

U.S. 20/26 Corridor Study

Summary of Public Open House & Online Public Meeting

June 2015

Introduction

The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) is continuing to develop a long-range plan for U.S. 20/26 from Eagle Road west to Interstate 84 in Caldwell. The plan will include recommended roadway improvements and identify right-of-way needs for the corridor between now and 2040.

U.S. 20/26 is one of the few east-west roadways in the Treasure Valley that runs from Caldwell to Boise. It is currently a two-lane rural roadway with a 55 mph speed limit.

The land use along this corridor continues to change. There are an increasing number of residential subdivisions being constructed, and the future is expected to bring a variety of development that will transform U.S. 20/26 into a primary east-west route in the future.

In summer 2015, ITD gathered input on the recommended improvements for U.S. 20/26 through meetings with property owners, public open houses, an online public meeting and live online Q&A sessions. Meetings with property owners and open houses were held on both ends of the corridor for the convenience of attendees.



The property owner meetings and the open houses were held:

- Tuesday, June 23 at the Thomas Jefferson Charter School. The meeting for property owners was held from 4 to 5 p.m. and an open house for the general public was held from 5 to 7 p.m.
- Thursday, June 25 at the Ambrose School. The meeting for property owners was held from 4 to 5 p.m. and an open house for the general public was held from 5 to 7 p.m.

All materials from the open houses were posted on ITD's website in an online public meeting format beginning on June 26, 2015. Live online Q&A sessions with the project manager were held on Monday June 29 (Noon to 1:00 p.m.), and Tuesday, June 30 (6-7 p.m.).

In all, 189 people attended the property owner meetings and public open houses. From these activities and the online meeting, 107 comments were submitted.

This document includes:

- A summary of key findings and most frequently heard comments from the open houses and online public meeting.
- The preparation, notification process and format for the public open houses and online public meeting.

Key Findings

The purpose of the June 2015 property owner meetings, open houses and online public meeting was to give the community an opportunity to comment on the U.S. 20/26 study and recommended improvements. Below is a summary the most frequently-repeated comments.

Improvements to U.S. 20/26 from Eagle Road to Caldwell are greatly needed as soon as possible and are long overdue.

- There were mixed opinions about how to best improve the corridor – some attendees were very supportive of the proposed improvements while others were not.
- Consider widening the corridor to four lanes in the very near future and then building it out to six lanes at a later time.
- The intersection of U.S. 20/26 and Eagle Road needs to be improved; the current turning movements at this intersection are not adequate.
- The number of traffic lights on 20/26 from Eagle to Caldwell should be reduced, or the signals need to be better synchronized to improve the flow of traffic and reduce congestion.

There were concerns about impacts to property owners, businesses and residents who live on and adjacent to U.S. 20/26, including how widening the corridor would affect property values and access in and out of subdivisions, business/shopping complexes and private driveways.

- Maintaining access to existing businesses and future development is important when planning the corridor improvements.
- Noise levels are of particular concern; increasing capacity will increase noise from traffic so soundwalls should be included as part of the improvements.
- ITD should keep in communication with those property owners who may need to sell right-of-way; keep them informed and involved when decisions are made about the future of this corridor.
- Impacts to the environment and landscaping should be taken into account. The corridor needs to be improved, but keeping it visually attractive is also important or as least maintaining a sense of a greenbelt.

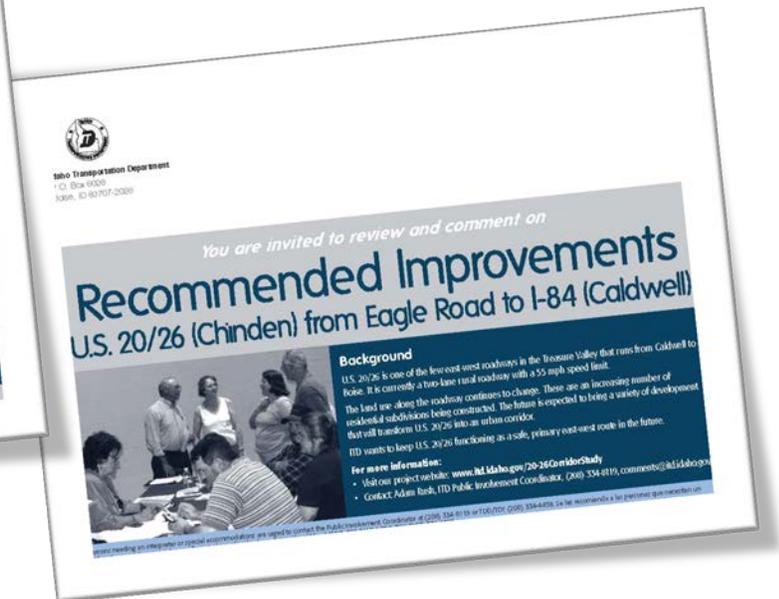
There are concerns about the Continuous Flow Intersection (CFI) concept and thoughts that this may not be the right type of design for this corridor. Some commented that CFIs:

- May be more efficient at moving traffic, but it is unfamiliar, and seems difficult and unsafe for motorists to navigate.
- Have a very large footprint and would require a greater amount of right-of-way.
- Would not operate well because there's not enough traffic to support this design.
- Seem difficult for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel through.
- Would require public education to prevent collisions.
- Participants who have used CFIs in Utah commented that they disliked them and thought they would be confusing for Idaho drivers who are not used to them.

