# SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum

Project No. STP-F-2392 (035)
Key No. 3077

# *Final Environmental Impact Statement*

February 2008

FHWA-ID-EIS-00-01-F

# SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum – US-20 to Saddle Road
# Blaine County, Idaho

## FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
## and
## FINAL SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

Submitted pursuant to 42 USC 4332(2)(c) and 49 USC 303
by the
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
and
Idaho Transportation Department

2-14-08
Date of Approval

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For Idaho Transportation Department

2/05/08
Date of Approval

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The proposed action includes improvements to approximately 27 miles of State Highway 75 (SH-75) from US-20 to Saddle Road in Ketchum, Idaho. The project passes through unincorporated Blaine County, the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey and Ketchum and borders on the City of Sun Valley. The project's southern terminus is the intersection of SH-75 with US-20; its northern terminus is the intersection of SH-75 and Saddle Road in northern Ketchum. The purpose of this project is to increase SH-75 roadway capacity to accommodate existing peak-hour vehicle traffic and future year 2025 vehicle traffic; and to increase transportation safety for all users. Three alternatives, including the No-Build Alternative were advanced and considered in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Alternative 2 was identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 2 includes reconstruction and widening of SH-75, intersection improvements, two bridge replacements, improved at grade and new grade-separated pedestrian crossings, and bus transit pull-outs.

This Final EIS has a review period of 30 days after which the Federal Highway Administration will issue a Record of Decision.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

The SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum project will provide improvements to State Highway 75 from its junction with US-20 at Timmerman Junction to the City of Ketchum. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation (DEIS), September 2005, was prepared by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), FHWA environmental regulations contained in 23 CFR Part 771, *Environmental Impact and Related Procedures* and FHWA guidance contained in Technical Advisory 6640.8A *Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents.* The NEPA process began in the fall of 2000. A public hearing on the DEIS was held on January 26, 2006 with close of comment period on February 24, 2006.

The SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been prepared in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Technical Advisory 6640.8A guidance for a condensed FEIS. The condensed FEIS includes the following:

- references and summarizes the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS);
- includes additional information developed since issuance of the DEIS;
- describes the Preferred Alternative and the basis for its identification;
- describes the potential future conversion by ITD to high occupancy vehicle (HOV) operations of a section of SH-75;
- documents additional coordination efforts, agency and public comments, and responses to comments; and
- documents findings, commitments and mitigation.

This Executive Summary provides an overview of the FEIS. The full DEIS is included in electronic form in a CD ROM in Appendix D of this FEIS.

## ES-1 Purpose and Need

### *Purpose*

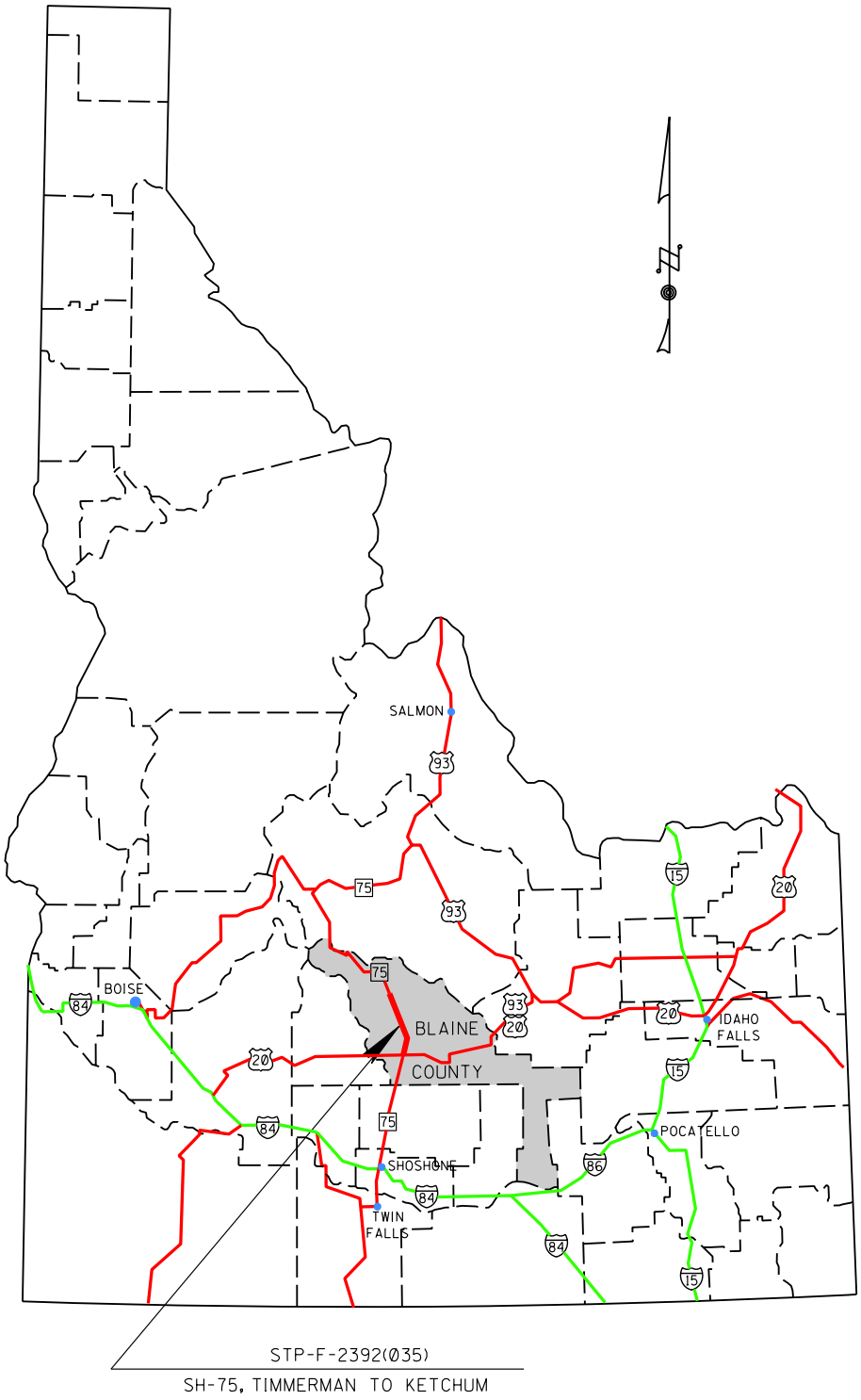
The purpose of the proposed project is two-fold:

- To increase SH-75 roadway capacity to accommodate existing peak-hour vehicle traffic and future year 2025 vehicle traffic; and
- To increase transportation safety for all users.

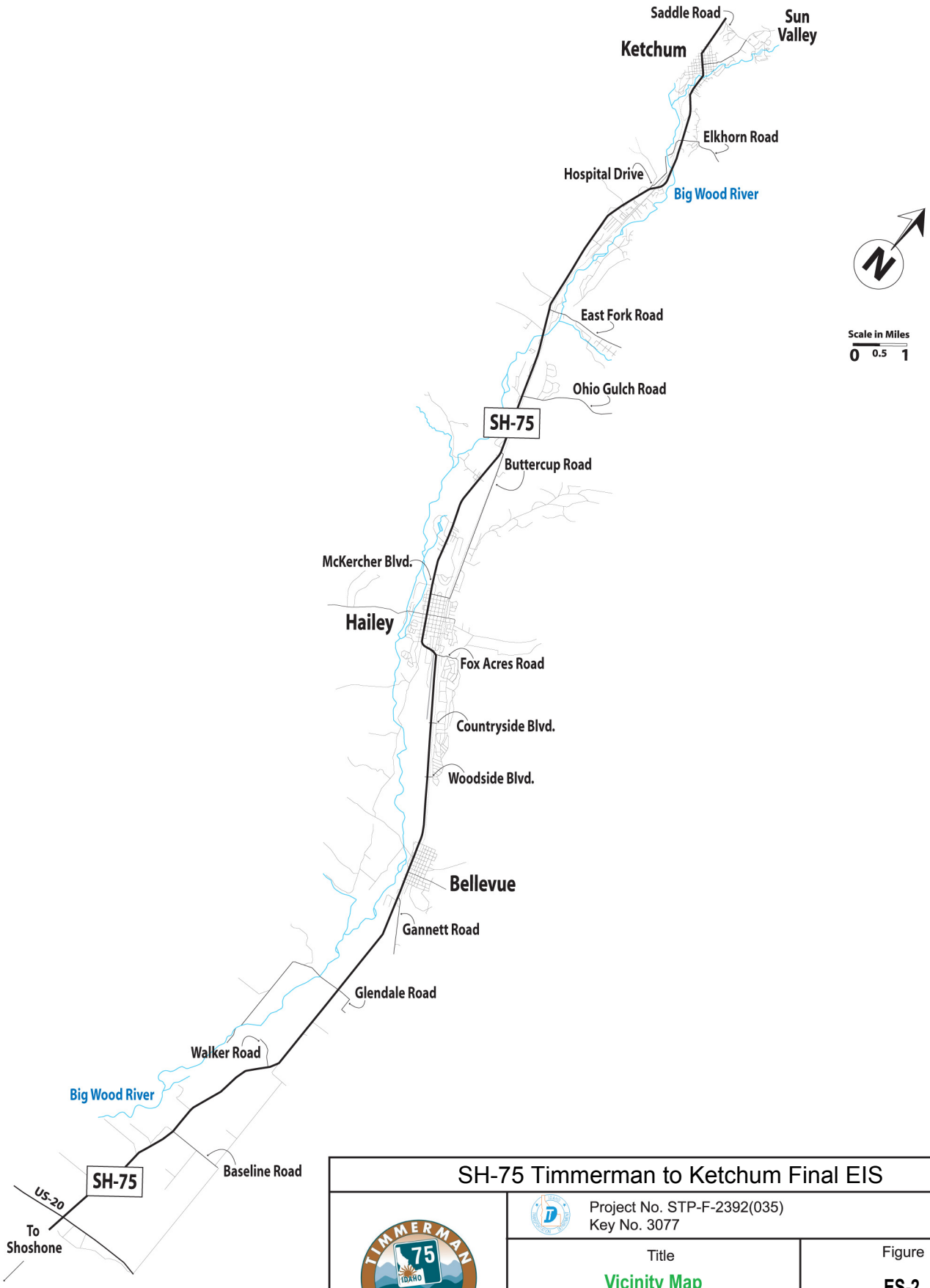
### *Need*

The need for this project is based on several factors:

- Current and predicted future year 2025 peak hour travel demand exceeds available transportation capacity. Peak hour congestion is primarily from commuters traveling within the project limits.
- Lack of shoulders, lack of right-turn lanes, and lack of center left-turn lanes at intersections create a safety and a capacity concern throughout the SH-75 corridor.
- Pedestrians and bicyclists need safe access across SH-75 to access community resources.
- Current peak hour bus transit and rideshare programs experience peak hour congestion.




| SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Project No. STP-F-2392(035)<br>Key No. 3077 | |
| | Title<br>Project Location | Figure<br>**ES-1** |
| | | Date: *February 2008* |




# SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title
**Vicinity Map**

Figure
**ES-2**

Date: *February 2008*

In meeting these needs, the project will safely and efficiently move a growing population with diverse needs and resources as well as move goods and materials to and through the Wood River Valley. The project will minimize impacts to scenic, aesthetic, historic, and other environmental resources in accordance with NEPA and 23 CFR Part 771 Environmental Impact and Related Procedures. SH-75 functions as an urban "Main Street" through the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey and Ketchum and that function needs to be maintained. The SH-75 project will use the existing highway corridor to help preserve future transportation options.

The SH-75 study corridor begins at the Timmerman Rest Area junction with US 20 (SH-75 milepost 102.1) and ends in Ketchum at the Saddle Road (SH-75 milepost 129.25). Page 1-1, line 34 of the DEIS incorrectly indicated that the project area ends at Warm Springs Junction (SH-75 milepost 128.5). This is the only location in the DEIS where this error occurs. Saddle Road is consistent with the Notice of Intent issued for the project on October 4, 2000 and is still valid. Figure ES1-1 illustrates the project location within the State of Idaho; Figure ES1-2 shows a vicinity map for the project. The corridor is approximately 27 miles long.

# ES-2 Preferred Alternative – Proposed Project

No preferred alternative was identified in the DEIS. A preferred alternative is identified in this FEIS. The process for identifying the preferred alternative took the following steps:

- FHWA and ITD review and evaluation of comments received on the DEIS, including preferences for Alternatives 1, 2 or 3.
- ITD additional coordination with regulatory agencies and local jurisdictions in the project area during May and June, 2006. Table 6-1 in Section 6.0 Comments and Coordination of this FEIS lists these meetings.
- FHWA and ITD review and evaluation of the comparative transportation performance of the alternatives and their ability to meet the purpose and need for the project.
- FHWA and ITD review and evaluation of the impacts of the alternatives on the natural and manmade environment.
- FHWA and ITD review of consistency with local plans and expressed desires of local jurisdictions as stated in comments received on the DEIS.

Alternative 2 was selected as the Preferred Alternative for the following reasons:

- Best increases SH-75 roadway capacity to accommodate future year 2025 vehicle traffic;
- Increases transportation safety for all users, relative to the No Build.
- It meets the purpose and need of the project.
- It provides the most travel time advantage for all SH-75 users.
- It provides the highest Level of Service between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road.
- Is generally consistent with local comprehensive plans, goals and objectives.

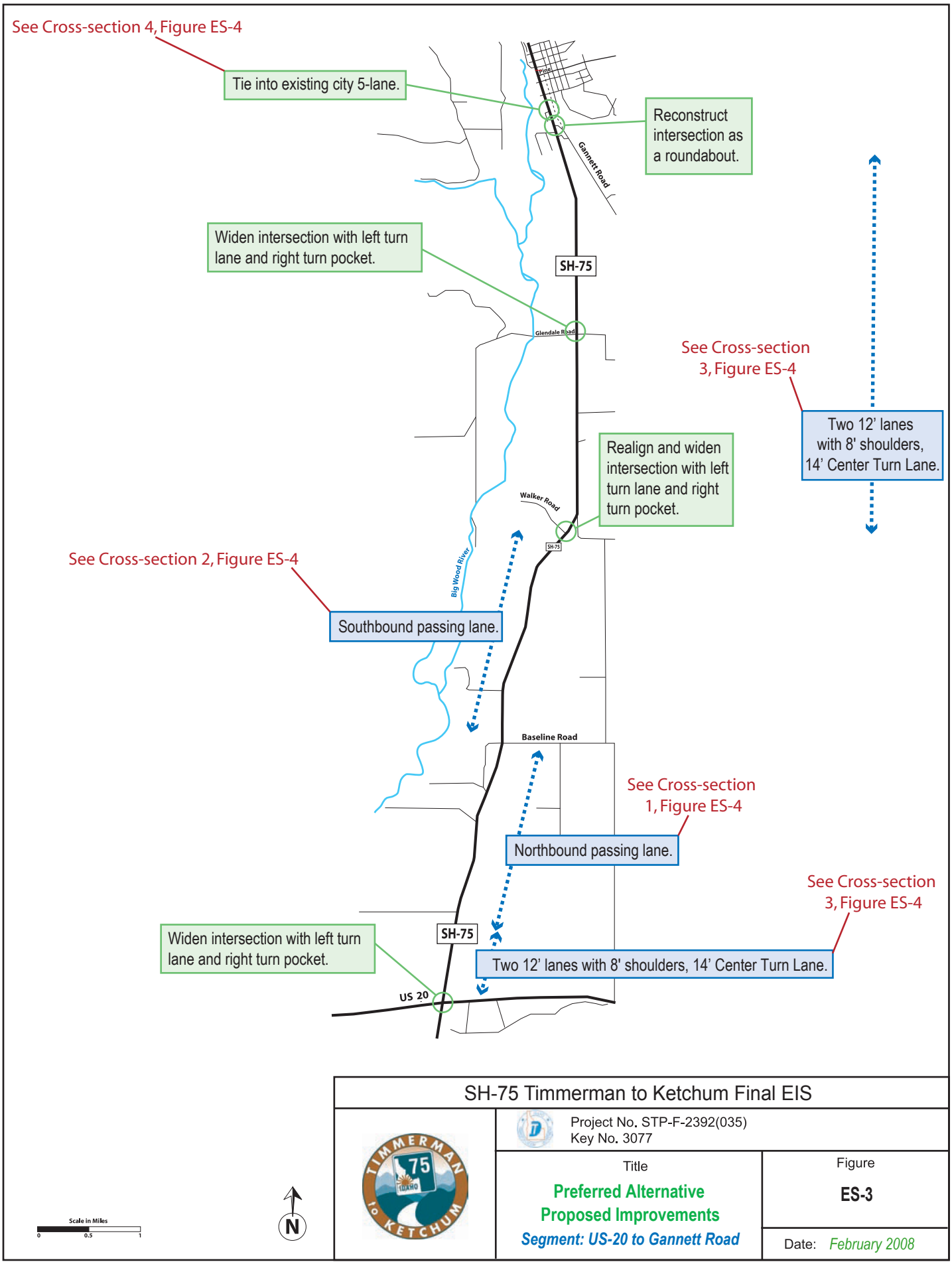
## *ES-2.1 Physical Description*

With the exception of three changes described below, Preferred Alternative 2 contains the same physical roadway section along with vertical and horizontal geometry described in the DEIS for Alternatives 2 and 3. These improvements are summarized in Table ES-1 and shown graphically in Figures ES-3 through ES-10 by geographic segment. The typical cross-sections for each geographic segment are shown in these figures.

**Table ES-1: Preferred Alternative Physical Characteristics**

| Segment | Improvements |
|---|---|
| US-20 to Gannett Road | Two 12-foot lanes with 8-foot shoulders and 14-foot center turn lane. Passing lanes. |
| Gannett Road to Fox Acres Road | Widen to match existing 2 lanes in each direction and center turn lane through Bellevue. Two 12-foot lanes in each direction, 4-foot safety median, 8-foot shoulders from north Bellevue to Fox Acres. Traffic signals at Woodside and Countryside Boulevards with right and left turn lanes on SH-75.<br>Roundabout at Gannett Road/SH-75 intersection. |
| Fox Acres Road to McKercher Boulevard | At-grade improved pedestrian crossings. Traffic signal at Myrtle Street. Bus pull-outs at McKercher Boulevard and SH-75. No other change to existing SH-75 cross-section. |
| McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road | Two 12-foot lanes in each direction, 14-foot center turn lane, 8-foot shoulders. Four-foot safety median when center turn lane not needed. Three pedestrian underpasses. Traffic signals at Buttercup Road/Zinc Spur Road, Ohio Gulch/Starweather Road. Bus pullouts. Roundabout at Elkhorn Road and SH-75 intersection. |
| Elkhorn Road to River Street | - Two 11-foot lanes in each direction with curb and gutter within existing right-of-way from Elkhorn Road to Serenade Lane. Transitions to a 3-lane cross-section, with one 11-foot lane in each direction with 12-foot center median, curb and gutter, and sidewalk. 58 foot 4 inch long Trail Creek Bridge reconstructed to accommodate 4 lanes but striped to 3 lanes. Striping to 3 lanes extended to River Street. |
| River Street to Saddle Road | No changes to existing SH-75 cross-section. Extension of 3 lane striping northward under consideration by the City of Ketchum. |

In response to comments received on the DEIS, three changes to the Preferred Alternative have been made. A roundabout is now included at the intersection of Gannett Road and SH-75. The pedestrian underpass at the intersection of SH-75 and Ohio Gulch/Starweather Drive has been eliminated. A new pedestrian underpass at Spruce Way has been included. Appendix C of this FEIS contains the revised conceptual engineering drawings for these three changes. The conceptual design drawings for the remainder of Preferred Alternative 2 are shown in Volume II Conceptual Engineering Design of the DEIS, included in Appendix D of this FEIS.




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

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Key No. 3077

Title

**Preferred Alternative**
**Proposed Improvements**
***Segment: US-20 to Gannett Road***

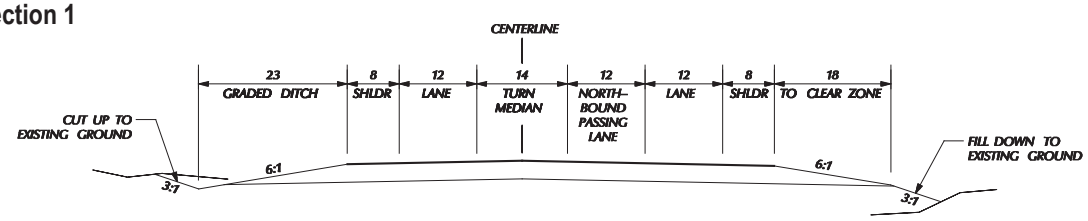
Figure

**ES-3**

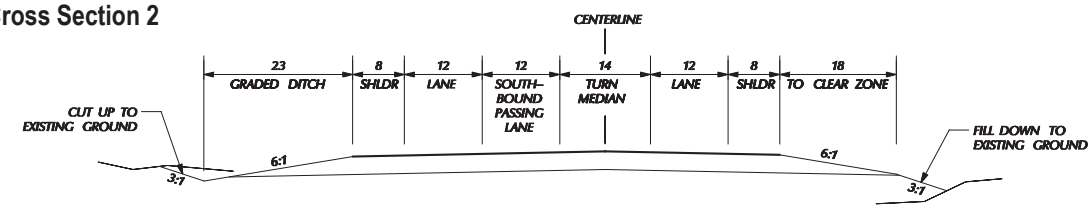
Date: *February 2008*

# Preferred Alternative Typical Sections: US-20 to Gannett Road

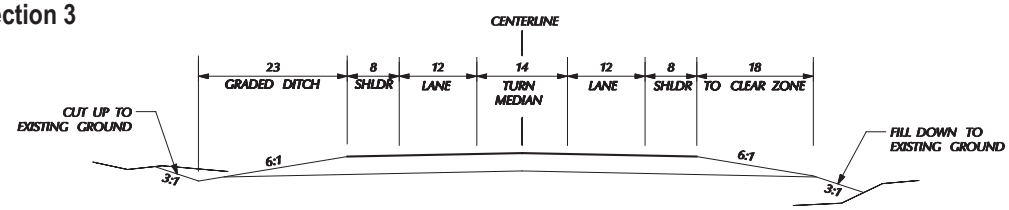
## Cross Section 1



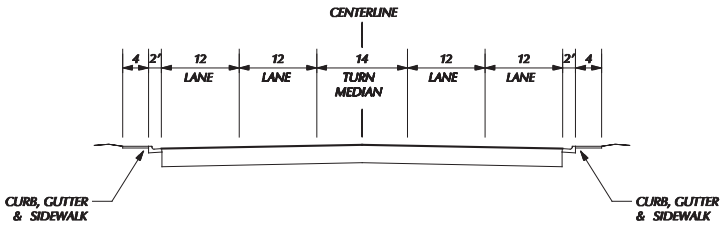

## Cross Section 2




## Cross Section 3




## Cross Section 4




*Note:*
*All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.*

*NOT TO SCALE*

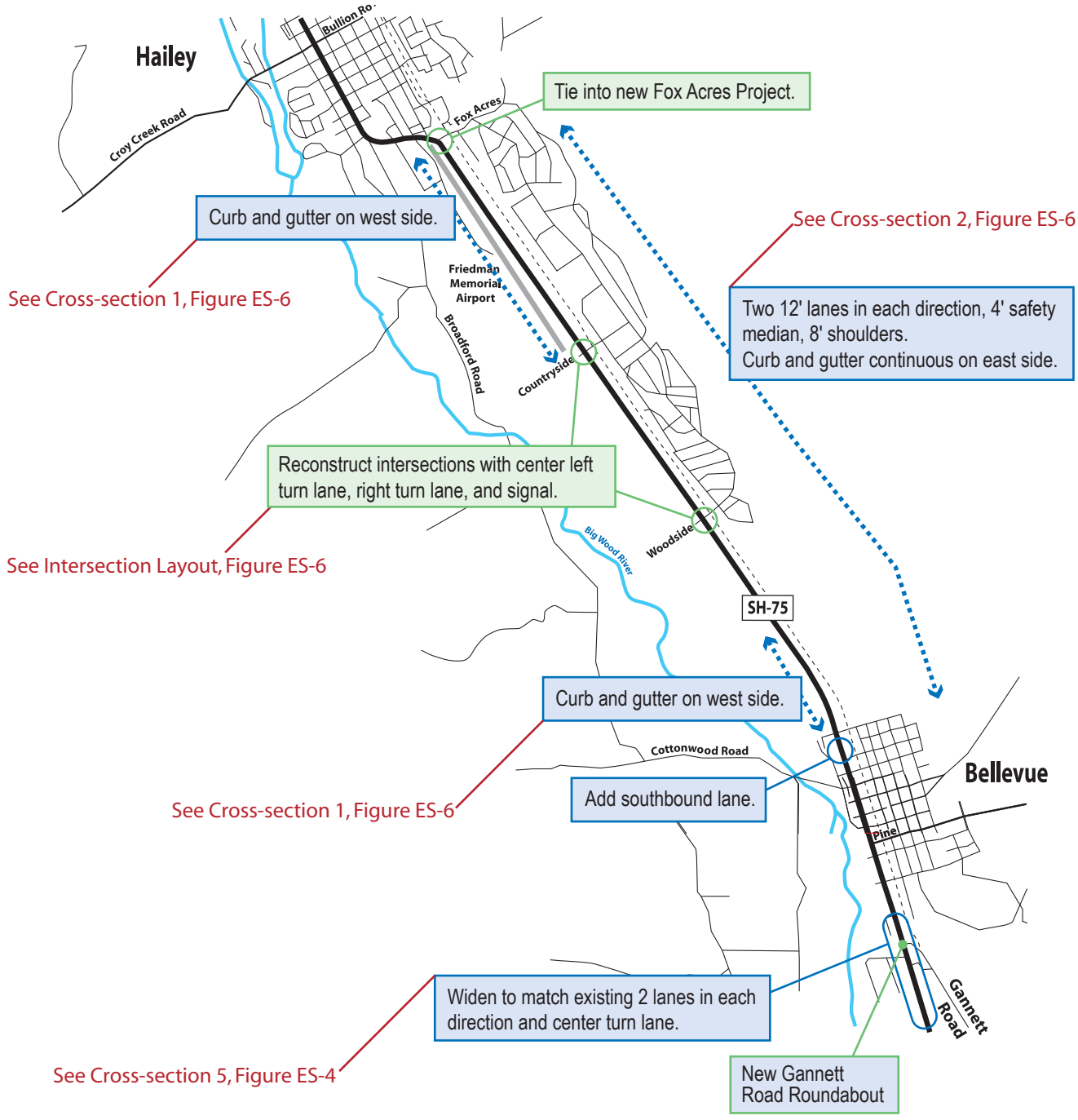
SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title
**Preferred Alternative Typical Cross-Sections**
***US-20 to Gannett***

Figure
**ES-4**

Date: *February 2008*




Scale in Miles
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N

SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

**Preferred Alternative**
**Proposed Improvements**
***Segment: Gannett Road to Fox Acres***

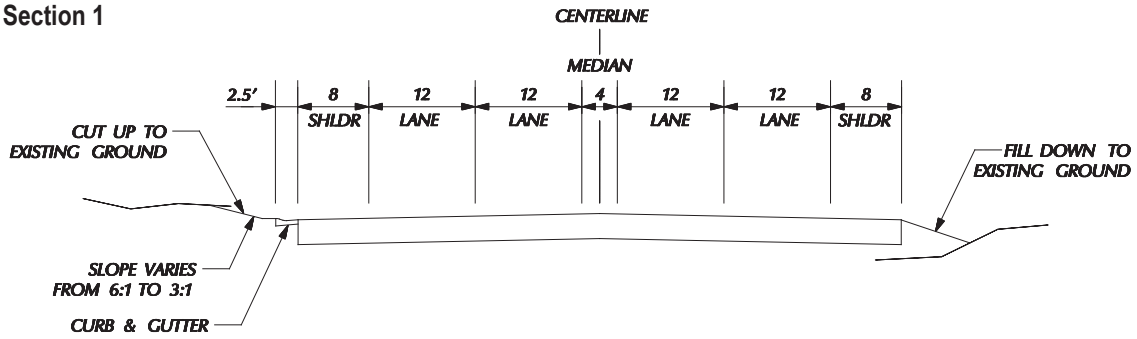
Figure

**ES-5**

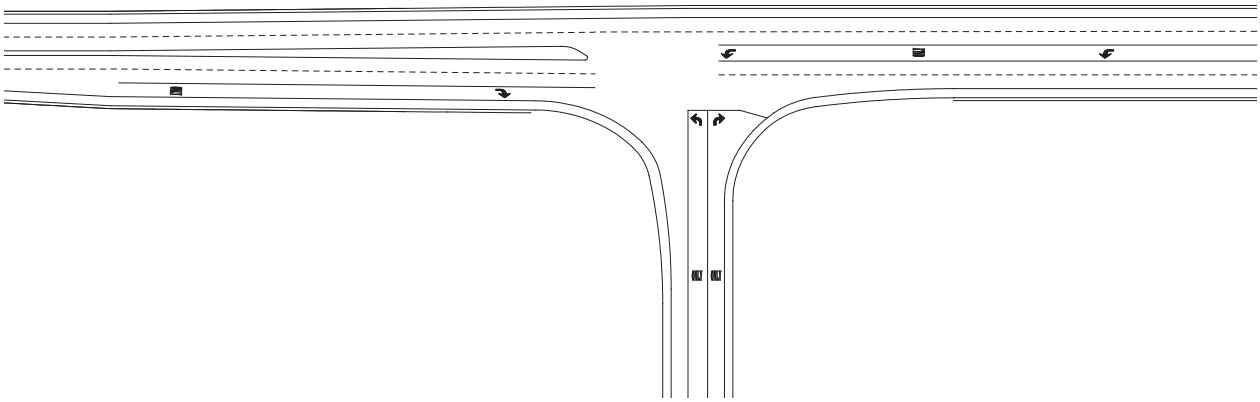
Date: *February 2008*

## Preferred Alternative Typical Sections: Gannett Road to Fox Acres

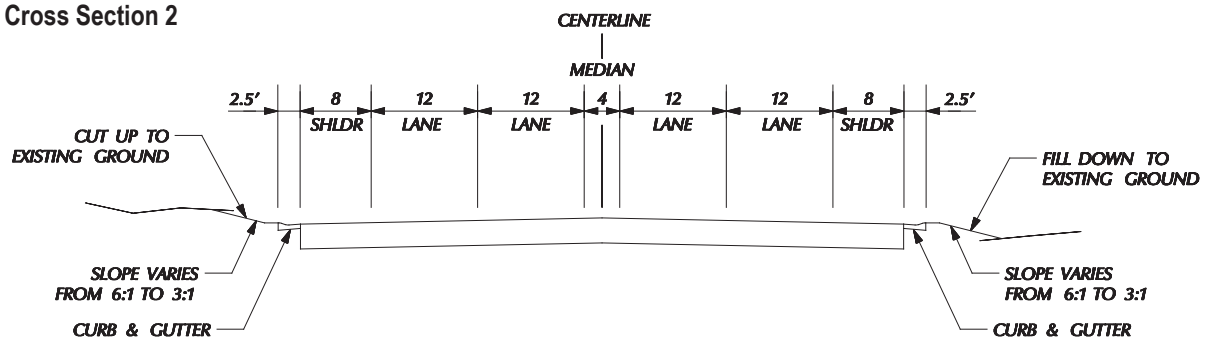
### Cross Section 1




### Intersection Layout



### Cross Section 2




*Note:*
*All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.*

*NOT TO SCALE*

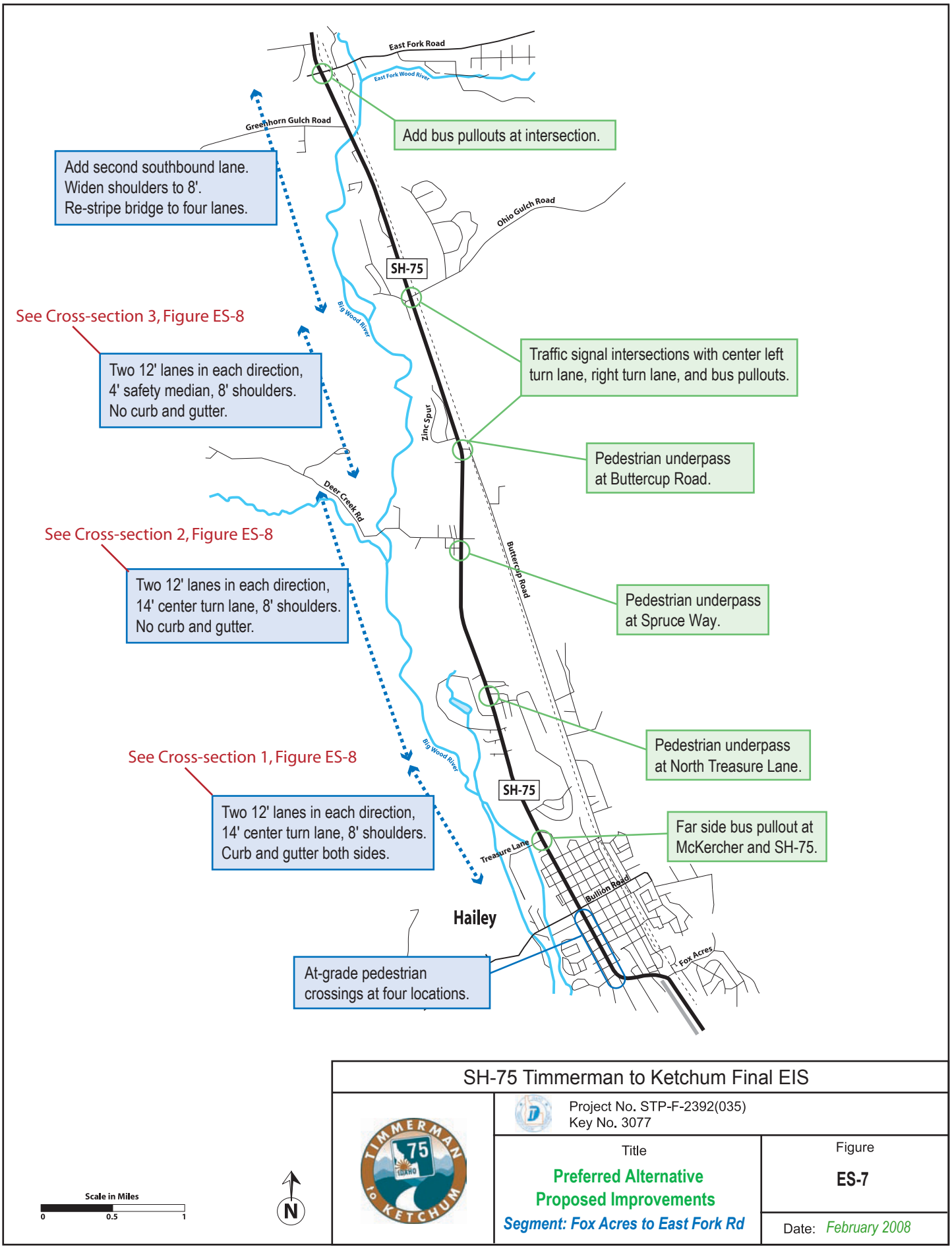
SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title
**Preferred Alternative Typical Cross-Sections Gannett to Fox Acres**

