

# POCATELLO AVE/I-86B INTERSECTION

## IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

### COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #3 SUMMARY | Nov. 15, 2018

In November 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 third 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 evaluated several options for redesigning the intersection and improving traffic operations for all users. Through a series of workshops in 2018, the community has been invited to identify issues and give feedback about potential design options.

Workshop #3 was held at the American Falls District Library (308 Roosevelt St.) on Nov. 15, 2018.

#### Workshop #3 purpose and notification

The purpose of the November workshop was to:

- Review outcomes from the July community workshop.
- Present and gather input on the recommended intersection improvements.
- Explain next steps in the project.

ITD notified the community about the workshop in several ways.

- **A postcard invitation** was sent to 1,978 residences and businesses within a three-mile radius of the intersection, as well as to the project database.
- **A letter from Dan Harelson, ITD Engineering Manager** was sent to the project database, which included 74 property owners, businesses, local jurisdictions, trucking and agricultural industry representatives, past workshop participants and local residents.
- **A display ad** ran in the Power County Press and the Aberdeen Times on Nov. 7.
- **A news release** was sent to local news outlets on Nov. 14. A reporter from the Power County Press participated in 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 #3 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 shared the outcomes from the second community workshop in July, including community feedback about each of the alternatives (a flyover ramp, roundabout, continuous Green T and “do nothing”).
- Dan reviewed the process of evaluating the alternatives based on cost, safety and other criteria (i.e., traffic flow, right-of-way, etc.).
- He then presented ITD’s proposed roundabout design for the intersection.
- The group watched a video of a Transystems vehicle navigating a roundabout in Nampa that is a similar design and size.
- Dan invited participants to review the design, ask questions and give feedback in discussion groups. He reiterated that ITD is committed to working with the American Falls community to prepare them for a new intersection design.

PowerPoint slides and maps of the alternatives are included in the appendix to this document.

## Discussion

After the presentation, attendees had the opportunity to participate in facilitated discussions about the proposed intersection design. Large maps of the proposed roundabout design were available at each table and as a handout for participants to take home. Participants had the opportunity to also make notes on written comment sheets.

The comment sheets and table discussions covered several questions:

1. What are your thoughts about the recommended intersection improvements?
2. Do you have any questions or concerns that ITD has not addressed?
3. Do you have any suggestions for preparing the community for the new intersection design?
4. Do you have any other questions?

Approximately 25 people participated in discussion groups. Each facilitator took detailed notes for inclusion in the meeting summary. In addition, six participants submitted written comments and a few groups recorded comments on the table maps.

Participants’ responses to each question are summarized on page 3. A transcription of all comments is included in the appendix to this document.

## Summary of comments

Participants shared a wide variety of thoughts during the table discussions. The following summary is based on detailed notes from the table facilitators, written comments sheets and hand-drawn comments on the map. The order of comments in this summary is not significant.

### 1. What are your thoughts about the recommended improvements to this intersection?

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Responses to this question included:

- **It is important to ensure that the roundabout accommodates split axle, 53-foot livestock trucks and the hay trailers that often pull triples through the intersection.**
  - Single or double trailers have a set of tandem axles and turn tighter than the Transystems trailers. One person mentioned that these trailers off-track two times farther.
  - Consider increasing total diameters overall and island, 20-25ft. and add half of the increase to traffic lanes around the roundabout.
  - Make the inside lane at least 25 feet wide (about 5 to 8 feet wider).
  - Eastbound Pocatello Avenue needs to be extra wide.
- **Education and signage will be very important:**
  - Teach people to yield – don't stop at the roundabout.
  - Make sure the intersection has plenty of signs and pavement markings and advanced warning signs especially on the side with two lanes.
- **Many expressed general support for the roundabout.**
  - It keeps traffic moving and reduces stopping.
- **A minority of participants expressed concerns about the roundabout due to the possibility of slowing traffic down and causing confusion.** However, many of these also stated that the discussion had addressed the majority of their concerns.
- **Several gave comments about the speed limit:**
  - 25 mph is the right speed through the roundabout.
  - Lower the speed limit on SH-39, maybe reduce to 45 mph after/before the railroad bridge. Then possibly install a yellow flashing sign posting SLOW or slow traffic ahead. Then have police enforcement.
- **Other comments included:**
  - The roundabout traffic will be busy at certain times of the day, such as when Lamb Weston has a shift change. Traffic coming from Highway 39 to I-84 will make it difficult for traffic coming from American Falls.
  - A few people preferred another option such as the no-build or the Green T.
  - Fernley, Nevada, has a similar roundabout (about 30 miles due east of Reno on Highway 80).

- The presentation focused on truck traffic more than cars, but the larger percent of drivers are cars. Focus on the mix of vehicles.
- Ice will slow traffic down.
- Make sure the roundabout is well-lit.
- Don't build anything in the center.

