

POCATELLO AVE/I-86B INTERSECTION

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #2 SUMMARY | July 17, 2018

In July 2018, the Idaho Transportation Department hosted a community workshop for the Pocatello Avenue/I-86B Intersection Improvement Project in American Falls. This workshop was the second in a series of community workshops to determine a new design for the intersection.

The Pocatello Ave/I-86B intersection is located along State Highway 39, a primary route for trucking and agricultural traffic. It also provides a gateway to the American Falls community. In response to local concerns, ITD has begun exploring possible designs to improve traffic operations for all users. Key stakeholders and members of the public have been invited to participate in a series of workshops and provide input on potential designs.

Workshop #2 was held at the American Falls District Library (308 Roosevelt St.) on July 17, 2018.

Workshop #2 purpose and notification

The purpose of the July workshop was to:

- Review outcomes of Workshop #1.
- Present and gather input on the range of potential intersection improvements.
- Explain next steps in the project.

ITD notified the community about the workshop in several ways.

- **A letter from Dan Harelson, ITD Engineering Manager** was sent to every person on the project database. The database included property owners, businesses, local jurisdictions, trucking and agricultural industry representatives, past workshop participants and local residents.
- **A postcard invitation** was sent to 1,983 residences and businesses within a three-mile radius of the intersection, as well as to the project database.
- **A display ad** ran in the Power County Press and the Aberdeen Times on July 11.
- **A news release** was sent to local news outlets on July 6. A reporter from the Power County Press participated in the workshop. The newspaper published a story on July 25 summarizing the workshop.
- **Reminder phone calls** were placed a few days before the workshop to everyone on the database whose phone numbers were available.

Copies of all notification materials are included in the appendix to this document.

Workshop presentation

Workshop #2 included two identical sessions: one session from 4-5 p.m. and one from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Community members were encouraged to attend the session that worked best for their schedules.

Each session began with a presentation by ITD Engineering Manager Dan Harelson. Dan gave an overview of public input from the first workshop; reviewed goals and process for the project; and explained five potential alternatives that ITD had developed for the intersection. The alternatives included two variations of a flyover intersection (1A and 1B), a roundabout (2), a continuous green T intersection (3), and a “do nothing” alternative (4). PowerPoint slides and maps of the alternatives are included in the appendix to this document.

After the presentation, attendees had the opportunity to participate in facilitated discussions at tables. Large maps of each alternative were available on each table. Participants had the opportunity to make notes on written comment sheets.

The comment sheets and table discussions covered several questions:

- What do you like about Alternative 1A? Why?
- What do you dislike about Alternative 1A? Why?
- What do you like about Alternative 1B? Why?
- What do you dislike about Alternative 1B? Why?
- What do you like about Alternative 2? Why?
- What do you dislike about Alternative 2? Why?
- What do you like about Alternative 3? Why?
- What do you dislike about Alternative 3? Why?
- Did we miss anything?
- Do you have any other questions or comments?

Approximately 38 people participated in discussion groups and ITD received 23 written comment sheets. In addition, each of the six facilitators took notes during the verbal discussions. Facilitator notes have been included in this summary of comments. A verbatim transcription of all comments is included in the appendix.

Key themes

Several key themes emerged from the comment sheets and table discussions:

- Access to Fairgrounds Road is an important consideration, particularly for businesses.
- Many expressed concerns about situations where traffic would need to merge, especially with fast-moving trucks.
- Many participants expressed a need for dedicated left- and right-turn lanes.
- The concept of “free-flowing” traffic was viewed very favorably.
- Cost is an important factor in the decision, especially for alternatives 1A and 1B.

- Participants suggested several design adjustments to the roundabout and Green T alternatives (2 and 3).

A question-by question summary of comments begins on page 4. A transcription of written comments is included in the appendix to this document.

Summary of comments

Alternative 1A: Flyover Ramp: Pocatello Avenue

What do you like about Alternative 1A – Flyover Ramp: Pocatello Avenue?

The single most repeated “like” was:

- Traffic keeps moving; traffic flow is smooth.