Figure
**ES-6**

Date: *February 2008*




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

**Preferred Alternative**
**Proposed Improvements**
***Segment: Fox Acres to East Fork Rd***

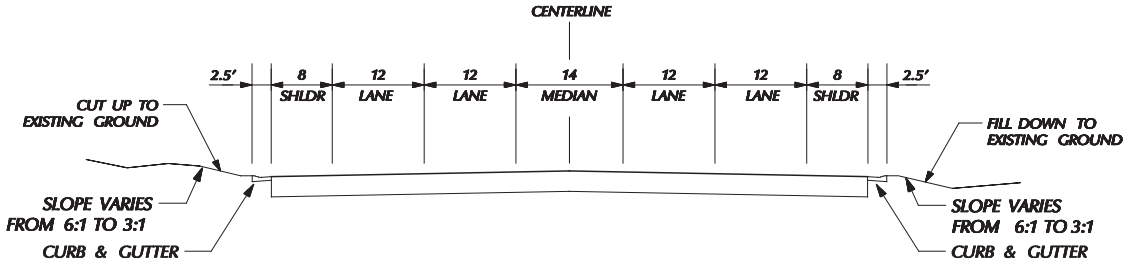
Figure

**ES-7**

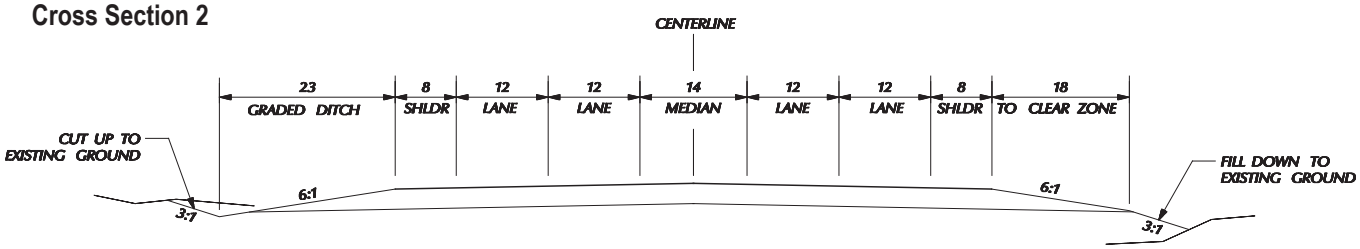
Date: *February 2008*

## Preferred Alternative Typical Sections: Fox Acres to Elkhorn Road

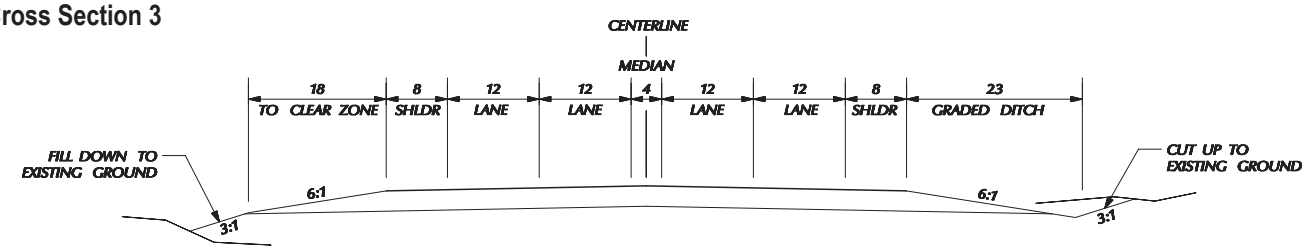
### Cross Section 1




### Cross Section 2



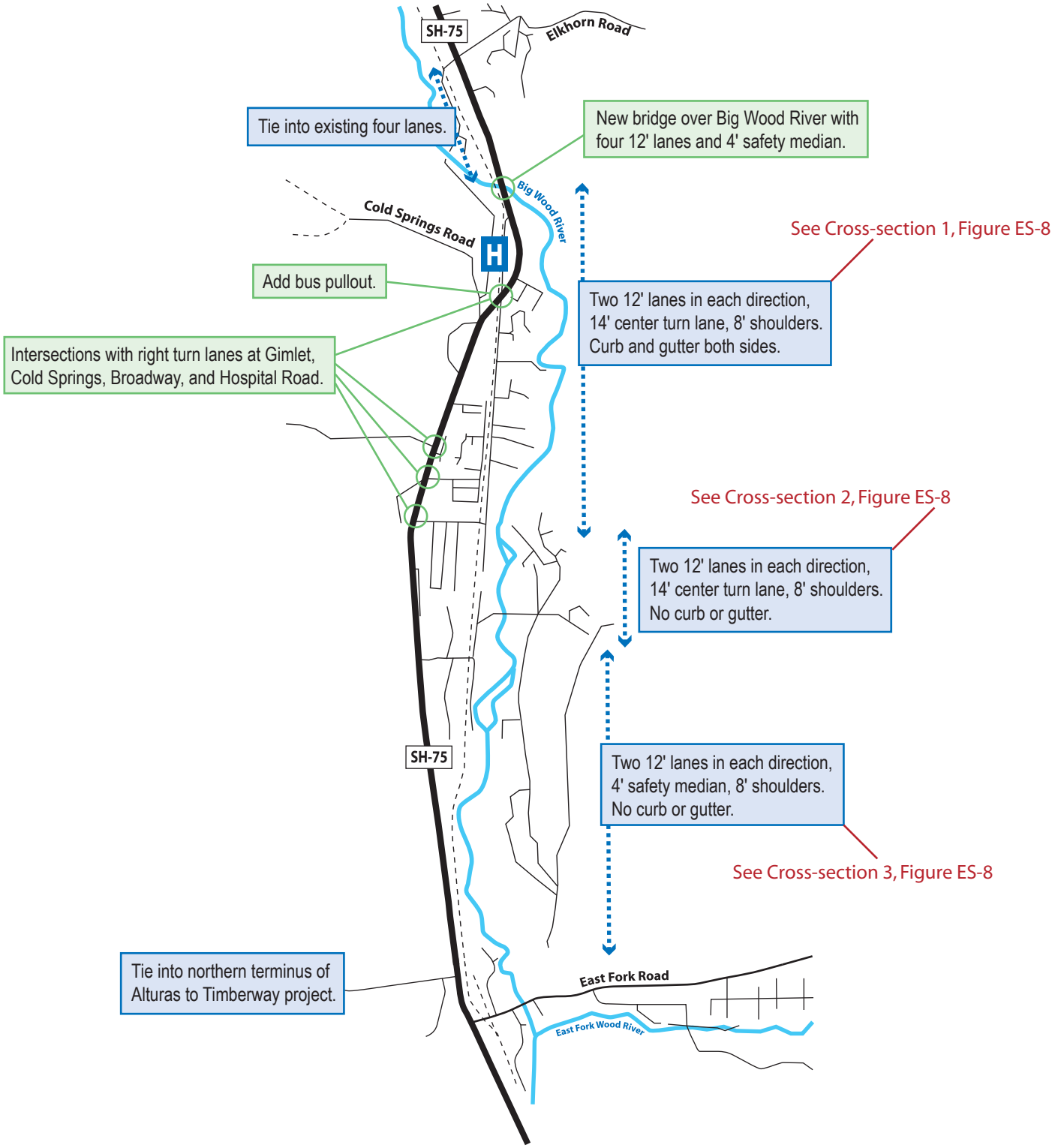

### Cross Section 3




*Note:*
*All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.*

*NOT TO SCALE*

| SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Project No. STP-F-2392(035)<br>Key No. 3077 | |
| | Title<br>**Preferred Alternative Typical Cross-Sections**<br>***Fox Acres to Elkhorn*** | Figure<br>**ES-8** |
| | | Date: *February 2008* |




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

**Preferred Alternative**
**Proposed Improvements**
***Segment: East Fork to Elkhorn Road***

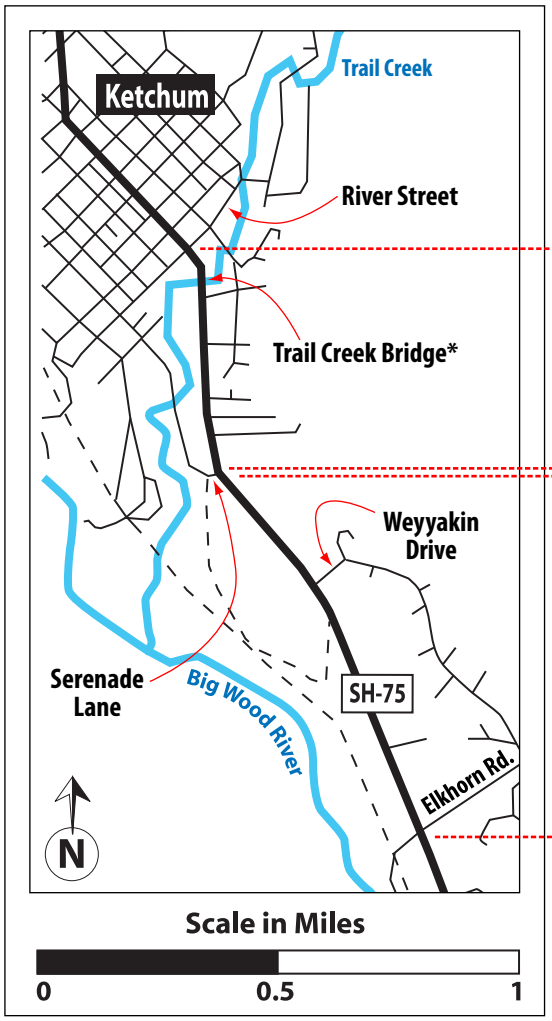
Figure

**ES-9**

Date: *February 2008*

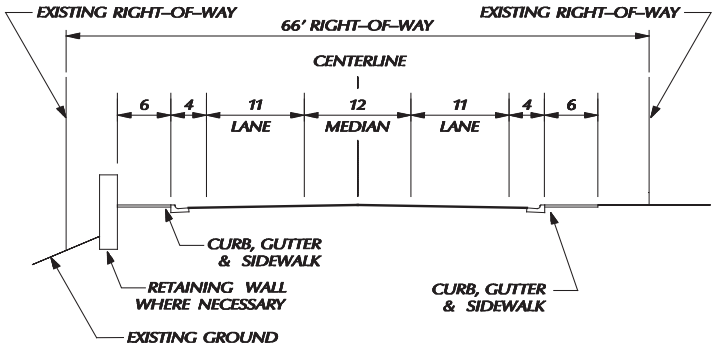
# Preferred Alternative Typical Sections: Elkhorn Road to River Street

**Key Map:**



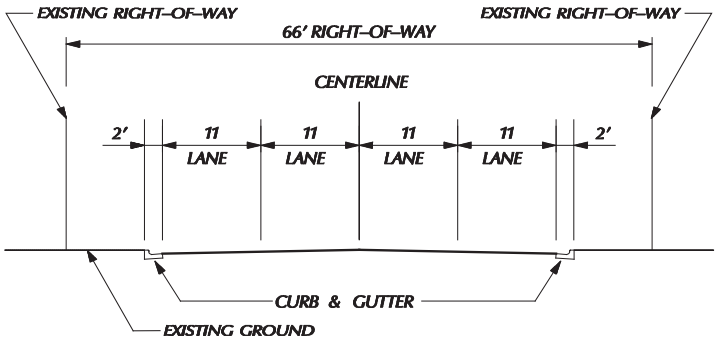

** 58-foot long Trail Creek Bridge reconstructed to accommodate 4 lanes but striped to 3 lanes.*

**Cross Section 2 Serenade Lane to River Street**




NOTE:
Number of through lanes transitions at intersection of Serenade Lane and SH-75.

**Cross Section 1 Elkhorn to Serenade Lane**




*Note:*
*All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.*

NOT TO SCALE

| SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Draft EIS | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Project No. STP-F-2392(035)<br>Key No. 3077 | |
| | Title<br>**Preferred Alternative Typical Cross-Sections**<br>***Elkhorn to River Street*** | Figure<br>**ES-10** |
| | | Date: *February 2008* |

## ES-2.2 No Build from River Street to Saddle Road

The Preferred Alternative does not include improvements from River Street to Saddle Road, the northern terminus of the project area. The No Build through this section of the corridor was advanced into the EIS for the following reasons:

Public scoping and subsequent public involvement activities conducted during the preparation of the DEIS, as documented in Chapter 6 of the DEIS, indicated that any physical reconstruction of SH-75 through downtown Ketchum, known as Main Street, would be unacceptable to local residents, businesses and the City of Ketchum. This concern was based on the value placed on the existing Main Street streetscape and its contribution to the visual quality and attractiveness of the resort community. Any potential widening of SH-75 would encroach into the existing sidewalks and storefront areas of Main Street, adversely affecting the existing visual quality of the Main Street, decreasing the sidewalk area, and thereby adversely impacting the pedestrian environment of downtown Ketchum.

During the development of the DEIS, the City of Ketchum undertook transportation planning, traffic studies, and parking studies that were expected to provide input to the SH-75 EIS process with respect to potential improvements and traffic operations changes north of Serenade Lane. However, the City of Ketchum did not make decisions or recommendations based on these studies with regard to potential physical reconstruction of SH-75 through downtown Ketchum.

In comments received on the DEIS, the Cities of Ketchum and Sun Valley, for the first time in this EIS process, requested a build alternative between River Street and Saddle Road, including Main Street in downtown Ketchum. This included a request for changes to the grade at the intersection of Warm Springs and SH-75 in downtown Ketchum. On September 8, 2006, the City of Ketchum adopted the "Downtown Ketchum Master Plan" (January, 2006). This document does not call for any reconstruction of SH-75 or for specific changes to the Warm Springs intersection. However, the document contains the following recommended step:

> *A three-lane configuration on Main should be considered as an alternative to the four-lane system to calm (slow) traffic and improve pedestrian comfort.*

To date, neither the City of Ketchum nor the City of Sun Valley have forwarded a potential build alternative to FHWA and ITD, so no such alternative or improvements to SH-75 north of River Street are included in the FEIS.

While the FEIS and the Preferred Alternative do not include a build alternative for River Street to Saddle Road, the Cities and ITD have committed to continued coordination of the planning for potential improvements to this section of SH-75. This commitment was made at a March 14, 2007 joint meeting with the City of Ketchum City Council, the City of Sun Valley City Council, and ITD. A subsequent letter was provided to ITD and is included in Appendix A of this FEIS. ITD has committed to assist the Cities in obtaining any funding and any additional environmental clearances that may be needed in the future. These activities will be conducted outside of the EIS process and are expected to occur over the next several years.

## ES-2.3 Revised Conceptual Phasing Plan

Since the publication of the DEIS, the SH-75 project was removed from Idaho's Grant Anticipation Revenue Bonds (GARVEE) funding initiative. Funding for the project was, however, included in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) which provides a total of $22.2 million funding for the SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum project.

These funding changes have necessitated the development of a revised conceptual phasing plan since the DEIS was published. Construction of the Preferred Alternative will be phased, primarily in accordance with available federal and state funding and public/private funding opportunities in the Wood River Corridor.

This first phase will occur during years 2009 through 2012, in accordance with the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for Fiscal Year 2008-2012 and will include at the following:

- development of preliminary engineering and right-of-way plans for Timberway to Hospital Drive section;
- acquisition of right-of-way from Timberway to Hospital Drive; public/private contributions to ROW acquisition through expected development;
- construction of improvements from Timberway to Hospital Drive; and,
- development of preliminary engineering and right-of-way plans for the Hospital Drive to Elkhorn Road and McKercher Boulevard to Alturas Way sections.

Subsequent phases of construction will occur over several years, contingent upon expected federal and state funding at levels similar to those experienced since 1991.

## *ES-2.4 Potential Future Conversion to HOV Operations*

The traffic operations analysis conducted for Alternative 3 in this DEIS indicates that the HOV operations will result in a lower Level of Service for vehicles in the general purpose lane. The majority of users in this section of SH-75 will be in the general purpose lane. However, in recognition of the comments received on the DEIS that support HOV operations, and the joint letter signed by the elected officials of Blaine County and five Blaine County cities (see pages B-15 to B-19 in Appendix B of this FEIS), ITD acknowledges that the reconstructed SH-75 between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road could be converted to HOV operations in the future.

The decision of whether and when to convert to HOV operations will be made by ITD. The FHWA will not be involved in that decision and HOV operations are not part of the Preferred Alternative identified by the FHWA in this FEIS.

ITD's decision will be based on documentation that the following four requirements have been met. If a conversion to HOV operations is made, ITD will also have the final authority on the continuation or cessation of HOV operations, based on the evaluation process described in Requirement 4.

Requirement 1: A minimum segment of roadway, from at least Ohio Gulch to Elkhorn Road, has been reconstructed to the cross section and geometry as defined in Alternative 2. The success of HOV is partially dependent upon having a sufficiently long segment of roadway in place for drivers to experience a noticeable travel time savings. A typical HOV performance measure in the United States is a travel time savings of at least 5 minutes overall in the project corridor.[i]

Requirement 2: A change in Idaho State legislation has been enacted to enable enforcement of the HOV lane restrictions. Idaho State legislation currently does not provide any regulatory ability for the Idaho State Police or Blaine County Sheriff's office to enforce an HOV lane.

Requirement 3: A plan for and the basis for funding of the enforcement of HOV, of education and marketing of the HOV operation, and of collection and analysis of performance data

[i] American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), "Guide for High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Facilities, 3rd Edition", 2004; and,
National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 414 HOV Systems Manual, National Academy Press, 1998

have been developed and agreed upon among the Idaho Transportation Department, Blaine County, Mountain Rides[ii], and the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley.

Requirement 4: A formal process for evaluating the HOV operation, and for making a determination of whether to continue or discontinue its operation, is developed and agreed upon between ITD and the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum, Sun Valley, Blaine County and Mountain Rides. The first review will occur no sooner than 6 months and no later than 12 months following commencement of HOV operations. This will provide time for SH-75 users to adjust to HOV operations over at least a 6-month period and commits to a specified timeframe for a formal review.

Criteria to be used in this review will include measured travel time for users of the HOV lane and of the single occupancy lane (based on peak travel time studies); actual costs of enforcement and numbers of violations of the HOV lane restrictions (as provided by the Blaine County Sheriff's Office); HOV lane traffic volumes (based on traffic counts taken on at least three occasions during HOV operations); peak hour Level of Service for the HOV lane and the single occupancy vehicle lane; public response (based on phone calls, emails and correspondence received during the first 6 to 12-month period); crash analysis (based on accident reports); and impacts on trucking (based on comments received from the trucking industry).

To facilitate this process and to develop the necessary documentation that ITD will require to approve a conversion, ITD commits to create a SH-75 Corridor Operations Management Team composed of representatives from ITD, Blaine County, Mountain Rides, and the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley for the purpose of developing and implementing a program to meet the four requirements specified above. The members of the Operations Management Team will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to commit the resources to comply with the four requirements and to develop and provide documentation to ITD that the conditions have been met.

Formation of this Corridor Operations Management Team will occur once funding for construction of the final section of the SH-75 corridor between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road has been approved in the State Transportation Improvement Plan. ITD will be responsible for initiating formation of the Corridor Operations Management Team at that time.

[ii] Mountain Rides is the new regional transportation authority officially created in October 2007. It combines KART, Peak Bus, and Wood River Rideshare into one transportation entity.

# ES-3 Transportation Impacts

Preferred Alternative 2 will provide transportation improvements relative to Alternative 1 No-Build for Year 2025 that meet the purpose and need for the project. Table ES-2 summarizes the peak hour travel performance for the three alternatives considered in the DEIS.

**Table ES-2: Summary of Peak Hour Travel Performance Information (Year 2025)**

| Criterion | Alternative 1: No-Build | Preferred Alternative 2: Four Lanes with Center Turn Lane | Alternative 3: Four Lanes with HOV and Center Turn Lane[iii] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Corridor Travel Time (minutes) | 60 | 49 | 58 (60 General Purpose, 49 HOV) |
| Number of intersections at LOS E/F | 10 | 1 | 8 |
| Lane-miles at LOS E/F | 7 | 0.1 | 10 |
| Corridor Delay (vehicle hours in peak period) | 349.1 | 149.7 | 265.9 |
| Work Trip Person Trips – Drive Alone | 25,200 | 25, 100 | 24,600 |
| Work Trip Person Trips - Carpool | 10,400 | 10,500 | 10,850 |
| Work Trip Person Trips - Transit | 1,160 | 1,160 | 1,220 |
| Percent of study area trips in carpools, transit | 31% | 32% | 33% |

Under the Preferred Alternative, highway users will experience reductions in travel time, particularly between Gannett Road and Fox Acres Road and between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road.

Travel time will improve by 11 minutes, and the LOS at intersections and on the SH-75 mainline will see substantial improvement. Corridor delay during the peak travel period will be more than halved. A minor shift to carpools will occur.

Travel speeds throughout the SH-75 corridor will improve with the greatest improvement between Gannett Road in southern Bellevue and Fox Acres Boulevard in Hailey, and between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road. LOS relative to the No Build will also improve. In the urban section of the City of Hailey (Fox Acres to McKercher Boulevard), travel speeds are set by the 25 mile per hour speed limit and will not be affected by the Preferred Alternative.

More detailed information regarding the projected travel performance of Preferred Alternative 2, and of Alternative 1 No Build and Alternative 3 is contained in the following tables.

[iii] As analyzed in the DEIS.

**Table ES-3: Comparative Peak Hour Travel Speed and LOS (Year 2025)**

| SH-75 Geographic Segments | Alternative 1 No Build | | Preferred Alternative 2 | | Alternative 3 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Speed | LOS | Speed | LOS | Speed | LOS | |
| US-20 to Gannett Road | 40-45 | D | 45-50 | C | 45-50 | C | No HOV operations in these sections. |
| Gannett Road to Fox Acres Road | | | | | | | |
| • Gannett Road to Woodside Boulevard | 25-30 | E | 40-45 | B | 40-45 | B | |
| • Woodside Boulevard to Fox Acres Road | 25-30 | E | 30-35 | C | 30-35 | C | |
| Fox Acres to McKercher Boulevard | 20 - 25 | C | 20 - 25 | C | 20 - 25 | C | |
| | Alternative 3 | | | | General Purpose Lane | | HOV Lane | |
| | | | | | Speed | LOS | Speed | LOS |
| McKercher to Ohio Gulch | 15-25 | E/F | 30-35 | D | 30-35 | D | 40-45 | A |
| Ohio Gulch to Elkhorn | 25-30 | E | 30-35 | D | 15-20 | F | 30-35 | A |
| | | | | | Alternative 3 | | No HOV operations in these sections. | |
| Elkhorn to River Street | 20-25 | E | 25-30 | D | 25-30 | D | | |
| River Street to Saddle Road | 15-20 | E | 15-20 | E | 15-20 | E | | |

**Table ES-4: Comparative Peak Hour Levels of Service for Intersections (Year 2025)**

| SH-75 Intersection at | Year 2000 | Alternative 1 | Preferred Alternative 2 | Alternative 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| US-20** | B | D | **A** | **A** |
| Gannett Road | B | E | **B** | **B** |
| Woodside Boulevard** | D | F | **A** | **A** |
| Countryside Road** | E | E | **A** | **A** |
| Fox Acres Road* | B | B | B | B |
| Bullion Street* | A | A | A | A |
| Myrtle Street** | D | F | **A** | **A** |
| McKercher Boulevard* | N/A | A | A | A |
| Deer Creek Road | C | F | **D** | F |
| East Fork Road* | C | C | C | F |
| Buttercup Road** | C | F | **B** | F |
| Ohio Gulch** | C | F | **B** | F |
| Broadway South | F | F | **C** | F |
| Hospital Drive/Broadway Run* | B | E | **A** | E |
| Elkhorn Road* | A | C | C | F |
| Serenade Lane | B | D | **C** | **C** |
| Sun Valley Road* | C | E | E | E |

* Intersections with existing traffic signals ** Additional intersections signalized in Preferred Alternative

Eleven intersections evaluated in the DEIS will have substantial improvement in Level of Service under the Preferred Alternative, as shown in bold in Table ES-4.

**Table ES-5: Comparative Peak Hour Travel Time (Minutes) (Year 2025)**

| SH-75 Geographic Segment | Alternative 1 | Preferred Alternative 2 | Alternative 3 | Alternative 3 (General Purpose Lane) | Alternative 3 (HOV Lane) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| US-20 to Gannett Road | 12 | 11 | 11 | 11 | |
| Gannett Road to Fox Acres Road | 12 | 7 | 7 | 7 | |
| Fox Acres Road to McKercher Boulevard | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | |
| McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road | **21** | **16** | **25** | **27** | **16** |
| Elkhorn Road to River Street | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | |
| River Street to Saddle Road* | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | |
| **Total** | 60 | 49 | 60 | 60 | 49 |

**Included to reflect corridor travel time between logical termini.*

Under the Preferred Alternative, substantial reduction in travel times will occur in the Gannett Road and Fox Acres Road segment and the McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road segment. Travel time from McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road is the same for Preferred Alternative 2 and for the HOV lane in Alternative 3. A detailed explanation of why travel time for Preferred Alternative 2 and for the HOV lane in Alternative 3 are the same is provided on page 4-8.

Under Alternative 3, the general purpose lane in the McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road section of SH-75 will not operate as well as either lane under Alternative 2. The local governments, local organizations, and individuals in the Wood River Valley believe that HOV operations, including the general purpose lane, will perform better than modeled. They believe that their continued aggressive implementation of transit and carpooling programs will result in higher usage of the HOV lane, and better LOS in the general purpose lane.

## *ES-3.1 Impacts on Transit*

### ES-3.1.1 Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative will provide buses and carpools with the same travel times and safety benefits as other vehicles using the roadway. Buses will use the bus pullouts to pick up and discharge passengers.

### ES-3.1.2 Potential Future Conversion to HOV Operations

Although a conversion to HOV operations is not part of the Preferred Alternative, this discussion is included to inform Blaine County, the cities in the Wood River Valley, and other organizations and individuals who provided comment on the DEIS that support HOV, and also because the potential future conversion to HOV operations is reasonably foreseeable.

The impacts of HOV operations on transit were analyzed under Alternative 3 in the DEIS. This analysis is relevant to a potential future conversion to HOV operations between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road under the conditions described in ES-2.2 above. As previously described, the local governments believe that HOV operations will perform better than projected in the DEIS and this FEIS.

Buses, carpools and other HOV lane eligible vehicles will have a travel-time advantage between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road, relative to vehicles in the general purpose lane. This travel time for HOV lane users will be the same as for all users, including transit and carpools, of both travel lanes under Alternative 2. Transit buses will have travel times longer than other HOV lane users as they will be stopping to load and unload passengers, adding approximately 5 minutes to the bus travel time. Bus transit users will have a six-minute travel-time advantage over the general purpose lane user. Between US-20 and McKercher Boulevard, there will be no HOV operations. Vehicles carrying 2 or more persons and buses will operate in the general purpose lanes and will experience the same Levels of Service and travel times shown in Tables ES-2 and ES-5 above.

## *ES-3.2 Impacts on Freight Movement*

### ES-3.2.1 Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative will provide improved travel times and improved Levels of Service for all SH-75 users. Freight movements during peak periods will experience the same LOS as other highway users. With the additional through lanes, center turn lane, 8-foot shoulders, and right-turn lanes, truck traffic will experience greater levels of safety compared to Alternative 1 No Build. The addition of passing lanes in the US-20 to Gannett Road segment will also improve the safety for both trucks and other vehicles.

### ES-3.2.2 Potential Future Conversion to HOV Operations

The impacts of HOV operations on freight movement were analyzed under Alternative 3 in the DEIS. This analysis is relevant to a potential future conversion to HOV operations between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road under the conditions described in ES-2.2 above. The HOV operations will provide a lower level of mobility for trucks in this portion of SH-75. Between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road, trucks over 10,000 pounds will not be allowed in the HOV lane and will be restricted to the general purpose lane. Between McKercher and Elkhorn, truck trip travel times will be the same as for other general purpose lane users.

The LOS in the HOV section of SH-75 will be D from McKercher Boulevard to Ohio Gulch and F from Ohio Gulch to Elkhorn Road. The stop-and-go conditions typical of this level of congestion will increase the potential for trucks to be involved in rear-end accidents in the general purpose lane. Gaps in traffic from the traffic signal operations at McKercher Boulevard, Buttercup Road, Ohio Gulch, Hospital Drive, and Elkhorn Road intersections will enable slower, left-turning trucks to execute turns more safely across oncoming traffic.

## *ES-3.3 Impacts on Pedestrians and Bicyclists*

### ES-3.3.1 Preferred Alternative

Preferred Alternative 2 will enhance pedestrian travel in the SH-75 corridor through the addition of sidewalks in southern Bellevue, and construction of pedestrian/bicyclist under passes at Treasure Lane, Spruce Way, and Buttercup/Zinc Spur. The installation of traffic signals at the intersections of SH-75 and Myrtle Street in Hailey, Buttercup/Zinc Spur and Ohio Gulch/Starweather will also facilitate pedestrian and bicyclist crossings of SH-75.

Bus pullouts will be incorporated into the Preferred Alternative to facilitate pedestrian access to transit and support transit use. These will be provided at McKercher Boulevard, Buttercup Road/Zinc Spur, Ohio Gulch/Starweather, East Fork Road, and Broadway Run/Hospital Drive. The Sun Valley Ketchum Transit Authority (KART) and the Peak Bus service were combined into Mountain Rides, a regional transit authority as of October 2007. Mountain Rides is planning for additional transit service and associated infrastructure

requirements. The resultant plan may result in the opportunity to incorporate additional bus pullouts into SH-75 during the design phase.

### ES-3.3.2 Potential Future Conversion to HOV Operations

The impacts of HOV operations on pedestrians and bicyclists were analyzed under Alternative 3 in the DEIS. This analysis is relevant to a potential future conversion to HOV operations between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road under the conditions described in ES-2.2 above. The impacts to pedestrians and bicyclists will be unchanged from those of the Preferred Alternative.

## ES-4 Environmental Impacts

The impacts of the Preferred Alternative on natural and manmade resources in the Wood River Valley were fully evaluated in the DEIS under Alternative 2. Table ES-6 provides an overview of the impacts on these resources.

Should ITD implement HOV operations between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road under the conditions described in ES, the impacts of HOV operations on environmental resources were evaluated under Alternative 3 and disclosed in the DEIS. The transportation impacts of this potential conversion to HOV operations are discussed in Section ES-3 above.

