

June 1, 2022

# Non-Metropolitan Local Official Consultation Process Plan



June 1, 2022

Dear Local Officials and staff:

Every hour of every day - the work of the Idaho Transportation Department enhances the quality of life of each citizen.

Idaho's transportation system is critical to the economy. It is the bedrock from which we work and live. A reliable transportation system connects people to everything they do. Our transportation system generates economic opportunities and supports our quality of life. It ensures our security at home and abroad.

Because of this, it is critical for the department to listen to and work with our partners - citizens, business leaders and elected officials - to meet and exceed their expectations.

The department holds public meetings on projects in person, virtually, or a combination of the two and provides information on its web and social media sites. I personally invite you to attend any one of our numerous meetings within your area or you can offer input by phone, e-mail or through social media.

Sincerely,

Scott Stokes  
Director



Your Safety.



Your Mobility.



Your Economic Opportunity.



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The Idaho Transportation Department knows that your time is valuable which is why we want to provide as many different opportunities for you to provide input. Public involvement is the keystone to building and maintaining a successful transportation system. To achieve that success means spending as much time listening and learning as teaching and telling. ITD committed to creating for all Idahoans, a transportation system that meets the needs of the 21st century.

ITD can only be successful if stakeholders are engaged and in the decision-making processes and provides timely input on transportation projects in planning, design, and construction phases throughout Idaho.

ITD encourages Non-Metropolitan Local Officials or their staff to contact the department at any time to get information, make comments on plans and programs, or to make suggestions on how the Idaho Transportation Department can do a better job of keeping you engaged.

**If you would like additional information, please contact:**

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## BACKGROUND

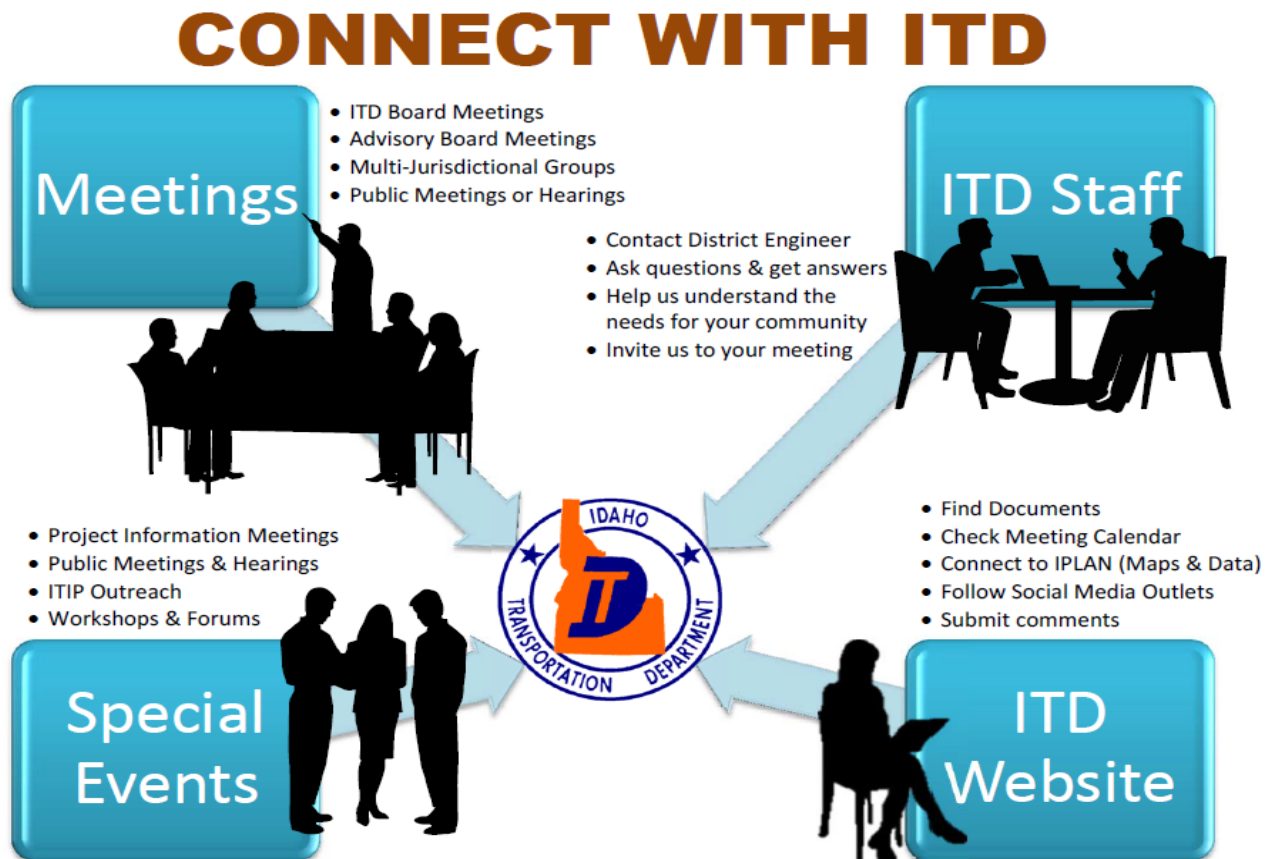
The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) developed and adopted a Non-Metropolitan Local Official Consultation Process Plan in February 2016 in compliance with federal code 23 CFR 450.210 (b). This regulation requires each state to have a documented process “for consulting with local officials” located outside of federally designated metropolitan planning areas during the development of statewide or district transportation plans and the Idaho Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP). States are further required in federal code 23 CFR 450.210(b)(1) to review this process and solicit comments every five years regarding the effectiveness of the consultation.

