

U.S. 95 Thorncreek Road to Moscow

Alternatives/Alignments Workshops At-a-Glance Summary

Four alternatives/alignments workshops for the U.S. 95 Thorncreek Road to Moscow Project were held on Jan. 19-20, 2005. Nearly 200 people attended and more than 550 comment forms were received.

The purpose of the workshops was to present a range of possible alternatives/alignments to the public. The range was developed based on purpose and need, design standards and public input from the open houses held in November 2004.

Below is a brief summary of what the Idaho Transportation Department heard from the public. A more detailed summary, including maps showing alignments suggested by the public is now available on the project Web site, www.itd.idaho.gov/GetInvolved/D2/, click on U.S. 95, Thorncreek Road to Moscow, Stage 1.

Western Alignments: W1

Likes

- Minimum impacts to homes, businesses and people
- Fewer impacts to wildlife, plants
- Could tie to future bypass
- Less impact from weather because low in elevation
- Avoids Paradise Ridge and Palouse Prairie
- Limited access
- Gradual grades – conforms to landscape
- Least visual impacts looking south of Moscow
- Flatter and straighter
- Less noise impact because it's farthest from people
- Existing U.S. 95 could be used during construction and after as a local road
- Good connection to Moscow-Pullman highway

Dislikes

- Impact to farmland:
 - Fertile soil
 - Splits farms
 - Limits farmer access
 - Land values
- Length of new route – people may continue to use existing route
- Large amount of earth to move, lots of cut and fill
- Number of bridges
- Weather concerns – snow and fog
- Median too wide
- Possible impacts to wetlands and other water
- Lack of context-sensitive design

Western Alignments: W2

Likes

- Advantages over W1:
 - Shorter route
 - Less excavation
 - Less farmland disrupted
 - Fewer curves
 - Fewer bridges
 - Less right-of-way needed
 - Straighter
- Few impacts to existing homes and/or structures
- Could tie to future bypass
- Low elevation
- Less impact from weather
- Appears to avoid native plants, prairie and wildlife habitat
- Not on Paradise Ridge
- Will slow western development
- Close to existing road – few new impacts

Dislikes

- Impact to farmland:
 - Fertile soil
 - Splits farms
 - Access
 - Land values
- Length of new route still longer than existing
- Large amount of earth to move, lots of cut and fill
- Number of bridges
- More impact to structures (homes and businesses)
- Noise will affect Paradise Ridge, Jacksha Road homes
- Cost
- Weather concerns – especially snow, ice
- Goes through wildlife corridor
- Not context-sensitive design

Central Alignments: C1

Likes

- Takes advantage of the existing footprint – less right-of-way, uses less land
- Maximizes existing infrastructure
- Fewest environmental impacts –Palouse Prairie, farmland, wildlife
- Lower elevation
- Less cut and fill and excavation
- Not as costly
- Fixes existing safety concerns
- Would not encourage development/sprawl

Dislikes

- Not as safe as other options:
 - School buses still would use
 - Icy, foggy and shady
 - Doesn't address Reisenauer Hill
 - Still has curves
- Impacts to existing homes and businesses
- Not a limited access road – too many driveways
- Cost of right-of-way
- Traffic impacts during construction
- Environmental impacts – tree removal, wildlife effects
- Noise
- Creek, wetlands and wells negatively affected

Central Alignments: No Action

Likes

- Conserves Palouse Prairie
- No action means no new impacts to homes, businesses, farmland, wildlife, etc.
- Least expensive
- Limits growth
- Gives more time to find a safer route

Dislikes

- Existing road is too dangerous
- Money is available to build new road or improve existing
- Traffic will continue to increase

Eastern Alignments: E1

Likes

- Shortest, straightest, most direct
- Fewer home and business impacts than others
- Less impact to prime agricultural land
- Does not use a lot of land – less right-of-way to acquire
- Fewer dangerous curves
- Only one bridge
- Relatively flat route – only one large grade
- Limited access
- Leaves existing U.S. 95 as local road
- Can use cuts for wildlife underpasses
- Less excavation than others
- Looks less expensive
- Farther from Paradise Ridge
- Removes cell tower
- Could tie to bypass if bypass goes east

Dislikes

- Large cuts and fills, too much dirt to move
- Visual impact on Paradise Ridge and Moscow
- Elevation brings weather issues – snow and ice
- Greater wildlife impacts than western alignments
- Takes more farm ground than E2
- Loss of homes
- No escape routes for trucks
- Removes cell tower
- Too steep into Moscow
- Noise – Traffic, truck brakes will be used into town
- Wells and wetlands impacted, could affect groundwater, impact on Steven's Spring
- Doesn't conform to landscape
- Won't connect to bypass if bypass goes west
- Too straight, unattractive, will mean higher speeds
- Not context sensitive

Eastern Alignments: E2

Likes

- Few residential impacts
- Less farmland impacts
- Short, straight, not a lot of elevation change
- Fewest cut and fills
- Less right-of-way to acquire
- Not as expensive
- Minimal access
- Construction impacts not significant
- Could allow for wildlife underpasses and fences
- Stays away from native grasses
- Existing 95 can be a frontage road and to move farm machinery
- Southern exposure means quicker melting

Dislikes

- Most weather impacts – fog, snow, ice
- Close to wildlife and migration areas
- Visual impact on Paradise Ridge/Moscow
- Impact on Palouse Prairie – could bring invasive grasses to prairie
- Grade is too steep – need truck escape
- Noise and headlights coming into town
- Impacts Steven's Springs, pond, wetlands, wells
- Too high on Paradise Ridge
- Will require many bridges if wildlife underpasses are built – costly and unsafe
- May influence building bypass to the east
- Not context sensitive