role in both safety and security planning and operation. The roles are somewhat different for each area which is reflected to the goals listed below:



**Safety Goal:**

- Promote a safe transportation system for all users throughout the region.
- Reduce the number of traffic-related deaths. (SHSP Goal)

**Security Goal:**

- Use planning tools and others resources to assist and prepare emergency response, transit, and others providers of emergency services in their roles of preparing for and responding to emergency situations.
- Improve the security of the transit system.
- Improve the emergency response rate within the urban area.

In both cases, BTPO will use planning tools and resources available to assist those responsible for the management and operations in these areas to carry out their function. As transportation planners for the area we have access to information, statistical methods, regional traffic flows, and infrastructure placement to assist in identifying deficiencies in the existing system and plan solutions to those identified problems. These resources can be used to assist those who need to use these types of data in their role of emergency service provider.

## **Institutional History in Safety and Security**

BTPO has a long history in safety related planning efforts. BTPO has, in the past, had a traffic safety committee which looked at the traffic safety needs of the region. There is a tri-annual review of the traffic crashes as part of the Long Range Transportation Plan. Traffic crash data is part of the project selection criteria. One intersection was identified from this analysis during the 2006 Long Range Transportation Plan as a potential high crash area. This intersection was part of the detailed intersection analysis and was conducted by BPTO to determine possible treatments.

Over the last three years BTPO has had a Safe Routes to School committee. This committee has been responsible for improving the safety of the area's school zones. The BPTO Policy Board has expanded their role to all safety and provided limited funding for an annual project.

BTPO and Pocatello Regional Transit (PRT) have worked in the past on many safety and security projects. Most of the efforts are in the area of an intelligent transportation system and namely improving the vehicle tracking capabilities along with improving driver safety by improving communication equipment.

## **Safety Plan**

The safety plan has two main goals:

- Promote a safe transportation system for all users throughout the region.
- Reduce the number of traffic-related deaths.

The first is from the 2006 Long Range Transportation Plan and the second is from the draft Idaho Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). BTPO, working with our member



agencies, is committed to reducing traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle accidents within the urban area.

The SHSP has ten focus areas to assist in achieving their goal of zero deaths. The focus areas are:

- Aggressive Driving;
- Commercial Vehicles;
- Emergency Medical Services;
- Highway-Related Grade Crossing;
- Impaired Drivers;
- Older Drivers (older than 65);
- Occupant Protection;
- Road Related Crashes;
- Vulnerable Users and
- Young Drivers.

For each area the plan identifies the problem, challenges, and sample of recent implemented strategies. Our safety plan focuses on five of the SHSP areas and four additional areas. The additional areas are school, pedestrian, bicycle and transit safety. Our plan divides these focus areas into three categories, user safety, roadway safety, and transit safety. For each category BTPO has developed objectives to achieve the goal and strategies to implement the objectives.

The other five focus areas include aggressive driving, commercial vehicles, emergency medical services, impaired drivers, and occupant protection. These are out of the BTPO planning role. BTPO staff will work with other organizations on the safety committee which has a primary responsibility for these areas.

### ***User Safety***

Vulnerable users include bicyclists and pedestrians which include school children.

### ***Bicycle Safety***

#### *Objective(s):*

- Eliminate potential problem areas related to getting to school;
- Reduce bicycle accidents

#### *Strategies Existing:*

- Implement School Zone Improvement Plan
  - Work with each school to develop safe routes to school committees
- Educate riders on safe rider techniques;
  - Distribute Idaho Bicycling Commuter Guides
  - Assist in developing bicycle rodeos
  - Attend safety fares



- Review annual State of Idaho Crash Accident Reporting System (CARS) bicycle crashes for potential problems areas.
- Continue implementation of bicycle plan

Proposed Strategies:

- Work with Southeast Idaho District Health to promote Bicycle safety;
- Work with Southeast Idaho Council of Governments to attend senior health fairs;
- Seek certified bicycle safety instructors and promote classes;
- Coordinate with Idaho Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

## **Pedestrian Safety**

Objective(s):

- Eliminate potential problem areas related to getting to school;
- Reduce pedestrian accidents.

