

# Section 7

## Policy Recommendations

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The multi-jurisdictional nature of this project required coordination with many stakeholder groups. Project concurrence from both land-use and transportation agencies is imperative for the long-term implementation of the plan. Joint policy maker coordination occurred at several key stages during the project. Approval of the project findings and directives at key decision points were provided by a joint team of elected officials. Two joint policy maker meetings occurred during the project between:

- Board of Ada County Commissioners
- City of Eagle Mayor and City Council
- Ada County Highway District Commissioners

City of Eagle  
Mayor and Council



ACHD  
Commissioners



Ada County  
Commissioners



At these meetings, the project team presented the main study findings and elicited joint decisions by the policy makers to achieve agreement on the study recommendations.

The two joint coordination meetings occurred:

- Wednesday, October 15, 2008
- Tuesday, December 2, 2008

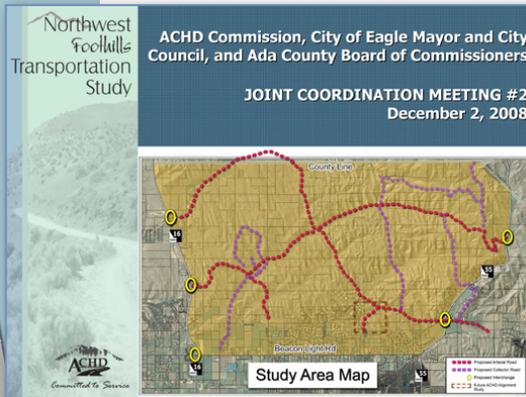
Two key policy decisions were made during the course of the project including:

- Support for funding of State infrastructure improvements through a new joint Ada County Delegation
- Crucial multi-jurisdictional corridor preservation practices

Guidance to include transit facilities in future project planning was also identified during the meetings.

## Policy Decision #1 – Funding State Infrastructure Improvements is Essential

At the December 2, 2008 Joint Meeting, policy makers were asked to provide policy recommendations regarding funding of transportation infrastructure improvements. Participants agreed that lack of additional capacity on the State system would cause significant consequences to the local network including increased volumes, declined LOS and intolerable delays. Ultimately, elected officials unanimously agreed that funding and construction of additional State infrastructure is essential.



Three scenarios were analyzed to show the differing needs in the study area's transportation system if certain ITD improvements are not provided by 2030. These additional scenarios permit a comparative analysis of regional impacts of varying funding scenarios to the roadway network required by additional development in the Northwest Foothills.

Background data was presented at the joint meeting to support the need for additional State infrastructure. Participants reviewed the degradation in the local network based on varying scenarios of State funding and other options available to address the lack of State roadway capacities.

The following scenarios were created to illustrate the substantial requirements on the local system if the anticipated State improvements were not made:

- No ITD Improvements (Limited State Facility)
- Partial Funding Scenario A
- Partial Funding Scenario B

### No ITD Improvements

An additional scenario was analyzed to determine impacts to the ACHD system if ITD facilities are not improved beyond the current condition. The No ITD Improvement Scenario anticipated no improvements to either SH 55 or SH 16 beyond the current condition.

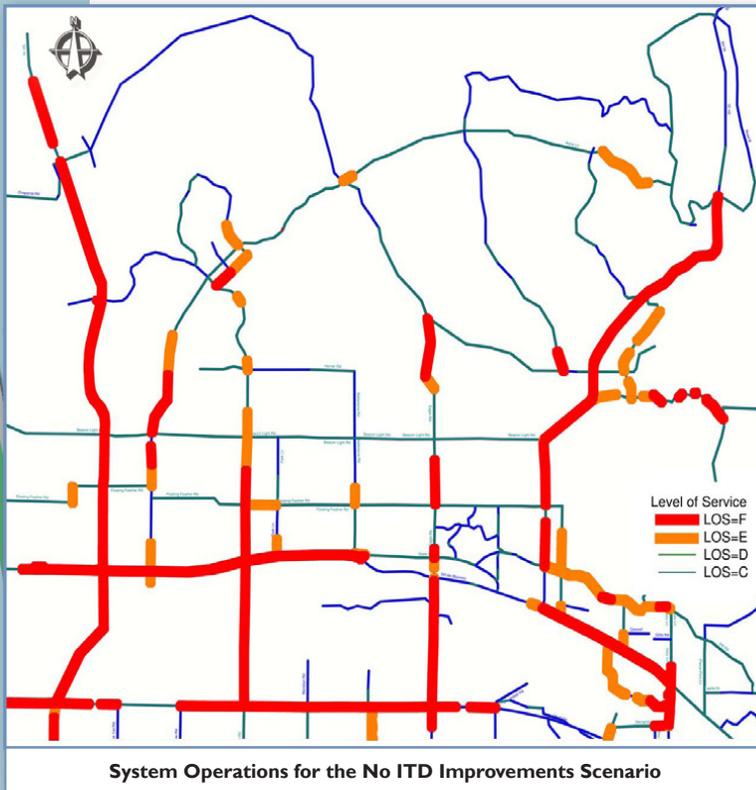
### Partial Funding Scenario A

The Partial Funding Scenario A assumes partial improvement to the State system. This scenario includes improvements to SH 55, Chinden Boulevard, and includes the Three Cities River Crossing.