**Table ES-6: Summary of Environmental Impacts of Preferred Alternative**

| Type of Resource | Summary of Impacts |
|---|---|
| Land Use Impacts<br>*(Section 5.1 of the DEIS, page 5-1)*<br>*(Section 5.1 of the FEIS, page 5-1)* | No adverse impacts. Generally consistent with land use plans. |
| Social Impacts<br>*(Section 5.2 of the DEIS, page 5-3)*<br>*(Section 5.2 of the FEIS, page 5-3)* | No adverse impacts. Improves accessibility to services, emergency response, and increased public safety. |
| Environmental Justice Impacts<br>*(Section 5.3 of the DEIS, page 5-7)*<br>*(Section 5.3 of the FEIS, page 5-3)* | No disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority or low income population. |
| Relocation<br>*(Section 5.4 of the DEIS, page 5-10)*<br>*(Section 5.4 of the FEIS, page 5-3)* | Relocation of 12 residences and 2 commercial properties. Acquisition of 134.25 acres of new right-of-way. |
| Farmland, Agriculture, Soils and Geology Impacts<br>*(Section 5-5 of the DEIS, page 5-13)*<br>*(Section 5-5 of the FEIS, page 5-3)* | Acquisition of 59 acres of prime farmland for new road right-of-way. Prime farmland primarily located between US-20 and Gannett Road. Irrigation canals, farm access retained. Improved opportunities to pass slower moving agricultural and other vehicles. |
| Economic Impacts<br>*(Section 5.6 of the DEIS, page 5-15)*<br>*(Section 5.6 of the FEIS, page 5-4)* | Generally supports Wood River Valley economy due to increased accessibility, reduced travel times, lower transport costs. Direct adverse impacts to 2 businesses. Estimated reduction in tax revenue of $165,000. Construction expenditures estimated to make a major local economic contribution during construction period. |
| Noise Impacts<br>*(Section 5.7 of the DEIS, page 5-12)*<br>*(Section 5.7 of the FEIS, page 5-4)* | Eight locations have noise level impacts that approach or exceed the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC). There are two locations where noise barriers are warranted and feasible. |

**Table ES-6: Summary of Environmental Impacts of Preferred Alternative - continued**

| Type of Resource | Summary of Impacts |
|---|---|
| Air Quality Impacts<br>*(Section 5.8 of the DEIS, page 5-32)*<br>*(Section 5.8 of the FEIS, page 5-12)* | Exceedances of national standards for carbon monoxide (CO), particulate matter ($PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$) are not expected. See Section 5.8.1, page 5-12 of the FEIS. Air toxics expected to be lower due to EPA national control programs. |
| Water Resources Impacts<br>*(Section 5.9 of the DEIS, page 5-37)*<br>*(Section 5.9 of the FEIS, page 5-13)* | Improved stream crossings at 4 locations. Replacement of 21 irrigation culverts. Improved floodplain conditions at 2 bridge crossing locations. Increased storm water runoff. Use of detention ponds and infiltration swales to collect and treat storm water in accordance with Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) standards and Best Management Practices. |
| Vegetation Impacts<br>*(Section 5.10 of the DEIS, page 5-46)*<br>*(Section 5.10 of the FEIS, page 5-13)* | Existing roadside vegetation and landscaping removed from new right-of-way. Extensive impacts to berms and manmade landscaping, primarily between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road. |
| Wetland Impacts<br>*(Section 5.11 of the DEIS, page 5-51)*<br>*(Section 5.11 of the FEIS, page 5-13)* | Destruction of 2.26 acres of natural wetlands and impacts to 1.18 acres of irrigation-dependent wetlands (total of 3.44 acres). No net loss with mitigation. |
| Wildlife Impacts (including Threatened and Endangered Species – T&E)<br>*(Section 5.12 of the DEIS, page 5-64)*<br>*(Section 5.12 of the FEIS, page 5-16)* | Either "no effect", "may affect, not likely to adversely affect". "No effect" and "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" determinations developed by ITD, concurred upon by FHWA, per the 2/28/03 Memorandum of Agreement between ITD, US Fish & Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and FHWA. Bald Eagle delisted from the Endangered Species Act since DEIS; protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Overall wildlife habitat value of valley not adversely impacted by reduction in roadside vegetation habitat. Reduced potential for wildlife kill due to increased roadside visibility for drivers, reduction in roadside forage for deer/elk, and increased road area for drivers to avoid potential collision with animals. |
| Fisheries Impacts<br>*(Section 5.13 of the DEIS, page 5-81)*<br>*(Section 5.13 of the FEIS, page 5-17)* | "May affect, not likely to adversely affect" Utah valvata snail, a T&E species. No effect" and "may affect" determinations developed by ITD, concurred upon by FHWA, per the 2/28/03 Memorandum of Agreement between ITD, US Fish & Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and FHWA. |
| Cultural Resource Impacts<br>*(Section 5.14 of the DEIS, page 5-90)*<br>*(Section 5.14 of the FEIS, page 5-17)* | "No adverse effect" determination for 30 historic resources and "no effect" determination for 16 historic resources. |
| Section 4(f) Impacts<br>*(Section 5.15 of the DEIS, page 5-97)*<br>*(Section 5.15 of the FEIS, page 5-17)* | "De minimus" impact on seven historic resources. |
| Visual Impacts<br>*(Section 5.16 of the DEIS, page 5-130)*<br>*(Section 5.16 of the FEIS, page 5-17)* | Impacts to berms, roadside vegetation, and manmade roadside landscaping will change visual character of roadside environment, primarily north of McKercher Boulevard. Retaining wall and noise barriers will be new visual elements. |
| Parks and Recreation Impacts<br>*(Section 5.17 of the DEIS, page 5-141)*<br>*(Section 5.17 of the FEIS, page 5-18)* | No adverse impacts to parks facilities. Positive impacts to access for pedestrians and bicyclists to Wood River Trail system. Positive impacts to users of Harriman Trail in the Boulder Flats area. |
| Utilities Impacts<br>*(Section 5.18 of the DEIS, page 5-143)*<br>*(Section 5.18 of the FEIS, page 5-18)* | Relocation of underground and overhead utilities. |
| Hazardous Materials Impacts<br>*(Section 5.18 of the DEIS, page 5-148)*<br>*(Section 5.18 of the FEIS, page 5-18)* | No adverse impacts. |

# ES-5 Findings, Mitigation and Commitments

## *ES-5.1 Findings*

Findings associated with the Preferred Alternative are summarized in Table ES-7.

**Table ES-7: Findings**

| Act/Regulation/Executive Order | Finding |
|---|---|
| The Clean Water Act; Executive Order 11990, 23 CFR 777 and Department of Transportation Order 5660.1A | No net loss of wetlands. Section 5.11, page 5-13 of the FEIS provides the explanation of this finding. |
| Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act | "No effect" for two species. "May affect, not likely to adversely affect" for three species. Section 5.12 Wildlife and Section 5.13 Fisheries of the DEIS (page 5-64 and page 5-81 respectively) provide the explanation for these findings. As the Bald Eagle has been delisted from the ESA, the original finding of "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" in the DEIS is superseded by this delisting. (See Section 5.12.1 on this FEIS, page 5-16) |
| Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act | "No historic properties effected" or "No effect" on historic resources. Section 5.14 Cultural Resources (page 5-90 of the DEIS) and the correspondence from the Idaho State Historical Society in Appendix A of this FEIS provide the explanation for this finding. |
| Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act | A Section 4(f) use but *de minimus* impacts on 7 properties. Appendix D of the DEIS and Section 5.15 Section 4(f) of the DEIS, page 5-97, provide the explanation for this finding. |
| The Clean Air Act (as amended 1990) | Does not exceed the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Section 5.8 of the DEIS (page 5-32) as supplemented by Section 5.8 of this FEIS (page 5-11) provide the explanation for this finding. |
| Executive Order 12898, Department of Transportation Order 5610.2 and FHWA Order 6640.23 | No disproportionately high and adverse impacts on any minority or low-income population. Section 5.3 of the DEIS (page 5-7) provides the explanation for this finding. |

## ES-5.2 Mitigation

The DEIS prescribes mitigation measures for many resources. These measures will be incorporated into the design of Preferred Alternative and reflected in the construction documents. The mitigation required for the Preferred Alternative is fully described in Section 7.2 of this FEIS (beginning on page 7-2). Mitigation is specified for the following impacted resources or conditions:

- Noise
- Floodplains
- Vegetation
- Wetlands
- Relocations
- Wildlife
- Wildlife habitat permeability
- Fisheries
- Section 4(f) properties
- Construction

## ES-5.3 Commitments

A number of commitments were made by ITD during the NEPA process and as a result of additional federal, state, and local agency coordination during preparation of the FEIS. In summary, these commitments include the following:

- Additional coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USCOE) to ensure compliance with the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines of the Clean Water Act, particularly with respect to the Big Wood River Bridge.
- Additional coordination with USCOE and the U.S. Forest Service regarding preparation and approval of the final wetlands mitigation plan.
- Additional coordination with EPA and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) regarding the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.
- Additional coordination with Blaine County regarding results of the wildlife crossing mitigation study recommendations.
- Additional coordination with the Blaine County Recreation District (BCRD) to incorporate any changes the BCRD may make to the Wood River Trail in response to private land development.

Although not part of the Preferred Alternative nor an FHWA decision or commitment, ITD makes the following additional commitment:

- Creation of a SH-75 Corridor Operations Management Team composed of representative of ITD, Blaine County, Mountain Rides and the cities of the Wood River Valley and the potential implementation of peak hour HOV operations between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road under conditions described in ES-2.4 Future Conversion to HOV Operations.

# ES-6 Federal and State Actions and Permits Required

Implementation of Preferred Alternative will require the federal actions and permits shown in Table ES-8.

**Table ES-8: Federal and State Permits Required**

| Action or Permit | Issuing Agency |
|---|---|
| Dredge/fill permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers |
| National Pollution Discharge Elimination System under the Clean Water Act, consisting of a Construction Stormwater Permit and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan | Environmental Protection Agency |
| Stream Alteration Permit | Idaho Department of Water Resources |
| 401 Water Quality Certification | Idaho Department of Environmental Quality |

# ES-7 Comments and Coordination

Agency coordination and public involvement were important elements in the preparation of the DEIS and the FEIS. Table ES-9 summarizes events that occurred from project inception in August of 2000 through the public hearing on the DEIS on January 26, 2006.

**Table ES-9: Summary of Agency Coordination and Public Involvement**

| Event | Number of Events |
|---|---|
| Introductory briefings of County Commission and City Councils | 21 |
| Public scoping meetings, including informal scoping booths in area grocery stores | 9 |
| Resource agency consultation, meetings and field trips | 12 |
| Work Group meetings (Includes representatives from 18 government and citizen groups) | 11 |
| Wood River Regional Transportation Committee presentations | 5 |
| Public open houses | 4 |
| Monthly “Storefront Office” open houses | 16 |
| Briefings of County Commission and City Councils | 13 |
| Presentations to other groups | 6 |
| Newsletters | 5 |
| Project website – www.sh-75.com | On-going |
| Public hearing | 1 |

In response to the comments received on the DEIS, additional coordination was conducted during the months of May and June, 2006 with the following entities:

- Federal agencies: Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Forest Service,
- State agencies: Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho State Police, Idaho Public Transportation Division of ITD
- Local jurisdictions: Blaine County, City of Bellevue, City of Hailey, City of Ketchum, City of Sun Valley, Blaine County Recreation District

# ES-8 Next Steps

In accordance with 23 CFR 771.127, this FEIS will be available for review for a minimum of 30 days from the time the Environmental Protection Agency publishes a notice of availability in the Federal Register. Notification of its availability will also be published in the printed and electronic news media in Blaine County, Idaho.

The FEIS has been made available to federal, state, and local agencies, private organizations, and members of the public who provided substantive comments on the DEIS. Reference copies of the FEIS have also been placed in the following locations:

- City of Bellevue, City Hall and Library, 115 Pine Street, Bellevue, ID
- City of Hailey City Hall, 115 South Main Street, Hailey, ID
- City of Ketchum City Hall, 480 East Avenue North, Ketchum, ID
- City of Sun Valley, City Hall, 81 Elkhorn Road, Sun Valley, ID
- Blaine County Planning and Zoning, 219 First Avenue South, Suite 208, Hailey, ID
- Community Library, 415 Spruce Avenue North, Ketchum, ID
- Idaho Transportation Department, District 4, 216 South Date Street, Shoshone, ID
- Idaho Transportation Department, 3311 West State Street, Boise, ID
- Federal Highway Administration, 3050 Lakeharbor Lane, #126, Boise, ID

A Record of Decision (ROD) will be signed by FHWA no sooner than 30 days after the Notice of Availability of this FEIS is published in the Federal Register. The ROD will explain the reasons for the project decision, summarize any mitigation measures that will be incorporated into the project, and document the required Section 4(f) approval. The ROD will include the following key items: a decision on the selected alternative; alternatives considered; Section 4(f); measures to minimize harm; monitoring or enforcement program; and comments and responses to any comments received on the FEIS.

FHWA may publish a notice in the Federal Register, pursuant to 23 USC §139(l), indicating that one or more Federal agencies have taken final action on permits, licenses, or approvals for a transportation project. If such notice is published, claims seeking judicial review of those Federal agency actions will be barred unless such claims are filed within 180 days after the date of publication of the notice, or within such shorter time period as is specified in the Federal laws pursuant to which judicial review of the Federal agency action is allowed. If no notice is published, then the periods of time that otherwise are provided by the Federal laws governing such claims will apply.

FHWA has not determined whether it will publish such a notice for the SH-75 Project. FHWA plans to indicate in the ROD whether or not it will be publishing such a notice regarding the final NEPA action.

# INTRODUCTION

The SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Section 4(f) Evaluation (FEIS) documents the Preferred Alternative identified for SH-75 improvements from US-20 to Ketchum and evaluates its impacts on resources.

The FEIS is presented as a condensed document, in accordance with Federal Highway Administration guidelines for the preparation of FEIS documents contained in FHWA Technical Advisory 6640.8A, and includes the following:

- references and summarizes the Draft Environmental Impact Statement;
- includes additional information developed since issuance of the DEIS;
- describes the Preferred Alternative and the basis for its identification;
- documents additional coordination efforts, agency and public comments, and responses to comments; and,
- documents findings, commitments and mitigation.

The full text of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation (DEIS) is appended to the FEIS in CD ROM format and includes Volumes I, II and III. The reader is referred to the DEIS for a complete description of alternatives and analysis of impacts.

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# 1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

This chapter summarizes the need for transportation improvements along State Highway 75 (SH-75) in south central Idaho and describes the purpose of the project[4]. It was prepared in accordance with the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) environmental regulations contained in 23 CFR Part 771 *Environmental Impact and Related Procedures* and Technical Advisory 6640.8A *Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents.*

## *1.1 Summary Purpose and Need Statement*

### *1.1.1 Purpose*

The purpose of the proposed project is two-fold:

- To increase SH-75 roadway capacity to accommodate existing peak-hour vehicle traffic and future year 2025 vehicle traffic; and
- To increase transportation safety for all users.

### *1.1.2 Need*

The need for this project is based on several factors:

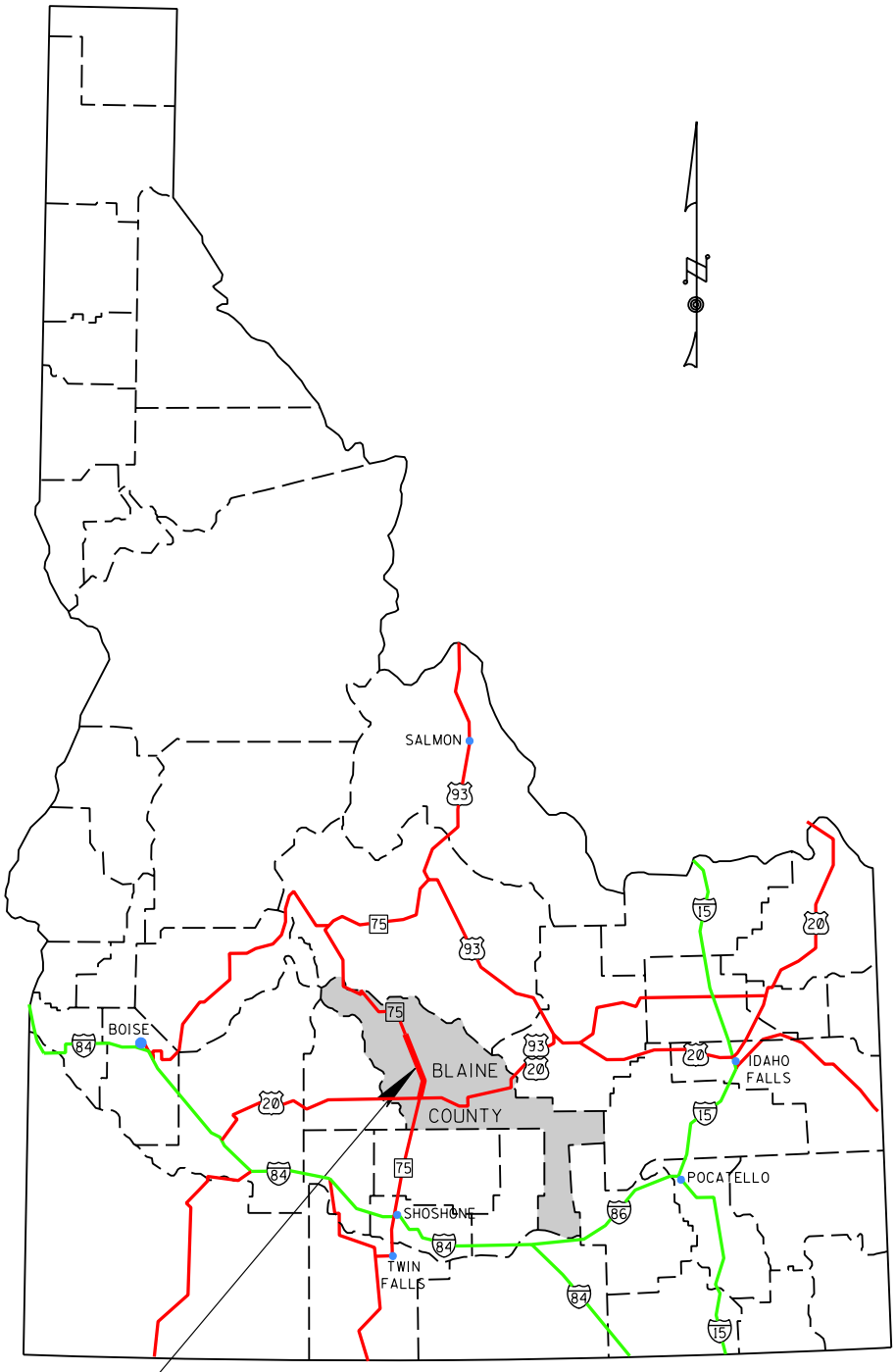
- Current and predicted future year 2025 peak hour travel demand exceeds available transportation capacity. Peak hour congestion is primarily from commuters traveling within the project limits.
- Lack of shoulders, lack of right-turn lanes, and lack of center left-turn lanes at intersections create a safety and a capacity concern throughout the SH-75 corridor.
- Pedestrians and bicyclists need safe access across SH-75 to access community resources.
- Current peak hour bus transit and rideshare programs experience peak hour congestion.

In meeting these needs, the project will safely and efficiently move a growing population with diverse needs and resources as well as move goods and materials to and through the Wood River Valley. The project will minimize impacts to scenic, aesthetic, historic, and other environmental resources in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR Part 771 Environmental Impact and Related Procedures. SH-75 has "Main Street" characteristics through the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey and Ketchum that need to be maintained. The SH-75 project will use the existing highway corridor to help preserve future transportation options.

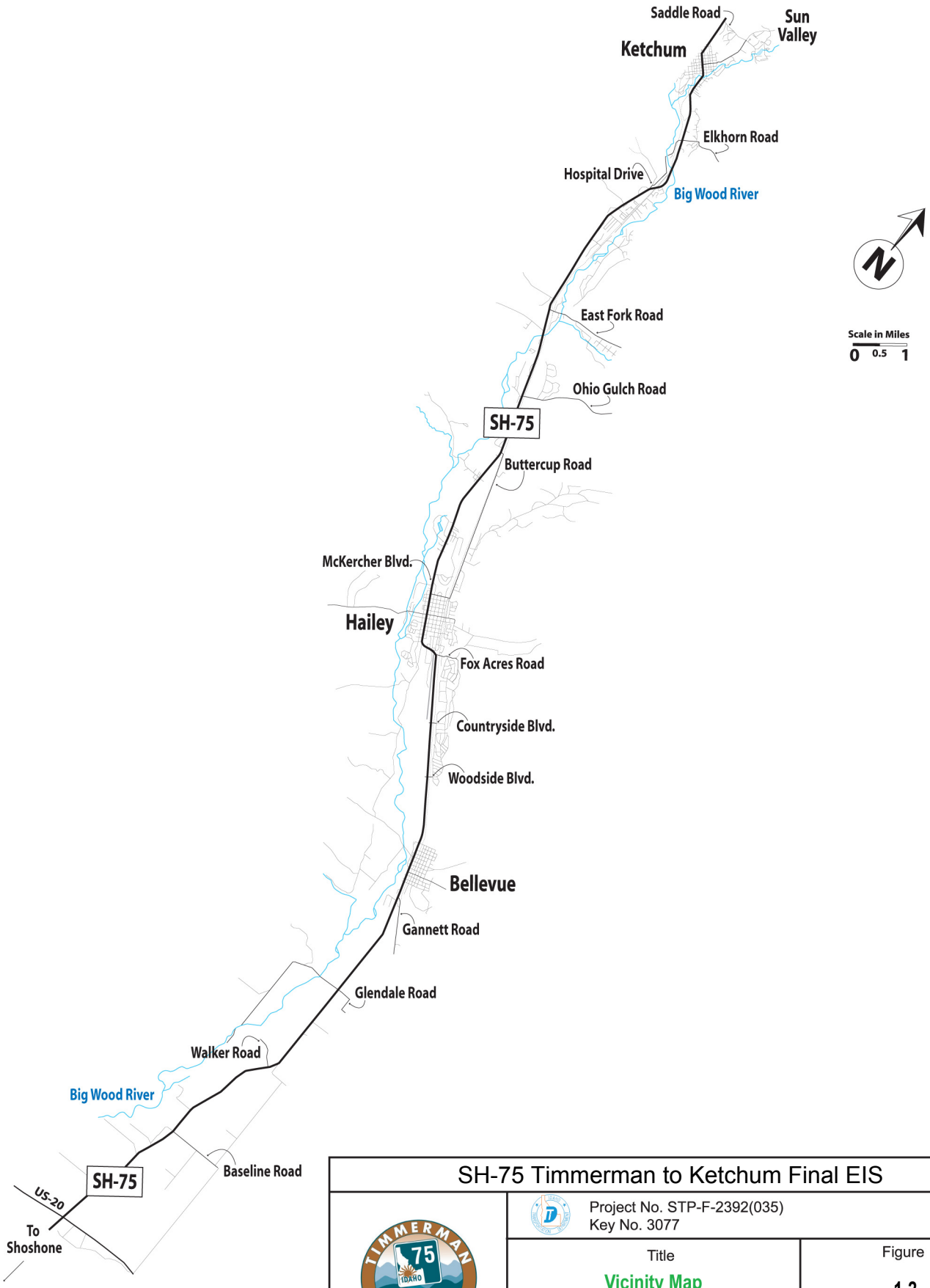
The SH-75 study corridor begins at the Timmerman Rest Area junction with US 20 (SH-75 milepost 102.1) and ends in Ketchum at Saddle Road (SH-75 milepost 129.25). Page 1-1, line 34 of the DEIS incorrectly indicated that the project ends at Warm Springs Junction (SH-75 milepost 128.5). This is the only location in the DEIS where this error occurs. Saddle Road is consistent with the Notice of Intent issued for the project on October 4, 2000 and is still valid.

Figure 1-1 illustrates the project location within the State of Idaho; Figure 1-2 shows a vicinity map for the project. The corridor is approximately 27 miles long.

[4] Chapter 1 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement provides a complete analysis of existing and future No-Build conditions, crash analysis, and analysis of existing and future needs.




| SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Project No. STP-F-2392(035)<br>Key No. 3077 | |
| | Title<br>Project Location | Figure<br>**1-1** |
| | | Date: *February 2008* |




# SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title
**Vicinity Map**

Figure
**1-2**

Date: *February 2008*

# 1.2 Project Programming and Funding

The DEIS listed several projects in the SH-75 corridor on the then applicable Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Since publication of the DEIS, ITD has developed a new planning program, "Horizons in Transportation" that is a long-range transportation plan. As well, an updated 2008-2012 STIP is approved, as of the date of publication of this FEIS.

The discussion in the DEIS under 1.1.3 "Statewide Transportation Improvement Program" and Table 1-1 on page 1-4 of the DEIS is replaced by the following discussion.

## *1.2.1 Idaho Horizons Long Range Capital Improvement & Preservation Program (LRCIP)*

The Idaho Transportation Department is implementing a Long Range Capital Improvement and Preservation Program (LRCIP) called "Horizons in Transportation". The LRCIP complements and provides the transition between the shorter five year project development and implementation years of the STIP and the longer 2034 Idaho Transportation Vision. The current LRCIP was formulated in September 2006.

The LRCIP is intended to become the long range planning process for the identification and development of STIP projects. It is organized into three "horizons" – near horizon (6 to 10 years), mid horizon (11 to 15 years out), and far horizon (16 years and beyond).

The Near Horizon includes the reconstruction and realignment of SH-75 between Bellevue and Hailey, listed as Key #7836. This project falls within the logical termini and study area of the DEIS and is consistent with the improvements that were identified and evaluated in the DEIS.

## *1.2.2 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)*

SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum was listed as Key #3077 on the STIP at the inception of the NEPA process in 2000.

ITD's current Fiscal Year 2008-2012 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program contains a project to acquire right-of-way for the Timberway to Hospital Drive portion of SH-75. The project is Key #07836. This project falls within the logical termini and study area of the DEIS and the improvements have been identified and evaluated in the DEIS.

## *1.2.3 Federal Funding*

Public Law 109-59 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) allocates funding for the SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum project. SAFETEA-LU is the federal transportation funding authorization bill signed into law on August 10, 2005; it provides funding for the fiscal years 2005 to 2009.

Three sections of SAFETEA-LU allocate a total of $22.8 million for the SH-75 project evaluated in this EIS:

- Section 1702 High Priority Project #968 "Improve SH-75 from Timmerman to Ketchum" provides $4.8 million
- Section 1702 Project #4038 "Transportation Improvements to Improve SH-75, Timmerman to Ketchum" provides $16 million; and
- Section 1934(1)(2) Project #140 "Transportation Improvements to Improve SH-75, Timmerman to Ketchum" provides $2 million

The $22.8 million authorized by SAFETEA-LU will be used to advance a portion of the SH-75 project, as described in Section 2.3 Phasing of the Preferred Alternative of this FEIS.

### 1.2.4 Future Funding

The reconstruction of SH-75 described in this FEIS is expected to occur over many years, in response to the availability of federal and state funding and as envisioned in ITD's "Horizons in Transportation".

Three federal transportation funding bills have been authorized since the early 1990's: Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) for fiscal years 1992 to 1997; Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century for fiscal years 1998 to 2003 (TEA-21); and SAFETEA-LU. Table 1-1 shows the funding allocated to the State of Idaho from the last two funding bills.

**Table 1-1: Federal Highway Funding for the State of Idaho**

| Federal Funding Bill | Year | Idaho Allocation |
|---|---|---|
| TEA-21[5] | 1998 | $174,073,000 |
| | 1999 | $203,441,000 |
| | 2000 | $208,483,000 |
| | 2001 | $209,982,000 |
| | 2002 | $213,867,000 |
| | 2003 | $217,849,000 |
| SAFETEA-LU | 2005 | $260,868,000 |
| | 2006 | $264,199,000 |
| | 2007 | $278,589,000 |
| | 2008 | $288,460,000 |
| | 2009 | $291,823,000 |

SAFETEA-LU, compared to TEA-21, provides the following increase in apportionments as a percentage of TEA-21 Average Annual Apportionment:

FY2005 122.9%

FY2006 124.4%

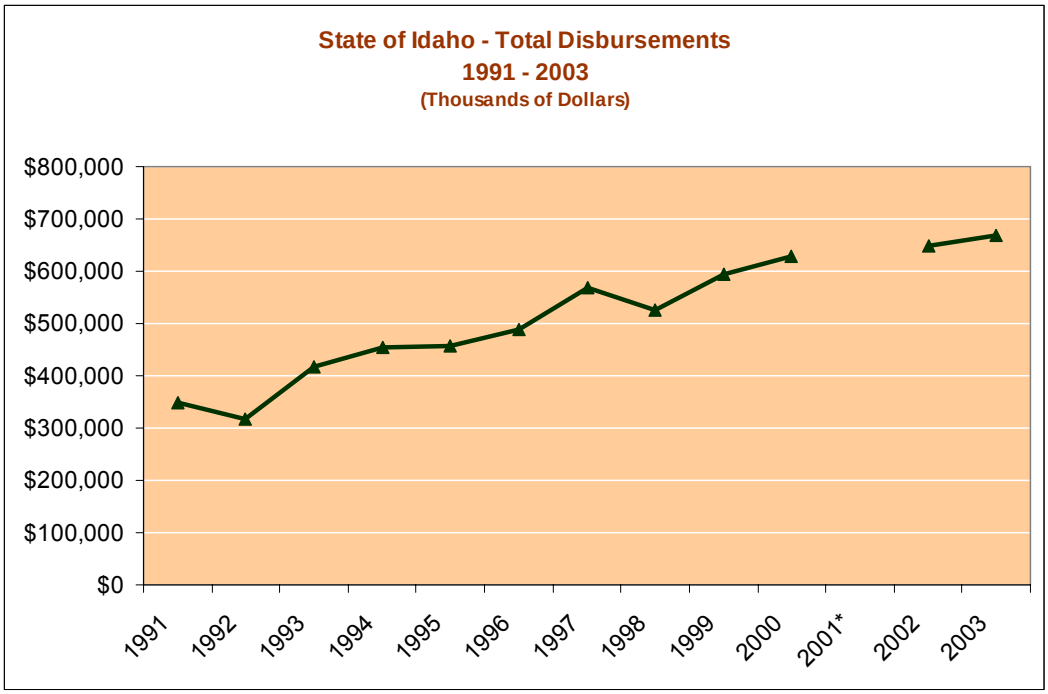
FY2007 131.2%

FY2008 135.9%

FY2009 137.2%

The following graph illustrates the history of funding for highways in the State of Idaho from 1991 to 2003 from all sources, including ISTEA and TEA-21 allocations, state and local funding.

[5] http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tea21/est1200.xls




Source: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/ohim. Data for 2004 onwards not yet available on website.
* Data for 2001 not included on website.

Based on the history of federal and state funding of highways in the State of Idaho and the total capital expenditures on highways from all government sources, it is reasonable to conclude that federal funding and funding from state and local sources will continue to be available to fund right-of-way acquisition and construction of the SH-75 improvements evaluated in this FEIS.

### *1.2.5 History of Public/Private Partnerships in Transportation Facility Development*

Completion of the SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum project will also include a continuation of public/private partnerships to contribute to right-of-way acquisition and construction. The Idaho Transportation Department has partnered with both local governments and private development interests to construct portions of transportation facilities in the State.

The Wood River Valley has experienced high levels of sustained population growth, as evidenced by an average annual 4.1% population growth rate over a 30-year period, as shown in Table 3.1-1, page 3-1 of the DEIS. The associated land development has presented opportunities to develop public/private partnerships to implement improvements along the SH-75 corridor. These include:

- Golden Eagle Ranch Estates– Harry Rinker contributed $500,000 plus highway right-of-way (ROW) and easements to the reconstruction of SH-75 in the Alturas to Timberway Project and its associated pedestrian/bicycle underpass.
- St. Luke's Hospital development – Blaine County contribution matching funds and ROW totaling approximately $1 million.
- ROW valued at approximately $75,000 was donated to ITD by Walker Sand and Gravel for a turn bay at Walker Road.
- Hidden Hollow development – Blaine County required the developer to provide a turn bay on SH-75 valued at $250,000

ITD has also successfully partnered with local governments and development interests on other projects, including:

- I-84/Isaacs Canyon Interchange east of Boise. ITD District 3 partnered with Micron to construct this interchange.
- I-84/Franklin Interchange structure widening in Nampa, ID. ITD District 3 partnered with Micron to widen this structure.
- I-90/Beck Road Interchange between Post Falls and Washington State Line. ITD District 1 is partnering with Cabela's. The project is in development.

### *1.2.6 History of Phased Implementation of Projects in Idaho*

The implementation of projects once a Record of Decision (ROD) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been issued or a Categorical Exclusion has been approved is frequently accomplished through phasing, particularly of large or complex projects. ITD has successfully constructed projects in phases once a NEPA approval has been issued. Table 1-2 summarizes projects that ITD has phased after a FONSI or approval of a Categorical Exclusion has been approved. The table also includes projects that are in the STIP and/or the LRCIP and will be implemented in phases.

**Table 1-2: Phased Idaho Projects**

| Project Name/Key Number(s) | NEPA Approval (date and type) | Phased Implementation | Status of Phases |
|---|---|---|---|
| Twin Falls Alternative Route<br>Twin Falls, Idaho | Environmental Assessment<br>March 8, 2000<br>Re-evaluation September 29, 2004 | 2 phases or more | Phase I completed 2006 |
| US-95 Worley to Mica<br>Coeur d'Alene, Idaho | Environmental Assessment<br>September 18, 2000 | 4 phases | Final phase under construction |
| Wye IC – I-84<br>Boise, Idaho | Environmental Assessment<br>July 9, 1984 | 3 Phases | Final construction completed |
| I-84/US-93 Interchange Reconstruction<br>Twin Falls, Idaho | Categorical Exclusion<br>2001 | 2 Phases | Phase 1 completed |
| SH-20 Menan/Lorenzo and Thornton Interchanges | Environmental Assessment, August 9, 2007 | 2 Phases | Menan/Lorenzo programmed for construction 2009. Thornton IC is in the LRCIP Mid-Horizon. |
| I-84 Orchard to Eisenman | Environmental Assessment<br>July 7, 2007 | 8 phases | All phases programmed in the 2008 to 2012 STIP as 8 individual GARVEE projects |
| US-30 McCammon to Lava | Environmental Assessment, June 3, 2003 | 6 Phases | All phases programmed in the 2008 to 2012 STIP as 6 individual GARVEE projects. Phase 1 under design. |

### 1.2.7 Funding Conclusion

It is reasonable that the SH-75 project evaluated in this EIS can be funded and constructed based on the following:

- the inclusion of SH-75 project components in the LRCIP and the STIP;
- the existing SAFETEA-LU funding allocation for SH-75;
- the history of growth in federal and state highway funding since 1991;
- ITD's successful partnering with the private sector and local governments to implement transportation projects; and
- ITD's success in implementing phased projects.