The term “non-metropolitan local official” is defined as “the elected and appointed officials of general-purpose local government, in non-metropolitan areas, with jurisdiction/responsibility for transportation.” This may include highway districts, counties, and cities.

ITD’s consultation goals are to:

- Enhance the consistency and effectiveness of the department’s consultation commitments based on local officials’ comments during the state’s long-range transportation vision;
- Further consistency in responding to non-metropolitan transportation needs;
- Outline the statewide and district-specific commitments for local consultation on the nonmetropolitan elements of statewide transportation planning;
- Enrich local consultation by providing formal opportunities to review and comment on the projects to be included in the ITIP; and
- Comply with the provisions of 23 CFR 450.212 documenting non-metropolitan local officials’ participation in statewide transportation planning and development of the ITIP.

There are several ways to connect with ITD and this document will outline the ways you can be engaged and heard. We look forward to working with you in the future.



## CONSULTATION METHODS

The department utilizes a variety of methods to consult with Non-Metropolitan Officials and their agencies:

- ITB Outreach
  - ITB Subcommittees
  - ITD Advisory Boards, Committees and Working Groups
- LHTAC Partnership
- Multi-Jurisdictional Transportation Planning Groups
- Information – Communication Technology
- Public Meetings and Hearings

The following pages outline these consultation methods. The department is continually improving its communication actions in order to improve its efficiency, transparency and public outreach when making transportation decisions and developing policies that influence project selection and development as well as how the department maintains and operates highways.

### ITB Outreach

The ITB is a seven-member group whose collective purpose is to ensure a safe, efficient transportation system serving the needs of Idaho citizens. Six board members represent each ITD district of the state. They are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Idaho State Senate. The seventh board member, an at-large Chairman, serves at the pleasure of the Governor.

The ITB meets once a month to oversee the operations of the department. The ITD Board establishes state transportation policy and guides the planning, development and management of a transportation network that is safe, efficient and enhances Idaho's economy and quality of life.

The ITB normally meets six times in Boise and six times across the state annually. These meetings are open meetings and the public is invited to attend. However, because of the ITD Board's tight schedule, it is highly recommended that officials or their staff contact the ITD Board Executive Assistant to get on to the agenda.

Contact:

Ms. Lorraine Dennis, Board Executive Assistant  
P.O. Box 7129 – Boise, Idaho 83707-1129  
Telephone: (208) 334-8207  
Lorraine.Dennis@itd.idaho.gov

Additional information about the ITB can also be found on the ITD Website ([www.itd.idaho.gov](http://www.itd.idaho.gov)) by clicking the "Transportation Board." This site contains Board member biographies; meeting schedules and agendas; meeting minutes; Director's Board Reports; and Board Subcommittee Actions.

### ITB Subcommittees

The ITB has three subcommittees that may have a direct impact on local activities.

#### ITB Subcommittee on Adjustments to the State Highway System

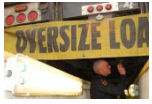


This subcommittee was established in 1996 to review requests to add mileage to the state highway system and to relinquish miles from the state's system. The Subcommittee only meets when there is a formal request from the District Engineer (DE) and/or a local agency. Local agencies may at any time submit addition or deletion requests to their respective DE. The DE will work closely with the local agency to gather information and to create a report about the section of highway in question.

The DE will submit the request to the ITD Board Executive Assistant. She will convene the Subcommittee prior to an upcoming regular ITD Board meeting. The DE and local officials are encouraged to attend this meeting to answer Subcommittee questions. After the Subcommittee considers the request, it submits a formal recommendation to the ITD Board for action.

During one of its monthly Board Meetings, the Board will make its final decision. Minutes will be posted online on the ITD webpage at: <http://www.itd.idaho.gov/Board/brdmin.htm>.

## *ITB Subcommittee on 129,000 Pound Truck Routes*



The ITD Board Subcommittee on 129K Truck Routes reviews and analyzes requests to allow trucks up to 129,000 pounds to drive on non-interstate, state-maintained highway routes. The Subcommittee will review each request and make a recommendation to either tentatively approve or reject requests for new 129,000 pound routes.

Once a decision has been made by the Subcommittee, the department will conduct a 15-day public comment period and conduct a hearing in which verbal or written comments can be submitted. Once the comment period is over, the Subcommittee will consider all of the comments and make a final decision. The Subcommittee will then forward their final decision to the ITD Board for their approval.