Strategies Existing:

- Implement School Zone Improvement Plan
  - Work with each school to develop safe routes to school committees;
- Review annual State of Idaho Crash Accident Reporting System (CARS); pedestrian crashes for potential problems areas.

Proposed Strategies:

- Work with Southeast Idaho District Health to promote pedestrian safety;
- Work with Southeast Idaho Council of Governments to attend senior health fairs;
- Develop walking guides, which will include safety tips and information for young; and older groups;
- Develop pedestrian safety plan;
- Coordinate with Idaho Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

## **Transit (school bus) Users Safety**

The Pocatello area has six fixed routes and complementary Para-transit services. In the last four years only one pedestrian related bus crash has occurred. This crash was a driver passing a bus while a pedestrian crossed the street. No pedestrian crashes related to school buses have been reported. School buses have a similar safety record. The biggest area for improvement is the safety of bus loading and unloading facilities.

PRT and BTPO developed a bus stop access plan which identified those stops which were accessible. This was a great start in providing for improved safety for transit users. The next step is to evaluate the safety of the stops themselves.

During the development of two highway projects the safety of the school bus drop off was questioned. In both cases the improvement of the school and parent drop offs were improved. Three of the 44 pedestrian accidents over a four year period were related to children being picked-up and dropped off at school. BTPO, School District #25, City of



Chubbuck, and the City of Pocatello need to continue to evaluate the conditions of these drop-off locations for potential improvements.

Objective(s):

- Continue to support school bus safety public service announcements during school year;
- No transit related pedestrian crashes.

Strategies Existing:

- Implement School Zone Improvement Plan.

Proposed Strategies:

- Coordinate with Idaho Strategic Highway Safety Plan;
- Work with School district to upgrade bus loading facilities.

### **School Zone Safety**

In 2005 BTPO developed a School Zone Improvement Plan which looked at the infrastructure needs in school zones within the urban area. Four accidents in the past four years involved children going to or from school. Three were at one school.

Objective(s):

- Eliminate potential problem areas related to getting to school;
- Eliminate school trip crashes.

Strategies Existing:

- Implement School Zone Improvement Plan.

Proposed Strategies:

- Work with each school to develop safe routes to school committees;
- Work with other agencies to promote back to school safety announcements at beginning of school and during the spring;
- Work with School District 25 to increase current safety programs;
- Coordinate with Idaho Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

### **Roadway Safety**

Roadway safety incorporates both driver and the design of the transportation facilities elements into one safety system. There is an old saying "There are no accidents. All accidents are caused by human error". While this may be true, there are roadway design treatments which can be more forgiving of these human errors. Figure 1 indicates that while the number of crashes has decreased since 1997 the trend is flat or actually increasing, except for 2006. Fatalities have shown a decrease over the last ten years from an average of 3 to 1.5 per year. The ten-year average is two fatal accidents per year.