### Partial Funding Scenario B

The Partial Funding Scenario B differs slightly from Scenario A on the basis that Scenario B does not include the construction of the Three Cities River Crossing. It does include improvements to SH 55 and Chinden Boulevard.

Particular emphasis was placed upon comparison of the Preferred Network to the No ITD Improvements Scenario. Comparing these two funding alternatives allowed the project team to emphasize the importance of State system improvements (SH 55 & SH 16) to the operation of the greater Northwest Foothills transportation system. Consequences of the No ITD Improvements Scenario include significant volume increase on Aerie Lane, Floating Feather Road, Palmer Road, Willow Creek Road, and Ballantyne Lane. In some cases, volumes on these roadways are projected to be doubled in the No ITD Improvements Scenario in comparison with the Preferred Network.



Additional system-wide capacity threshold analysis was conducted for the Preferred Network scenario and the ITD No Improvement scenario to compare system-wide operations with and without State improvements. Based on this analysis, substantial system-wide impacts can be expected to occur if future improvements are not made to ITD facilities. In addition to volume increases, consequences of limited State facilities on the local system include decrease in LOS, the need for additional lanes, and the need for signals at previously stop controlled intersections. Policy makers agreed that these consequences are not acceptable.

Concluding the data presentation regarding impacts of no or limited State facilities to the local network, several policy options were provided for consideration. The policy options that could influence the future operation of the transportation system were:

- Expand the ACHD Network
- Reconsider development densities
- Address funding of State Facilities

Policy makers unanimously approved addressing the final option by creating the delegation to assist the State by exploring ways to increase transportation funding for State facilities.

Elected officials agreed to form a delegation with representatives from each of the three constituent groups to assist ITD and the State to explore ways to secure additional funding and add needed capacity. Suggestions for additional revenue included Impact Fees for State projects as well as local option tax for transportation improvement projects. Other alternatives will be explored as the delegation meets with State officials.

One of the final policy maker agreements was that developers should be limited on their allowable development densities if significant plan assumptions or concepts change, or if some connections or improvements to the transportation system do not occur in the project area.

## Policy Decision #2 – Corridor Preservation is Vital

At the December 2, 2008 Joint Meeting, policy makers also highlighted the need to preserve right-of-way for future transportation corridors. Purchase of necessary right-of-way is increasing project costs at an exponential rate.

During the course of discussions about the number of required traffic lanes, policy makers agreed that seldom does an agency find itself in the position of excess right-of-way width on essential travel corridors. The converse is often true. The planning nature of this study into the 2030 horizon suggests that policy makers take a long-range view of corridor preservation. A corridor preservation map has been included in this report based on the Preferred Network lane and intersection configuration needs to allow land-use agencies to coordinate with development to preserve land along transportation corridors for planned future improvements.

## Policy Guidance – Include Transit Opportunities

Policy makers agree that transit opportunities must be incorporated in future project planning. As Ada County grows and the foothills are developed, residents may require more diverse transportation solutions. During their December 2 meeting, policy makers noted that transit is an important component in the transportation planning process. However, the dynamic nature of the Treasure Valley's transit systems often make planning for these systems challenging. Elected officials agreed that a benefit of right-of-way preservation was the ability to incorporate transit into project designs as those projects are engineered. Incorporation of a transit system into the Northwest Foothills Study area should be considered and can be accommodated through appropriate corridor preservation requirements.

## Policy Guidance – Final Adoption Recommendations

During the adoption of the Northwest Foothills Transportation Study, the ACHD Commission provided additional considerations to be included in the final report. These additional items include:

- Developers may be limited on their density of development if planned concepts materially change, assumptions in plans materially change, the BLM does not allow easements for road connections or State facility improvements do not materialize in the project area, due to lack of funding or other reasons
- Consideration of design elements for pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian and wildlife will be included as roadway developments are submitted and specific alignments are considered
- ACHD will proceed to consider an extraordinary impact fee district for the study area and identify projects for inclusion
- A corridor preservation map that is consistent with the Northwest Foothills study findings is included in this report

All of these recommendations should be analyzed as the Northwest Foothills area develops. The corridor preservation map is included in Section 8 on Extraordinary Impact Fees and Corridor Preservation.