Other “likes,” in order of frequency, included:

- It will improve safety.
- It will reduce delay times, especially for trucks.
- Shorter delays will reduce trucks’ usage of Pocatello Avenue.
- It is cost-effective.
- It will handle traffic volumes.
- It does not require right-of-way.
- It is better than 1B.

What do you dislike about Alternative 1A – Flyover Ramp: Pocatello Avenue?

Frequent “dislikes” included:

- Many concerns about access to Fairgrounds Road and businesses such as the canal company, M&H Construction and 15 Acres.
- Concerns about difficult merging situations (for example, merging with trucks).
- No left turn (from downtown to bypass) or right turn (from bypass to downtown).
- High cost.

Other “dislikes” included:

- (ITD should) slow bypass speed to 45 to match city speed.
- Fairgrounds Road needs some attention. The city plans to annex this into the city and have tried to get some stores to come in. A store was looking into moving into the old Kings building and declined due to poor access. Not only are large trucks accessing this road to/from Funk Farms, traffic is really backed up during events at the fairgrounds. Cars take risks to get out on highway.
- Adding a bridge may introduce danger in the winter (from ice).
- Relocating the road would take it through a residential area, which includes a daycare, in an area that has already had several wrecks.

Alternative 1B: Flyover Ramp: SH-39 Bypass

What do you like about Alternative 1B – Flyover Ramp: SH-39 Bypass?

The most repeated “like” was:

- Traffic flows freely without stopping.

Other “likes,” in order of frequency, included:

- Safety.
- Traffic capacity.
- Fewer truck delays.
- It keeps road as they are.
- It has one flyover lane.
- This is the best all-around solution.

What do you dislike about Alternative 1B – Flyover Ramp: SH-39 Bypass?

Frequently repeated “dislikes” included:

- High cost.
- Difficult access to American Falls and local businesses.
- Lack of turn lanes (to/from bypass and Pocatello Avenue).
- Difficult access to Fairgrounds Road.
- Merging difficulties (i.e., sight distance, less distance to merge).

Other “dislikes” included:

- Right-of-way issues.
- Different elevations between adjacent land.
- This is my least favorite.

Alternative 2: Roundabout

What do you like about Alternative 2 – Roundabout?

The most frequent “likes” included:

- Traffic keeps moving and trucks do not need to stop.
- Cost is lower than some other alternatives.

Other “likes” and comments, in order of frequency, included:

- It allows access to and from Fairgrounds Road.
- A roundabout is a good solution.
- Safety.
- It will need to be the correct scale.
- I like the slow speed (25 mph); it slows traffic coming into town.
- It has minimum right-of-way needs.
- What is the speed limit design?

- Please lower the bypass speed limit.

What do you dislike about Alternative 2 – Roundabout?

The most frequent “dislikes” included:

- The design is too slow, too small or otherwise problematic for trucks.
- Roundabouts are more confusing for drivers, which may result in accidents.

Other “dislikes,” in order of frequency, included:

- I dislike this alternative in general.
- Education would be necessary.
- Short merging distances are a problem.
- Trucks will not yield for other traffic.
- It is not clear whether the roundabout should be one or two lanes.
- It needs a statue in the middle.
- Pocatello Avenue should stop or yield to Highway 39 traffic.
- Change the angle of the SW circle. Take out areas at each leg.

Alternative 3: Continuous Green T Signal

What do you like about Alternative 3 – Continuous Green T Signal?

The most frequent “likes” included:

- Cost is low.
- Traffic flow is smooth, especially for trucks.
- This is the best alternative.
- Traffic signals reduce confusion for drivers and/or create breaks in traffic.

Other “likes” and questions included:

- It accommodates Fairgrounds Road traffic.
- It is safe.
- High constructability; short construction time.
- Could the middle left-turn lane be a left- and right- turn near Fairgrounds Road, with it continuing up for acceleration?
- Straighten out the Pocatello Road bypass for safety.
- I like the double lane from bypass to Pocatello Avenue.
- Make the left-turn lane shorter past Fairgrounds Road.
- Does this alternative allow drivers to make the left turn into Fairgrounds Road?
- No need to buy property.

What do you dislike about Alternative 3 – Continuous Green T Signal?