## 1.3 Need for Improvements

The need for improvements for SH-75 was determined by considering existing (year 2001) traffic operations, predicted year 2025 traffic operations, safety and crash analyses, and substandard roadway features.

### 1.3.1 Existing Traffic Operations

"Traffic" includes all vehicles on the roadway, regardless of the number of occupants. Traffic therefore includes single occupant vehicles, carpools, buses, recreational vehicles, motorcycles, and trucks. All contribute to and are part of the traffic stream.

The method that is used to evaluate traffic operations throughout the United States is one established by the Transportation Research Board. Level of Service (LOS) is the transportation engineering standard in the United States used to compare how a highway currently functions and how it will function in the future, based on traffic and local conditions. There are six categories of LOS, as described in Table 1-1. These range from LOS A, commonly referred to as free flow, to LOS F, commonly referred to as "stop and go" conditions. To arrive at a LOS determination, the Highway Capacity Manual [1] methodology was used. For the SH-75 project, capacity analyses were performed for four selected roadway segments and 16 intersections using traffic movements at the busiest time of the day, the morning peak hour.

Figure 1-3 shows the existing Level of Service by roadway segment and intersection.

[1] Transportation Research Board, National Research Council, Highway Capacity Manual, 2000

**Table 1-3: Levels of Service**

*Definitions of Level Of Service (LOS)*

| v/c ratio (LOS) | Roadway Segment Operating Characteristics | Visual Example |
|---|---|---|
| A | Represents free traffic flow, very few cars on roadway. |  |
| B | In the range of free traffic flow, with some other motorists in the traffic stream begins to be noticeable. Some time spent following slower vehicles but appropriate gaps in traffic allows for passing with little delay. |  |
| C | In the beginning range of traffic flow in which the operation of individual motorists becomes significantly affected by other motorists in the traffic stream. Time spent following slower vehicles is longer and occurs more frequently, but appropriate gaps in traffic allows for passing with moderate delay. |  |
| D | Represents high-density traffic flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted, and the driver or pedestrian experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience. Time spent following slower vehicles is noticeably longer and occurs more frequently, and there are fewer gaps in traffic to allow for passing, increasing overall delay. |  |
| E | Represents operating conditions at or above the capacity level. All speeds are reduced to a low and relatively uniform speed. Time spent following slower vehicles exceeds time not behind slower vehicles, and there are few if any gaps in traffic to allow for passing. |  |
| F | Used to define intermittent stopping and moving at a very reduced speed. This condition exists wherever the amount of traffic exceeds the capacity of that point. Time spent following slower vehicles approaches 100 percent of the time traveling on a roadway segment, and there are likely no gaps in traffic to allow for passing. |  |

*Source: Transportation Research Board, Highway Capacity Manual / (HCM) 2000, Pg. 10-5.*

## *1.3.2 Social, Economic and Multi-modal Needs*

SH-75 is the only continuous roadway link in the Wood River Valley. Its function and operation have implications for social, economic, and other aspects of the communities that it serves. It serves a wide variety of users for many different trip purposes. The highway is the primary route for emergency services vehicles and provides access to St. Luke's Hospital. Access to many recreational opportunities depends upon SH-75.

SH-75 plays an important role in facilitating multi-modal transportation, including public transportation, bicycling, and access to Friedman Memorial Airport in the City of Hailey. Pedestrian access along and across SH-75 is an issue for local residents and businesses, both in the more rural areas as well as within the cities of Bellevue, Hailey and Ketchum.

#### 1.3.2.1 History of Transit Development in Wood River Valley

When this NEPA process was initiated in October 2000, the only public transit service within the study area was KART (Ketchum Area Rural Transit), operating within the Cities of Ketchum and Sun Valley. Blaine County commissioned a transit feasibility study; the resultant Blaine County Transit Feasibility Study was published in 2001. It outlined a series of transit steps that the Wood River Valley communities could take to initiate transit service and continue its development.

Peak Bus Commuter service was subsequently started in June 2002, with 3 daily trips between Bellevue and Ketchum during the morning peak period and 3 during the evening peak period. Four years later, Peak Bus and KART were merged in June 2006. The merger of Wood River Rideshare, the local rideshare entity, with Peak Bus and KART into one regional transit authority was completed in August 2007. The resultant new Mountain Rides Transportation Authority was made official in October 2007 (http://www.mountainrides.org ).

#### 1.3.2.2 Transit Services Provided

From the initial six peak hour trips provided by Peak Bus in 2002, the provision of transit service has grown and its ridership has increased substantially. The following services are now provided in the Wood River Valley:[7]

- Peak Bus is now known as Down Valley service and monthly ridership averages 6500 riders per month, up over 50% from one year ago.
- Weekday bus service has been increased to six one-way trips going north in the morning and six coming south in the evening.
- Weekend bus service has been introduced, with six roundtrips on Saturday and five on Sunday.
- Free fare zones within the City of Hailey and from St. Luke's Hospital into Ketchum were introduced.
- A reduced fare of $1 between Hailey and Bellevue was introduced. The normal fare between Bellevue and Ketchum is $2.25 for an adult.
- Four vans were purchased and four vanpools now operate from Twin Falls, Jerome, and Shoshone areas. These cities and town are located 70 miles, 61 miles, and 40 miles, respectively, south of the City of Hailey in the Wood River Valley. The vanpool service has been in place for one year and has a ridership of 1500 to 1700 rides per month.

All these transit services use SH-75.

Mountain Rides has recently added the City of Hailey to the board of the regional transportation organization, joining Sun Valley, Ketchum, Blaine County, and Bellevue. The transportation authority has adopted a new vision, mission, and goals for the organization to create a regional, multi-modal "one-stop" shop for all transportation modes. As up November 29, 2007, Mountain Rides has adopted a new organization structure that has an Executive Director and department heads. This new structure is expected to move forward more aggressively to increase the use of transportation alternatives (transit and carpooling).

This rapid growth in the provision and use of transit services, and in the organizational structure that provides the services, demonstrates the commitment of the Wood River Valley communities to the role of transit and carpooling in meeting their existing and future transportation needs.

[7] Information and data provided by Jason Miller, Executive Director, Mountain Rides Transportation Authority, December 2007.

### *1.3.3 Summary of Needs*

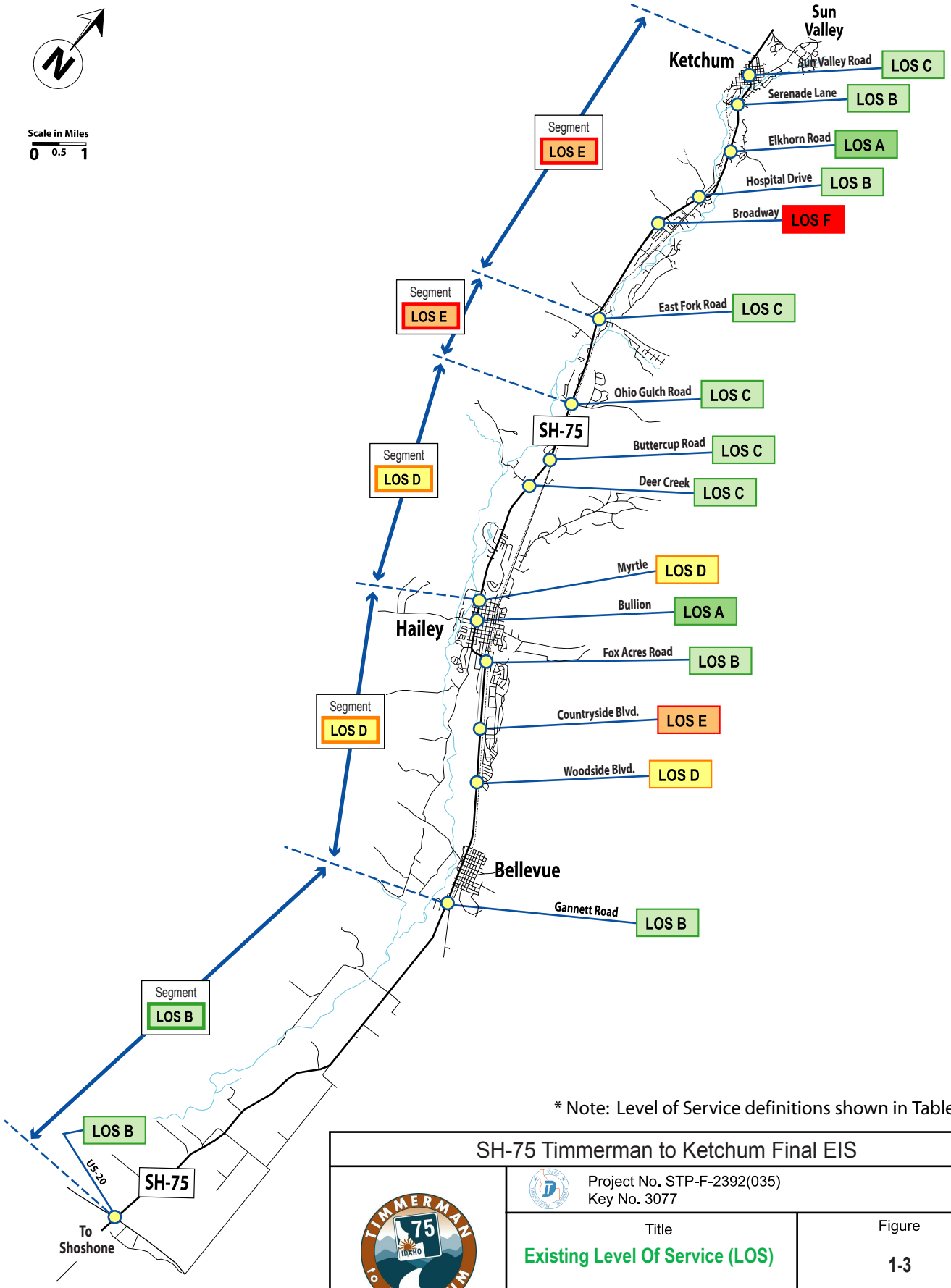
An analysis of the existing roadway features was a component of identifying the need for improvements on SH-75.

The definition of substandard roadway geometry is based upon the highway design standards established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and those contained in the Idaho Transportation Department Design Manual. Roadway geometry includes the horizontal alignment (how the roadway curves horizontally and the ability to safety accommodate vehicle travel for a given roadway classification), vertical alignment (changes in grade or how the roadway curves up and down) and their impact on sight distance. Sight distance and intersection sight distance is the distance a driver can see down the highway that allows a driver to stop or slow if a vehicle turns in front of it; or, a distance that allows adequate time for a driver on a cross street to decide if it is safe to turn onto or cross SH-75.

Width of shoulders is an important component of roadway geometry and safety; AASHTO recommends a usable shoulder width of 8 feet for rural arterial roadways with traffic volumes of 2,000 vehicles per day or more. Clear zone is another important component. AASHTO defines a clear zone and recovery area for roadways depending on traffic volumes and design speeds. The clear zone provides an unobstructed area adjacent to the roadway that allows errant vehicles to safely recover or stop if they leave the traveled way. This area should be free of obstructions and have slope upon which a vehicle can recover.

Sections of the existing SH-75 where there is inadequate storm water drainage can result in ponding that can create adverse driving conditions, including hydroplaning, and potential safety issues during inclement weather.

Field observations and review of the aerial mapping for SH-75 were used to identify areas of the existing highway that are substandard. Figures 1-4 through 1-8 summarize the existing and future Level of Service, substandard roadway geometry, substandard drainage and High Accident Locations for SH-75. In combination, these characteristics contribute to the need for improvements to SH-75.




* Note: Level of Service definitions shown in Table 1-1

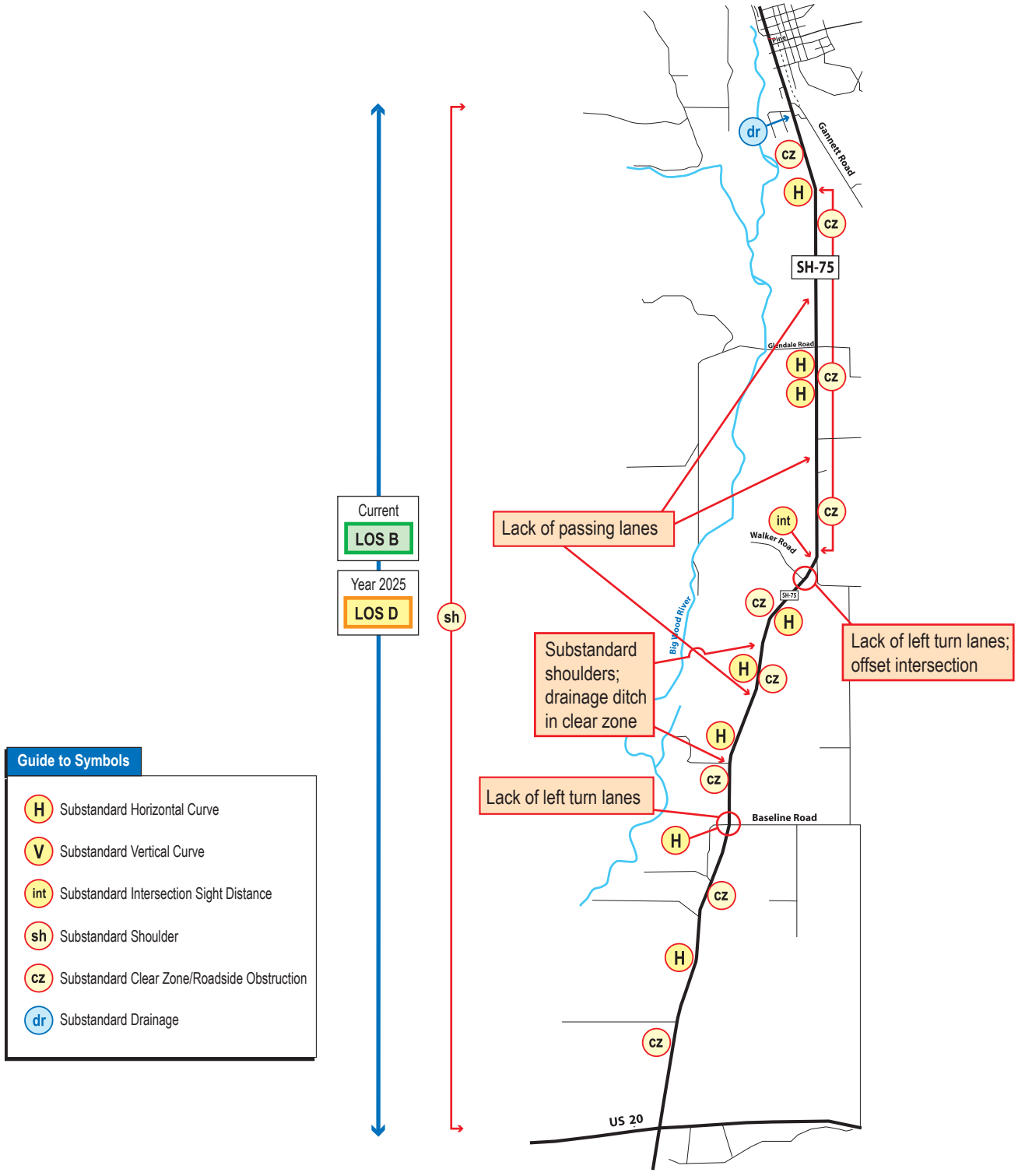
SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title
**Existing Level Of Service (LOS)**

Figure
**1-3**

Date: *February 2008*




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

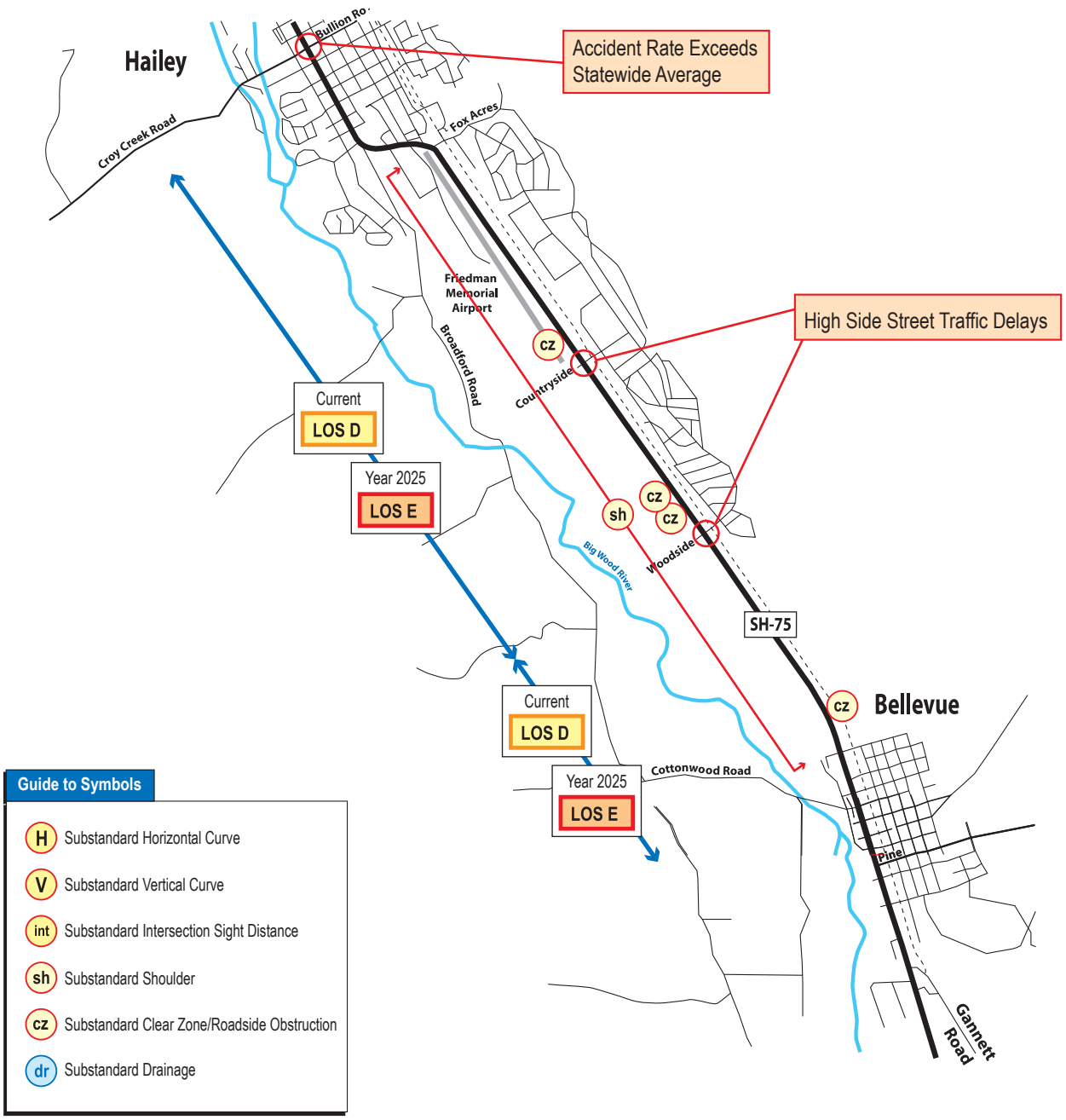
**Summary of Needs**

***Segment: US-20 to Gannett Road***

Figure

**1-4**

Date: *February 2008*




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

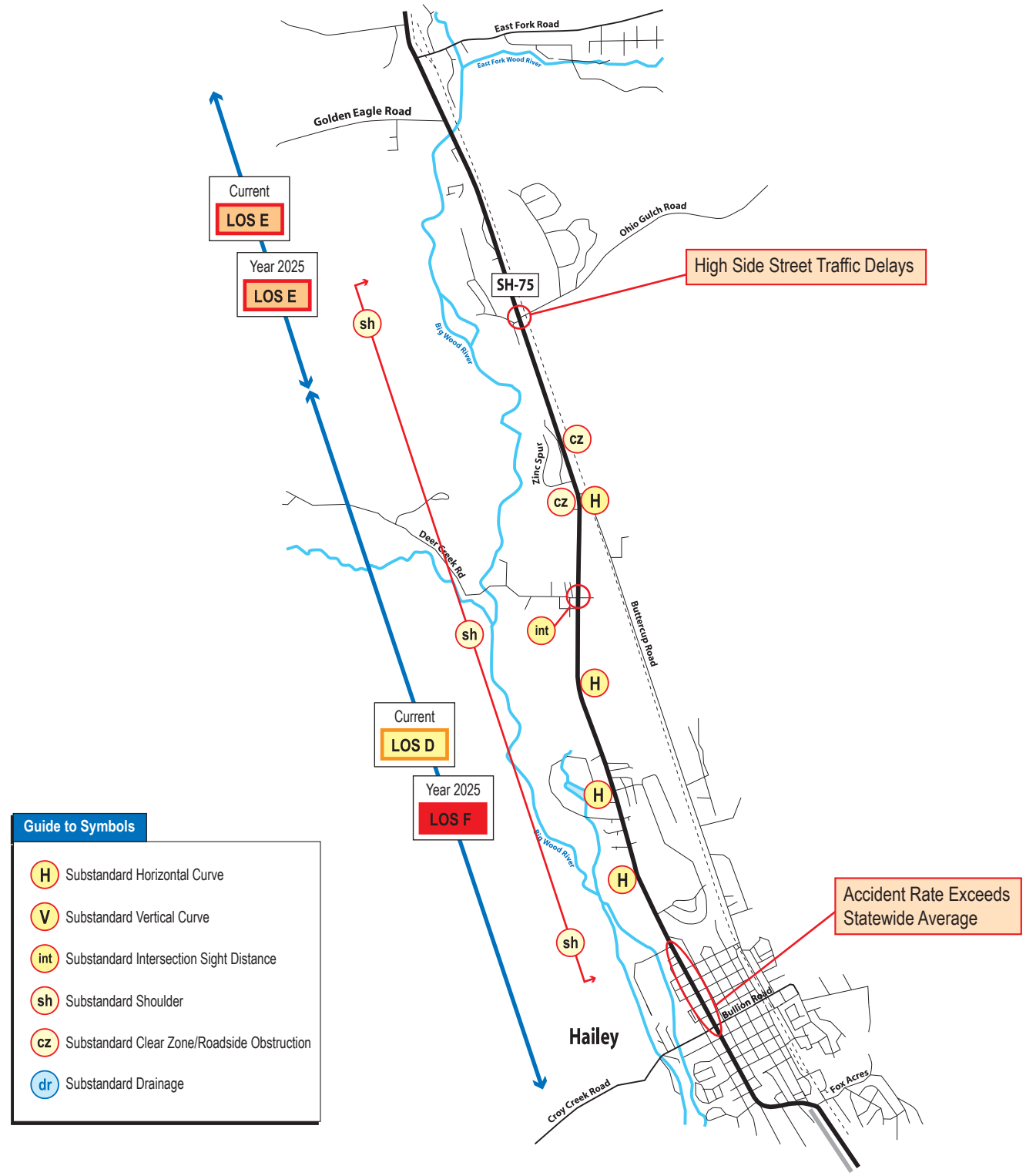
**Summary of Needs**

***Segment: Gannett Road to Fox Acres***

Figure

**1-5**

Date: *February 2008*




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

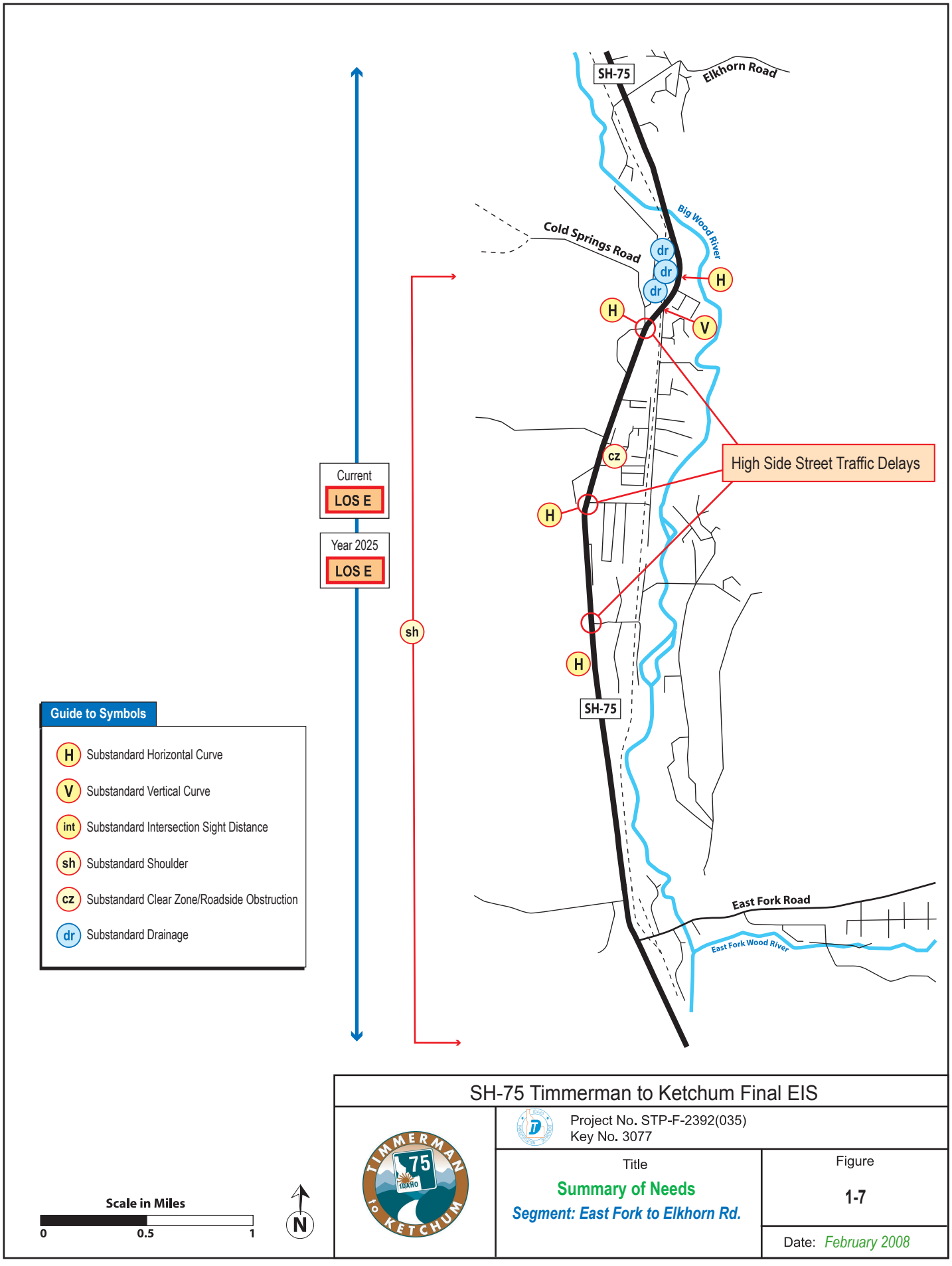
**Summary of Needs**

***Segment: Fox Acres to East Fork Rd.***

Figure

**1-6**

Date: *February 2008*




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

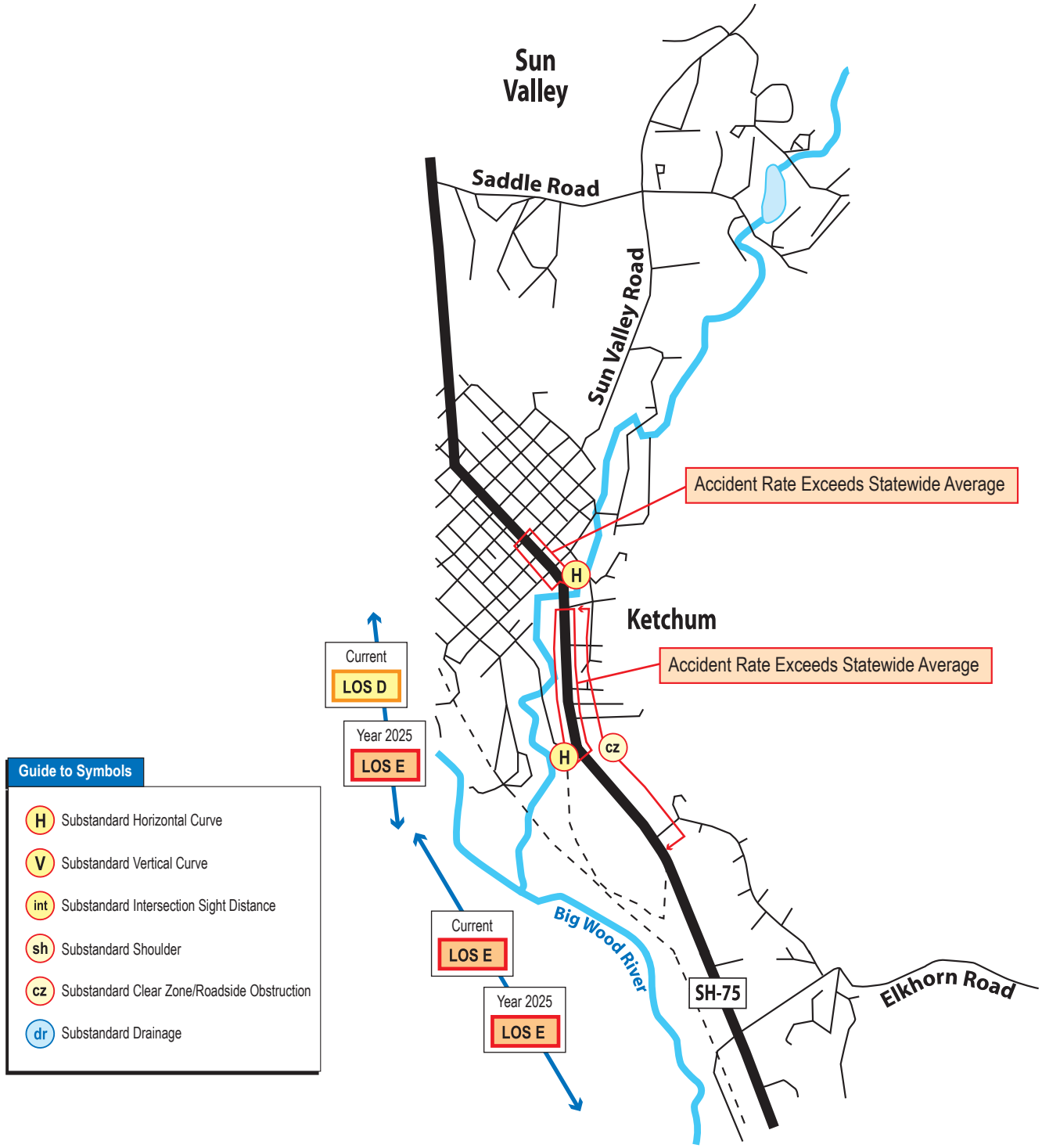
**Summary of Needs**

***Segment: East Fork to Elkhorn Rd.***

Figure

**1-7**

Date: *February 2008*




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title
**Summary of Needs**
***Segment: Elkhorn to Saddle Road***

Figure
**1-8**

Date: *February 2008*

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# 2.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Chapter 2 of the DEIS provides a complete description of the alternatives considered. The DEIS is included as Appendix D of this FEIS. The following summarizes that discussion and also provides a description of the Preferred Alternative.

## 2.1 Alternatives Considered in the DEIS

### *2.1.1 Alternatives Considered But Not Advanced*

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement considered a broad range of initial alternatives, based on public and agency scoping, analysis of physical and resource constraints, future travel demand, and technical analyses. Eight initial concepts were identified and considered, including:

- Alternative Corridor Through the Wood River Valley
- SH-75 with Reversible Lanes
- Fixed Guideway Transit (Light Rail Transit - LRT)
- Bus Only Transit
- Four-Lane SH-75 with Center Turn Lane
- Four Lane with High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane
- Enhanced Two Lane
- State Policy Level of Service C

An alternative corridor through the Wood River Valley, reversible lanes, Fixed Guideway Transit (LRT), and bus only transit concepts were not advanced into screening of alternatives for the following reasons:

- Alternative corridor: No other continuous unused corridor exists, necessitating the acquisition of a new corridor and major impacts on resources not currently affected by transportation facilities.
- Reversible lanes: There is a high potential for driver confusion and accidents resulting from traffic entering from driveways and cross streets. To maintain access from the over 100 access points between Hailey and Ketchum, an additional lane will be required to accommodate turning movements. Winter conditions will make lane markings difficult to see and increase the accident risk.
- Fixed Guideway Transit (LRT): LRT will result in adverse impacts to properties from noise and vibration, delays to local traffic circulation from the 34 at-grade street crossing of LRT tracks, low potential ridership, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) capital and local operations funding requirements for projects that Blaine County will not be able to finance.
- Bus Only Transit: This initial alternative will not remove sufficient vehicle trips from SH-75 to eliminate the need for additional highway capacity on SH-75. It will also have high capital costs and high annual operating costs.

The four remaining concepts were advanced into screening for additional analysis. These included the following:

- Alternative 2 Four Lanes with Center Turn Lane
- Alternative 3 Four Lanes with Center Turn Lane and HOV
- Alternative 4 Enhanced Two-Lane Plus Transit, and
- Alternative 5 State Policy Level of Service C

Alternative 1 No Build was also defined. Alternative 1 Future No-Build is the year 2025 transportation condition against which other alternatives are evaluated. It includes all programmed transportation improvements in a project area except the proposed action. Alternative 1 consists of the SH-75 roadway configuration in place as of the fall of 2003, the existing Peak Bus operation, and existing Wood River Rideshare programs.