Information about projects being considered as well as the way to make comments can be found on the ITD webpage at: <http://itd.idaho.gov/129K/>.

## *ITB Subcommittee on Policies*

The Board Subcommittee on Policies was established in 2012 to review Board Policy, which later expanded to include Administrative Policy. In August 2021, the Subcommittee's status changed to open public meetings. After the Subcommittee considers a request, it submits a recommendation to the Idaho Transportation Board for action. Members of the Subcommittee are Bob Hoff, who serves as chairman, Julie DeLorenzo, and Jim Thompson. From ITD, the Chief Deputy, Chief Operations Officer, Deputy Attorney General, Chief Engineer, Highway Construction and Operations Administrator, ITD staff as needed, and the Executive Assistant to the Board provide assistance. The Board Subcommittee meets on an as-needed basis. Subcommittee meetings are open to the public.

## *ITD Advisory Boards, Committees and Working Groups*

In order to make wise decisions that truly represent the needs of Idahoans, the transportation

department relies heavily on the expertise of advisory boards, committees and working groups. The following groups meet regularly and make recommendations to the Idaho Transportation Board and ITD staff. If any local official would like to find out more about these boards, contact the ITD Board Executive Assistant.

### *Idaho Aeronautics Board*



The five-member Aeronautics Board advises department staff and the Idaho Transportation Board on aviation issues. Members of the Aeronautics Advisory Board are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Idaho Senate to serve staggered three-year terms. The members represent an area of expertise.

### *Idaho Automobile Dealers Advisory Board*



The Idaho Automobile Dealers Advisory Board advises the transportation department in administering and enforcing the Motor Vehicle Dealer and Salesman Licensing Act. The governor appoints 11 members for three-year terms.

### *Idaho Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee*



The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee assists in facilitating statewide coordination of the Idaho Transportation Department's Bicycle and Pedestrian Program. It consists of 12-15 members broadly representative of organizations, agencies and advocates with diverse perspectives and geographies. The committee identifies needs, promotes programs and provides input on bicycle and pedestrian programs, plans and studies.

### *Idaho Freight Advisory Committee*



The Idaho Freight Advisory Committee consists of seven private industry freight stakeholders who bring a statewide freight perspective from diverse stakeholder groups. The Committee serves as a forum for discussing freight movement and freight infrastructure within Idaho; educating freight stakeholders regarding local, regional, and statewide transportation planning processes;

providing access to improved freight data; and working with the Idaho Transportation Department to incorporate freight interests into transportation planning to improve freight infrastructure.

### *Idaho Traffic Safety Commission*



The Idaho Traffic Safety Commission reviews traffic safety issues, promotes local and state cooperation, recommends programs for federal aid and supports accident prevention. The commission consists of 15 members including the chairs of the Idaho Senate Transportation and the House Transportation and Defense Committees. Public Transportation Advisory Council



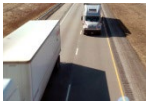
The Public Transportation Advisory Council advises the Idaho Transportation Board on public transportation issues. It is comprised of six members appointed by the Idaho Transportation Board. Members are appointed for staggered, three-year terms.

### *Public Transportation Interagency Working Group*



The Public Transportation Interagency Working Group assists the transportation department in analyzing public transportation needs, identifies areas for coordination and develops strategies for eliminating procedural and regulatory barriers.

### *Trucking Advisory Council*



The seven-member council recommends highway improvements and advises the board on laws and rules that affect Idaho trucking operations and safety issues.

### *Local Highway Technical Assistance Council Partnership*



Consultation and coordination between the Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC) and ITD is a formal partnership in which personnel interact on a regular basis. It is important to note

that LHTAC is not subject to the administrative or management control of ITD, but is a separate independent agency. LHTAC was established in 1994 by Idaho Code 40-2401. The LHTAC Council consists of 9 members representing the Association of Idaho Cities, Idaho Association of Counties, and the Idaho Association of Highway Districts.

LHTAC's mission is to "Advocate. Support. Train." LHTAC develops uniform standards and procedures for highway maintenance, construction, operation and administration; makes recommendations to the ITD Board for the distribution and prioritization of federal funds for local highway projects; and assists the Legislature by providing research and data relating to transportation matters affecting Local Highway Jurisdictions within the state. LHTAC represents its member jurisdictions in conferences, meetings, and hearings relating to highway and street subjects affecting Local Highway Jurisdictions; maintains and disseminates information from other states as to similar activities that would affect the local highway jurisdictions in Idaho.

In addition, LHTAC has the ability to cooperate with and receive and expend aid and donations from the federal or state governments, and from other sources for the administration and operation of the Council, and when authorized by the participating local jurisdiction, to act for that local jurisdiction, through a joint exercise of powers agreement with any other local jurisdiction and any agency of the state of Idaho, or any agency of the federal government.

### *Regional Planning Organizations*

Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) serve as the designated transportation planners for many rural areas, are part of the transportation networks and economies of surrounding metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. The statewide and metropolitan area transportation planning processes, as defined in 23 USC § 135(m), provide multiple opportunities for participation by RPOs or nonmetropolitan officials with responsibility for transportation participation.