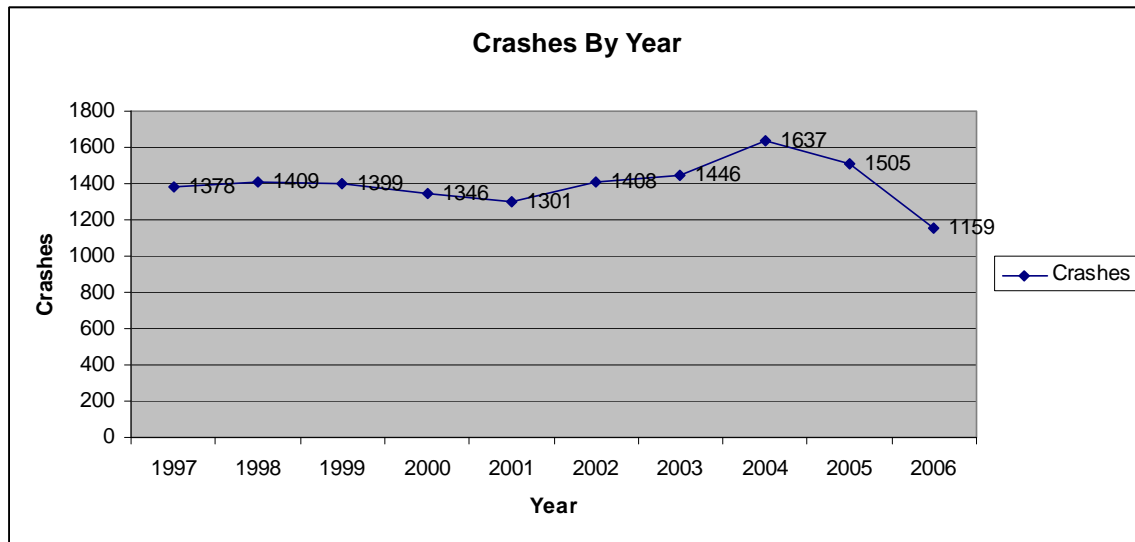


Figure 1: Annual Crash Day by Year

BTPO has divided this area into driver education and road related sections. BTPO has not been active in the driver education or enforcement and education related to aggressive driving. The safety committee will provide a link from the enforcement efforts to the road improvement efforts. BTPO's primary focus has been identifying and improving areas with potential roadway safety issues. Each section identifies the potential strategies to meet the objective.

Roadway safety has been important feature of our long range planning. Every three years BTPO uses the State of Idaho CARS system to identify potential high crash areas. These high crash areas can be intersection of segments of roadway. For those with a crash rate (crashes per million miles traveled or entering vehicles) twice the local average are analyzed and added to potential projects to be included in the Long Range Transportation Plan.

### Drivers Education

BTPO will focus on mature and young drivers as part of our driver education. This focus will be to work with ITD and enforcement agencies to implement the strategies listed in the SHSP. The safety committee will also work with enforcement members to identify other strategies which we can employ on a regional level.

Our area is similar to the state in the percent age of young (15-19) and old drivers (Older than 65) who were involved in accidents. These two classes make up almost fifty percent of all crashes in Pocatello and Chubbuck (47.12%). The young driver on average represents 34% while the older driver accounts for 13% of all crashes from 1997 to 2006.

Aggressive driving (SHSP emphasis area) is a larger concern for our area. From 1997 to 2006 aggressive driving accounted for an average of 65% of all crashes in Pocatello and



Chubbuck. Aggressive driving includes disregarding a signal or stop sign, exceeding posted speed, failure to yield, and following too close.

Objective(s):

- Lower accidents through improved driver education and training.

Strategies Existing:

- No existing strategies.

Proposed Strategies:

- Pursue a membership for one MPO representative on the Action Plan Groups which will better define the options and provide tools for education.
- Work with safety and state to develop affective education principals
- Adopt the results of ITD SHSP action plans for this area.

## Road Related

Objective(s):

- To maximum extent possible eliminate road related crashes.

Strategies Existing:

- Identify potential high crash locations during the Long Range Plan and add to needed project list.

Proposed Strategies:

- Pursue a membership for one MPO representative on the Action Plan Groups which will better define the options and provide tools for education;
- Adopt the results of ITD SHSP action plans for this area;
- Bi-annually develop a list of potential high crash locations for evaluation by local and state safety audit teams.

## Other Efforts

The 2006 Long Range Transportation Plan and School Zone Improvement Plan both brought up the need to develop a pedestrian safety plan and provide additional funding to that already provided by the cities and state. The BTPO Policy Board converted the School Zone Improvement committee to the safety committee. The committee has the mission of following the efforts of the SHSP and preparing a safety action plan for BTPO and the responsibility to identify and implement one safety project each year.

