



Sara M. Baker, President
John S. Franden, Vice President
Rebecca W. Arnold, Commissioner
Mitchell A. Jaurena, Commissioner
Jim D. Hansen, Commissioner

Planning & Programming

November 5, 2013

TO: Commissioners, Director and Deputy Directors

FROM: Ryan Head, Transportation Funding Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Northwest Foothills Transportation Plan Update –
Update on Stakeholder Meeting #1**
Staff Report for November 13, 2013 Commission Meeting

Executive Summary

At the July 23, 2013 Commission meeting, staff presented the Northwest Foothills Transportation Plan Update for adoption. Substantial public testimony reflected concerns for widening Beacon Light Road. The Commission remanded the Update to staff with direction to form a new Stakeholder Committee to discuss the land use and transportation interaction surrounding the corridor. The first Stakeholder meeting was held on October 24, 2013. The new Committee includes Commissioner Franden, public representatives, elected officials from Eagle, Star, and Ada County, and a senior official from the Idaho Transportation Department. This Commission briefing will update the Commission on what was presented at the first meeting, what is planned for meeting #2, and ongoing challenges.

Stakeholder Meeting #1

Stakeholder meeting #1 focused on bringing members up to speed on previous efforts, identifying options for accommodating future demand on Beacon Light Road, and to begin to form an implementable recommendation for the Cities, County, ITD, and ACHD. The following highlights were presented at the meeting:

1. Projected region and community land use growth results in future demand on Beacon Light Road at around 1500 vehicles in the peak hour. Maximum threshold for a 3-lane roadway is around 900 vehicles in the peak hour. The Committee was asked to evaluate options for handling the projected excess 600 vehicles in the peak hour. Options include:
 - a. Preserving right-of-way for 5-lanes and widening when vehicle counts on the road exceed the maximum threshold; Evaluate design options for Beacon Light at 5-lanes
 - b. ITD widening State Highway 44 to 6-lanes plus a center median.
 - c. Build or widen another east-west roadway.
 - d. Decrease the level of development in the City's plans starting immediately.
2. Staff presented initial findings on the impact of these options:
 - a. Stopping "additional" growth through 2035 between SH 16 and SH 55, north of SH 44, beyond what the City of Eagle has entitled now, would not alone keep Beacon Light from needing 5-lanes. This can be interpreted that Beacon Light serves a regional function.

- b. Widening SH 44 to 6-lanes plus a center median would not alone keep Beacon Light from needing 5-lanes.
 - c. The combination of #1 and #2 above, would keep Beacon Light from needing five lanes in 2035.
3. The Committee asked ACHD to investigate the impact and feasibility of another east-west roadway north of Beacon Light and to bring back design options for a 5-lane facility.

Stakeholder Meeting #2

The next meeting of the Stakeholders is scheduled for November 14th. This meeting will be focused on reviewing the feasibility and cost of each of the options and selecting a recommended alternative. Committee members will be asked to represent their agencies’ perspectives on the options, in particular where implementation would be contingent on their participation.

City of Eagle Letter

ACHD received a letter (Attachment A) from the City of Eagle dated October 29, 2013 providing clarification that they are not opposed to preserving Beacon Light for 5-lanes. The City also asked that ACHD not construct the 5-lane roadway until on the ground data demonstrates the need. Of note, ACHD standard practice is to only widen roadways there is a demonstrated congestion or safety need.

Ongoing Challenges

The October 24, 2013 Committee meeting had limited attendance from the primary stakeholders. Table 1 indicates attendance. If participation at the next meeting remains low, this may impact the validity by which the Stakeholder’s recommendation is viewed.

Table 1 - Stakeholder Meeting #1 Attendance

John Franden, ACHD	Attended
Jim Reynolds, Eagle	Partially Attended
Mary Defayette, Eagle	Did Not Attend
John Grasser, Eagle	Partially Attended
Dave Case/Jim Tibbs, Ada County	Staff Substitute
Nathan Mitchell, Star	Did Not Attend
Jim Carpenter, ITD	Staff Substitute
Steve Purvis, NACFA	Substitute
Teri Murrison, Resident	Requested Invitee for 2 nd Meeting

Public opposition to preservation for 5-lanes on Beacon Light remains high. If preservation for 5-lanes is recommended by the Committee, the Commission can expect additional continued opposition when the Plan returns for consideration for adoption in January.

Next Steps

- November 14, 2013 – Stakeholder Committee Meeting #2
- City/County Action – November 19, 2013 – December 9, 2013 (Tentative)
- ACHD/Eagle/Star /Ada County/ ITD Joint Meeting – December 12, 2013
- ACHD Commission Consideration for Adoption – January 22, 2014

Attachments

- A. City of Eagle letter dated November 14, 2013



Mayor
James D. Reynolds

City of Eagle

P.O. Box 1520
Eagle, Idaho 83616
208-939-6813

Council Members
Mark Butler
Mary Defayette
John Grasser
Jason Pierce

Ada County Highway District
Attn: Commissioner Franden
3775 Adams St.
Garden City, ID 83714

October 29, 2013

Dear Commissioner Franden,

The City thanks you for your and your staff's continued work and support of the City, our planning, and land use objectives. After the October 24, 2013, Beacon Light meeting the City wishes to provide some clarity and direction on Beacon Light Road. In July of 2013, the City recommended the following:

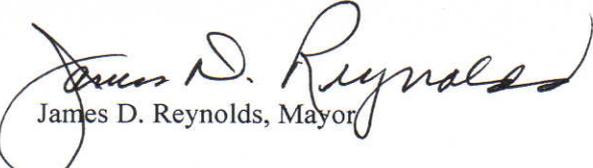
"The 2008 NWFTP projected the 2030 need on Beacon Light to be 3 lanes, and that is all that has been endorsed by the City. Not knowing the future, that is not to say that "preserving" to keep developers from encroaching beyond what might be needed for 5 lanes one day is not a good idea."

During the October 2013, Beacon Light meeting the ACHD staff provided the panel an overview of four options for the management of Beacon Light Road post 2035. Those options included:

- 1) Widen Beacon Light Road to 5 lanes;
- 2) Widen State Highway 44 to 6 lanes with a median;
- 3) Build or widen an another east/west roadway; or
- 4) Decrease the level of development allowed in the City's plan/development approvals starting immediately

The City wishes to reiterate that we are not oppose to the "**preservation**" of right of way along Beacon Light Road for a future 5 lane section and considering that the ACHD has already preserved over 60% of the ROW in the corridor this seems to be a responsible and proactive safe guard. With that said, the City wishes to retain a Beacon Light as a 3 lane section as long as possible and requests the ACHD continue to monitor and review the traffic volumes on Beacon Light Road so both the City and ACHD can continue our proactive conversation about the demands on the road.

We look forward to continuing our dialogue on Beacon Light Road and working together for a bright future.


James D. Reynolds, Mayor

CC: Council
Zoning Administrator