The typical cross-sections for Alternatives 1 through 5 are shown on Figure 2-1. These cross-sections were used as a template to define a conceptual footprint for Alternatives 2 through 5, using aerial mapping. This cross-sectional template was centered on the existing centerline of SH-75 and new cut-and fill lines were determined. Widening was assumed to be equal on each side of this centerline. The edge of the conceptual cut and fill lines were then used to identify additional right-of-way requirements and initial impacts on natural and community resources.

Alternative 4 Enhanced Two-Lane Plus Transit was developed in response to community input. It was defined as a two-lane roadway that used aggressive access control, minor improvements to the existing roadway, trip reduction strategies, and additional transit service to meet future travel needs. Minor improvements included left and right turn lanes at key intersections, traffic signal coordination, left-turn acceleration lanes, and access management. It also increased the amount of peak hour transit, flextime, telecommuting, and carpooling.

To achieve the higher capacity on a two-lane roadway in Alternative 4, access must be limited to one approach every half-mile per side of SH-75. Two methods of achieving this level of control were developed for Alternative 4: purchase of access from property owners, and development of frontage roads that will connect to SH-75 at approximately half-mile intervals. A typical 120-foot cross-section incorporating frontage roads was defined and is shown on Figure 2-1.

Alternative 5 State Policy Level of Service C was considered. ITD applies a policy of achieving a peak travel period LOS C on transportation improvement projects. This policy allows for statewide consistency in state highway project planning and design and generally results in projects that accommodate future travel needs with efficient use of available funds. The typical cross-section needed to achieve LOS C in 2025 for the SH-75 segment with the highest level of congestion and greatest number of access points would have a total of seven lanes, as shown on Figure 2-1 (six travel lanes and one center turn lane).

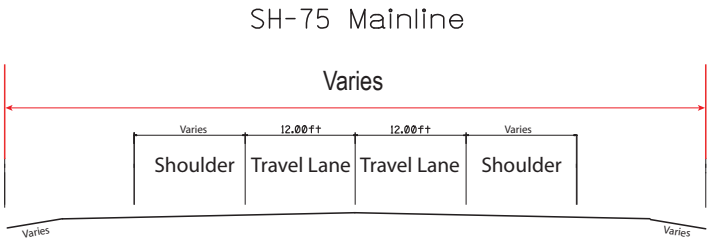
These five alternatives were evaluated based on several criteria: travel performance, resource impacts, conceptual costs, and community impacts. The output from the travel demand forecasting model developed for the project provided data for the following travel performance indicators: number of intersections at LOS D, LOS E and F; number of lane miles at LOS D, E and F; travel time; vehicle hours traveled; vehicle miles traveled; hours of delay; and intersections with side street delay. Based on the cross-section templates for each alternative, initial environmental resource impact criteria were estimated for wetlands, historic properties, and additional right-of-way required. Conceptual construction and right-of-way costs and operating and maintenance costs were estimated. Using the templates and the aerial mapping, community impacts were estimated for vegetation, residential buffer, berms, homes, and walls.

This information was used in a screening analysis that was reviewed by stakeholders, ITD and the Federal Highway Administration. It resulted in the elimination of Alternatives 4 and 5 from further consideration in the environmental analysis.

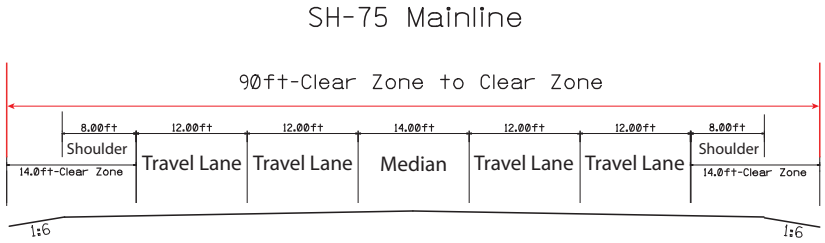
## Initial Typical Cross-Sections

*Note:*
*All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.*

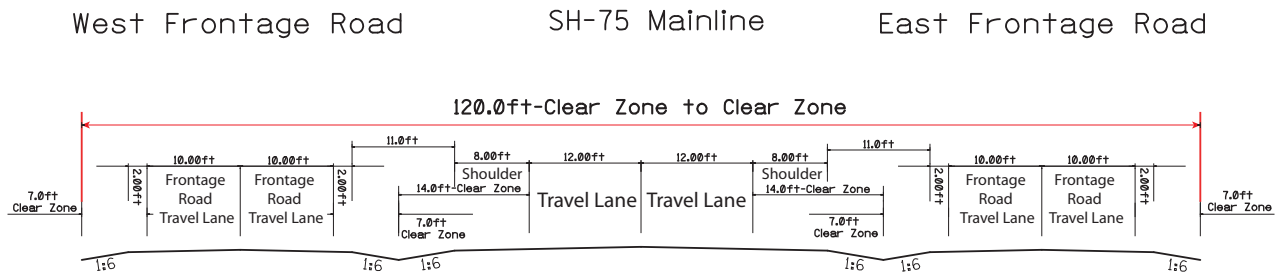
### *Existing Typical Cross Section:*



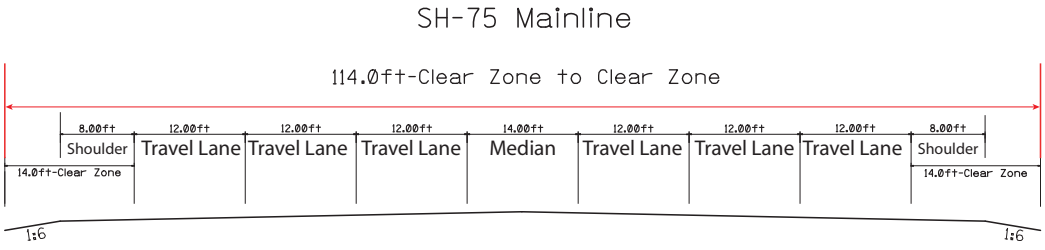

### *Alternatives 2 & 3 - Conceptual Typical Cross-Section:*




### *Alternative 4 - Conceptual Typical Cross-Section:*




### *Alternative 5 - Conceptual Typical Cross-Section:*




| SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Project No. STP-F-2392(035)<br>Key No. 3077 | |
| | Title<br>**SH-75**<br>**Initial Concept**<br>**Typical Cross-Sections** | Figure<br>**2-1**<br>Date: *February 2008* |

Alternative 4 was eliminated from further consideration as it would provide minimal travel performance improvement, had a right-of-way acquisition requirement nearly equal to other alternatives that would have better travel performance, and would have higher community impacts than Alternative 2 and 3. Relative to the typical 90-foot cross-section for Alternatives 2 and 3, the 120-foot cross-section to accommodate frontage roads would result in the higher costs and impacts.

Alternative 5 would provide a Level of Service C between Ohio Gulch and Hospital Drive, consistent with ITD's policy of achieving a peak travel period Level of Service C on transportation improvement projects. Although Alternative 5 would achieve this policy, it was eliminated from further consideration because its seven-lane, 114-foot wide cross-section between Ohio Gulch and Hospital Drive would result in the largest purchase of new right-of-way, greatest wetlands impact, greatest community impact, and largest impacts to historic resources. Based on the criteria and data used to conduct the alternatives screening analysis conducted during alternatives development of the DEIS, as summarized in Table 2.1 on page 2-9 of the DEIS, Alternative 5 would impact an additional eight historic structures, require the acquisition of 53 additional acres of new right-of-way, and result in the loss of approximately one mile of existing berms that provide buffering for existing development. ITD and FHWA therefore concluded that a five-lane cross-section that would result in a Level of Service D and have fewer adverse impacts will be acceptable. Alternative 5 was therefore not advanced for further consideration I the DEIS.

## *2.1.2 Advanced Alternatives*

Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 were carried forward for detailed evaluation in the DEIS. Based on the initial templates developed for the screening process, additional conceptual engineering and impact analysis were conducted for both Alternatives 2 and 3 to minimize impacts to wetlands and historic properties, minimize right-of-way acquisition, accommodate pedestrians and transit, and address public comment received during the development of the DEIS.

### 2.1.2.1 Alternative 2 Four Lane with Center Turn Lane

Alternative 2 will reconstruct SH-75 from US-20 Timmerman Junction to River Road in the City of Ketchum. Figures II-1 through II-99 in Volume II of the DEIS appended by reference to this document provide the conceptual designs for this alternative. Table 2-1 summarizes the proposed improvements by geographic segment.

**Table 2-1: Summary of Alternative 2 Improvements**

| Segment | Improvements |
|---|---|
| US-20 to Gannett Road | Two 12-foot lanes with 8-foot shoulders and 14-foot center turn lane. Passing lanes. |
| Gannett Road to Fox Acres Road | Widen to match existing 2 lanes in each direction and center turn lane through Bellevue. Two 12-foot lanes in each direction, 4-foot safety median, 8-foot shoulders from north Bellevue to Fox Acres. Traffic signals at Woodside Boulevard and Countryside Boulevard. |
| Fox Acres Road to McKercher Boulevard | At-grade improved pedestrian crossings. Traffic signal at Myrtle Street. Bus pull-outs at McKercher Boulevard and SH-75. No other change to existing SH-75 cross-section. |
| McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road | Two 12-foot lanes in each direction, 14-foot center turn lane, 8-foot shoulders. Four-foot safety median when center turn lane not needed. Three pedestrian undercrossings. Traffic signals at Buttercup Road/Zinc Spur Road, Ohio Gulch/Starweather Road. Bus pullouts. |

**Table 2-1: Summary of Alternative 2 Improvements - continued**

| Segment | Improvements |
|---|---|
| Elkhorn Road to Serenade Lane<br>(all within existing SH-75 right-of-way) | - Two 11-foot lanes in each direction; or<br>- Two 11-foot lanes in each direction and a 12-foot center turn lane; or<br>- One 12-foot lane in each direction with a 14-foot center turn lane |
| Serenade Lane to River Street | - One 14-foot lane in each direction with curb and gutter and sidewalk; or<br>- One 11-foot lane in each direction, 12-foot center turn lane, with curb and gutter and sidewalk; or<br>- One 11-foot lane in each direction, 12-foot center turn lane, 7-foot shoulder or parking strip, curb and gutter and sidewalk; or<br>- Four 11-foot lanes, no shoulders or turn lane, sidewalk one side. |
| River Street to Saddle Road | No Build. No change to existing SH-75 cross-section. |

#### 2.1.2.2 Alternative 3 Four Lane with Center Turn Lane and HOV

Alternative 3 will have the same physical footprint throughout the corridor as Alternative 2, including right- and left-turn lanes, acceleration lanes, bus pullouts, pedestrian under crossings, and traffic signals. Table 2.2 above summarizes those improvements. From McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road, the curb lane will operate as a high-occupancy vehicle lane (HOV) in the morning and evening peak hours, peak direction only. It will be restricted to buses and other vehicles carrying 2 or more persons.

## 2.2 Changes to Alternatives 2 and 3

In response to comments received on the DEIS, roundabouts at two locations and the Ohio/Gulch pedestrian underpass were re-evaluated as part of preparation of this FEIS. As Alternatives 2 and 3 have the same physical footprint, the changes to the conceptual design discussed below apply to both alternatives.

### *2.2.1 Roundabout Evaluations*

The use of roundabouts as an alternative intersection design was raised during the DEIS. Several comments on the DEIS requested consideration of roundabouts for SH-75.

#### 2.2.1.1 Consideration of Roundabouts in the DEIS

During the preparation of the DEIS, the feasibility of roundabouts at Serenade Lane, Ohio Gulch, Buttercup Road, Woodside Boulevard and Countryside Boulevard were examined. In all these locations, the roundabout will require right-of-way from property or features that will be subject to Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended. These include lands from the Reinheimer Ranch, deemed to be historic under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Wood River Trail system, a parks and recreation facility.

As such, these eligible properties are subject to Section 4(f), as codified at 23 United States Code 138. The code states:

> "The Secretary shall not approve any program or project (other than any project for a park road or parkway under section 204 of this title) which requires the use of any publicly owned land from a

> public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, State, or local significance as determined by the Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction thereof, or any land from an historic site of national, State, or local significance as so determined by such officials unless (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land, and (2) such program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to such park, recreational area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from such use."

Because roundabouts at these locations will require the use of part of a historic property and a parks and recreation resource and the impacts are not expected to be de minimus, Section 4(f) prohibits that use unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the roundabout. Alternatives 2 and 3 and Preferred Alternative all include conceptual designs for non-roundabout intersections at Serenade Lane, Ohio Gulch, Buttercup Road, Woodside Boulevard and Countryside Boulevard that meet the purpose and need for the project and that are feasible and prudent alternatives that do not impact these historic or parks and recreation resources. Accordingly, the FHWA cannot approve a roundabout at these locations.

#### 2.2.1.2 Roundabout Experience

In response to the interest in roundabouts and current developments in the transportation industry, telephone research was conducted on the use of and experience with roundabouts in mountain environments that experience snowy winters.

Region 3 of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) was contacted to determine their experience with the use of roundabouts in such locations as Aspen, Glenwood Springs, and Vail. Telephone discussions with the CDOT Chief Design Engineer and Traffic Engineer for Region 3 were conducted on April 10 and 12, 2006.

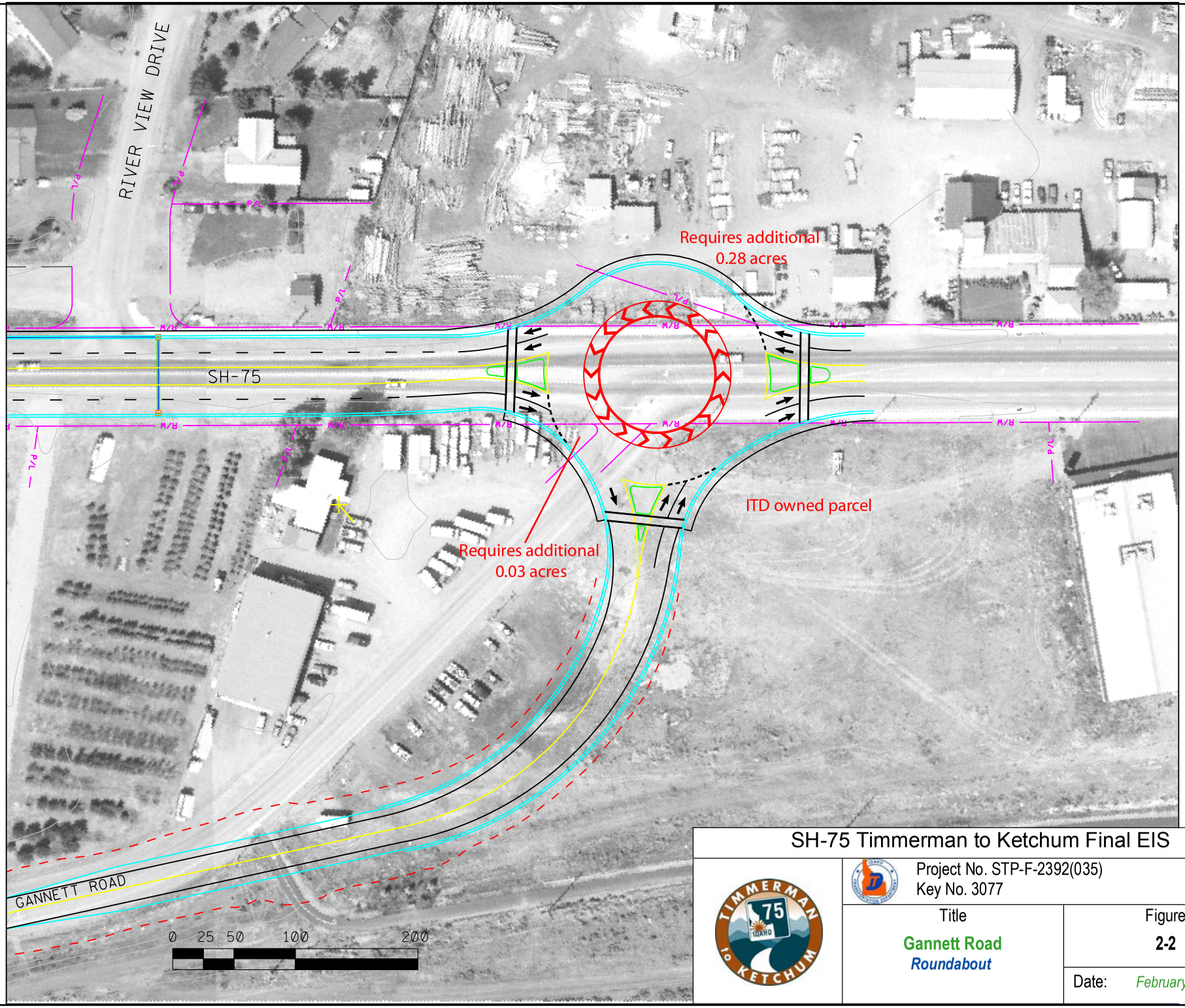
CDOT has positive experience with roundabouts in terms of their ability to handle traffic, safety, and driver acceptance. Most of the CDOT roundabouts have been installed as part of total roadway construction or reconstruction. Snow removal can be an issue from the perspective of shared responsibility between CDOT and the local jurisdiction. Maintenance agreements with the local jurisdictions are commonly put in place to address snow removal and other maintenance issues associated with the roundabouts.

#### 2.2.1.3 Feasible Roundabouts

There are two locations on SH-75 where roundabouts will not require the use of lands that will be subject to Section 4(f) protections. In response to DEIS comments, roundabouts were analyzed at the intersection of SH-75 and Gannett Road and at SH-75 and Elkhorn Road. Roundabouts at both locations were found to be acceptable from a traffic operations perspective and the additional right-of-way required does not contain any natural or manmade resources that are subject to additional analysis under other federal regulations. The conceptual design and traffic operations for roundabouts at Gannett Road and for Elkhorn Road were presented to the City of Bellevue and to the City of Ketchum, respectively in May 2006.

##### *Gannett Road*

Figure 2-2 shows the conceptual layout of a roundabout at the intersection of Gannett Road and SH-75. The roundabout is designed as a two-lane facility that will have two SH-75 lanes entering and departing the roundabout. The approach speed will be 25 miles per hour; the design accommodates a WB-67 vehicle (large semi-trailer truck).

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| Title | Figure |
|---|---|
| Gannett Road *Roundabout* | 2-2 |
| | Date: *February 2008* |

A traffic operations analysis was conducted for the Year 2025 for both morning and evening peak hour, using the VISSIM[8] traffic simulation model. The results of this analysis indicate that a two-lane roundabout will function at Level of Service A/B.

This concept was presented to the City of Bellevue on May 15, 2006 and received a favorable response. It will be one component of a traffic calming plan for the City of Bellevue. Access to the business west of the roundabout will be provided via an additional direct access into the roundabout. Discussions with the land owner on May 22, 2006 were held to obtain input on the roundabout concept and possible access to his property. A favorable verbal response was received.

Relative to the Gannett Road/SH-75 realignment evaluated in the DEIS, the Gannett Road roundabout will require the acquisition of an additional 0.28 acres of land from the owner on the west side of SH-75 and a 0.03 acre sliver of vacant land from a privately owned parcel in the southeast quadrant of the existing intersection. The land required on the west side of SH-75 is currently used for outdoor lumber storage and informal parking by the land owner. The additional 0.31 acres of proposed right-of-way was included in the wetlands, cultural resource, Threatened and Endangered species, and hazardous material surveys documented in Chapter 3 Affected Environment of the DEIS. These surveys were conducted for 150 feet each side of the existing SH-75 centerline. No natural or cultural resources or hazardous materials were found on this property.

As the Gannett Road roundabout will result in an acceptable Level of Service, is favored by the City of Bellevue and acceptable to the affected landowner west of SH-75, and does not have impacts on natural or cultural resources, it is incorporated into Alternatives 2 and 3. Figure II-36 of Volume II of the DEIS is therefore replaced with a revised Figure II-36 that is included in this FEIS in Appendix D.

***Elkhorn Road***

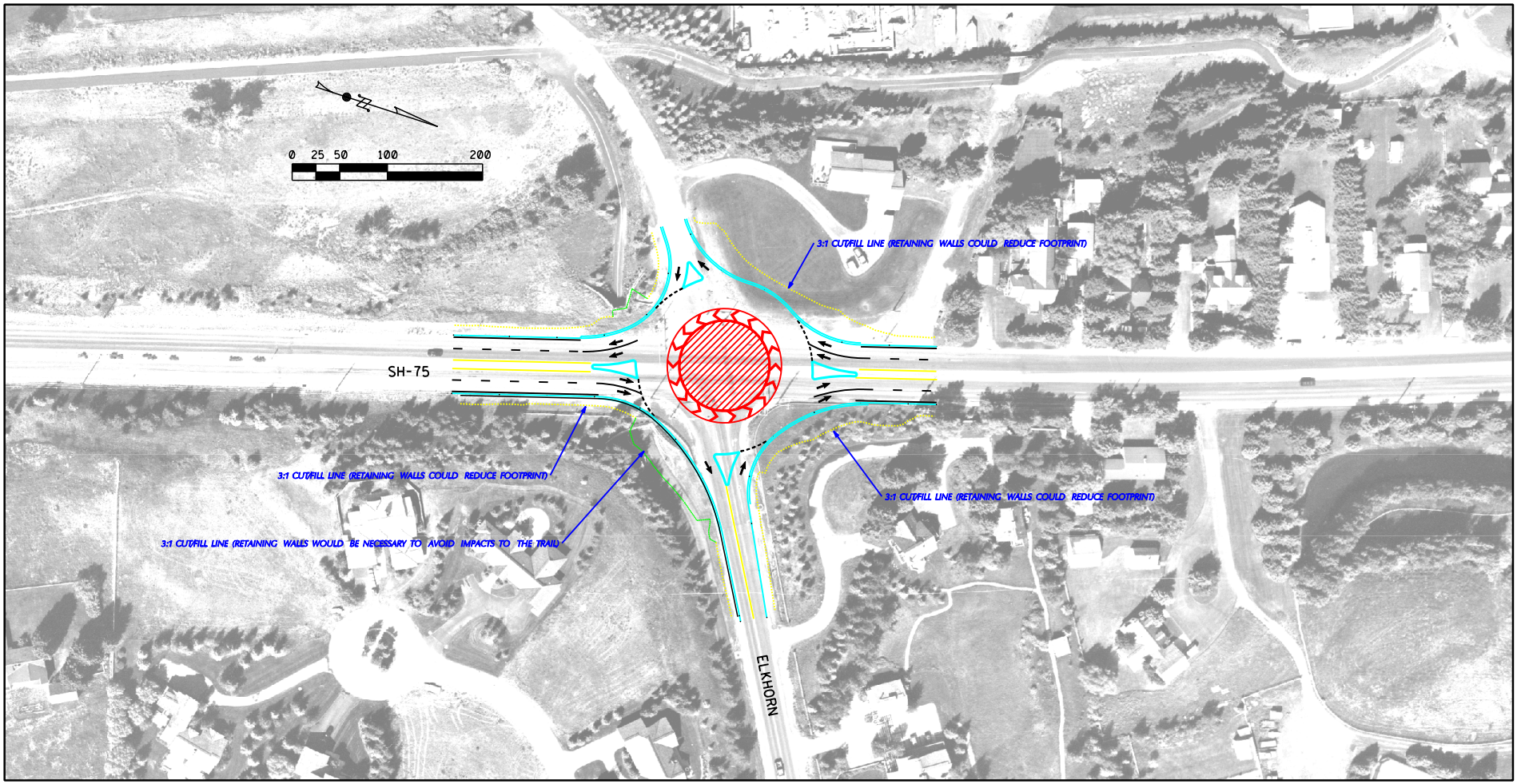
Figure 2-3 shows the conceptual layout of a roundabout at the intersection of Elkhorn Road and SH-75. The roundabout is designed as a two-lane facility that will have two SH-75 lanes entering and departing the roundabout. The approach speed will be 25 miles per hour; the design accommodates a WB-67 vehicle (large semi-trailer truck).

A traffic operations analysis was conducted for the Year 2025 for both morning and evening peak hour, using the VISSIM traffic simulation model. The results of this analysis indicate that a two-lane roundabout will function at Level of Service C or better.

This concept was presented to the City of Ketchum and City of Sun Valley on May 22, 2006. Through discussion at that meeting, it was determined that the roundabout could be an opportunity to create a gateway entry to both cities and will also serve as a traffic calming device.

The roundabout will require acquisition of private property from all four quadrants of the intersection, totaling approximately 0.32 acres. The City of Ketchum and City of Sun Valley agreed to contact the land owners from which this right-of-way will need to be acquired and obtain input from them. These landowners did not support the roundabout at this time.

[8] VISSIM is a behavior-based multi-purpose traffic simulation computer program that is used internationally to analyze complex traffic conditions on highways and urban roadway situations. It also enables simulation and visualization of traffic operations.

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Key No. 3077

Title

**Elkhorn Road**
***Roundabout***

Figure

**2-3**

Date: *February 2008*

Although the Elkhorn roundabout is feasible from a traffic operations point of view, it is not acceptable to adjacent landowners. The existing at-grade intersection currently operates at Level of Service A and will operate at Level of Service C in 2025 with Alternative 2. As the existing intersection will meet ITD's peak hour LOS C policy in Year 2025, the acquisition of additional right-of-way is difficult to justify. The Elkhorn roundabout is therefore not included in the Preferred Alternative.

### *2.2.2 Pedestrian Underpass Locations*

The DEIS proposed pedestrian underpasses at three locations between McKercher Boulevard and East Fork Road to address pedestrian/bicyclist crossing safety issues identified through the public involvement program. As the Wood River Trail system parallels SH-75 on the east side of the highway in this segment of the corridor, residents west of the highway have difficulty crossing the highway to access the trail.

Comments on the DEIS from the general public and from the Blaine County Recreation District (BCRD) questioned the location of the Ohio Gulch/Starweather pedestrian underpass and recommended that a pedestrian underpass be provided at Deer Creek. Deer Creek Road provides direct access to Deer Creek Canyon and the recreational amenities it provides.

A May 22, 2006 coordination meeting with the Blaine County Recreation District (BCRD), which administers the Wood River Trail system, BCRD indicated their preference for elimination of the Ohio Gulch/Starweather location in favor of a pedestrian underpass at Deer Creek Road.

Prior to issuance of the DEIS, ITD received a letter from the Starweather Homeowners' Association, opposing the pedestrian underpass at Ohio Gulch as it will occupy the Association's communal lands and will provide access to a private road and development for non-residents of the Starweather subdivision.

The suggested alternative pedestrian underpass at Deer Creek was evaluated. During the preparation of the DEIS, the property in the northwest corner of the SH-75 and Deer Creek intersection has been developed with a home that is designated as an affordable housing unit. Inclusion of a pedestrian underpass at this location will require the removal of this home. As lack of affordable housing is a serious issue in this resort community, this location for a pedestrian underpass was not advanced for further consideration.

An alternate location was therefore examined at Spruce Way. Based on comments received during alternatives development of the DEIS, Alternatives 2 and 3 included a closure of Spruce Way at SH-75 and a cul-de-sac at Spruce Way. This closure and cul-de-sac required the acquisition of additional lands to accommodate the cul-de-sac versus leaving Spruce Way open. This additional ROW was included in the DEIS and impacts to any resources were included in the DEIS evaluation of impacts. The right-of-way required for the cul-de-sac and the widening of SH-75 west of its existing location provides the opportunity to incorporate a pedestrian underpass at Spruce Way. Figure 2-4 shows the conceptual layout of the Spruce Way pedestrian underpass and cul-de-sac.

On the east side, the conceptual design for the pedestrian underpass shown in Figure 2-4 will require 1.08 acres of right-of-way from the Peregrine Ranch area, a large undeveloped privately owned land parcel. This is in addition to the acreage required for the road widening. Discussions with the Blaine County planners indicate that future development of this parcel is expected and, through negotiations with the Peregrine Ranch landowner and future land use development approvals, incorporation of the east portal of the pedestrian underpass and will be negotiated. Exploratory discussions between the land owner and ITD in the fall of 2006, initiated by the land owner, confirm the owner's intent to work with ITD on incorporation of a pedestrian underpass into his future development.

The right-of-way needed from Peregrine Ranch for the east side of the pedestrian underpass is currently used for a landscaped berm adjacent to SH-75 and vacant grassland. As this land falls with 150 feet of the centerline of the existing SH-75 right-of-way, this land was surveyed for natural and cultural resources and


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for the existence of hazardous materials as part of the resource surveys conducted and documented in Chapter 3 of the DEIS. Placement of the pedestrian underpass at this location will therefore not result in any impacts on these resources.

The Spruce Way pedestrian underpass is incorporated into both Alternatives 2 and 3 as it meets the existing and future pedestrian/bicyclist needs by connecting the Wood River Trail to residences west of SH-75. It also will provide additional pedestrian and bicyclist access to Deer Creek Road and Deer Creek Canyon.

The Ohio Gulch/Starweather pedestrian underpass is eliminated from Alternatives 2 and 3 for two reasons. The Starweather Homeowners' Association opposes the use of their communal lands for the underpass. Based on comments from Blaine County Recreation District and a review of the parks and recreation discussion in the DEIS, an underpass at this location does not connect to any other regional public recreation resource. Figures II-64 (Spruce Way) and Figures II-70 and II-71 in Volume II of the DEIS are therefore replaced and included in this FEIS in Appendix D.

## 2.3 Preferred Alternative

### *2.3.1 Identification of a Preferred Alternative*

No preferred alternative was identified in the DEIS. A preferred alternative is identified in this FEIS. The process for identifying the preferred alternative took the following steps:

- FHWA and ITD review and evaluation of comments received on the DEIS, including preferences for Alternatives 1, 2 or 3.
- ITD additional coordination with regulatory agencies and local jurisdictions in the project area during May and June, 2006. Table 6-1 in Section 6.0 Comments and Coordination of this FEIS lists these meetings.
- FHWA and ITD review and evaluation of the comparative transportation performance of the alternatives and their ability to meet the purpose and need for the project.
- FHWA and ITD review and evaluation of the impacts of the alternatives on the natural and manmade environment.
- FHWA and ITD review of consistency with local comprehensive plans and expressed desires of local jurisdictions as stated in comments received on the DEIS.

The matrix shown in Table 2-2 summarizes this information for the three DEIS alternatives.

FHWA and ITD conducted a workshop on June 15, 2006 to consider the information presented in Table 2-2 (shown on page 2-7 of this FEIS), comments on the DEIS, technical information contained in the DEIS, and the results of the additional agency and community coordination. A second meeting with FHWA, ITD, and ITD consultant team was held on December 14, 2006 to further discuss the SH-75 alternatives. Subsequently, FHWA identified Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative.

Alternative 2 was identified as the Preferred Alternative for the following reasons:

- Best increases SH-75 roadway capacity to accommodate future year 2025 vehicle traffic;
- Increases transportation safety for all users, relative to the No Build.
- It meets the purpose and need of the project.
- It provides the most travel time advantage for all SH-75 users.
- It provides the highest Level of Service between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road.
- Is generally consistent with local comprehensive plans, goals and objectives..