## Security

The purpose of the Bannock County Emergency Operation Plan is to develop a simple emergency management capability that can take immediate steps to respond to the effects of an emergency, preserve life, minimize damage, provide necessary assistance, and



coordinate in the County's recovery, thus returning the community to its normal state of affairs.

From this purpose and discussions with emergency service providers from the County, Idaho Department of Homeland Security, city of Pocatello, and the city of Chubbuck, BTPO's role is one of support. We need to ensure the proper facilities, routes, and technology is in place to allow the providers to perform the tasks listed in the plan. BTPO is a member of the County's security committee. In this role we can assess how BTPO can better service our community's security needs.

In the role and responsibilities section transportation, engineering, and planning and development have regional agencies duties related to damage assessment, opening and maintaining evacuations routes, and recovery operations. To assist in their role, BTPO has developed four security goals. These goals are:

**Security Goals:**

- Use planning tools and others resources to assist and prepare emergency response, transit, and others providers of emergency services in their roles of preparing for and responding to emergency situations.
- Improve the security of the transit system.
- Improve the emergency response rate within the urban area.
- Improve evacuation routes.

To achieve these goals there are three emphasis areas: data preparedness, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and transit. These are used to focus efforts and resources. BTPO's primary function in these emphasis areas is to provide the tools and information needed by front line agencies to complete their assigned functions.

***Data Preparedness***

Data preparedness is the ability to have the information needed in a time of emergency to make decisions quickly.

Objective(s): Provide needed technical and traffic flow data to assist in evacuation and route planning.

Strategies Existing:

- Identify emergency evacuation routes;
- Update and maintain center line file;
- Update and maintain traffic flow maps.

Proposed Strategies:

- Work together with other agencies to update aerial data to include 3D mapping;
- Work with member agencies to determine other data needed in time of emergency;



- Determine how to provide data to member communities and emergency responders in time of disaster.

## ***ITS***

Intelligent Transportation Systems is a catch all for technology used in transportation. BTPO and ITD developed an ITS architecture in 2005 which will allow us to better perform our security role. This architecture includes data and service needed along with contact information. Included in the architecture is traveler information systems; incident and emergency management; and traffic management. This architecture establishes the relationships and role for these different types of incidents.

### Objective(s):

Update and maintain the existing ITS Architecture.

### Strategies Existing:

- Work with ITD to conduct annual review of the architecture.

### Proposed Strategies:

- Conduct annual reviews of ITS plan.

## ***Transit***

Federal Transit Administration is working hard with providers of transit services, including Pocatello Regional Transit, to provide safety and security training to front line employees. FTA's five year plan is to develop an all hazard approach to safety and security. Transit safety was discussed earlier. This section reviews security and emergency response pieces of this overall all-hazard approach.

Transit must focus on internal security. This security takes many shapes from theft of buses, potential terrorist attacks using buses, and general driver and passenger safety. PRT and ITD are completing an ITS plan which will provide vehicle tracking information, enhanced communication, and potential for video surveillance. This upgrade will go hand and hand with PRT's existing security efforts. PRT works with the Pocatello police department with a sub station at the transit center to provide security. This includes following buses at various times, monitoring high volume stops, and providing a general presence. PRT also annually funds security efforts.

PRT was part of a statewide analysis of every transit property. The results of the plan were a specific safety and security plan for PRT. The plan identified potential problem areas and way to reduce the risk these areas pose. BTPO will assist PRT in any effort needed to implement the results of this plan.

The other component for PRT is emergency response. PRT is part of the communities' emergency response plan. PRT will use the upgraded vehicle tracking components to



better prepare for the mission of providing vehicles to evacuate threatened areas of the community.

As with the other areas, BTPO's main role is to provide PRT planning support and to ensure these upgrades and other emergency management systems work together to provide improved transit security.

Objective(s):

Improve security of the transit system by enhancing the communication and vehicle location features.

Strategies Existing:

- Implement the recommendation of the regional ITS plan for transit;
- Update transit routes and stop information in regional GIS.

Proposed Strategies:

- Assist in finding funding for planning a transit management center.