## **2. Do you have any questions or concerns that ITD has not addressed?**

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Responses to this question included:

- Will 53-foot trucks be able to safely drive the roundabout?
- Please simulate the 53-foot trailer. This trailer has a much larger off-tracking. This size of truck is used 12 months out of the year and is used by most potato farmers in the area. The intersection MUST accommodate this single trailer truck. The Trans-System truck is only used a few months out of the year.
- Could ITD consider a second lane on the roundabout from town to I-86?
- Consider changing the speed limit to 45 mph.
- What percentage of the roundabout traffic is from trucks? Is it enough to warrant truck-oriented design on the roundabout?
- How efficient is a roundabout? Would roundabouts be more hassle to traffic?

## **3. Do you have any suggestions for preparing the community for the new intersection design?**

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Participants overwhelmingly supported the need to educate the community. Specific suggestions included:

- Go into each trucking place for a one-on-one meeting. This will cure 99 percent of problems.
- Have group sessions at the three large trucking companies in the area.
  - *Contact information for Lamb Weston (John Schutt), ENR (Nick) and Great Rift (Lance Funk) were provided to ITD at the workshop.*
- Have an informational booth at the annual Power County Search and Rescue Salmon BBQ (in July).
- Pay attention to signage at the roundabout.
- Have video and easy directions on ITD website. Then make flyers with website and directions on them.
- Send flyers home with kids from schools.
- Hang flyers at stores.
- Take bus tours through roundabout before you open it.
- Explain flow of traffic – whether to stop or yield.
- Communicate with older folks in the community.
- Use U.S. Mail, mail, email and Facebook.
- Run video on the news and create TV commercials.
- Not too many read newspapers anymore; it is not a great resource.
- Host some workshops on using roundabouts.

- Go to the Senior Citizen Center several times and invite the community.
  - *Others believed that not too many would attend a presentation.*
- Present information to law enforcement.
- Educate drivers, especially about yielding.
- Hang display board in Lamb Weston cafeteria.

#### 4. Do you have any other questions?

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Other questions and comments included:

- The roundabout designed is much better than the one originally presented.
- Get local police to patrol the SH-39 bypass.
- Please superimpose a regular roundabout on the one proposed to see just how much bigger the proposed roundabout is. Provide a side-by-side comparison too.
- The Power County Highway Commissioner would like to see improvements at the Fairgrounds intersection. Could ITD consider building a right turn lane onto Fairgrounds Rd or just a turn pocket? Trucks could pull into the lane to slow down or turn and not cause traffic behind them to slow down.
- Consider including a second lane on the roundabout.
- Trucks avoid stops and roundabouts.
- Get truck traffic off Idaho Street and Fort Hall.
- Education is key.
- Contact Andy Robbins, Driscoll Farms. *Phone number provided to ITD.*
- Please follow up with Joe about whether 53' trucks can go through the roundabout.
- Consider blinking yellow lights to indicate the speed reduction.

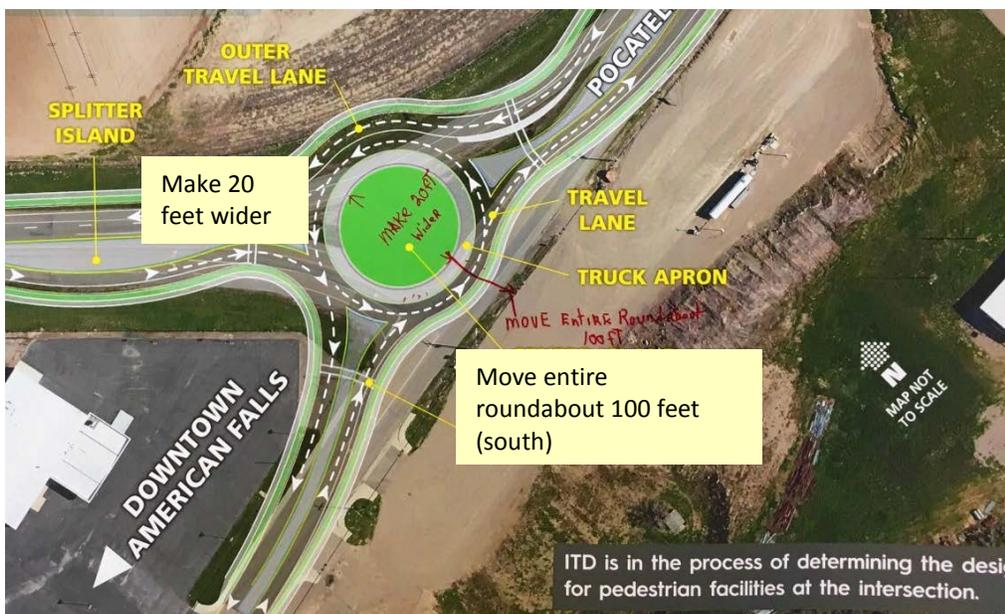
### Map comments

A few groups recorded notes on the maps at their tables. The photos in this document have been cropped to show detail.

#### Map 1



#### Map 2



Map 3