## Table 2.2: Comparison of Build Alternatives

| **YEAR 2025 TRAVEL PERFORMANCE (McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road Only)** | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Evaluation Considerations*** | ***Alternative 2*** | ***Alternative 3*** |
| Segment Travel Time | 16 minutes | 25 minutes average; 27 minutes General Purpose, 16 minutes HOV |
| NOTE: An explanation of why travel time for Alternative 2 and for the HOV lane in Alternative 3 is the same is provided on page 4-8. | | |
| Level of Service<br>- Segment from McKercher to Ohio Gulch<br>- Segment from Ohio Gulch to Elkhorn<br>o At East Fork<br>o At Hospital/Broadway Run<br>o At Elkhorn | All Vehicles<br>D<br>D<br>C<br>A<br>C | General Purpose LOS - HOV LOS<br>D – A<br>F – A<br>F – A<br>E – A<br>F – A |
| NOTE: Intersection LOS for Alternative 2 reflects the most congested approach of the intersection which is typically not the SH-75 approach. Because of the high level of congestion in the general purpose lane with Alternative 3, the most congested approach of the intersection is typically the SH-75 approach. | | |
| Safety | Improved over Alternative 1 No-Build; responds to High Accident Locations | Similar to Alternative 1 No-build except during peak period HOV operation as follows:<br>• Moderate risk for increased rear-end accidents along section between Alturas and Timber Way where existing GP lane will be converted to HOV<br>• Moderate risk of increased rear-end and sideswipe accidents due to right-turning vehicles traveling into and out of HOV lane<br>• Low-to-moderate risk of sideswipe accidents near where HOV designation begins and ends |
| % Trips in Carpools/Transit | 33% | 34% |
| Corridor Delay (vehicle-hours in 2025 peak period) | 150 | 266 |
| Freight Mobility | Mobility for goods movement improved based on overall improvement in Level of Service, safety. | During peak hour HOV operations, trucks restricted to HOV lane with low Level of Service. Higher potential for rear-end collisions with trucks due to stop and go conditions and slower truck accelerations speeds. |
| Minimum Operating Segment for HOV | Not applicable | Elkhorn to Ohio Gulch to attain at least 5 minutes per vehicle minimum travel time saving in HOV lane |
| - Vehicles in HOV lane [1] | N/A | 260-280 |
| - Persons in HOV lane | N/A | 1100-1200 |
| **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS (US-20 to River Street)** | | |
| Prime Farmland | 59 acres directly impacted. Form ADF 1006 Land Evaluation and Site Assessment score of 132 (<160 score threshold set by NRCS). | Same as Alternative 2. 59 acres directly impacted. |
| Noise Impacts | 8 locations where predicted noise levels will be at or exceeding 66 dBA. Two locations where noise barrier mitigation is feasible. | Same as Alternative 2. 8 locations where predicted noise levels will be at or exceeding 66 dBA. Two locations where noise barrier mitigation is feasible. |
| Air Quality (Clean Air Act) | No exceedances of the 1-hour or the 8-hour NAAQS for CO. No adverse impacts. | Same as Alternative 2. No exceedances of the 1-hour or the 8-hour NAAQS for CO or adverse impacts. |
| Environmental Justice Populations | No disproportionately high or adverse impacts to environmental justice populations. | Same as Alternative 2. No disproportionately high or adverse impacts to environmental justice populations. |
| Wetlands Impacts (Section 404) | Impacts to 1.19 acres of natural wetlands, 1.29 acres of irrigation dependent wetlands, 1.07 acres of natural wetlands at mitigation site. Full mitigation at Boulder Flats Mitigation Site. | Same as Alternative 2. Impacts to 1.19 acres of natural wetlands, 1.29 acres of irrigation dependent wetlands, 1.07 acres of natural wetlands at mitigation site. Full mitigation at Boulder Flats Mitigation Site. |
| Historic Resources (Section 106 and Section 4(f)) | Section 4(f) de minimus impacts on 7 cultural resources (5 canals, two historic properties) | Same as Alternative 2. Section 4(f) de minimus impacts on 7 cultural resources (5 canals, two historic properties) |
| Threatened and Endangered Species (Section 7) | Biological Assessment (BA) gave "May effect, not likely to adversely effect" determinations for Canada Lynx, Bald Eagle, Utah Valvata Snail. "No effect" determination for Gray Wolf, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bull trout, Steelhead, Spring/Summer Chinook Salmon, Sockeye Salmon. Since the BA was signed, the Bald Eagle has been delisted and but is still protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. | Same as Alternative 2. Biological Assessment (BA) gave "May effect, not likely to adversely effect" determinations for Canada Lynx, Bald Eagle, Utah Valvata Snail. "No effect" determination for Gray Wolf, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bull trout, Steelhead, Spring/Summer Chinook Salmon, Sockeye Salmon. Since the BA was signed, the Bald Eagle has been delisted and but is still protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. |
| **COMMUNITY AND AGENCY COMMENT** | | |
| Local Jurisdictions Support | No written support from local jurisdictions. | Unanimous written support from 6 local jurisdictions, including separate letters from the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley, as well as a joint letter signed by the cities, Blaine County and the City of Carey. |
| Preferences Expressed in DEIS Comments | Of 59 comments expressing a preference, about 52% of public comment supported. | Of 59 comments expressing a preference, about 48% of public comment supported. |
| Regulatory and Resource Agencies | No preferences expressed for alternatives. | No preferences expressed for alternatives. |

[1] The travel demand forecasting model was run with 3 different all-day parking costs in the City of Ketchum. The results show that paid parking will increase the number of vehicles and person trips in the HOV lane.

## 2.3.2 Description of Preferred Alternative

Except for the three changes associated with the Gannett Road roundabout and the Spruce Way pedestrian underpass discussed below, the Preferred Alternative contains the same physical roadway section along with vertical and horizontal geometry described in the DEIS for Alternatives 2 and 3. Figures 2-2 through 2-9 on pages 2-10 through 2-17 provide an overview of these physical characteristics by geographic segment and illustrate the typical cross-sections for each geographic segment.

As Alternative 2 is constructed from McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road, it will be signed to indicate that future conversion of the curb lane to a High Occupancy Vehicle Lane may occur in the future.

The Preferred Alternative 2 is described in the following sections. Based on comments received on the DEIS, two changes to the conceptual design of the project have been incorporated into the Alternative: a roundabout at the intersection of SH-75 and Gannett Road in the City of Bellevue, incorporation of a pedestrian underpass at Spruce Way and SH-75 north of the City of Hailey, and elimination of the proposed pedestrian underpass at SH-75 and Ohio Gulch/Starweather Road. These are detailed as follows.

***Gannett Road Roundabout***

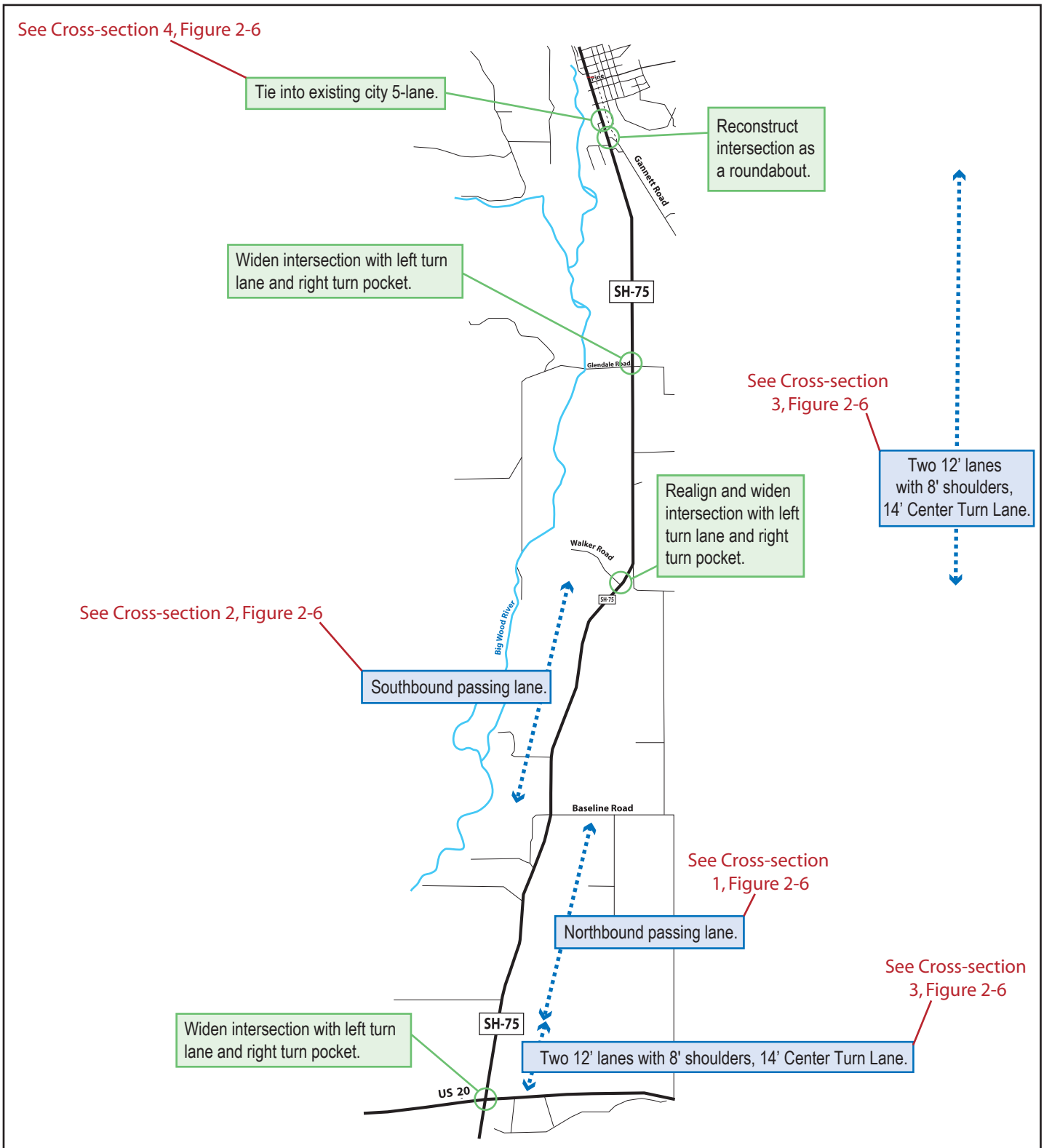
Figure 2-2 shows the conceptual layout of a roundabout at the intersection of Gannett Road and SH-75. The roundabout is designed as a two-lane facility that will have two SH-75 lanes entering and departing the roundabout. The approach speed will be 25 miles per hour; the design accommodates a WB-67 vehicle (large semi-trailer truck). A traffic operations analysis was conducted for the Year 2025 for both morning and evening peak hour, using the VISSIM[9] traffic simulation model. The results of this analysis indicate that a two-lane roundabout will function at Level of Service A/B.

This concept was presented to the City of Bellevue on May 15, 2006 and received a favorable response. It will be one component of a traffic calming plan for the City of Bellevue. Access to the business west of the roundabout will be provided via an additional direct access into the roundabout. Discussions with the land owner on May 22, 2006 were held to obtain input on the roundabout concept and possible access to his property. A favorable verbal response was received.

Relative to the Gannett Road/SH-75 realignment proposed in the DEIS, the Gannett Road roundabout will require the acquisition of an additional 0.28 acres of land from the owner on the west side of SH-75 and a 0.03 acre sliver of vacant land from a privately owned parcel in the southeast quadrant of the existing intersection. The land required on the west side of SH-75 is currently used for outdoor lumber storage and informal parking by the land owner. The additional 0.31 acres of proposed right-of-way was included in the wetlands, cultural resource, Threatened and Endangered species, and hazardous material surveys documented in Chapter 3 Affected Environment of the DEIS. These surveys were conducted for 150 feet each side of the existing SH-75 centerline. No natural or cultural resources or hazardous materials were found on this property.

As the Gannett Road roundabout will result in an acceptable Level of Service, is favored by the City of Bellevue and acceptable to the affected landowner west of SH-75, and does not have impacts on natural or cultural resources, it is incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.

[9] VISSIM is a behavior-based multi-purpose traffic simulation computer program that is used internationally to analyze complex traffic conditions on highways and urban roadway situations. It also enables simulation and visualization of traffic operations.

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**Preferred Alternative**
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***Segment: US-20 to Gannett Road***

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***Spruce Way Pedestrian Underpass***

The conceptual design drawings contained in Volume II Conceptual Engineering Design of the DEIS (included in Appendix D DEIS) show the conceptual design of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2. Appendix D of this FEIS contains replacement figures for Figures II-64, II-70 and II-71. These illustrate the revised conceptual design at Spruce Way and the Ohio Gulch areas respectively.

### *2.3.3 No Build from River Street to Saddle Road*

The Preferred Alternative does not include improvements from River Street to Saddle Road, the northern logical terminus for the project. The No Build through this section of the corridor was advanced into the EIS for the following reasons:

Public scoping and subsequent public involvement activities conducted during the preparation of the DEIS, as documented in Chapter 6 of the DEIS, indicated that any physical reconstruction of SH-75 through downtown Ketchum, known as Main Street, would be unacceptable to local residents, businesses and the City of Ketchum. This concern was based on the value placed on the existing Main Street streetscape and its contribution to the visual quality and attractiveness of the resort community. Any potential widening of SH-75 will encroach into the existing sidewalks and storefront areas of Main Street, adversely affecting the existing visual quality of the Main Street, decreasing the sidewalk area, and thereby adversely impacting the pedestrian environment of downtown Ketchum.

During the development of the DEIS, the City of Ketchum undertook transportation planning, traffic studies, and parking studies that were expected to provide input to the SH-75 EIS process with respect to potential improvements and traffic operations changes north of Serenade Lane. However, the City of Ketchum did not make decisions or recommendations based on these studies with regard to potential physical reconstruction of SH-75 through downtown Ketchum.

In comments received on the DEIS, the Cities of Ketchum and Sun Valley, for the first time in this EIS process, requested a build alternative between River Street and Saddle Road, including Main Street in downtown Ketchum. This included a request for changes to the grade at the intersection of Warm Springs and SH-75 in downtown Ketchum. On September 8, 2006, the City of Ketchum adopted the "Downtown Ketchum Master Plan" (January, 2006). This document does not call for any reconstruction of SH-75 nor for specific changes to the Warm Springs intersection. However, the document contains the following recommended step:

> *A three-lane configuration on Main should be considered as an alternative to the four-lane system to calm (slow) traffic and improve pedestrian comfort.*

To date, neither the City of Ketchum nor the City of Sun Valley have forwarded a potential build alternative to FHWA and ITD, so no such alternative or improvements to SH-75 north of River Street are included in the FEIS.

While the FEIS and the Preferred Alternative do not include a build alternative for River Street to Saddle Road, the Cities and ITD have committed to continued coordination of the planning for potential improvements to this section of SH-75. This commitment was made at a March 14, 2007 joint meeting with the City of Ketchum City Council, the City of Sun Valley City Council, and ITD. A subsequent letter was provided to ITD and is included in Appendix A of this FEIS. ITD has committed to assist the Cities in obtaining any funding and any additional environmental clearances that may be needed in the future. These activities will be conducted outside of the EIS process and are expected to occur over the next several years.

### 2.3.4 Phasing of the Preferred Alternative

Section 1.2 Project Programming and Funding of this FEIS describes the current programming and funding that is available for implementing the Preferred Alternative. The DEIS described a general construction phasing plan in Section 5.20.1 and as illustrated in Figure 5.20-1 (pages 5-148 and 5-150 of the DEIS, respectively). This conceptual phasing plan was developed to take into account geographic areas with the highest levels of congestion, and to provide a sequencing of construction that will have the least likely traffic disruption. Changes in the funding since publication of the DEIS have necessitated development of a revised phasing plan.

SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum was one of several projects included in the Connecting Idaho program, instituted by the then Governor Dirk Kempthorne. Key to the implementation of the Connecting Idaho program was a new form of funding, Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle (GARVEE). As funding for the project was to be provided through the GARVEE project at the time of the DEIS publication,[10] the phasing plan presented in the DEIS was based on the continued availability of federal funds through the GARVEE program.

Since the publication of the DEIS, the SH-75 project was removed from the GARVEE funding initiative and specific funding was provided in SAFETEA-LU for $22.2 million. These two changes have necessitated the development of a revised conceptual phasing plan. Construction of the Preferred Alternative will be phased, primarily in accordance with available federal and state funding and public/private funding opportunities in the Wood River Corridor.

ITD has coordinated with Blaine County, and the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley to identify the highest priority components of SH-75 and develop a first phase plan for the currently available SAFETEA-LU funding allocation.

This first phase will occur during years 2009 through 2012:

- development of preliminary engineering and right-of-way plans for Timberway to Hospital Drive section;
- acquisition of right-of-way from Timberway to Hospital Drive; public/private contributions to ROW acquisition through expected development;
- construction of improvements from Timberway to Hospital Drive; and,
- development of preliminary engineering and right-of-way plans for the Hospital Drive to Elkhorn Road and McKercher Boulevard to Alturas Way sections.

Subsequent phases of construction will occur over many years, contingent upon expected federal funding at levels similar to those experienced since 1991, as described in Section 1.2 of this FEIS. Based upon current ITD and local jurisdiction discussions, the expected phasing is as follows:

- acquisition of right-of-way between McKercher Boulevard and Alturas Way.
- construction of improvements on Main Street in both the Cities of Bellevue and Hailey;
- construction of SH-75 between McKercher Boulevard to Greenhorn Bridge
- construction of SH-75 between Bellevue to Hailey
- acquisition of right-of-way between US-20 and Gannett Road.

[10] The GARVEE Transportation Program was approved by the Idaho Legislature in April 2005. GARVEE is a new funding program that allows Idaho to plan, design and build more highway projects in less time than through traditional transportation funding methods. It uses Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle (GARVEE) bonds to fund critical improvements in six transportation corridors throughout the state.

These phases are subject to change, in response to changes in federal funding and/or state or local priorities but represent the best available information at the time of publication of this FEIS.

Each of these phases will include the use of any ITD and/or local jurisdiction public/private partnerships including use of local funding, and developer contributions to right-of-way and construction that occur prior to or during these phases.

## 2.4 Potential Future Conversion to HOV Operations from McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road

In recognition of the comments received on the DEIS that support HOV operations, and the joint letter signed by the elected officials of Blaine County and five Blaine County cities (see pages B-15 to B-19 in Appendix B of this FEIS), FHWA and ITD acknowledge that Alternative 2 between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road could be converted to HOV operations. The traffic operations analysis conducted for Alternative 3 in this EIS indicates that the HOV operations will result in a lower Level of Service for vehicles in the general purpose lane, the majority of users in this section of SH-75.

Notwithstanding the traffic operations analysis in the DEIS, and as presented at public open houses, Work Group meetings, and at the public hearing, Blaine County, the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley, Blaine County Citizens for Smart Growth, and many individuals provided comment on the DEIS that they expect that the HOV lane will attract more users that this EIS predicts. They believe the continued development of transit, carpooling, and changes to travel habits will support a much higher usage of the HOV lane.

This belief is partially supported by the growth in the provision of transit services in the Wood River Valley. This growth, the use of these services, and the new Mountain Rides Regional Transportation Authority, as described in Sections 1.3.2.1 and 1.3.2.2 of this FEIS indicate that there is a strong commitment to and implementation of transit services in the Wood River Valley.

Based on the position and desires of the local communities and organizations that submitted comments on the DEIS, ITD commits to the conversion of the operations of Alternative 2 to HOV operations from McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road when ITD determines that the requirements discussed below have been met. Implementing Alternative 2 provides the necessary roadway cross-section to accommodate a change in traffic operations to HOV operations.

The decision of whether and when to convert to HOV operations will be made by ITD. The FHWA will not be involved in that decision and HOV operations are not part of the Preferred Alternative identified by the FHWA in this FEIS.

ITD's decision will be based on documentation that the following four requirements have been met. If a conversion to HOV operations is made, ITD will also have the final authority on the continuation or cessation of HOV operations, based on the evaluation process described in Requirement 4.

Requirement 1: A minimum segment of roadway, from at least Ohio Gulch to Elkhorn Road, has been reconstructed to the cross section and geometry as defined in Alternative 2. The success of HOV is partially dependent upon having a sufficiently long segment of roadway in place for drivers to experience a noticeable travel time savings. A typical

HOV performance measure in the United States is a travel time savings of at least 5 minutes overall in the project corridor.[11]

Requirement 2: A change in Idaho State legislation has been enacted to enable enforcement of the HOV lane restrictions. Idaho State legislation currently does not provide any regulatory ability for the Idaho State Police or Blaine County Sheriff's office to enforce an HOV lane.

Requirement 3: A plan for and the basis for funding of the enforcement of HOV, of education and marketing of the HOV operation, and of collection and analysis of performance data have been developed and agreed upon among the Idaho Transportation Department, Blaine County, Mountain Rides, and the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley.

Requirement 4: A formal process for evaluating the HOV operation, and for making a determination of whether to continue or discontinue its operation, is developed and agreed upon between ITD and Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum, Sun Valley, Blaine County and Mountain Rides. The first review will occur no sooner than 6 months following commencement of HOV operation and no later than 12 months after commencement of operations. This provides time for SH-75 users to adjust to HOV operations over a 6-month period and commits to a specified timeframe for a formal review.

Criteria to be used in this review include measured travel time for users of the HOV lane and of the single occupancy lane (based on peak travel time studies); actual costs of enforcement and numbers of violations of the HOV lane restrictions (as provided by the Blaine County Sheriff's Office); HOV lane traffic volumes (based on traffic counts taken on at least three occasions during HOV operations); peak hour Level of Service for the HOV lane and the single occupancy vehicle lane; public response (based on phone calls, emails and correspondence received during the first 6 to 12-month period); crash analysis (based on accident reports); and impacts on trucking (based on comments received from the trucking industry).

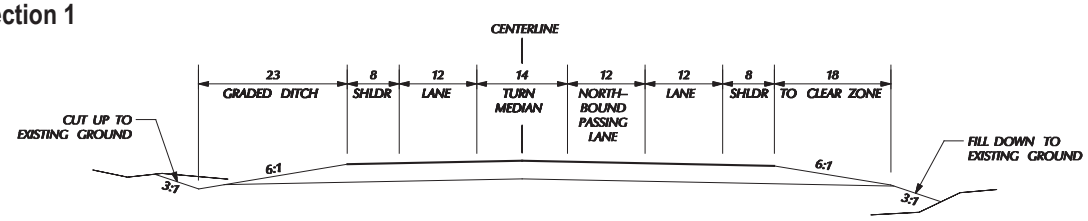
To facilitate this process and to develop the necessary documentation that ITD will require to approve a conversion, ITD commits to create a SH-75 Corridor Operations Management Team composed of representatives from ITD, Blaine County, Mountain Rides, and the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley for the purpose of developing and implementing a program to meet the four requirements specified above. The members of the Operations Management Team will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to commit the resources to comply with the four requirements and to develop and provide documentation to ITD that the conditions have been met.

Formation of this Corridor Operations Management Team will occur once funding for construction of the final section of the SH-75 corridor between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road has been approved in the State Transportation Improvement Plan. ITD will be responsible for initiating formation of the Corridor Operations Management Team at that time.

[11] American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), "Guide for High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Facilities, 3rd Edition", 2004; and, National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 414 HOV Systems Manual, National Academy Press, 1998

# Preferred Alternative Typical Sections: US-20 to Gannett Road

## Cross Section 1

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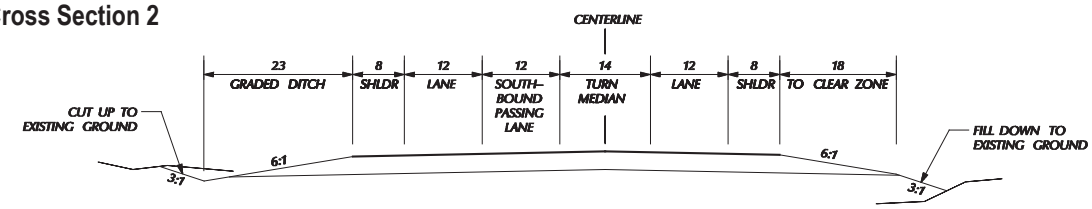


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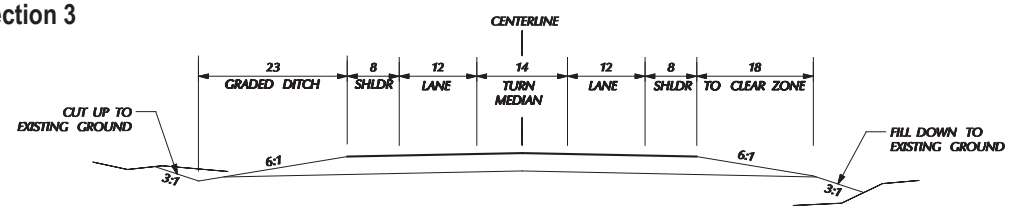


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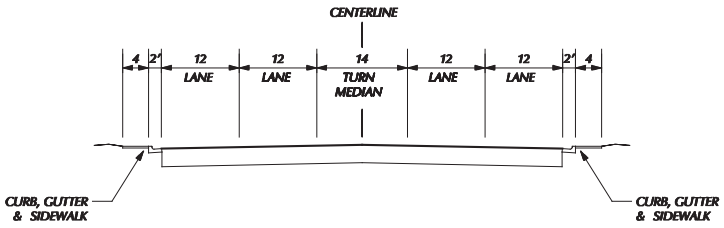


*Note:*
*All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.*

*NOT TO SCALE*

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Title
**Preferred Alternative Typical Cross-Sections *US-20 to Gannett***

Figure
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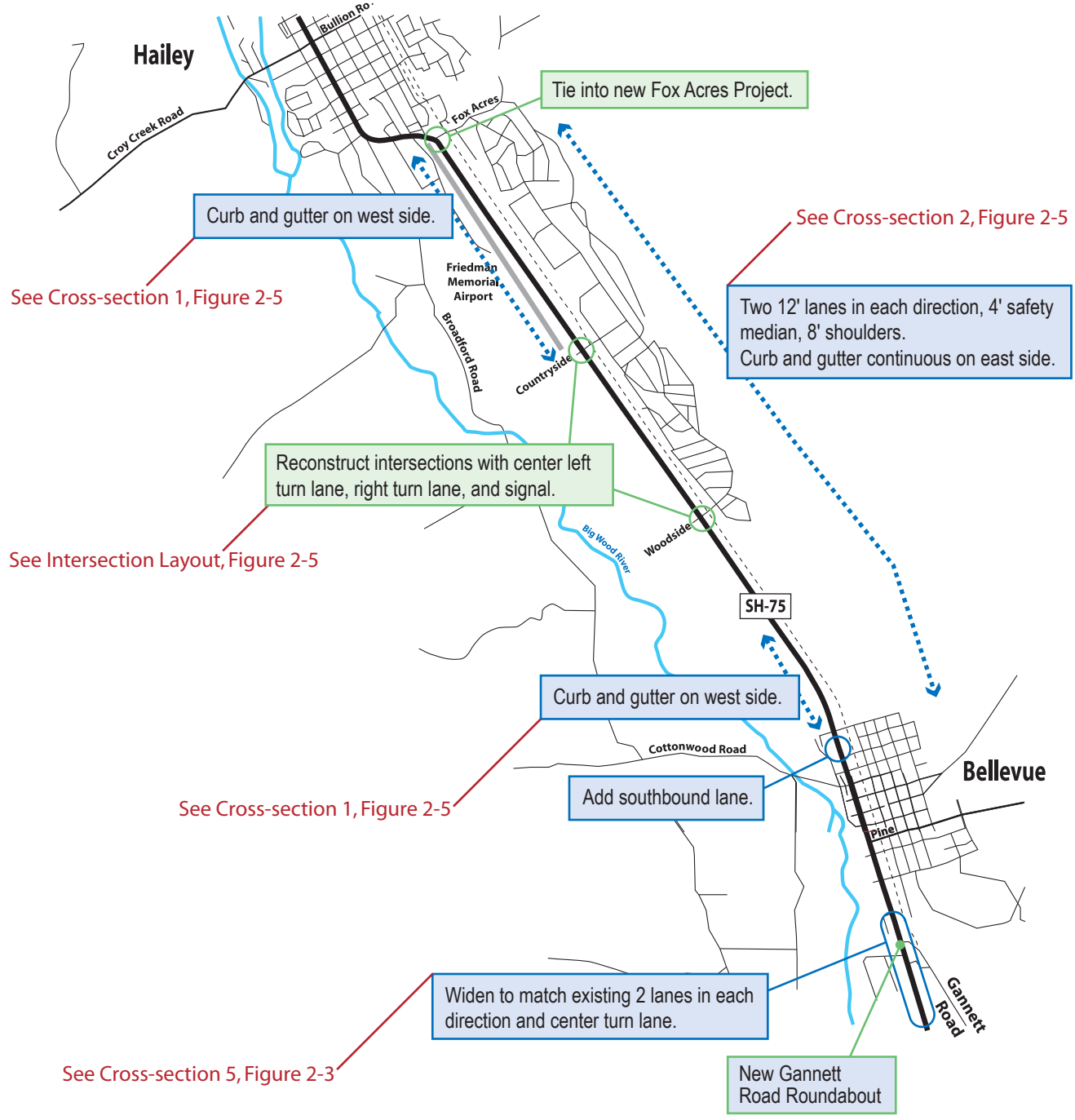


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Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

**Preferred Alternative**
**Proposed Improvements**
***Segment: Gannett Road to Fox Acres***

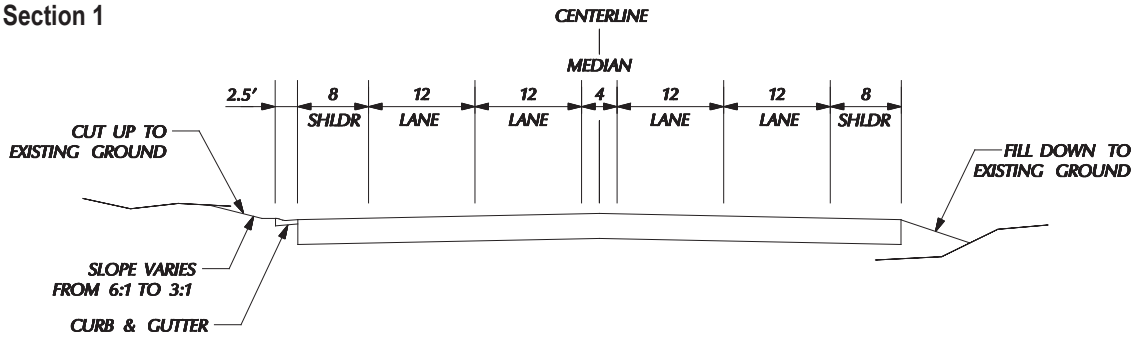
Figure

**2-7**

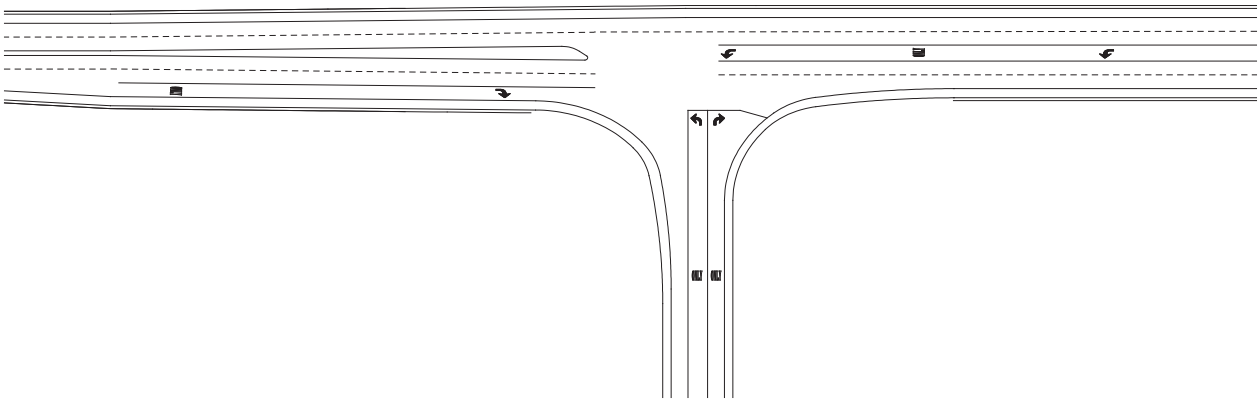
Date: *February 2008*

# Preferred Alternative Typical Sections: Gannett to Fox Acres

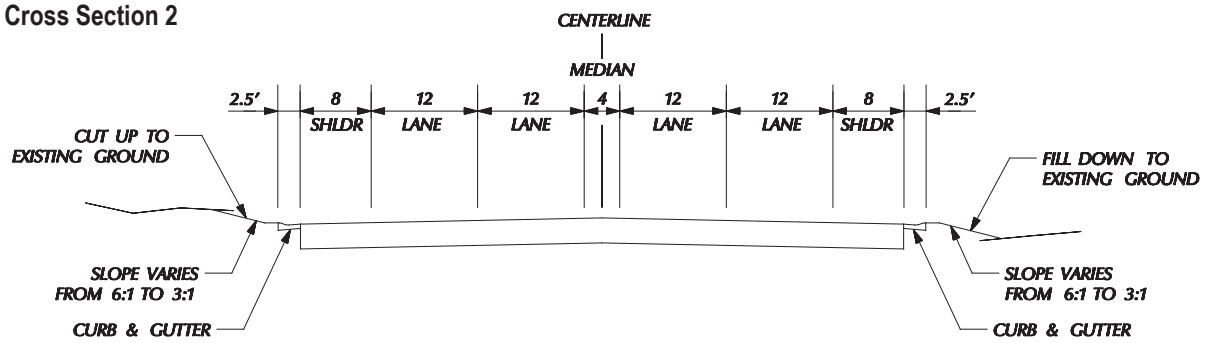
## Cross Section 1




## Intersection Layout



## Cross Section 2




*Note:*
*All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.*

*NOT TO SCALE*

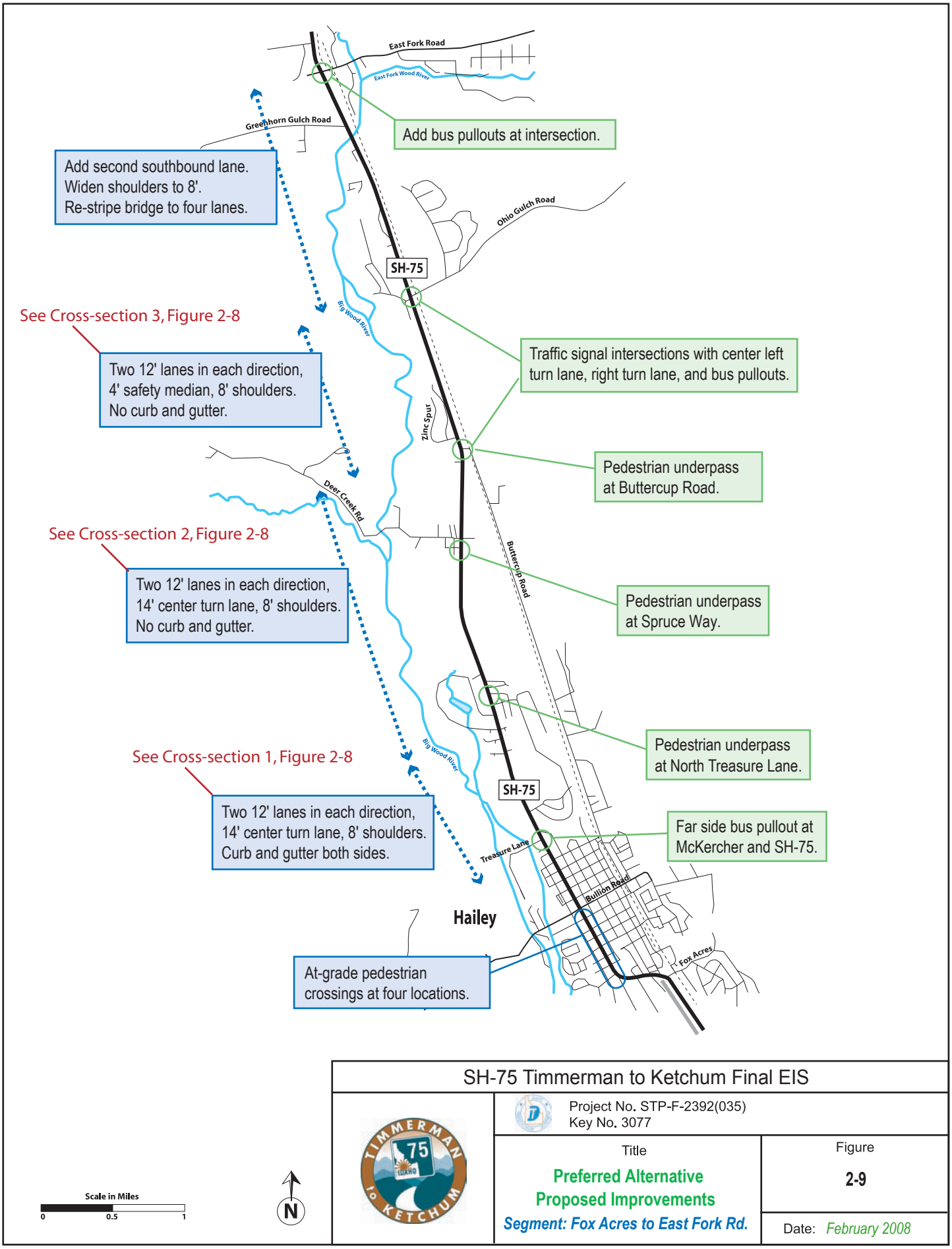
SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title
**Preferred Alternative Typical Cross-Sections Gannett to Fox Acres**