The most frequent “dislikes” included:

- It seems less safe; increases the potential for angle crashes.
- It still requires trucks and other traffic to stop.
- Access to Pocatello Avenue will be more difficult.

- Some design adjustments are needed.

Suggested adjustments included:

- *Add a left-turn lane after Fairgrounds Road so they can get in and out.*
- *Add an acceleration lane when turning left from Fairgrounds Road to I-86B interchange.*
- *The intersection needs good turning space when turning left from bypass to Pocatello Avenue.*
- *Don't start the left turn lane so soon. Use that space from Fairgrounds Road to turn left to the freeway.*
- *It would be better if there was no light and only the traffic from Pocatello Avenue had to stop. Consider combining some aspects from this alternative and Alternative 1A.*

Other “dislikes” included:

- Fairgrounds Road is still a problem.
- I don't like it in general.
- There is a bit of a delay.
- It requires traffic to merge.

Other comments

Did we miss anything?

- I would like to vote yes for the “Do Nothing” option. There is a definite stop. Trucks cannot run a yellow or red light and potentially hit someone.
- Can Fairgrounds Road be managed differently; different access?
- This was done very well. Maybe have example of how each alternative works.
- The preferred option for most at my table is Do Nothing.
- Dead-end guardrails.
- Safety first.

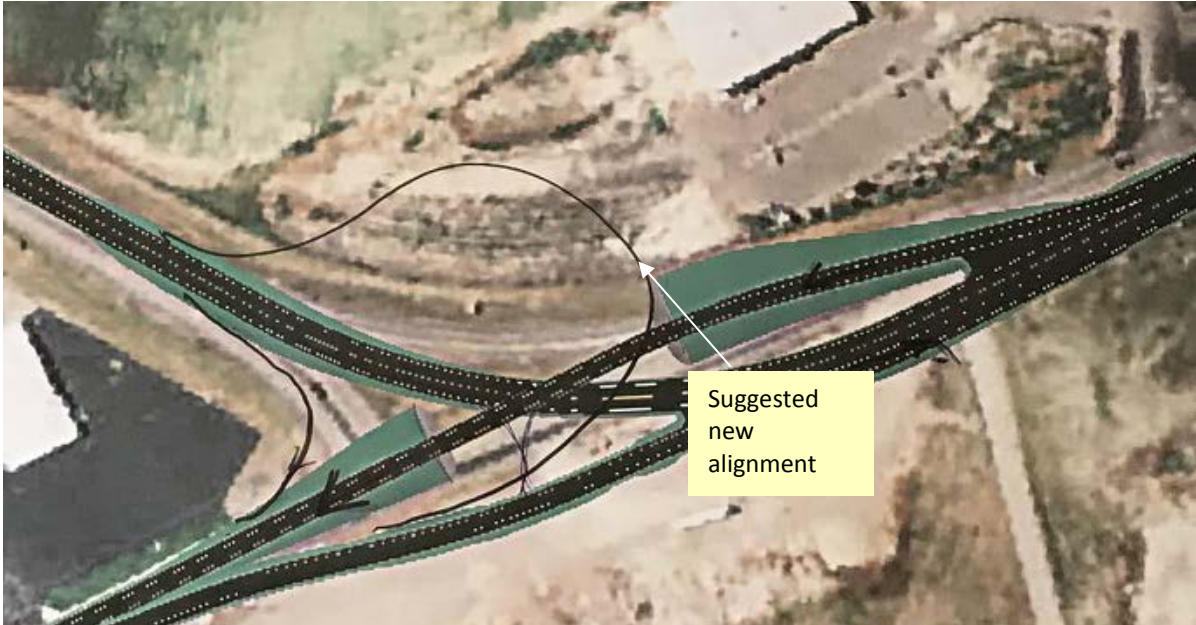
Do you have any other questions or comments?

- Keep existing roads, but make only one flyover lane for traffic to get to I-86. Maybe making it a left-lane flyover so right lane uses existing road now.
- Guard rails have dead ends too close to high-speed traffic. They need to be turned away from roadway.
- Do nothing!
- Thanks for taking our input.
- Change Fairground Road access. Go with 1A or go with 1B.
- The roundabout is the best but has too much opposition. The Green T is the best alternative from roundabout. The flyover options are too expensive.