Preparation and notification

Preparation for the open houses and the online meetings began several months in advance. The public involvement team prepared a detailed meeting plan that outlined the purpose, event logistics and display board content. Notification about the meetings and open houses was conducted in several ways:

- Residents, property owners, agencies, business owners, and elected officials received a postcard notifying them of the public open houses, online public meeting and the live online question-and-answer sessions.
- Advertisements for the open house ran in the Idaho Statesman on Sunday, June 21; the Idaho Press Tribune on Sunday, June 21; the Meridian Press the week of June 19-June 25; and the Valley Times on Monday June 22.
- Each property owner along U.S. 20/26 from Eagle Road to I-84 in Caldwell received a personal letter from ITD inviting them to the public open houses, online public meeting and the live online question-and-answer sessions.
- The invitation to the public open houses, online public meeting and the live question-and-answer sessions was posted on ITD's website.
- Postcards were hand delivered to staff at the City of Meridian, the City of Eagle and the Holy Apostles Catholic Church.
- A news release announcing the public open houses, online public meeting and the live online question-and-answer sessions was distributed through ITD's media manager system on Friday, June 19.
- Sandwich signs were posted on June 23 and June 25 at key locations on U.S. 20/26 to advertise the location and time for the public open houses.



Open house format

The open houses were held over two days at opposite ends of the U.S. 20/26 corridor. The first open house was held on the west end of the corridor near U.S. 20/26 and I-84; the second was held on the east end of the corridor near the intersection of U.S. 20/26 and Locust Grove Road.

Large visual display boards were used to present information about the project. In addition to the display boards, maps of the recommended preferred improvements were laid on tables with the corridor broken down into sections, and indicated the recommended improvements for each. The same information was presented in the same format and each of the open houses. Attendees were welcome to come and leave at any time and project staff were available throughout the event to answer questions.



Staff from ITD, RBCI (public involvement consultant) and Parametrix (design consultant) greeted attendees at the door, asked them to sign in, provided them with a meeting guide and comment sheet and encouraged them to view the display board stations that were set up around the room. Participants had the opportunity to review large section maps that were laid on tables to see what recommended improvements were being considered. A video of a Continuous Flow Intersection (CFI) was available for anyone who wanted additional information on how this type of intersection operates.

ITD and Parametrix consultant staff were available to talk with attendees and answer questions. All participants were encouraged to complete a comment sheet, and tables and chairs were placed around the room for those who wished to do so.

The display board stations included:

- **Station 1: About This Project**
Explained the process, schedule and background for the U.S. 20/26 Corridor Study.
- **Station 2: Existing and Projected Conditions**
Described existing conditions along the U.S. 20/26 corridor and current and projected traffic volumes.
- **Station 3: Environmental Analysis**
Outlined the purpose and need for the project and environmental considerations that will be taken into account.
- **Station 4: Recommended Improvements**
Presented recommended roadway improvements and right-of-way needs for the U.S. 20/26 Corridor Study.
- **Station 5: Right-of-Way**

ITD staff was available at this station to answer questions and talk with property owners.

- **Station 6: What's Next**

Provided an overview of next steps for the U.S. 20/26 Corridor Study and how attendees could stay involved.

The section maps were broken down by area as follows:

- **Map 1:** I-84 to East of KCID
- **Map 2:** East of KCID to East of Midland
- **Map 3:** East of Midland to East of Franklin
- **Map 4:** East of Franklin to East of Can-Ada
- **Map 5:** East of Can-Ada to East of Idaho 16
- **Map 6:** East of Idaho 16 to East of Ten Mile
- **Map 7:** East of Ten Mile to East of Meridian
- **Map 8:** East of Meridian to Eagle
- **Map 9:** U.S. 20/26 – Star Road Intersection
- **Map 10:** U.S. 20/26 – Linder Road Intersection

Online meeting format

ITD hosted an online meeting for the U.S. 20/26 Corridor study beginning on June 26, 2015. The online format allowed participants to learn about the project at their convenience and ask questions at a time that fit their schedules. The online meeting was available continuously from June 8 through June 30, 2015. ITD recorded 4,450 page views during the three weeks of the online meeting.

The online meeting consisted of:

- An introduction video: The online meeting opened with Marc Danley, ITD's Project Manager, introducing himself, welcoming participants to the online meeting and giving a brief overview of the U.S. 20/26 Corridor Study.
- Presentation slides: The slides consisted of all display boards from the public open house and included a voice-over introducing and explaining each slide. The presentation was organized into five sections:
 - About the project
 - Existing and projected conditions
 - Environmental analysis
 - Proposed improvements
 - Next steps
- Online comment form: Participants had the ability to submit comments at any point during the presentation. A comment icon was located at the bottom of all of the slides, on the project page and the online meeting page.
- Live online Q&A sessions: ITD hosted two live online Q&A sessions that gave participants the opportunity to chat online one-on-one with the project manager and have their question answered in real-time format. The online Q&A sessions were held on June 29 from noon to 1 p.m. and on June 30 from 6 to 7 p.m.