

U.S. 95 Thorncreek Road to Moscow March 2006 –July 2007

Summary of Public Comments

Members of the public are encouraged to submit comments on the U.S. 95 Thorncreek Road to Moscow project through e-mail on the project web site, U.S. mail, telephone or face-to-face. From February 2006 to July 2007, ITD received 41 written comments and two petitions.

This summary is intended to represent overall themes and opinions expressed by the public. It is not intended to be statistically reliable. Copies of all public comments are included at the end of this summary.

Written Comments

Many written comments expressed support or opposition to the W4, E2, C3 and “no action” alternatives. ITD did not receive comments in support of W4 or opposing C3 during this time period. Major themes included:

Opposition to western alternative (W4)

- Noise and visual impacts to University Arboretum.
- Impacts to historical and residential properties.

Opposition to the eastern alternative (E2)

- Will cause damage to Paradise Ridge.

Support for eastern alternative (E2)

- Most ecologically sound and cost effective.
- Safest and shortest.

Support for the central alternative (C3)

- Invades less undeveloped land.
- Causes least impact to the community and wildlife.
- Closest to current route.

Improve the existing highway (No action)

- Less costly.
- Passing lanes could be added.
- Reisenauer Hill could be modified to reduce hazards.

Other written comments included the following general themes:

- ITD has not been clear in showing how the eastern and western alternatives will be seen from the city of Moscow.

- Safety and efficiency should be the most important criteria used in selecting an alternative.
- The public needs to attend the upcoming public hearing to voice input and ask questions.
- ITD has not altered any of the three proposed alternatives after extensive public input.
- The Giant Palouse Earthworm has recently been petitioned to the U.S. Department of Interior for listing on the Endangered Species Act. The Earthworm's habitat is within the scope of this project and should be included in ITD's environmental analysis.

Questions in written comments included:

- How did ITD draw their conclusions from the January 2006 public meeting comments? Did ITD include all comments received from the public in their analysis?
- How will the petitions be incorporated into public input?
- What is the time frame for a decision? How will the public be notified of the decision?
- Is ITD truly starting over and considering public input? What role will public input play in the final decision?
- Can ITD provide the number of miles of U.S. 95 that would be turned over to Latah County and the number of miles that would be five-lane, non-divided highway?
- Has ITD conducted a storm water analysis?

Petitions

ITD received two petitions between March 2006 and July 2007.

- Bird watchers on the Palouse submitted a petition that opposed moving U.S. 95 near Paradise Ridge, specifically through the E2 alternative. The petition included 14 signatures and was not dated.
- A second petition was submitted that opposed ITD pursuing the E2 alternative. The petition included 361 signatures and was submitted in pages from Aug. 3 to Dec. 12, 2006.