The Madison County Regional Planning Organization was formed in September 2013 and is the first of its kind in Idaho. The RPO has been an effective way for rural agencies within Madison County and the Idaho Transportation Department to jointly discuss and plan for the current and future transportation needs of the county. When the RPO was first established, they worked closely with ITD's District 6 in planning and infrastructure discussions.

MAP-21 and the FAST Act indicate that rural areas may develop Regional Planning Organizations. In the cases where RPOs exist, the department will ensure that communication, coordination, and consultation will occur when developing plans and projects.

## **Multi-Jurisdictional Transportation Planning Groups**

ITD's headquarters office is in Boise. However, to ensure optimal project development and operations, the department is divided into six districts. District offices are in the following locations:

- District 1: Coeur d'Alene  
208-772-1200
- District 2: Lewiston  
208-799-5090
- District 3: Garden City  
208-334-8300
- District 4: Shoshone  
208-886-7800
- District 5: Pocatello  
208-239-3300
- District 6: Rigby  
208-745-7781



More information about each district, the projects in your area, your district ITD Board representative and District Engineer can be found on the ITD website at: [www.itd.idaho.gov](http://www.itd.idaho.gov).

Each district regularly participates in several Multi-Jurisdictional Transportation Planning Groups. As a member of these groups ITD provides information and collects input on ITD's Idaho Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) and other statewide transportation planning efforts. ITD encourages and supports the development of multi-jurisdictional

transportation planning groups that include local governments responsible for transportation as well as other interests such as freight, schools, federal or state agencies to name but a few.

Where multi-jurisdictional transportation planning groups have been formed, the ITD District Engineer and/or other appropriate ITD staff will participate and consult with these groups concerning regional short and long-range transportation planning issues and the inclusion of transportation projects in the ITIP. Where these groups have not formed, the ITD district and local officials will develop alternate methods agreeable to local jurisdictions for review, prioritization, and recommendation of projects to the ITIP.

## **District 1**

District 1 staff schedules meetings with the commissioners in each of its five counties. Letters of invitation are sent to a variety local highway jurisdictions, economic development interests and civic groups within each county. Individual coordination meetings are held with staff from the Coeur d'Alene, Kalispell, and Kootenai Tribes. The district also coordinates with the following multi-jurisdictional transportation planning groups in a regularly scheduled basis:

- Boundary Area Transportation Team - Monthly
- Bonner County Transportation Team - Monthly
- Kootenai County Area Transportation Team – Monthly
- Silver Valley Area Transportation Team – Quarterly
- Benewah Area Transportation Team - Quarterly

These groups focus on transportation issues affecting their local area. Participants include ITD, counties, cities, highway districts, bike-pedestrian interest groups, public transit agencies, and individuals who have transportation-related expertise. The District Engineer, or his designee, attends all of the above teams and meets on a regular basis with tribal councils/chairs, city council, individuals and service/civic organizations. The district's goal is to support and actively participate in the inter-jurisdictional transportation teams in each of the five northern counties. In addition, ITD

staff meets with specific jurisdictions on specific projects and issues as needed.

Local officials receive hard copies of planning documents and the district accepts written comments. For ITIP consultation, the district schedules a meeting in each county, usually through the county commissioners, to discuss and receive input on the draft. These meetings have been held each year during the comment period in July.

The District supports statewide planning needs by involving locals in special meetings or other sessions as requested to support the planning process. On request, District personnel attend specific city, county and highway district meetings.

### *District 2*

District 2 staff meets monthly with three multi-jurisdictional transportation planning groups located in the:

- Moscow area
- Lewiston area
- North Latah County area
- Lewis and Clark Valley MPO

Committee membership includes local elected officials from cities, counties and highway districts and other interested parties. ITD's District Engineer and Engineer Managers regularly participate in committee meetings. The District's Senior Transportation Planner attends these meetings as appropriate to support meeting objectives. The District Engineer and the ITD Board member meet with the Nez Perce Tribe biannually, if possible. Committees address ongoing construction projects, projects under development, scheduling of projects, and planning. State planning efforts are often included on the agenda.

Work associated with the ITIP is routinely discussed. The committees work to identify priority projects that could be considered for inclusion in the ITIP, and become familiar with the respective components of that document that affect their region. All committee members receive copies of the ITIP prior to the meeting at which it is specifically discussed. Other state-level planning efforts are included on the committees' meeting agendas as needed.

The District supports statewide planning needs by involving locals in special meetings or other sessions as requested to support the planning. On request, District personnel attend specific city, county, and highway district meetings.

### *District 3*

District 3 is largest in both area and population of the six ITD districts. The consultation process with rural and small urban areas outside the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) MPO area is conducted on a continuous basis. District 3 meets with two different multi-jurisdictional transportation planning groups: annually with Valley-Adams Planning Partnership (VAPP) and quarterly with Payette, Adams, Washington and Gem counties Road & Bridge departments and local highway districts. Local officials from all counties frequently bring their priorities to the District's attention. District staff is routinely made available to attend city, county, and highway district meetings, as requested by the agencies, to provide information and guidance in planning, financing, design, and construction issues. Local officials are contacted for input to project plans at the concept stage of all design projects in their area. Local officials can review ITIP information and comment on the program at all project related public meetings. Corridor and Planning Studies also include close work with affected local agencies.

