

Megan Sausser

From: Idaho Transportation Department <megan.sausser@itd.idaho.gov>
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 10:12 AM
To: Megan Sausser
Subject: ID-53 online meeting



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ID-53 Washington to Rathdrum

June 25, 2020



Response to comments from online meeting

Thank you for participating in the online meeting from May 18 to June 8 for four projects planned for Idaho Highway 53 between Washington and Rathdrum.

Since the conclusion of the online meeting, ITD learned that the Pleasant View interchange was not awarded the INFRA grant for 2020 and thus will remain scheduled to start in 2026. ITD was one of 173 grant applicants requesting \$7.4 billion in funding or about eight times the available amount. [View the list of selected projects.](#)

The design team has reviewed all comments and would like to share responses to the most common concerns or questions.

If your question was not answered below or you would like to further discuss your comment, please contact the appropriate project manager.

- Washington state line to Hauser Lake Road
 - Sharesa Wheeler at sharesa.wheeler@itd.idaho.gov or (208) 772-8022
- Pleasant View interchange and Rathdrum turn lanes
 - Chance Cole at chance.cole@itd.idaho.gov or (208) 772-8021
- Hauser Lake Road to Bruss Road (this includes the Hauser Lake Road intersection)
 - Steven Bakker at steven.bakker@itd.idaho.gov or (208) 772-1221

It is hard to turn left onto the highway. Can ITD reduce the speed limit, add signals or build acceleration lanes?

With growth in the area, turning left onto the highway can be challenging during peak times, but crash data does not indicate this is the hardest or least safe movement. The data shows that drivers have more issues turning off the highway rather than turning onto it, resulting in several serious and fatal injuries that prompted the expansion of the highway.

Speed limits are safest when set at the speed most drivers naturally travel at; when limits are artificially reduced, it can result in more crashes as some drivers will follow the posted limit while others will travel at speeds comfortable to them. Drivers trying to turn face a greater challenge when vehicles in different lanes are not moving at consistent rates of speed.

Adding signals to ID-53 would not only compromise the mobility of the route, it could create a greater hazard. Signals are placed in locations for a variety of reasons, usually the number of turning movements, and are not warranted within project limits. Placing signals where they are not warranted, or where they are not expected along a signal-free route in a rural setting, could lead to more crashes.

Acceleration lanes are designed to help traffic get onto a high-speed route. They do not address the primary safety issue of leaving the high-speed route. They could help commercial traffic, but given the lack of industrial areas near Rathdrum and Hauser, most trucks are not accessing the highway from county or city roads.

Turn lanes are the appropriate safety solution for the corridor, and the construction of the Pleasant View interchange will facilitate safer movements onto the highway than currently exist at Beck Road/Prairie Avenue and McGuire Road.

The Pleasant View interchange is needed, but so are the other nearby intersections like McGuire Road.

An interchange at Pleasant View will provide a safe connection for the best north-south route that connects ID-53 and I-90. It maximizes safety by carrying traffic over the railroad

tracks, closing other intersections with the highway and funneling drivers along connector roads to one well-developed access point.

Interchanges are generally safer than at-grade intersections, but with the additional lanes on the overpass, traffic flow will be maintained even in the event of crashes. In the case of a major crash capable of blocking four lanes, drivers will likely be redirected to Greensferry Road or into Washington.

The additional benefit of closing Beck Road/Prairie Avenue and McGuire Road will be the removal of at-grade railroad crossings, which pose significant mobility and safety concerns. Without these at-grade crossings, train horns will not be necessary to alert cars when trains pass.

While the closure of those nearby railroad crossings may add a few miles to one's commute, the delay is minimal when compared with the delays experienced by drivers waiting for multiple trains to pass. Currently, trains block these crossings for an average of six hours a day.

Why is ITD only expanding the highway to three lanes?

At full build-out the highway will be wider than three lanes, but current funding for improvements only allows for smaller safety modifications like adding turn lanes and not capacity modifications like adding travel lanes.

After construction, will speed restrictions be necessary for trucks in the spring?

The new route will be wider with a reconstructed base that is expected to eliminate the need for seasonal speed restrictions placed on trucks (also known as spring breakup limits). Extreme conditions could require limits to be enforced after construction, but the road base will be rebuilt to withstand average impacts of freeze-thaw cycles. As the corridor is rebuilt one section at a time, older sections may still experience spring breakup limits.

Hidden Valley Road should receive improvements. Why isn't it?

The intersection of Hidden Valley Road and ID-53 is not planned for improvements as it is beyond project limits, and crash data does not warrant a turn lane at this time.

The intersection is in the larger four-mile gap between Bruss Road and Latah Street that is not programmed for any changes as it is not warranted by crash data. As the region grows, this section may be addressed at a later date.

Signs will be placed later this summer to warn drivers of the intersection ahead, and ITD will continue to monitor conditions.

Will Cloverleaf Road be closed with the construction of the Pleasant View interchange?

This intersection will not be affected by the construction of the interchange and will remain open. It falls under the 2024 project between the state line and Hauser and is being evaluated for the addition of safety improvements.

These changes are not being constructed for some time. Can ITD construct temporary improvements in the meantime?

Given the funding shortfall for transportation, ITD does not have additional funding to either advance the planned projects or construct other temporary improvements in the meantime.

[visit corridor website](#)



You are receiving this email due to your indicated interest in these projects or previous attendance at related open houses.



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