

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

August 2017

TARGHEE PASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA) OVERVIEW

The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) has initiated an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate risks, benefits, opportunities, and costs associated with reconstruction of Targhee Pass (U.S. 20 between its junction with Idaho 87 and the Montana state line). At this time, pavement condition in this segment of the corridor is beyond routine repair and requires reconstruction, as well as consideration of upgrades to meet current design safety standards. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead agency on this study and will be signing the final study document. The study will be completed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). For more information on FHWA and NEPA, visit www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/index.asp



What's has been done lately?

In July 2017, ITD developed a Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) to help ITD and FHWA by providing feedback that is representative of the diverse interests in the EA. ITD also held an Alternatives Development Workshop where the public assisted ITD in developing alternatives to be evaluated for the EA. Since those meetings, ITD has reviewed all comments, and worked to incorporate that feedback into alternatives for the EA.

What's Next?

Comment Period – ITD is providing a 30-day comment period to gather feedback on the proposed alternatives. Please submit feedback to the EA team no later than Friday, September 29, 2017.

Impact analysis – ITD will incorporate comments from the comment period and refine the alternatives, while also conducting an in-depth impact analysis on the alternatives.

EA Public Meeting and Comment Period – When the Targhee Pass EA document is complete, ITD will provide another 30-day comment period and public meeting. This is currently expected to occur in Summer 2018.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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STUDY PROCESS & SCHEDULE

The study team has been gathering input from residents, local officials, regulatory agencies and all interested parties to understand issues facing Targhee Pass and surrounding areas. ITD will work with stakeholders through an open process to complete a thorough environmental assessment that considers and evaluates a range of potential solutions.

	OCT-DEC 2016	JAN-JUNE 2017	JULY-AUG 2017	AUG-DEC 2017	JAN-SPRING 2018	EARLY SUMMER 2018
Study initiation Public Meeting #1	Incorporate comments	Public Meeting #2 Alternatives workshop	Public Meeting #3 Present draft alternatives	Complete impact analysis	Public Meeting #4 Present EA document	
Stakeholder assessment Public scoping & comment period (12/15/16-1/30/17)	Refine Purpose & Need Evaluate strategies for reducing wildlife collisions & maintaining wildlife movement	Incorporate comments Develop draft alternatives	30-day public comment period Incorporate comments & refine alternatives	Prepare environmental assessment (EA) document	30-day public comment period Finalize EA Prepare & publicize decision	



TARGHEE PASS EA ALTERNATIVES

Needs & Objectives	Alternative 1 “No Build”	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Roadway Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace existing pavement only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace pavement • Replace ballast (road subsurface) • Drainage improvements including improved culvert at Howard Spring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Alternative 2
Traffic Flow/Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbing lane added entire length • Left and right turn lanes into Big Horn Hills Estates, both entrances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Alternative 2
Driver Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut back trees in areas where shading increases ice • Shoulders widened to 8-feet • Curve reductions, road geometry improvements • Ballast and drainage improvements for roadway structure also improve safety • Measures to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions (below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Alternative 2
Bike and Pedestrian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider shoulders will better accommodates bike and pedestrians • Preserve access locations to trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Alternative 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Alternative 2
Wildlife-vehicle collision reduction and wildlife movement enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three wildlife crossing structures • Fence entire project corridor length that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wildlife escape ramps ○ Raised swing gates for hiking/fishing access ○ Gates, electric mats and/or wildlife detection/driver warning systems at vehicle access points ○ Fence end treatments (wildlife guards, electric mats, fence end returns, boulder field, driver awareness signs) • Possible culvert or other snowmobile crossing near top of pass/state line • Possible continuation of fence on Montana side of Targhee Pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife-vehicle collision reduction measures other than wildlife crossings and fence. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Animal detection system ○ Digital/variable message signs ○ Seasonal wildlife warning signs and advisory speeds ○ Vegetation removal to improve visibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One wildlife crossing structure with approximately three miles of fence. Fenced portion to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wildlife escape ramps ○ Raised swing gates for hiking/fishing access ○ Gates, electric mats and/or wildlife detection/driver warning systems at vehicle access points ○ Fence end treatments (wildlife guards, electric mats, fence end returns, boulder field, driver awareness signs) • Other Wildlife-Vehicle Collision reduction measures for unfenced portion of the corridor