Maps from discussions

Workshop participants worked together to leave comments on large maps of each alternative.

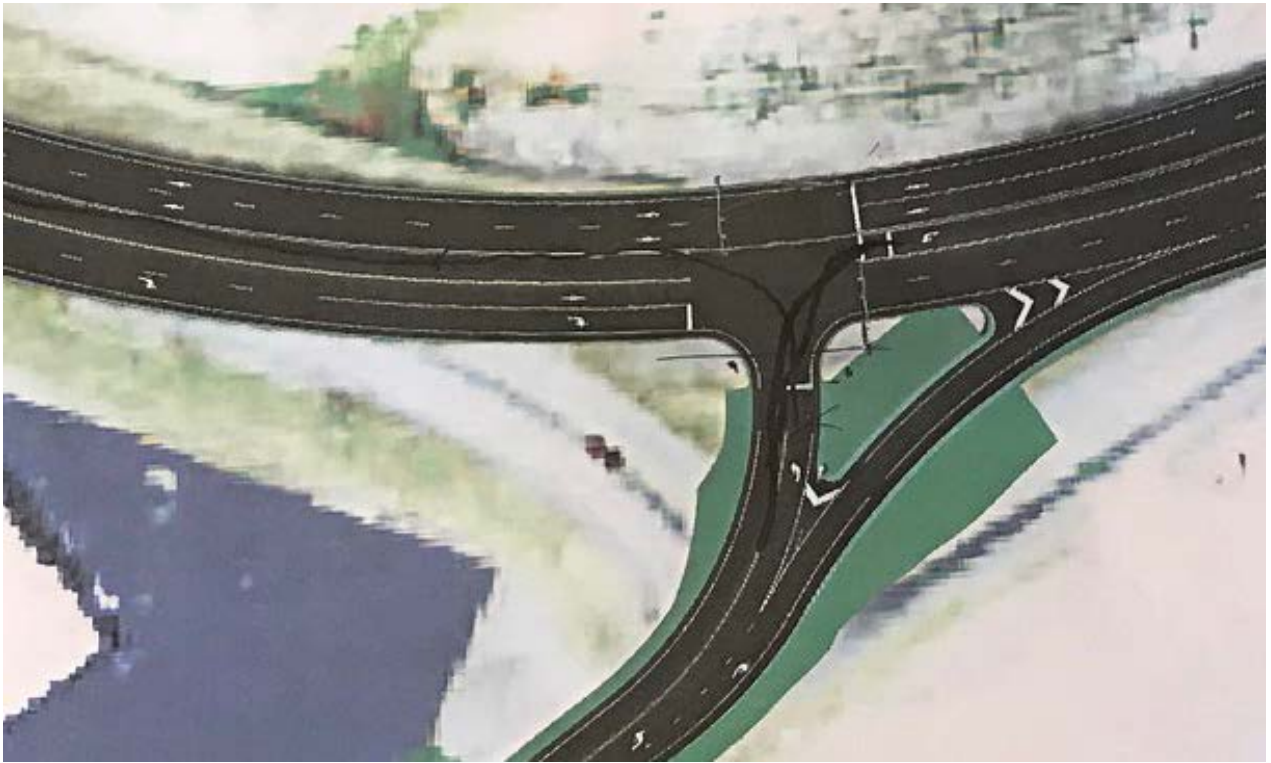
Map 1. Alternative 1A (Flyover Ramp – Pocatello Ave)



Map 2. Alternative 1B (Flyover Ramp – SH 39 Bypass)



Map 3. Alternative 3 (Continuous Green T Signal)



Map 4. Alternative 1A (Flyover Ramp – Pocatello Ave)



Map 5. Alternative 3 (Continuous Green T Signal)



Map 6. Alternative 1A (Flyover Ramp – Pocatello Ave)



Map 7. Alternative 1B (Flyover Ramp – SH-39 Bypass)



Map 8. Alternative 2 (Roundabout)