The Senior Transportation Planner is the designated contact for projects prior to ITIP approval. After ITIP approval, the District Planner continues as the liaison with planning related projects. District Management and other staff are also made available, as needed, to present information or respond to issues as well as discuss design of construction projects.

### *District 4*

District 4 meets monthly with four different multi-jurisdictional transportation planning groups representing four different parts of the district. Committee membership is comprised of local elected officials from cities, counties and highway

districts and other interested parties. Committees include the:

- Mini-Cassia Transportation Committee
- Greater Twin Falls Area Transportation Committee
- North Side Transportation Committee
- Blaine County Transportation Committee

Three of the four committees require dues and operate with a budget. ITD's District Engineer and the ITD Board Member participate in these committee meetings, as does the Senior Transportation Planner.

Committee meetings are conducted by using a specific agenda that addresses ongoing projects, projects under development, scheduling of projects, and planning. Any state planning efforts are included on the agenda. Work associated with the ITIP is undertaken routinely, as committees work to identify priority projects that could be considered for inclusion in the ITIP, become familiar with the respective components of that document that affect their region. All committee members receive copies of the ITIP prior to the meeting at which it is specifically discussed. Other state-level planning efforts are included on the committees' meeting agendas as needed.

The district supports statewide planning needs by involving locals in workshops, special meetings or other sessions as requested to support the planning process. On request, district personnel attend specific city, county, and highway district meetings.

### *District 5*

District 5 participates in four multi-jurisdictional transportation planning groups also known as coalitions that meet on a quarterly basis. Formal meeting notes are kept and tracked, formal agendas and sign-up sheets are provided for every meeting to enable accountability and tracking of requests, commitments, and other activities of concern to the coalitions. Written notification of meetings is provided to cities, counties, highway districts, ITD, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, school districts, chambers of commerce, state senators and representatives and everyone who has attended a previous coalition meeting.

Coalition attendance varies but generally, participants in coalition meetings include city public works staff and elected officials, county public works staff and elected officials, highway district staff and elected officials, school district staff, and Idaho Transportation Department staff and the Idaho Transportation Board member from District 5.

On a more sporadic basis, meetings are also attended by members of the public who have issues they want the coalition to address, law enforcement, planning and zoning commission and staff, resource agencies, local development groups, and businesses. Department staff who attend on a regular basis include the District Engineer and various Engineering Managers.

The groups include:

- Power County Joint Transportation Coalition
- Bingham County Joint Transportation Coalition
- Five-County Joint Transportation Coalition (Bear Lake, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, and Bannock)

The ITIP is among the many topics discussed and reviewed by these groups. In the fall, the District formally announces its intention to begin the annual ITIP update, explains the ITIP updating process, and notifies the members of local funding opportunities, then, reviews the draft ITIP document in July at each coalition meeting. Each participant is provided a copy of the draft ITIP document. Projects that are potential nominees to the ITIP are discussed at coalition meetings throughout the year.

Since 1999 the District has undertaken comprehensive planning processes for specific transportation corridors. Consultation regarding corridor needs, goals and objectives, and appropriate improvements and management programs are central to the corridor planning process. Consultation methods for corridor planning including broadly-based advisory committees and public meetings that are convened throughout the planning process from issue identification to recommendation and adoption of improvements; public announcements in the print media and frequented locations; newsletters; personal notification; and the internet. The District also

supports and facilitates statewide, headquarters-driven planning and study processes by soliciting participation from local officials and community members. Members of ITD also serve on the MPO Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee.

### *District 6*

District 6 participates in several multi-jurisdictional transportation planning groups and organizations representing:

- Jefferson County
- Bonneville County
- Madison Regional Planning Organization

These committees are made up of resource agencies, elected officials including state legislators, school districts, and public safety organizations. Committees meet at least bi-monthly.

These committees have been quite effective as a forum to discuss transportation related concerns, and to present information to local public agencies on funding opportunities, project updates, and information on the annual ITIP. Additional topics can vary based on the interests of the committee membership. The DE, District staff and the Board Member often attends these committee meetings. Annually, the District hosts a local roads meeting with purpose of providing local government officials in eastern Idaho with information about the ITIP update, future funding opportunities, and how local jurisdictions can participate in this process.

Corridor planning also includes a consultation effort with local elected officials. These plans emphasize a collaborative process with the public, elected officials and agency representatives. Normally, in addition to regularly scheduled public open houses, staff meets with elected officials to identify their concerns and ideas on how best to accomplish the goals and objectives of the individual corridor. It is anticipated that updates will be made to completed corridor plans approximately every five years or as needed. These updates will provide additional opportunities for dialogue and consultation. The District supports statewide planning needs by involving locals in special meetings or other sessions as requested to support the planning process. On

request, District personnel attend specific city, county and highway district meetings.

