

MONTHLY UPDATE



IDAHO POLICY INSTITUTE, MAY 2020

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

As May comes to an end, IPI finds itself amid a major transition. First of all, it is with deep sadness that I announce that I am stepping down as the Director of the Idaho Policy Institute. I have accepted a job as the Chief Administrative Officer and Dean of Faculty at the University of Utah Asia Campus in South Korea effective June 23. Starting the Idaho Policy Institute has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional life. Working with Vanessa Fry and all of the researchers has made the opportunity to lead this organization a true blessing. I am sad to leave such an amazing place, filled with such amazing people, but excited about my new opportunity.

This brings me to the second transition; I am very pleased to announce that Dr. Vanessa Fry has been named the Interim Director of the Idaho Policy Institute. As you know, she has been with IPI since the beginning and I am absolutely confident that she will take the Institute to great new heights. Vanessa works tirelessly and will be a great leader for the Institute's next phase. Congratulations, Dr. Fry!

A few other transition notes:

1. IPI's offices will be moving into the Environmental Research Building on campus. We have enjoyed our stay downtown in the Zions Bank building and appreciate Scott Anderson with Zions, Tommy Ahlquist, and Kem Gardner for facilitating this. We are now looking forward to being closer to our campus colleagues and fostering the relationships there.
2. Dr. Cheong Kim has a new position. He will be a Senior Research Associate. Congratulations, Cheong!
3. McAllister Hall has a new position. She will be a Research Associate. Congratulations, McAllister!

The rest of the update will be devoted to the work that is moving on, but as the outgoing Director, I just want to say "thank you" to all of those who have made the Idaho Policy Institute a reality. Thank you to the President's office for supporting the vision. Thank you to our former dean, Corey Cook, and current dean, Andy Giacomazzi, for committing to our vision and providing the necessary resources, as well as giving us the space to make it happen. And thank you to our dedicated staff: Vanessa Fry, Lantz McGinnis-Brown, Cheong Kim, Matthew May, Ben Larsen, Gabe Osterhout, Tasha Smagula, and the many students who have worked with us through the years. This group has worked incredibly hard to one end: have an impact. The impact of the Idaho Policy Institute on our communities and the State can be traced directly to this wonderful group of researchers and staff. I anticipate that the impact of IPI will continue as time goes on and I'll be sure to be watching. So, thank you for the incredible opportunity I had to be the founding Director of this great Institute and please keep supporting their amazing work!

- DR. GREG HILL

PROJECT UPDATE

CITY OF BOISE MODE SHIFT

Team: Matthew May, Gabe Osterhout, and Emily Pape

IPI completed its analysis of commute mode choice for the City of Boise and delivered its final report. The report provides an overview of current commuting habits in the city, describes common barriers that prevent individuals from changing their commute mode, identifies best practices that other cities have implemented, and provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of existing or likely mode shifters. Additionally, the report outlines several successful policy strategies that the city can implement in order to encourage greater mode shift among the population.

The study's major findings include:

- Encouragement from policy makers is a vital component of success in breaking existing transportation habits.
- Boise has a high incidence of single-occupant-vehicle (SOV) usage (over 80% of commuters). While SOV usage remains high in the downtown area, this area also has more diverse mode use patterns, with greater bicycle and bus usage than the rest of the city. The relative success of the downtown area in diversifying mode choice can help identify and inform successful policy approaches citywide.
- While many barriers to mode shift exist, it is important to understand that individuals are affected by specific barriers in different ways. While some barriers are real and require physical solutions (such as additional infrastructure), others are only perceived barriers and can be addressed through targeted awareness campaigns.
- Best practices for encouraging mode shift include a structured, data-driven approach and the employment of push and pull measures, such as parking management policies that push commuters away from SOV usage or financial subsidies that pull commuters toward mode shift alternatives. These policies can take the form of free bus passes, new infrastructure, or employer benefits.
- Having transportation policy goals in mind when making decisions in non-transportation areas creates a better environment for success.

CITY OF BOISE PEER CITIES

Team: Vanessa Fry, Lantz McGinnis-Brown, McAllister Hall, Ben Larsen

In collaboration with the City of Boise, the Idaho Policy Institute used an objective, statistical approach to determine a set of peer cities for use across city departments. This analysis uses a set of population and demographic variables to identify a group of cities that closely match Boise's demographic profile.

Selecting peer cities will help the City:

- Compare performance and service levels to similar cities,
- Detect problems or patterns in similar cities, and
- Create opportunities for collaboration across cities.

PROJECTS IN PROPOSAL STAGE

- Masters of Environmental Management Needs Assessment (multiple sponsors)
- Idaho Public Television Attitudinal Awareness Survey (sponsor, Idaho Public Television)
- Supporting Housing Stability (sponsor, Robert Wood Johnson)
- A Foundation for Research into Webcams as Tools in Informal STEM Learning (sponsor, National Science Foundation)
- Nevada Rural Indigent Caseload Study (sponsor, Nevada Indigent Defense Commission)
- Workplace Climate Study (sponsor, Idaho Women Lawyers)
- Prevalence and Probability of Youth Homelessness (sponsor, U.S. Housing and Urban Development)

ONGOING SPONSORED PROJECTS

- Charter School Program Evaluation (sponsor, Bluum)
- SAMHSA Treatment and Transitions Evaluation (sponsor, Idaho Health and Welfare)
- Idaho's Transportation Infrastructure Funding (multiple supporters)
- Charter School Diagnostic Site Visit Research Design (sponsor, Bluum)
- New Path Community Housing Evaluation (sponsor, City of Boise)
- Streamflow Data Survey (Northwest Climate Adaptation Science Center)

ONGOING UNSPONSORED PROJECTS

- Downtown Mobility Collaborative (City Go)
- US Census Complete Count Committee
- MPA Employer Needs Assessment
- Statewide Eviction Study
- State of Local Governments Survey
- Relationships Between Municipal Governments and Tribal Governments

PROJECTS CLOSING

- Peer Cities (sponsor, City of Boise)
- Transportation Mode Shift (sponsor, City of Boise)



GET IN TOUCH



(208) 426-5488



@idaho_policy



ipi@boisestate.edu



boisestate.edu/sps-ipi/