Section 2
Public Involvement
Public Involvement Approach

In order to achieve regional support and approval of the findings of the Northwest Foothills Transportation Study, a detailed public involvement approach was implemented. The public involvement approach included public open houses, stakeholder interviews, multi-agency coordination, policy maker Joint Coordination Meetings, media releases, open house and web comment forms, and web postings on the project.

The public was frequently encouraged to provide comments on the progress and findings of the project as it moved forward. Three Public Involvement Open House Meetings were held during the project. Detailed summaries of these meetings are included in the appendix. Public Open Houses were held on:

- August 14, 2008
- October 2, 2008
- November 13, 2008

At these open houses, the public was allowed a chance to review the analysis conducted by the project team and comment on the direction forward. During the project open houses the public commented on issues such as:

- Road network alignments
- Areas of concern
- System improvements
- Other important considerations unique to the area

After each open house, comments were summarized to present a general overview of the main themes and opinions expressed by the public. The common or recurring comments identified at each open house were considered in subsequent analysis of the project.
Stakeholder Interviews

During the initial stages of the project, stakeholder interviews were conducted with key entities that had a crucial stake in the outcome of the Northwest Foothills Transportation Study. The stakeholders identified for consultation were suggested and approved by the project team. The stakeholders interviewed for the project were:

- Service Providers (Idaho Power, United Water, Soil Water Conservation District)
- Emergency Responses providers (Eagle Police, Eagle Fire, Ada County Paramedics)
- State Highway 55 Consortium and Area developers (Kittleson & Associates, Connolly, Kastera, SunCor, Harmon, Alpine Creek)
- M3 Corporation
- Public Land Management and Land Trust Agencies (BLM, IDFG, IDL)
- The North Ada County Foothills Association (NACFA)

In addition to the initial stakeholders meetings, subsequent meetings or discussions occurred when additional input was required. Stakeholders could comment on the findings and impacts of the study throughout the life of the project. Some of the primary findings from the stakeholder meetings were:

- Previous studies did not deal with road classifications or operational analysis
- ITD may require interchanges at major intersections along State Highways
- Additional road alignments were identified
  - A connection from Willow Creek Road to Brookside Lane
  - North-South alignments in the east project area
  - A connection from Woods Gulch to SH 55 was identified
  - An alternative Willow Creek Road alignment was identified
- Ownership and parcel data was clarified
- Species habitat information was provided
- Public land exchange opportunities were discussed
- The need for identifying the transportation system was generally agreed upon and supported
- General acceptance of the City of Eagle Comprehensive Plan was agreed upon

The following input was provided:

- A desire to preserve neighborhoods
- Easement requests must occur for alignments through BLM land
- Development will attract and disperse traffic in the foothills
- Emergency response times are important for future network alignments
- Additional travel lanes can increase response times
- Power lines follow transportation corridors
- A future soil survey could help identify erosion control measures in the foothills

Much of the input and information provided during stakeholder meetings helped to cultivate the analysis that would occur in subsequent stages of the study.
Findings of the August 14, 2008 Open House

The first open house was held on Thursday, August 14, 2008 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the Eagle Christian Church, 7000 W. State Street, Eagle, Idaho. At this open house:

- 147 people signed in
- 34 sets of comment sheets were submitted at the open house
- 14 sets of comments were received by ACHD after the open house by the close of the comment period on August 28, 2008

At this open house, participants were able to read quotes from stakeholder meetings and respond interactively with written comments on post-it notes. Participants were also provided an opportunity to draw practical alternative road alignments or provide commentary on the preliminary road alignments map. The alignments from this map utilized specific data provided by stakeholders in the early stages of the project. The purpose of showing the public these alignments was to begin gathering input from the public concerning the probable locations of some alignments and initial concerns. Participants were also given a comment form as they signed in to provide written comments.