## **MEETINGS AND HEARINGS**

There are times when the department will hold a public meeting, public hearing, or open public comment period. When the department uses these mechanisms, they will be well advertised either in newspapers, on the department's website, via direct mailing, on partner website, etc.

Meetings and hearings help monitor community reactions to ITD policies, proposals, and progress. By observing reactions at periodic meetings or at a hearing, ITD and people are made aware of opinions and stances. If public meetings are held early in the process, these opinions may be analyzed and responded to before they become solidified or difficult to modify. Public hearings provide formal input to decisions.

### *Open Public Meetings*

Public meetings present information to the public and obtain informal input from community residents. Held throughout the planning process, they are tailored to specific issues or community groups and are either informal or formal. Public meetings have been used for many years to disseminate information, provide a setting for public discussion and get feedback from the community.

Public meetings can be conducted in an "open house" format. Presentations, slide shows and one-on-one discussions continue throughout the event. Exhibits are laid out as a series of stations: a reception area; a presentation area for slide shows or short talks; areas for one-on-one discussions between community people and ITD staff; and displays of background information, activities to date, work flow, anticipated next steps and an array of primary subject displays.

Per ITD Board Policy 4008 (updated April 2019) as required by Idaho Code 74-201, all meetings will be open to the public and held in locations that are accessible to persons with disabilities. Public meetings are required to have a posted agenda at

least 48 hours in advance of regular meetings. The ITD Board sets its meeting schedule annually and publishes agendas and minutes on the ITD website. Although rare, the ITD Board sometimes calls special meetings to address serious issues or emergencies. In this case, if there is a special meeting, it will be announced with at least a 24-hour meeting and agenda notice. These meetings will be open to the public unless the meeting is in an authorized executive session.

### **Project Development and/or Planning Meetings**

Communication is a two-way process where stakeholders tell the department what it needs and wants and the department responds with what it can provide. Throughout the year, ITD Districts may conduct a public meeting for a specific project or for planning purposes. These meetings will be open to the public and held in locations that are accessible to persons with disabilities. These meetings can range from being informal to very formal. Informal meetings can run the gamut from workshops, site tours, stakeholder interviews, neighborhood association meetings, agency meetings, displays and presentations, or project development meetings. This is a two-way communication method that enables stakeholders to communicate directly with ITD staff and vice versa. Often times, these types of informal project development-planning meetings are fact finding missions and may not be formally announced or advertised.

Formal meetings are usually held at strategic milestones during the development of the project or plan. This is when ITD staff will hold an open public meeting to present information to stakeholders and ask for official comments. These comments can be accepted verbally or in writing. These meetings are always noticed and advertised. Comments collected during these formal meetings will be tracked and followed up on if warranted.

### **Public Hearings**

A public hearing is a more formal event than a public meeting. This type of meeting is held prior to

a decision point where a public hearing gathers community comments and positions from all interested parties for public record that can be inputted into decisions. Public hearings are required by the federal government as part of the NEPA process for many transportation projects and take place during transportation planning. Public notices in a general circulation newspaper cite the time, date and place of a hearing. The period between notice and hearing dates provides time for preparing comments for submission to ITD.

Public hearings may be conducted in an “open house” format in which presentations, slide shows and one-on-one discussions continue throughout the event. Exhibits can be laid out as a series of stations: a reception area; a presentation area for slide shows or short talks; areas for one-on-one discussions between community people and ITD staff; and displays of background information, activities to date, work flow, anticipated next steps and an array of primary subject displays.

Similar to public meetings, hearings are also open to the public and will be held in locations that are accessible to persons with disabilities. The purpose of a public hearing is to obtain public testimony or comment on specific, sensitive or controversial issues. Public Hearings will always have a Hearing Officer present to take official comment on the subject being discussed.

## **OTHER METHODS**

No two projects or plans are exactly alike, and the department uses a variety of public involvement tools and techniques that are tailored to reflect the particular character of each project such as its group of stakeholders, its geographic location, the successes and failures of previous public outreach programs and the level of complexity and controversy.

ITD uses an assortment of communication methods to announce when plans and projects are available for review or when public comments are being sought. ITD is always looking to find new ways of sharing information and looking for public input. If

you are aware of any emerging technology or process to get input, ITD would like to hear about it.

## Internet



(<http://itd.idaho.gov/>)

This is the department's official website where users can access a variety of information from projects in the ITIP to a variety of publications like Annual Reports, ITD's Strategic Plan, Corridor and Highway Plans, Long-Range Transportation Plans, Idaho Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP), etc.

The department will continue to make improvements to the website that provides intuitive and consistent organization of relevant data and useful information. Furthermore, the department recognizes that email and direct mail are some of the primary ways our stakeholders receive notifications and information. Thus, the department will work with the various partner associations to continually update mailing lists to ensure that the most current mailing lists are available.

Furthermore, the department will post online, send emails and/or post regularly (quarterly or biannual) updates of newsletters and updates on various topics and programs/projects.

