February 4, 2015

TO: ACHD Commissioners, Director Wong, Deputy Directors

FROM: Ryan Head, AICP, Supervisor – Planning and Programming

SUBJECT: Northwest Foothills Transportation Study Update
February 18, 2015 Commission Work Session – Information Briefing

Executive Summary
The Northwest Foothills Transportation Study (NWFTS) was adopted by the ACHD Commission in December 2008. In 2012, ACHD initiated a Plan update to address changes in key assumptions such as development pace and intensity, overall population increases and the need to add an implementation strategy. Joint meetings were held with the ACHD Commission, Ada County Commissioners, and the Mayor and Council of the City of Eagle on March 12, 2013, and June 11, 2013, to discuss the Study update.

On July 24, 2013, the Update was presented for adoption. Due to public opposition surrounding the portion of the Plan for Beacon Light Road, staff was directed to convene a stakeholder committee to make a recommendation regarding the future configuration of Beacon Light Road. An additional joint meeting was held between the Eagle City Council and Mayor, Ada County Commission, and the ACHD Commission on December 12, 2013.

Upon completion of efforts surrounding Beacon Light Road, the draft Update was revised and released for public review and comment on January 6, 2014. All public comments received since the beginning of the Update are included in Appendix A of the Plan.

In a letter dated January 21, 2014, the City of Eagle requested to have adoption of the Plan delayed for one year to allow for the City “to undergo review of the Comprehensive Plan…to review and consider land use alternatives and the associated transportation impacts on Beacon Light Road.”

On January 22, 2015, an adoption hearing was held before the ACHD Commission to hear public testimony and consider for adoption the draft Update. At the City’s request, the Commission elected to defer the hearing for one year.

At the work session, staff will present the finding of the City of Eagle’s efforts over the last year, as well as an overview of the study. The draft Update will then be presented to the Commission for consideration and adoption on March 25, 2015.

Attachments:
January 15, 2015 Letter from the City of Eagle
The Draft Update Report with Appendices is available on the ACHD website at http://www.achdidaho.org/Projects/PublicProject.aspx?ProjectID=124
Ada County Highway District
3775 Adams St.
Garden City, ID 83714

January 15, 2015

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for providing the City additional time to review the Northwest Foothills Transportation Study Update (NWFTS) and the relationship between the Eagle Comprehensive Plan, land use entitlements, and role of Beacon Light Road within the region. Over the past year, considerable Staff (City and COMPASS), Council and Community time has been spent analyzing the exiting entitlements within the City, forecasted growth within the City and the region, numerous network configurations, and an independent review by Fodor & Associates for The Friends of Beacon Light Road. On January 13, 2015, following a final review of the draft NWFTS, the City Council recommended the following:

1) The City Council’s position as stated in the December 10, 2013, and January 15, 2014, letters to the Commission remains unchanged;

2) The City recommends ACHD adopt the Northwest Foothills Transportation Study Update with Beacon Light Road designated as a 3 lane road from State Highway 16 to State Highway 55;

3) That all references in the Master Street Map and the CIP for the preservation of Beacon Light Road as 5 lanes be removed and replaced with 3-lanes;

4) The Commission include the Three Cities River Crossing in the NWFTS and the CIP and begin working with ITD and COMPASS to identify funding for this project;

5) The NWFTS be amended to include at least two arterial connections to State Highway 16 (M3 connections at Equest Lane/Pollard Lane and the northern access point) opposed to one arterial and one collector connection; and

6) That ACHD establish an extraordinary impact fee within the foothills to fund and ensure the construction of arterial connections from the foothills to both State Highway 16 and State Highway 55.

While the City understands ACHD’s concerns about level of services and congestion in 2035 on the local roadway system, the City of Eagle cannot support the expansion of the local system to offset the lack of planning and investment on the state highway system. The City is committed to working proactively with ACHD, ITD, and the Idaho Legislature to find regional solutions for the regional transportation needs but the City of Eagle is unwilling to sacrifice the rural character of the Beacon Light Road Corridor to offset the underinvestment in the state and regional transportation system.
The City continues to see ACHD as a proactive partner in the implementation of our community’s vision and we hope to partner with you as we implement our City’s vision and Comprehensive Plan.

Sincerely,

James D. Reynolds
Mayor

Mark Butler
Councilmember

Jeff Kunz
Councilmember

Stan Ridgeway
Council President

Mary McFarland
Councilmember

CC: Council
    Zoning Administrator
    Ryan Head