Based on the comments provided from the open house, common issues and desires were identified:

- Traffic distribution from the foothills to SH 16 and SH 55 is desirable
- Sufficient road capacity to accommodate projected future volumes is desirable
- Developers should pay for the construction of future roads
- Bike lanes on future roads are desirable
- Concerns were raised regarding traffic distribution and congestion on State Street (SH 44)
- Provide an alternative Willow Creek Road connection instead of what is shown in the Eagle Comprehensive Plan

Some of the additional recurring comments that were received identified a desire for:

- Less traffic traveling into the City of Eagle
- Maintaining open space in the foothills
- Providing another river crossing for future traffic (i.e. Three Cities River Crossing or SH 16 Extension)
- Considering wildlife impacts such as wildlife undercrossings
Findings of the October 2, 2008 Open House

The second open house was held on Thursday, October 2, 2008 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the Eagle Christian Church, 7000 W. State Street, Eagle, Idaho. At this open house:

- 85 people signed in
- 9 sets of comment sheets were submitted at the open house
- 13 sets of comments were received by ACHD after the open house by the close of the comment period on October 16, 2008

At this open house, participants were given a comment form as they signed in. The comment form presented two questions for participants to respond to and a general comment section. Based on the comments provided from the open house, the principal issues and desires identified were:

- 14 out of 22 of the comments identified Alternative 4 as the preferred Alternative
- 11 of 22 comments that identified Alternative 4 as the preferred Alternative requested the constrained Willow Creek alignment be included in this Alternative
- 6 of 22 comments did not identify a preferred Alternative

Based on comments provided from this open house, Alternative 4 was identified as the Preferred Network Alternative by the public. A number of comments cited this alternative as a reasonable compromise to the other alternatives. Many of the comments felt that Alternative 4 would have the least impact on North Eagle Road of the other alternatives. Numerous comments were also received that identified the potential Woods Gulch Road as bisecting an important section of planned open space.

Some of the additional comments provided from this open house identified a desire to:

- Limit traffic on Eagle Road
- Consider neighborhood impacts
- Provide an alternative alignment to Willow Creek Road
- Limit traffic on Beacon Light Road
- Disperse traffic to main Highways
- Consider a Cul-de-sac on the existing Willow Creek Road
- Maintain the rural feel of Eagle
- Consider transit
Findings of the November 13, 2008 Open House

The third open house was held on Thursday, November 13, 2008 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Eagle Christian Church, 7000 W. State Street. Eagle, Idaho. At this open house:

• 53 people signed in
• 11 sets of comment sheets were submitted at the open house
• 8 sets of comments were received by ACHD after the open house by the close of the comment period on October 16, 2008.

Participants were given a comment form as they signed in. The comment form for the final Northwest Foothills Transportation Study public meeting presented two questions for participants to respond to and a general comment section. Based on the comments provided from the open house, the principal issues and desires that were identified were:

Approximately 9 out of 12 of the comment sheets submitted agreed with the preliminary findings and recommendations of the study. Some comments suggested agreement, but that additional concerns needed to be addressed. Some of the commonly identified concerns were:

• Consider an alternative east-west connection to Beacon Light Road
• Distribute traffic to the main highways
• Consider an impact fee district for development to pay for infrastructure

Some of the additional concerns identified were:

• Limit the expansion of Beacon Light Road
• Consider bike and pedestrian options along roadways
• Provide an alternative connection to Willow Creek Road
• Consider the impacts to open space from roads through BLM land

Common Public Opinions for the Northwest Foothills Transportation Study

Many comments provided at the public open houses for the Northwest Foothills Transportation Study were repeated and became common themes to be addressed in the study. Some of the common or repeated themes that were expressed by the public were:

• Consider neighborhood impacts
• Distribute traffic to the main highways (SH 55 and SH 16)
• Provide an alternative alignment to Willow Creek Road instead of what is shown in the Eagle Comprehensive Plan
• Developers should pay for roads
• Limit the expansion of Beacon Light Road

The common public opinions identified for the Northwest Foothills Transportation Study have been addressed in the final Northwest Foothills Transportation Study Plan and should be further considered upon execution of the plan as the Northwest Foothills transportation system develops over time.