## Virtual Meetings

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, ITD now requires an online component for in-person public meetings and hearings. Virtual meetings include the same content as in-person meetings, along with an audio component. ITD typically hosts virtual meetings through [itdprojects.org](http://itdprojects.org) or ArcGIS story maps. Virtual meetings enhance the decision-making process by allowing more people to participate in meetings from any location on their own time.

## YouTube



(<https://www.youtube.com/user/idahoitd>)

This is a video-sharing Web site where users can upload, view and share video clips. Videos allow ITD to show audiences footage of road conditions, storm damage, project simulations,

or other events and activities in a visually compelling way.

## Twitter



(<https://twitter.com/idahoitd>)

This free networking and micro-blogging service allows users to send and read other users' text updates (known as tweets). Our Twitter updates are sent to subscribers and received on their computer, cell phone, or mobile hand-held device. This real-time information enables the user to adjust their travel plans or routes accordingly.

## Facebook



(<https://www.facebook.com/IdahoTransportationDepartment?ref=ts>)

This free interactive social media network is a way to stay up to date with ITD news via profile updates and photos. All you have to do is "Like" the ITD Facebook page, and you can keep tabs on what ITD is doing.

## Partner Websites

ITD will work closely with our partners to inform local officials of comment periods and public meetings. ITD will work closely with the following agencies to post notifications of events and activities on their websites:



- Association of Idaho Cities
- Idaho Association of Counties
- Idaho Association of Highway Districts

## Direct Mail



ITD is aware of the communication barriers to rural areas of the state that currently do not have broadband Internet access. These identified cities, counties and highway districts will receive review instructions and feedback mechanisms via letters, postcards and

newsletters mailed through the post office. The department recognizes that direct mail and email are some of the primary ways our stakeholders receive notifications and information. Thus, the department will work with the various partner associations to continually update mailing lists to ensure that the most current mailing lists are available.

Furthermore, the department will post online, send emails and/or post regularly (quarterly or biannual) updates of newsletters and updates on various topics and programs/projects.



Whether it is formal or informal – all comments are important to the Department. The Office of Communications, the Planning Services Section, and the Districts work cooperatively to carefully process public comments to be used in a variety of plans, projects, processes, etc. Comments are collected throughout the year with special emphasis being placed during open public comment periods. The consideration process is outlined in the following pages.



## Step 1: Solicitation

ITD is always looking to its stakeholders for guidance and feedback. Comments may be solicited informally and/or formally.

→ **Informal comments** are often received during one-to-one discussions, Multi-Jurisdictional Transportation Planning Group meetings, telephone calls, emails, social media, transportation fairs, or in conversation with ITD staff. Although comments are not formally requested, this is a very important part of project and plan development because discussions are had where staff and stakeholders can discuss issues and staff can ask questions to better understand the needs and wants of the community.

→ **Formal comments** are solicited during official comment periods to offer an opportunity for the widest array of interested parties to provide input on documents, plans, and processes. These comment periods and their timeframes are highly advertised to enable that everyone in the state is aware that comments are being accepted. Formal comment periods are used for public involvement consultation plans; long-range and corridor planning; and the update of Idaho's Transportation Investment Program (ITIP).

Below outline the minimum timeframes used for accepting comments:

- 60-days for non-metropolitan consultation processes
- 45-days for long-range transportation plans
- 30-days for district corridor plans or district plans
- 30-days for the annual update of the ITIP
- 15-days for 129,000 Pound Truck Route Modifications
- 30-days for Public Hearings
- 10-days for ITIP Amendments

For general information requests (such as information pertaining to how ITD operates and requests for copies of agency policies, forms, procedures, pamphlets, booklets, and other printed information designed for distribution), please visit

the ITD webpage or use the General Information Request form at:  
<https://apps.itd.idaho.gov/apps/WebCommentsV2>.

Public records requests (such as written documents and electronic files containing information relating to the conduct or administration of the public's business prepared, owned, used or retained by ITD) can be made at:  
<https://apps.itd.idaho.gov/Apps/WebCommentsV2/PublicRecord>

## Step 2: Documentation

Once a comment has been made, staff records every public comment that is collected in a database. Whenever possible, staff tries to keep information on each comment such as the date; commenter information (if submitted); the substance of the comment; referenced project key number or name; etc.

→ **Informal comments** are usually made in a casual setting or during meetings. These types of comments can be difficult to track; however, ITD staff will attempt to capture general comments either in their notes or by using meeting minutes.

It is highly recommended that if the issue is of great importance or if a response is desired; to put comments in writing and send to the appropriate district for consideration.

→ **Formal comments** that are made in writing, on official comment forms, submitted via email, and other forms of written communication are always tracked. Comments are collected and considered especially during official comment periods where stakeholders are asked to comment on the ITIP or Amendments to the ITIP or during project and plan development.



## Step 3: Analysis

All comments will be analyzed to determine the appropriate response. Responses can range from a formally a verbal answer during a meeting, a written letter, an email reply, or a telephone call. There are three types of comments: Informal, procedural, and substantial.

→ **Informal comments** are general in nature and may not directly relate to a project or plan usually does not require a detailed response. For example general comments could be: "The Project Team is doing a great job!" or "I am opposed to the project." All comments will be tracked, however, unless requested by the commenter, ITD does not always respond to these comments but can by email or letter acknowledging their comment.

Sometimes comments are beyond the scope of the subject project or they may be completely outside the sphere of ITD's influence. For example, "Main Street needs better signal timing." In these cases ITD will forward the comment to LHTAC or the appropriate Highway District for consideration.

Other times, the general comment may reveal issues which need to be addressed during future project development. For example "There are a lot of accidents that occur at this intersection." ITD will store the comments and consider it in the future.

→ **Procedural Comments** usually relate to the public involvement process. For example, "I've moved. My new address is \_\_\_\_." "I would like to get a copy of XYZ map." or "It was difficult to find the meeting room."

ITD will make every effort to respond with a letter acknowledging their interest in the project, along with information regarding what action has been or will be taken. For example "We have updated our mailing list" or "A copy of the map is enclosed." or "We plan to provide better signs for our next meeting."

- **Substantial Comments** are often categorized by project phase (i.e., previous, current or future). For example “I think XYZ should be the ITD’s highest priority.” “I like typical section XYZ.” “Are you going to close my driveway?” “How much of my property will be needed for the project?” or “How long will the road be closed during construction?”

Much of the time, substantive comments require further analysis and it may take a bit longer for staff to respond. However, ITD will make every effort to respond in a timely manner with the information.

### **Step 4: Acknowledgement**

ITD will try its best to always acknowledge public comments as soon as possible - a reasonable goal is within three to ten working days of receipt. However, comments that require detailed information or feedback may take some time to analyze and research. If staff needs more than ten days to respond, ITD will send a letter or email stating so and the approximate amount of time needed to gather the information and when a response could be anticipated.

- **Informal Comments** may not get a response from the department. However, this does not mean they are not important or considered.
- **Formal Comments** will always be responded to depending upon the parameter of the comment period or situation being considered.

### **Step 5: Distribution and Tracking**

ITD wants to make sure that all comments are distributed to the appropriate staff and often times; comments can be distributed to other ITD sections for further processing.

ITD’s Office of Communication and/or the Districts Public Information Specialist will track the comment from the time of receipt through resolution, ensuring that an adequate response is provided to

the public. It is important to note that some comments may require distribution to multiple ITD sections to ensure a complete answer to all issues. All comments that require detailed information or feedback will be answered as soon as possible. Be sure to provide your contact information so the appropriate ITD staff member can call to clarify your question or to send a written response. Do not forget that sometimes responses might be distributed to other sections for resolution and the other section may choose to respond to the comment directly.

### **Step 6: Incorporation**

All comments which are directly relevant to the current project phase should be considered for incorporation into the overall project decision-making process. Cross functional communication between ITD sections may be necessary to resolve key issues. For design details that do not affect the function and/or safety of a project, the community’s preferences should be incorporated into the project, when cost effective and feasible. Careful analysis of public ideas may lead to innovative solutions that address the community’s needs without compromising ITD’s goals.

- **Informal comments** that are relevant to the development of a project or plan are used in considering alternatives, improvements, or setting policies and direction. For example, throughout the year Districts are meeting with their respective multi-jurisdictional groups. Often times discussion themes become evident (i.e. collision incidents at a specific location, increased traffic delays, community development impacts on the highway system, etc.) and when staff begins the ITIP update cycle, these themes will be discussed. This is why one-to-one discussions and meeting conversations are so important throughout the year.

→ **Formal comments** are officially considered before a plan or project is developed or adopted. For example, comments made during the ITIP Public Comment Period are collected, addressed, analyzed, and provided to the Idaho Transportation Board for its consideration. The Board and staff can make changes to projects and plans based off of stakeholder statements.

ITD feedback on ways the department can better its communication and outreach processes.

### ***Step 7: Sharing***

ITD staff compiles a synopsis of comments received on various projects and their resolution; an outline of the major comment-generating events (e.g., a survey or public meeting); and all of the outreach meetings conducted by each District. This compilation of comments and responses ultimately serves as an excellent communications record as well as provides the documentation required by the Federal Highway Administration on certain projects.

Communications and Planning Services share this report with the ITD Board annually – usually in September or October. Within this report, staff presents the official comments that were received during the ITIP Public Comment Period (which is usually conducted in July). The ITD Board considers these comments and reviews how the department modified its plan or project based on the comments.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is no specific blueprint for public participation and stakeholder engagement. However, the Idaho Transportation Department values stakeholder involvement and recognizes that the benefit of public involvement may not be easily measured. The only way to determine involvement effectiveness is to consider how well community and stakeholder concerns, views and values are incorporated into decision-making and implementation of plans and projects.

ITD hopes that this consultation plan outlines ways non-metropolitan officials, staff, and stakeholders can be a part of our planning and programming processes. We encourage all non-metropolitan local officials and their staff to continually provide