Figure
**2-8**

Date: *February 2008*




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

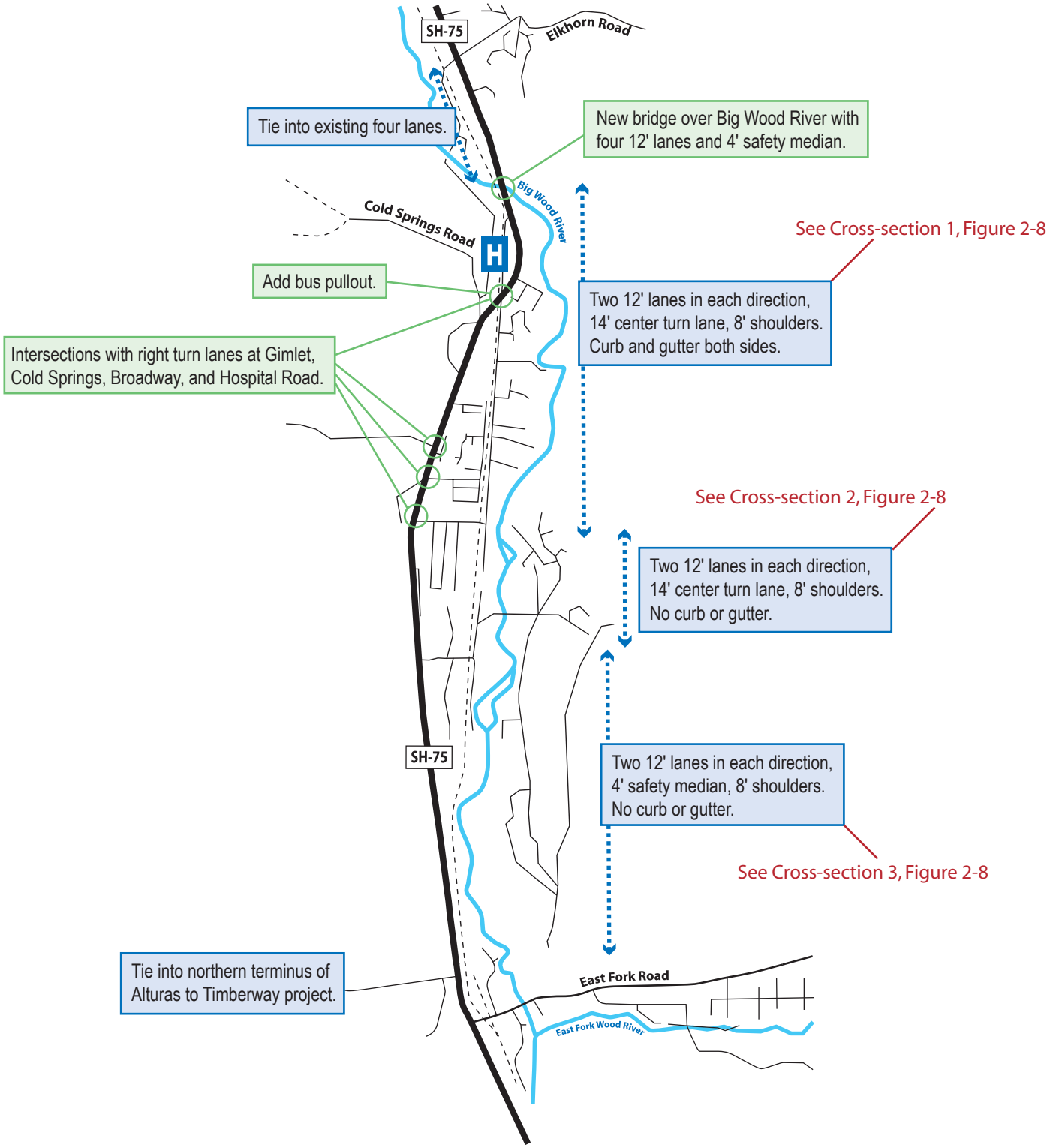
Title

**Preferred Alternative**
**Proposed Improvements**
***Segment: Fox Acres to East Fork Rd.***

Figure

**2-9**

Date: *February 2008*




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

**Preferred Alternative**
**Proposed Improvements**
***Segment: East Fork to Elkhorn Road***

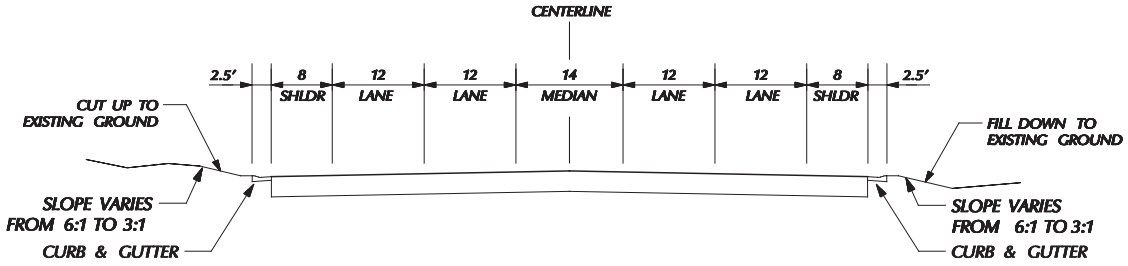
Figure

**2-10**

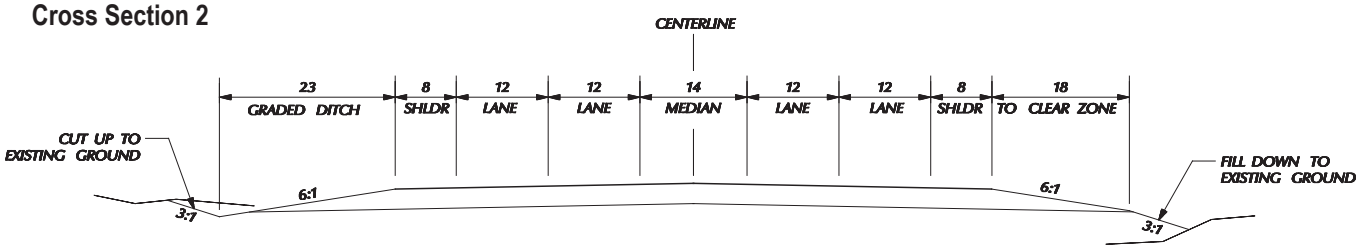
Date: *February 2008*

# Preferred Alternative Typical Sections: McKercher Blvd to Elkhorn Road

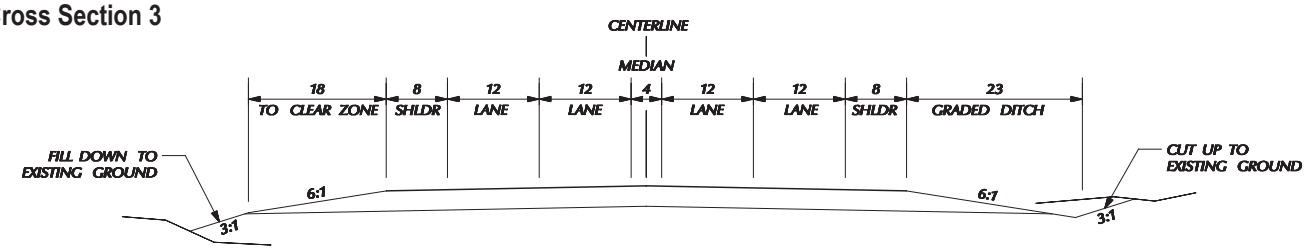
## Cross Section 1




## Cross Section 2




## Cross Section 3



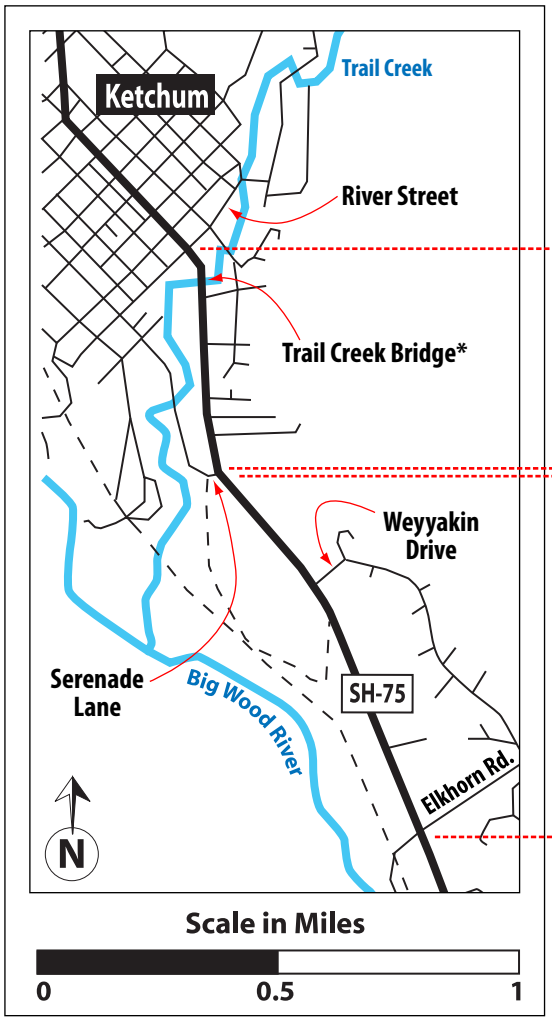

*Note:*
*All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.*

*NOT TO SCALE*

| SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Project No. STP-F-2392(035)<br>Key No. 3077 | |
| | Title<br>**Preferred Alternative Typical Cross-Sections McKercher to Elkhorn** | Figure<br>**2-11** |
| | | Date: *February 2008* |

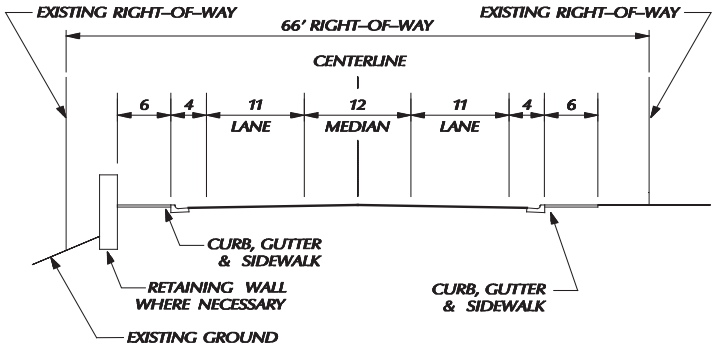
# Preferred Alternative Typical Sections: Elkhorn to River Street

**Key Map:**



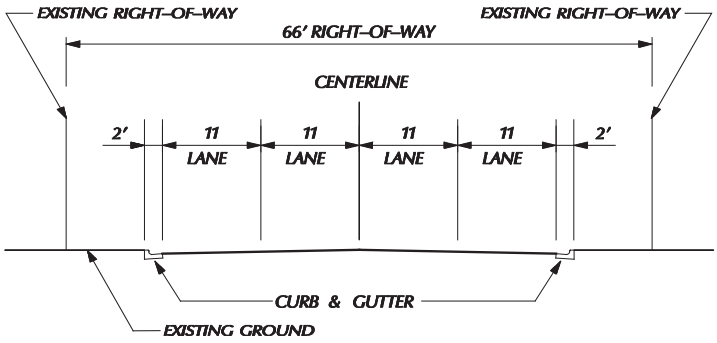

** 58-foot long Trail Creek Bridge reconstructed to accommodate 4 lanes but striped to 3 lanes.*

**Cross Section 2 Serenade Lane to River Street**




NOTE:
Number of through lanes transitions at intersection of Serenade Lane and SH-75.

**Cross Section 1 Elkhorn to Serenade Lane**




*Note:*
*All cross-sections are viewed in a northbound direction.*

NOT TO SCALE

| SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Draft EIS | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Project No. STP-F-2392(035)<br>Key No. 3077 | |
| | Title<br>**Preferred Alternative Typical Cross-Sections**<br>***Elkhorn to River Street*** | Figure<br>**2-12** |
| | | Date: *February 2008* |

# 3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The existing and anticipated future characteristics of the Wood River Valley that could be affected by SH-75 alternatives were described in Chapter 3 Affected Environmental of the DEIS. Chapter 3 documented the following topics and resources. This FEIS supplements the DEIS information for those topics and resources as noted:

- 3.1 Population and Demographics
- 3.2 Land Use – supplemental information provided below
- 3.3 Parks and Recreation
- 3.4 Community Services and Neighborhoods
- 3.5 Economics
- 3.6 Visual Resources
- 3.7 Noise
- 3.8 Air Quality – supplemental information provided below.
- 3.9 Pedestrians and Bicycles – supplemental information provided below.
- 3.10 Farmland, Soils and Geohazards
- 3.11 Water Resources
- 3.12 Vegetation
- 3.13 Wetlands – supplemental information provided below.
- 3.14 Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat – supplemental information provided below
- 3.15 Fisheries – supplemental information provided below
- 3.16 Cultural Resources
- 3.17 Hazardous Materials and Underground Storage Tanks

Except as specified below, the description of the Affected Environment in the DEIS is valid for this condensed FEIS. The following updates address changes since the DEIS was prepared and issued for comment, and comments received during the comment period. The information presented below is cross-referenced to the section and page number of the corresponding section of the DEIS.

## 3.1 Local Plans *(supplements Section 3.2.2, Page 3-21 of DEIS)*

Section 3.2.2 of the DEIS presented a discussion of local plans in place during 2002 and 2003. As of the date of this FEIS, the plans referenced below and discussed in the DEIS are still valid and in effect. As part of their comments on the DEIS, Blaine County and the Cities of Carey, Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley submitted a brief summary of the transportation related components of these comprehensive plans and transportation plans. These were reviewed during preparation of this FEIS. The consistency of the Preferred Alternative with these plans is assessed in Section 5.1.3 of this FEIS.

The following text is drawn from the comments on the DEIS submitted from the six jurisdictions noted above. *This text replaces that contained in Section 3.2.2, pages 3-21 and 3-22 of the DEIS.*

### *3.1.1 Blaine County (replaces Section 3.2.2.1, page 3-21 of the DEIS)*

The *Blaine County Comprehensive Plan* and the *Blaine County Public Transportation Feasibility Study* are two County plans that are relevant to any proposed SH-75 transportation Improvements.

The Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1994; its accompanying land use map was adopted in 1995. The "Road System" section of the plan includes 28 recommendations for the County's roadway and transportation system. Recommendation 24 states:

> "Actively pursue an expansion of Highway 75 between the cities of Bellevue and Ketchum. To the extent possible, the design of any highway improvements should recognize the community desire to minimize the visual impact of the highway system in a narrow scenic valley. The community should participate in the design of any improvements to the highway."

The Road System section also includes several recommendations with respect to access control and design of SH-75 improvements, protection and enhancement of the community's trail system, and development of a public transportation system.

The County's Comprehensive Plan states that Highway 75 corridor has been designated in the Comprehensive Plan as a Scenic Corridor and as a primary tourist attraction into and through Blaine County. The importance to the recreational and tourism economy of the Scenic Corridor is covered in other sections of the Plan, however all planning criteria for Highway 75 contained in the comprehensive plan are measured in the context of this designation.

Blaine County prepared a *Blaine County Public Transit Feasibility Study* in 2001 that recommended short, mid-term and long-term strategies to develop a public transportation system. Short term strategies were intended to be implemented within 2 years and include the following:

- A public education and promotional campaign to raise awareness of the public transportation options currently available as well as the strategies being considered for the future
- Enhanced KART service within Ketchum and Sun Valley
- An enhanced Wood River Rideshare program
- Special events bus service between Bellevue and Ketchum/Sun Valley
- Blaine County should coordinate with ITD and local communities on short-term capital improvements to support public transportation.
- Development of peak-hour HOV queue bypass lanes[12] on Highway 75 near East Fork
- Development of peak-hour HOV queue bypass lanes on Highway 75 near Elkhorn
- Active participation in the Timmerman to Ketchum Environmental Studies.

Mid term strategies were proposed for the two to five year timeframe and are based on continued coordination between Blaine County and ITD with the intent that public transportation will play a larger role in solving the County's traffic problems. Recommended strategies include:

- Initiating regularly scheduled peak-hour bus service in the Bellevue to Ketchum/Sun Valley corridor
- Initiating a transportation management program, including paid parking in the Ketchum central business district
- Constructing transit stations and park-and-ride lots for commuter bus service in the Bellevue to Ketchum corridor
- Developing peak hour HOV lanes or some other means of providing preferential treatment for high occupancy vehicles on HWY 75 between Bellevue and Ketchum
- Identifying and preserving an alignment for a future fixed guide way corridor

[12] A queue bypass lane refers to traffic operations at a traffic signal whereby vehicles in the HOV lane are given priority. This may be either through the use of an additional signal phase to allow the HOV lane to proceed before the single occupancy vehicle lane, or through the use of a separately constructed lane that will bypass the main traffic queue. The feasibility study did not specify a specific form for the HOV queue bypass lane.

Long term strategies were proposed for a timeframe beyond 5 years and include the following:

- Initiating all-day scheduled bus service in the Bellevue to Ketchum/Sun Valley corridor
- Initiating peak-hour bus service to more distant communities, including Carey and Twin Falls
- Initiating local circulator bus service in Bellevue and Hailey
- Constructing park-and-rides in Carey, Twin and other communities served by peak hour transit
- Completing the implementation of the Timmerman to Ketchum project
- Develop a proposal for fixed guide way transit in the Highway 75 Corridor

In addition to the Blaine County Comprehensive Plan and the Blaine County Transit Feasibility Study, Chapter 21A of the Blaine County Code Title 9 Zoning Regulations defines a Scenic Highway Overlay District for the SH-75 corridor. This section of the code defines setbacks from SH-75 and the heights of fences, berms, and other barriers adjacent to SH-75. The following excerpt from the Blaine County Code describes the overlay zone intent:

> This Chapter is intended to provide measures to protect visual resources and allied economic interests associated with Scenic Corridor 1 (SC1), as defined in Chapter 2 of this Title, in addition to those measures found in Chapter 21 of this Title, and to assist in providing for safety of passage on Idaho State Highway 75. Prior to the addition of this Chapter, Blaine County has been regulating development within one hundred feet (100') of Highway 75. It is important that current owners and potential purchasers of property that includes land within the Scenic Highway Overlay District recognize the significance of the public policy and land use interests reflected in this Chapter, and the additional requirements under this Code applicable to that land.[13]

The code also specifies a process for construction of walls, berms, fences and trees that do not qualify as a categorical exclusion under the code:

> Unless a categorical exclusion applies, construction of freestanding walls, earthen berms, fences and sight obscuring screens of trees within the Scenic Highway Overlay District require a site alteration permit, which is a type of special use permit authorized by Idaho Code section 67-6512.

### *3.1.2 City of Bellevue (replaces Section 3.2.2.2 of the DEIS, page 3-21)*

The *Comprehensive Plan for the City of Bellevue* was adopted in September 2002. Chapter 9 Transportation contains guiding policies.

Guiding Policy 1 is to provide a safe and efficient transportation system that will meet the needs of the community. Actions to implement this policy include:

1. Traffic control methods should be kept functional and in good repair to provide for the safe and efficient circulation of traffic, and safety of pedestrians. With the growth projections done, the city should examine the option of placing traffic lights at appropriate areas to accommodate increased vehicular, bike, and foot traffic.
2. Establish bike routes that interconnect residents and business areas within the Wood River Trail System to provide a safer environment for bicycle usage.
3. Maintain areas within the central business district for the parking of bicycles.
4. Encourage commercial deliveries of incoming freight and off-street parking to be through the alleyways
5. Research the possibility of temporarily leasing vacant lots and open space for snow storage.

[13] Obtained from the Blaine County Code via the internet at http://66.113.195.234/ID/Blaine%20County/index.htm

Guiding Policy 2 states that the City should upgrade the transportation system when the opportunity is available. New street development shall be reviewed to determine the effect on existing streets.

The land use section of the Comprehensive Plan contains a guiding policy to "maintain Bellevue's historic, small town, rural atmosphere". One implementing action is to "maintain strict design review standards for all developments adjacent to SH-75".

### *3.1.3 City of Hailey* *(replaces Section 3.2.2.3 of the DEIS, page 3-22)*

The *City of Hailey Comprehensive Plan* was revised in January 2000. Section 10.0 of the plan addresses transportation and circulation. Within this section, the City assessed Hailey strengths and weaknesses and listed "no location transportation within Valley" as the first weakness. The plan stated that along with designated pedestrian and bicycle routes that will connect to a commuter bus via a centrally located transit station, development along those routes should include transit shelters for commuters and students who ride the school busses.

Under the engineering section, the City of Hailey has a goal to "create and maintain a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly community that provides safe, convenient and efficient multi-modal transportation for all Hailey residents, that moves people and not just cars, and that preserves and enhances our quality of life." The stated policy is to promote long-term planning and development of an interconnected and integrated multi-modal transportation system and to contain or reduce the number of single occupant vehicle trips.

To implement this goal and policy, the Plan included the following Implementation plan:

a. Create and implement a Transportation Master Plan.

b. Participate in, and support, regional transportation planning for traffic and transportation management.

c. Support efforts to create a public transportation system that includes a local circulator shuttle within walking distance of most Hailey residents, as well as commuter service within the Wood River Valley corridor.

An addition stated policy was to promote land development that discourages urban sprawl, connects the community, and encourages multi-modal use. To implement this goal, the City plan included the following:

a. Create clear entrances at our north and south to define Main Street and our community (where to slow down).

b. Balance parking needs with multi-modal transportation needs. Minimize the effect of large parking lots with landscape buffers and islands.

c. Encourage neighborhoods service centers that serve the adjacent neighborhoods.

d. Encourage or require transit shelters along designated transit routes.

e. Encourage multi-use development closer to or along transportation corridors.

The Plan contains an education goal that recognizes that engineering and education are better tools for traffic management than enforcement and that creative street designs should be used to manage transportation demands. Education should be used to encourage healthy transportation choices.

The Plan's stated policy to maximize transportation opportunities and minimize tax dollars is to be implemented through the following actions:

a. Explore, create and foster cooperative opportunities with other county and regional resources.

b. Ensure that Hailey participates in long-term county wide transportation efforts.

c. Work with other resources and jurisdictions to provide a cohesive transportation system for our countywide community.

d. Explore and support efforts for a public transportation system that provides regional commuter services and connects to a local shuttle service within Hailey.

Under the Enforcement section, a goal to ensure that future growth does not place undue demands on Hailey's current quality of life, transportation infrastructure, rural character, or environmental quality, including clean air, is stated. A related policy is that standards for development should encourage multi-modal transportation. To implement this goal and policy, the Plan states the following implementation strategies:

a. Residential development of 20 units or more and commercial development of 20,000 square feet or more should provide a Transportation Management Study and should construct the infrastructure necessary to meet the transportation needs of that development, such as transit shelters, sidewalks and pathways, park-and-ride parking spaces, etc.

b. Review the parking ordinance to establish appropriate minimum and maximum numbers of parking spaces for development. Encourage creative alternatives to larger parking lots, such as shared parking, public transit, special event shuttles, etc. Explore other means to balance parking needs, such as parking meters.

### *3.1.4 City of Ketchum (replaces Section 3.2.2.4 of the DEIS, page 3-22)*

The *Ketchum Transportation Study,* 2004 recommended long-range strategy emphasizing support for pedestrian and bicycle modes within Ketchum, the expansion of transit service to/from and within Ketchum, and finally road improvements where necessary. The effectiveness of transit strategies requires a supporting strategy of parking controls in the downtown area and other major employment centers. Initial elements of this long-range strategy include:

- Expansion of KART system for higher frequency and reduced waits; and
- Expansion of Peak Bus commuter service.

The Study also indicates that over time, the following pedestrian and transit elements of the plan would be gradually expanded on an annual basis to keep up with growth

- Annual expansion of Peak Bus commuter service; and,
- Annual expansion of KART neighborhood circulation program

The Plan recommended that the City of Ketchum should also work with Blaine County and ITD to achieve the following goals:

- Enhance transit and carpool operations between the hospital area and downtown Ketchum; and,
- Investigate the possibility of creating a bus corridor from Hailey to Ketchum.

Part 6 Transportation of *The City of Ketchum Comprehensive Plan*, 2001contains the following goals and policies that are relevant to the SH-75 corridor:

Goal 2: Design safe roads and other transportation systems that support the Wood River Valley and maintain Ketchum's small town mountain character.

Goal 3: Develop a valley wide mass transit system with other jurisdictions for the employees, residents and tourists of Blaine County

Goal 4: Reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles and vehicle trips and promote alternative transportation

Policy 6.1 Ensure that transportation decisions are made comprehensively for all of Blaine County, including the consideration of all modes of travel and potential impacts to land uses.

Policy 6.2 Work with the Idaho Transportation Department, other Blaine County jurisdictions and citizen groups to develop a County wide transportation plan which includes mass transit.

Policy 6.6 Improve current Ketchum Area Rapid Transit system, including a high frequency, City wide mass transit service focusing on times and stop locations to serve tourists, residents and workers. When ridership is down increase service instead of decreasing service.

Policy 6.7 Restrict and reduce access points along Highway 75, Warm Springs Road, Saddle Road and Sun Valley Road. Provide for a landscape buffer on these roadways.

Policy 6.8 Place a high priority on developing safe, convenient and attractive bicycling and walking systems that are integrated with other transportations systems.

Policy 6.10 Wherever possible reduce the lane width for vehicular travel to promote traffic calming and to allow room in the rights-of-way alternative modes of transportation to preserve the small mountain town character of Ketchum.

The Ketchum Comprehensive Plan includes short-term, mid-term, and long-term action plans for transportation. Stated short term actions include:

- Work with KART, other interested agencies and citizen groups to develop a program to encourage the reduction of vehicle trips in Ketchum through development of alternatives to single occupancy vehicle trips.
- Develop a plan for implementing a valley wide transit system
- Clean, improve, and maintain the shoulder of the stretch of Highway 75 between River Street and Serenade Lane, and between Saddle Road and Sixth Street, and along Warm Springs Road, including adding pavement and trimming vegetation for safe pedestrian and bicycle travel.

Stated mid-term actions include:

- In conjunction with the other jurisdictions and citizen groups in the county, implement a mass transit system to serve the Wood River Valley along the Highway 75 corridor.
- Construct or require the construction of transit shelters
- Ensure the KART schedule efficiently transports employees from their residents to downtown Ketchum and other large areas of employment, in addition to maintaining the service for tourists and skiers.

A stated long-term action is to work with the other jurisdictions and citizen groups in the County to expand the mass transit system to other modes of mass transit to service additional outlying areas.

On September 8, 2006, the City of Ketchum adopted the “Downtown Ketchum Master Plan”. It was prepared to clarify community priorities, establish a vision for Downtown’s future, specify guiding principles, identify major improvement opportunities, and expand outreach and teambuilding within the community. It

contains a number of guiding principles with respect to downtown form. Principles that address transportation and circulation include the following:[14]

- Downtown circulation should balance the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and motorists alike.
- The circulation system will accommodate people and their various travel needs, providing convenient access for all user groups including businesses, employees, residents, customers, visitors and tourists.
- Downtown circulation should accommodate travel for school children, bicyclists, public transit, seniors and people with mobility challenges.
- Downtown is a pedestrian-priority district.
- Traffic demand management will include programs that offer a healthy mix of transportation modes to reduce automobile dependency and to increase the number of people access Downtown by foot, bicycle or transit..

Although the plan describes eight types of recommended physical improvements in the downtown (page 57 of the document), none include reconstruction or changes to Main Street (SH-75).

### *3.1.5 City of Sun Valley (replaces Section 3.2.2.5 of the DEIS, page 3-22)*

The *City of Sun Valley Comprehensive Plan*, 2005 includes a vision statement that the City will work closely with the Wood River Valley communities to provide opportunities for the development and expansion of adequate transit and housing, as well as to participate in stewardship of the region's social and natural assets.

The Plan includes an action items to evaluate funding mechanisms to assist with the development of community housing and to mitigate the transportation impacts of off-site development. An associated objective is to manage growth and development in a manner that preserves, protects, the existing physical and natural environment by steering growth into the appropriate locations, regulating its design and by emphasizing a pattern of pedestrian and mass transit oriented travel.

## 3.2 Air Quality *(supplements Section 3.8 of the DEIS, page 3-96)*

In December 2007, FHWA and ITD issued revisions to Section 600.00 Air Quality of the ITD Environmental Design Manual. This revised guidance confirms that Blaine County is not a federally-designated air quality non-attainment/maintenance area (Section 650.02 Areas of Concern) for carbon monoxide and particulate matter (both $PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$).

After the DEIS was published, the Federal Highway Administration issued guidance on addressing air toxics in NEPA documents for highway projects. The following text conforms to the guidance issued by FHWA on February 3, 2006 entitled "Interim Guidance on Air Toxic Analysis in NEPA Documents". This text is also contained in Exhibit 680-6A of the revised FHWA/ITD guidance document.

### *3.2.1 Mobile Source Air Toxics*

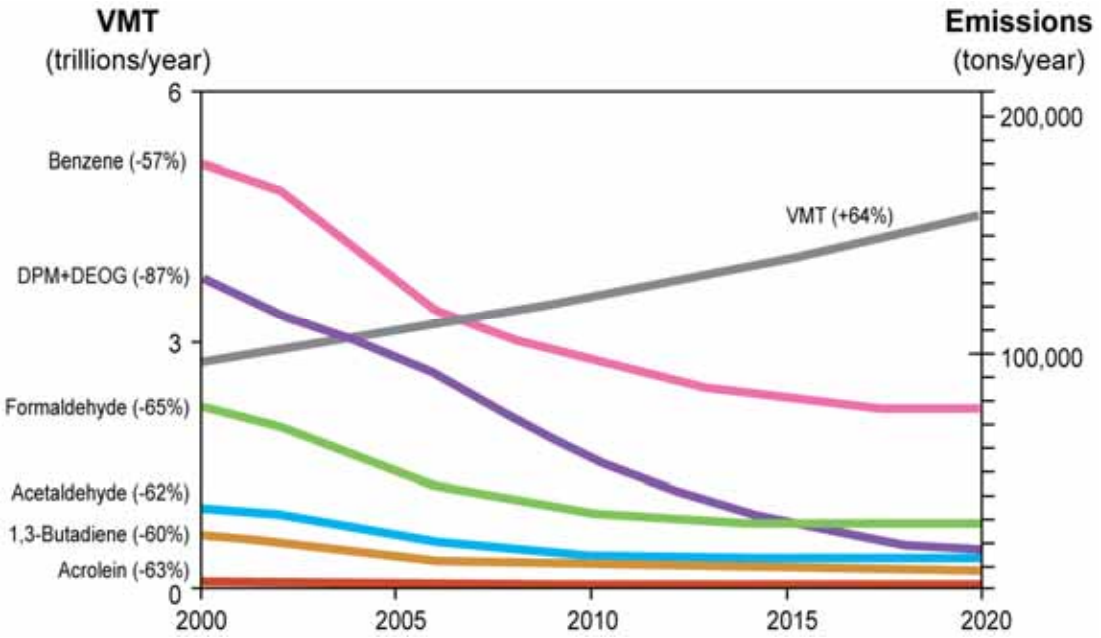
In addition to the criteria air pollutants for which there are National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), the Environmental Protection Agency also regulates air toxics. Most air toxics originate from human-made

[14] The Hudson Company, Downtown Ketchum Master Plan, January, 2006, page 16.

sources, including on-road mobile sources, non-road mobile sources (e.g., airplanes), area sources (e.g., dry cleaners) and stationary sources (e.g., factories or refineries).

Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs) are a subset of the 188 air toxics defined by the Clean Air Act (CAA). The MSATs are compounds emitted from highway vehicles and non-road equipment. Some toxic compounds are present in fuel and are emitted to the air when the fuel evaporates or passes through the engine unburned. Other toxics are emitted from the incomplete combustion of fuels or as secondary combustion products. Metal air toxics also result from engine wear or from impurities in oil or gasoline.

The EPA is the lead Federal Agency for administering the Clean Air Act and has certain responsibilities regarding the health effects of MSATs. The EPA issued a Final Rule on Controlling Emissions of Hazardous Air Pollutants from Mobile Sources. 66 FR 17229 (March 29, 2001). This rule was issued under the authority in Section 202 of the Clean Air Act. In its rule, EPA examined the impacts of existing and newly promulgated mobile source control programs, including its reformulated gasoline (RFG) program, its national low emission vehicle (NLEV) standards, its Tier 2 motor vehicle emissions standards and gasoline sulfur control requirements, and its proposed heavy duty engine and vehicle standards and on-highway diesel fuel sulfur control requirements. Between 2000 and 2020, FHWA projects that even with a 64 percent increase in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), these programs will reduce on-highway emissions of benzene, formaldehyde, 1,3-butadiene, and acetaldehyde by 57 percent to 65 percent, and will reduce on-highway diesel particulate matter (PM) emissions by 87 percent, as shown in the following graph:




**U.S. Annual Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) vs. Mobile Source Air Toxics Emissions, 2000-2020**

Notes: For on-road mobile sources. Emissions factors were generated using MOBILE6.2. MTBE proportion of market for oxygenates is held constant, at 50%. Gasoline RVP and oxygenate content are held constant. VMT: Highway Statistics 2000, Table VM-2 for 2000, analysis assumes annual growth rate of 2.5%. "DPM + DEOG" is based on MOBILE6.2-generated factors for elemental carbon, organic carbon and SO4 from diesel-powered vehicles, with the particle size cutoff set at 10.0 microns.

As a result, EPA concluded that no further motor vehicle emissions standards or fuel standards were necessary to further control MSATs. The agency is currently preparing another rule under authority of CAA

Section 202(l) that will address these issues and could make adjustments to the full 21 and the primary six MSATs.

### 3.2.2 Unavailable Information for Project Specific MSAT Impact Analysis

This FEIS includes a basic analysis of the likely MSAT emission impacts of this project as discussed in Section 5.8 of this FEIS. However, available technical tools do not enable the prediction of the project-specific health impacts of the emission changes associated with the alternative in the DEIS nor for Preferred Alternative. Due to these limitations, the following discussion is included in accordance with CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1502.22(b)) regarding incomplete or unavailable information:

### 3.2.3 Information that is Unavailable or Incomplete

Evaluating the environmental and health impacts from MSATs on a proposed highway project will involve several key elements, including emissions modeling, dispersion modeling in order to estimate ambient concentrations resulting from the estimated emissions, exposure modeling in order to estimate human exposure to the estimated concentrations, and then final determination of health impacts based on the estimated exposure. Each of these steps is encumbered by technical shortcomings or uncertain science that prevents a more complete determination of the MSAT health impacts of this project.

- **Emissions:** The EPA tools to estimate MSAT emissions from motor vehicles are not sensitive to key variables determining emissions of MSATs in the context of highway projects. While MOBILE 6.2 is used to predict emissions at a regional level, it has limited applicability at the project level. MOBILE 6.2 is a trip-based model--emission factors are projected based on a typical trip of 7.5 miles, and on average speeds for this typical trip. This means that MOBILE 6.2 does not have the ability to predict emission factors for a specific vehicle operating condition at a specific location at a specific time. Because of this limitation, MOBILE 6.2 can only approximate the operating speeds and levels of congestion likely to be present on the largest-scale projects, and cannot adequately capture emissions effects of smaller projects. For particulate matter, the model results are not sensitive to average trip speed, although the other MSAT emission rates do change with changes in trip speed. Also, the emissions rates used in MOBILE 6.2 for both particulate matter and MSATs are based on a limited number of tests of mostly older-technology vehicles. Lastly, in its discussions of PM under the conformity rule, EPA has identified problems with MOBILE6.2 as an obstacle to quantitative analysis.

  These deficiencies compromise the capability of MOBILE 6.2 to estimate MSAT emissions. MOBILE6.2 is an adequate tool for projecting emissions trends, and performing relative analyses between alternatives for very large projects, but it is not sensitive enough to capture the effects of travel changes tied to smaller projects or to predict emissions near specific roadside locations.

- **Dispersion.** The tools to predict how MSATs disperse are also limited. The EPA's current regulatory models, CALINE3 and CAL3QHC, were developed and validated more than a decade ago for the purpose of predicting episodic concentrations of carbon monoxide to determine compliance with the NAAQS. The performance of dispersion models is more accurate for predicting maximum concentrations that can occur at some time at some location within a geographic area. This limitation makes it difficult to predict accurate exposure patterns at specific times at specific highway project locations across an urban area to assess potential health risk. The National Cooperative Highway Research Program is conducting research on best practices in applying models and other technical methods in the analysis of MSATs. This work also will focus on identifying appropriate methods of documenting and communicating MSAT impacts in the

NEPA process and to the general public. Along with these general limitations of dispersion models, FHWA is also faced with a lack of monitoring data in most areas for use in establishing project-specific MSAT background concentrations.

- **Exposure Levels and Health Effects.** Finally, even if emission levels and concentrations of MSATs could be accurately predicted, shortcomings in current techniques for exposure assessment and risk analysis preclude us from reaching meaningful conclusions about project-specific health impacts. Exposure assessments are difficult because it is difficult to accurately calculate annual concentrations of MSATs near roadways, and to determine the portion of a year that people are actually exposed to those concentrations at a specific location. These difficulties are magnified for 70-year cancer assessments, particularly because unsupportable assumptions will have to be made regarding changes in travel patterns and vehicle technology (which affects emissions rates) over a 70-year period. There are also considerable uncertainties associated with the existing estimates of toxicity of the various MSATs, because of factors such as low-dose extrapolation and translation of occupational exposure data to the general population. Because of these shortcomings, any calculated difference in health impacts between alternatives is likely to be much smaller than the uncertainties associated with calculating the impacts. Consequently, the results of such assessments will not be useful to decision makers, who will need to weigh this information against other project impacts that are better suited for quantitative analysis.

### *3.2.4 Summary of Existing Credible Scientific Evidence Relevant to Evaluating the Impacts of MSATs*

Research into the health impacts of MSATs is ongoing. For different emission types, there are a variety of studies that show that some either are statistically associated with adverse health outcomes through epidemiological studies (frequently based on emissions levels found in occupational settings) or that animals demonstrate adverse health outcomes when exposed to large doses.

Exposure to toxics has been a focus of a number of EPA efforts. Most notably, the agency conducted the National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) in 1996 to evaluate modeled estimates of human exposure applicable to the county level. While not intended for use as a measure of or benchmark for local exposure, the modeled estimates in the NATA database best illustrate the levels of various toxics when aggregated to a national or State level.

The EPA is in the process of assessing the risks of various kinds of exposures to these pollutants. The EPA Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) is a database of human health effects that may result from exposure to various substances found in the environment. The IRIS database is located at http://www.epa.gov/iris. The following toxicity information for the six prioritized MSATs was taken from the IRIS database *Weight of Evidence Characterization* summaries. This information is taken verbatim from EPA's IRIS database and represents the Agency's most current evaluations of the potential hazards and toxicology of these chemicals or mixtures.

- **Benzene** is characterized as a known human carcinogen.
- The potential carcinogenicity of **acrolein** cannot be determined because the existing data are inadequate for an assessment of human carcinogenic potential for either the oral or inhalation route of exposure.
- **Formaldehyde** is a probable human carcinogen, based on limited evidence in humans, and sufficient evidence in animals.
- **1,3-butadiene** is characterized as carcinogenic to humans by inhalation.
- **Acetaldehyde** is a probable human carcinogen based on increased incidence of nasal tumors in male and female rats and laryngeal tumors in male and female hamsters after inhalation exposure.

- **Diesel exhaust** (DE) is likely to be carcinogenic to humans by inhalation from environmental exposures. Diesel exhaust as reviewed in this document is the combination of diesel particulate matter and diesel exhaust organic gases.
- **Diesel exhaust** also represents chronic respiratory effects, possibly the primary non-cancer hazard from MSATs. Prolonged exposures may impair pulmonary function and could produce symptoms, such as cough, phlegm, and chronic bronchitis. Exposure relationships have not been developed from these studies.

There have been other studies that address MSAT health impacts in proximity to roadways. The Health Effects Institute, a non-profit organization funded by EPA, FHWA, and industry, has undertaken a major series of studies to research near-roadway MSAT hot spots, the health implications of the entire mix of mobile source pollutants, and other topics. The final summary of the series is not expected for several years.

Some recent studies have reported that proximity to roadways is related to adverse health outcomes -- particularly respiratory problems. Much of this research is not specific to MSATs, instead surveying the full spectrum of both criteria and other pollutants. The FHWA cannot evaluate the validity of these studies, but more importantly, they do not provide information that will be useful to alleviate the uncertainties listed above and enable us to perform a more comprehensive evaluation of the health impacts specific to this project.

### *3.2.5 Relevance of Unavailable or Incomplete Information to Evaluating Reasonably Foreseeable Significant Adverse Impacts on the Environment (and evaluation of impacts based upon theoretical approaches or research methods generally accepted in the scientific community)*

Because of the uncertainties outlined above, a quantitative assessment of the effects of air toxic emissions impacts on human health cannot be made at the project level. While available tools do allow us to reasonably predict relative emissions changes between alternatives for larger projects, the amount of MSAT emissions from each of the project alternatives and MSAT concentrations or exposures created by each of the project alternatives cannot be predicted with enough accuracy to be useful in estimating health impacts. (As noted above, the current emissions model is not capable of serving as a meaningful emissions analysis tool for smaller projects.) Therefore, the relevance of the unavailable or incomplete information is that it is not possible to make a determination of whether any of the alternatives will have "significant adverse impacts on the human environment."

As discussed above, technical shortcomings of emissions and dispersion models and uncertain science with respect to health effects prevent meaningful or reliable estimates of MSAT emissions and effects of this project. However, even though reliable methods do not exist to accurately estimate the health impacts of MSATs at the project level, it is possible to qualitatively assess the levels of future MSAT emissions under the project. Although a qualitative analysis cannot identify and measure health impacts from MSATs, it can give a basis for identifying and comparing the potential differences among MSAT emissions-if any-from the various alternatives. The qualitative assessment presented below is derived in part from a study conducted by the FHWA entitled *A Methodology for Evaluating Mobile Source Air Toxic Emissions Among Transportation Project Alternatives*, found at:
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/airtoxic/msatcompare/msatemissions.htm

# 3.3 Pedestrians and Bicycles *(supplements Section 3.9 of the DEIS, page 3-99)*

Section 3.9.3 of the DEIS referenced concerns with pedestrian safety in the cities of Hailey and Bellevue. In a comment submitted on the DEIS, the City of Hailey expressed concern that the description provided does not adequately reflect their concern with the issue. The following text therefore supplements that provided in the DEIS.

In June of 2003, there was a pedestrian fatality on SH-75 in the City of Hailey. This fatality, in combination with concerns expressed by the citizens of Hailey during local planning processes, and during preparation of the SH-75 DEIS, has increased both the awareness and importance of the issue of safe pedestrian crossings of SH-75. The City of Hailey is examining alternative ways of increasing the visibility of pedestrians crossing SH-75 and their safety through their Transportation Master Plan planning process. Options to increase visibility of pedestrians crossing SH-75 include installation of additional street lighting along SH-75, and/or installation of in-pavement flashing lights in the SH-75 pavement. Improving the safety of bicyclists on SH-75 through the City of Hailey may include restriping of the existing roadway to provide for on-street bicycle lanes.

A variety of pedestrian crossing safety techniques and traffic calming measures for SH-75 through the City of Hailey are being considered as part of the City's Transportation Master Planning process. Additional coordination with the City of Hailey was conducted during February 2007 to determine the status and content of this planning process. Hailey's planning process has identified possible additional curb extensions or "bulb-outs" to better accommodate pedestrians by reducing the width of pavement that pedestrians will need to cross. These curb extensions will occur within the existing SH-75 right-of-way and will be constructed in the parking lane of SH-75 in the City of Hailey. The plan's draft recommendations maintain the existing SH-75 five-lane cross-section.

# 3.4 Wetlands *(supplements Section 3.13 of the DEIS, page 3-127)*

## *3.4.1 Relative Abundance of Wetlands*

Section 3.13 of the DEIS provided a description of the wetlands in the SH-75 corridor. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) submitted comments on the DEIS, one of which was a request to include additional information in the FEIS that addresses relative abundance of wetland communities within the watershed and relative scarcity of specific wetland plant communities. The EPA referenced an existing report on Wood River Basin wetlands as an additional source of information on that subject.[15] The following discussion is based on that report and supplements the Chapter 3 Affected Environment wetlands description in the DEIS.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Conservation Data Center digitized the National Wetland Inventory maps for the Big Wood River drainage from the headwaters at the confluence of the North Fork to Magic Reservoir. The dominant wetland types identified in the Big Wood Drainage are Palustrine emergent 40%, Palustrine scrub-shrub (PSS) 20% and Lacustrine limnetic 29%, Forested 5%, Littoral 4% and Unconsolidated bottom 2%. Of the three wetland types found in the project area, palustrine emergent and palustrine scrub-shrub are relatively common at 20% and 40%, respectively. The Forested wetlands were less common at 5%. Lacustrine limnetic, littoral or unconsolidated bottom wetlands were not identified in the project area.

[15] Jankovsky-Jones, M., *Conservation Strategy for the Big Wood River Basin Wetlands*, 1997, Conservation Data Center, Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

The network of Natural Heritage Programs and Conservation Data Centers ranks the range wide (GRANK or global rank) and state (SRANK or state rank) status of plants, animals, and plant communities on a scale of 1 to 5. GRANK or Global Rank is a ranking of the rarity of the species, and is a useful tool in determining conservation needs. The rank is primarily based on the number of known sites or observations (also known as occurrences), but other factors such as habitat quality, estimated number of individuals, narrowness of range of habitat, trends in populations and habitat, threats to the element, and other factors are also considered. The ranking system is meant to exist alongside national and state rare species lists because these lists often include additional criteria (e.g., recovery potential, depth of knowledge) that go beyond assessing threats to extinction.

The status ranking systems using the following coding:

**G** = Global rank indicator; denotes rank based on range wide status.

**S** = State rank indicator; denotes rank based on status within Idaho.

- **1** = Critically imperiled because of extreme rarity or because some factor of its biology makes it especially vulnerable to extinction (typically 5 or fewer occurrences).
- **2** = Imperiled because of rarity or because other factors demonstrably make it very vulnerable to extinction (typically 6 to 20 occurrences).
- **3** = Rare or uncommon but not imperiled (typically 21 to 100 occurrences).
- **4** = Not rare and apparently secure, but with cause for long-term concern (usually more than 100 occurrences).
- **5** = Demonstrably widespread, abundant, and secure.
- **U** = Unrankable.
- **H** = Historical occurrence (i.e., formerly part of the native biota; implied expectation that it might be rediscovered or possibly extinct).
- **X** = Presumed extinct or extirpated.
- **Q** = Indicates uncertainty about taxonomic status.
- **?** = Uncertainty exists about the stated rank.
- **NR** = Not ranked.
- **A** = Conservation status rank is not applicable.

The global and state rank indicator is used in conjunction with the rating. For example, G5 denotes a species that was demonstrably widespread, abundant, and secure. G? denotes uncertainty about the stated rank.

Forested wetlands: Broad-leaved deciduous forests occur on the Big Wood River, mid-sections of the Little Wood River and on moderate gradients of Camas Creek. The forests are most commonly dominated by black cottonwood with lesser amounts of P. acuminate (Rydberg's cottonwood) and occasionally quaking aspen. Populus tremuloides also occurs in association with springs in the valley bottoms and at upper elevations on tributaries to the major rivers.

Needle-leaved forests occur on high gradient tributaries to the Big Wood River. Fluvial landforms are frequently absent due to a stream gradient that limits lateral channel migration and riparian vegetation is confined to narrow streamside bands. At upper elevations forested riparian communities are dominated by Picea engelmannii (Engelmann spruce), Abies lasiocarpa (subalpine fir), or Pinus contorta (lodgepole pine). (Jankovsky-Jones, M. 1997)

Forested wetlands make up 5% of the Big Wood Drainage. The palustrine forested wetland communities in the project occur along Trail Creek, the Big Wood River and irrigation ditches and are black

cottonwood/yellow willow and Black cottonwood/Woods rose communities. These communities were named and ranked globally (G) and by state (S) based on the *Conservation Strategy for the Big Wood River Basin Wetlands* (Jankovsky-Jones, M. 1997). This report also suggest protection of all cottonwood stands identified in the report as well as those that provide flood water storage for urban areas. Table 3-1 shows the rank for Palustrine forest communities in the SH-75 project area.

**Table 3-1: Palustrine Forest Communities in the Project Area**

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| *Populus trichocarpa/Salix lutea* | Black cottonwood/Yellow willow | G?, S?<br>Both the global and state rank are uncertain. |
| *Populus trichocarpa/Rosa woodsii* | Black cottonwood/Wood's rose | GQ, S1<br>The global rank is uncertain about the taxonomic status. |

Within the SH-75 corridor, Wetland 20 at the Big Wood Bridge is part of the cottonwood forest that exists along the Big Wood River. However, portions of this area have historically been disturbed such that few cottonwood trees exist adjacent to the bridge.

Scrub-shrub vegetation: Shrublands dominated by willows and other shrubs are common throughout the Big Wood River Basin. Tall willow shrublands, associated with high gradient channels at lower elevations or occurring as a mosaic with cottonwood dominated stands on larger river systems such as the Big Wood River, contain a number of willow species. These include *Salix exigua* (coyote willow), *S. lutea* (yellow willow), and *S. lasiandra* ssp. *caudata* (whiplash willow). *Alnus incana* (mountain alder) and *Betula occidentalis* (water birch) communities. These are well represented in the survey area. *Alnus incana* is common on high gradient streams at the upper limit of the cottonwood zone. *Betula occidentalis* occurs at lower elevations along low gradient rivers. A single stand of *Crataegus douglasii* (Douglas hawthorne) in poor condition was located along a tributary to Rock Creek in the Camas Creek drainage. *Crataegus* dominated stands may have been more widespread throughout the Big Wood River Basin with grazing practices reducing their extent. At mid to upper elevations willow dominated vegetation associated with low gradient meandering channels, dominated by *Salix geyeriana* (Geyer's willow) and *S. boothii* (Booth's willow) with lesser amounts of *S. drummondiana* (Drummond's willow) occasionally occur on organic substrates. The low willows, *Salix wolfii* (Wolf's willow), and *S. planifolia* var. *monica* (Planeleaf willow), along with *Betula glandulosa* (bog birch) occur at upper elevations in association with streams, springs, or seeps.

In broad valley bottoms at lower elevations, low shrub wetlands dominated by *Potentilla fruticosa* (shrubby cinquefoil) and *Artemisia* spp. occur in association with springs, seeps, and vernal wetlands. *Artemisia cana* (silver sage) and *Artemisia tridentata* (big sagebrush) often occur on the margins of wetland complexes or on areas with slightly raised topography within wetlands. *Artemisia papposa* (fuzzy sagebrush) and *Artemisia longiloba* (alkali sagebrush) occur in vernal pools and in low gradient vernal drainages. Plant communities dominated by the latter two sagebrush species are poorly documented and described (Jankovsky-Jones, M. 1997).

Palustrine scrub-shrub communities are more common then the Palustrine forested (PFO) communities and make up 20% of the of the Big Wood Drainage wetlands. The shrub communities surveyed in the project area are yellow willow/beaked sedge, sandbar willow/mesic graminoid and shrubby cinquefoil/tufted hairgrass. These communities are listed in Table 2 and ranked globally (G) and by state (S) based on the

*Conservation Strategy for the Big Wood River Basin Wetland*. Although these communities are not imperiled, the report suggests significant gains in increasing the acreage of shrub-scrub wetlands in the survey area could be made by fencing tributary streams in the Big Wood drainages where willow remnants are present as stringers.

**Table 3-2: Palustrine Scrub Shrub Communities in the Project Area**

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| *Salix lutea/Carex rostrata* | Yellow willow/Beaked sedge | G4, S4 - Global rank and state rank are not rare and apparently secure, but with cause for long-term concern |
| *Salix exigua/Mesic graminoid* | Sandbar willow/Mesic graminoid | G3Q, S3 - Global rank is rare or uncommon with uncertainty about the taxonomic status.<br>State rank is rare or uncommon. |
| *Potentilla fruticosa/Dechampsia cespitosa* | Shrubby cinquefoil/Tufted hairgrass | G4, S3 - Global rank is not rare and apparently secure, but with cause for long-term concern. State rank is rare or uncommon but not imperiled. |

Emergent (herbaceous) vegetation: Herbaceous wetlands in the basin usually occur as a complex of monocultures dominated by the sedges and sedge-like species including; *Carex utriculata* (beaked sedge), *C. aquatilis* (water sedge), *C. nebraskensis* (Nebraska sedge), *C. praegricilis* (clustered field sedge), *C. simulate* (soft-leaved sedge), *Scirpus validus* (softstem bulrush), and *Eleocharis palustris* (common spikerush). *Typha latifolia* (broadleaf cattail), and *Nuphar polysepalum* (Rocky Mountain pond lily). These are frequently present in ponds with appropriate water regimes.

Tall grasslands in the basin are dominated by *Calamagrostis canadensis* (bluejoint reedgrass) and *Phalaris arundinacea* (reed canarygrass). Temporarily flooded grasslands, dominated by *Deschampsia cespitosa* (tufted hairgrass), *Agropyron smithii* (bluestem wheatgrass), *Poa juncifolia* (alkali bluegrass), or *Spartina gracilis* (alkali cordgrass), were likely formerly widespread in the basin. The latter three species along with *Distichlis spicata* (inland saltgrass) are frequently associated with saline or alkaline seeps. Grasslands are accessible and have largely been impacted by grazing or reseeding with pasture grasses.

The emergent communities surveyed in the project area are listed in Table 3-3 and ranked globally (G) and by state (S) based on the *Conservation Strategy for the Big Wood River Basin Wetlands* (Jankovsky-Jones, M. 1997). This report noted that efforts to protect communities should concentrate on those that are uncommon naturally or due to human disturbances. All the PEM communities in the project area are considered common.

**Table 3-3: Palustrine Emergent Communities in the Project Area**

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| *Juncus balticus* | Baltic rush | G5, S4<br>Global rank is demonstrably widespread, abundant, and secure. State rank is not rare and apparently secure, but with cause for long-term concern |
| *Phalaris arundinacea* | Reed canary grass | G5, S4<br>Global rank is demonstrably widespread, abundant, and secure. State rank is not rare and apparently secure, but with cause for long-term concern |
| *Carex utriculata* | Beaked sedge | G5, S4<br>Global rank is demonstrably widespread, abundant, and secure. State rank is not rare and apparently secure, but with cause for long-term concern |
| *Carex nebraskensis* | Nebraska sedge | G4, S3<br>Global rank is not rare and apparently secure, but with cause for long-term concern. State rank is rare or uncommon but not imperiled. |
| *Eleocharis palustris* | Common spike rush | G5, S3<br>Global rank is demonstrably widespread, abundant, and secure. State rank is rare or uncommon but not imperiled. |

## *3.4.2 Irrigation Dependent Wetlands*

Section 3.13.2 SH-75 Corridor Wetlands of the DEIS contained references to both NJ (non-jurisdictional) and I-D (irrigation-dependent wetlands). The correct reference is I-D. The text on page 3-131 of Chapter 3 Affected Environment of the DEIS is therefore amended to read as follows:

### 3.4.2.1 US 20 to Gannett Road

*Natural:* Nineteen of the 21 natural wetlands located in the project corridor occur in this segment. Of these, 13 are PEM ( Palustrine emergent) and six are PSS (Palustrine scrub-shrub) communities. There are no natural PFO (Palustrine forested) communities in this segment.

*Irrigation-dependent:* Ten irrigation-dependent wetlands are located in this segment. Of these, seven are PEM, and three are PFO communities associated with the valley's extensive irrigation canal and ditch system. For wetland I-D-10, a significant portion of the PFO community parallels the District Canal and SH-75 for approximately 2.5 miles.

**Table 3.13-2: Natural and Irrigation-Dependent Wetlands by Wetland Community Type, US-20 to Gannett Road**

| Community Type | Natural Wetland Number | Irrigation-dependent Wetland Number |
|---|---|---|
| PEM | 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18, and 19 | I-D-1, I-D-2, I-D-3, I-D-4, I-D-6, I-D-8, and I-D-9 |
| PSS | 2, 4, 7, 13, 14, and 17 | None |
| PFO | None | I-D -5, I-D -7, and I-D -10 |

### 3.4.2.2 Gannett Road to Fox Acres Road

*Natural:* There are no natural wetlands in this segment.

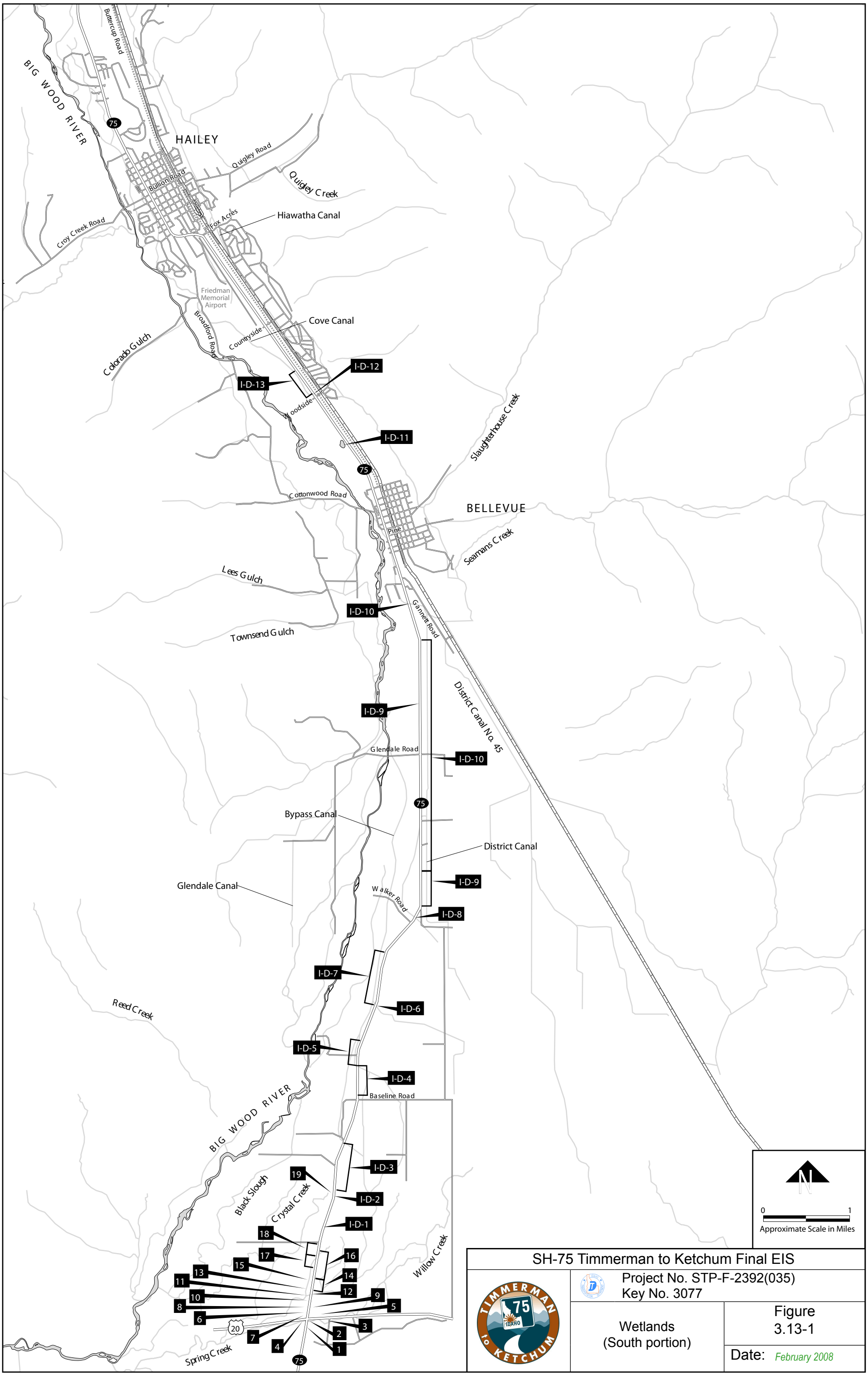
*Irrigation-dependent:* Three irrigation-dependent wetlands are located in this segment. Of these, two are PEM communities and one is a PFO community. Wetlands I-D-11 and I-D-12 are associated with irrigation ponds, and NJ-13 is associated with an irrigation canal.

**Table 3.13-3: Natural and Irrigation-Dependent Wetlands by Wetland Community Type, Gannett Road to Fox Acres**

| Community Type | Natural Wetland Number | Irrigation-Dependent Wetland Number |
|---|---|---|
| PEM | None | I-D12 and I-D-13 |
| PSS | None | I-D-11 |
| PFO | None | None |

Figures 3.13-1 and 3.13-2 are also amended, replacing references to NJ with I-D. The revised figures are included on the following pages.

It should be noted that although I-D wetlands do not necessarily require a Section 404 permit, they are still covered by Executive Order 11990, 23 CFR Part 777 and Department of Transportation Order 5660.1A and must be considered in any mitigation plan.



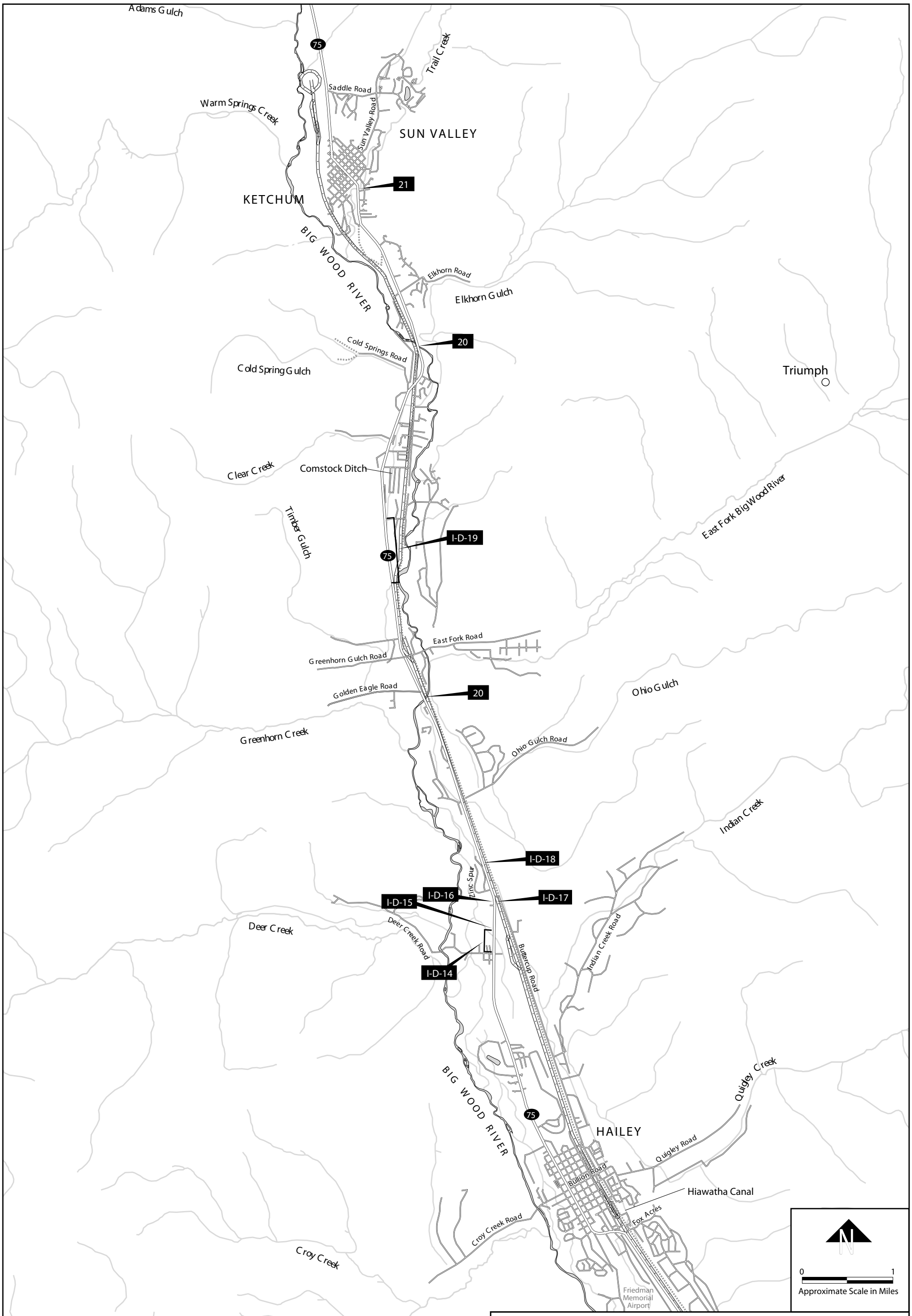

SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Wetlands
(South portion)

Figure
3.13-1

Date: *February 2008*




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Wetlands
(North portion)

Figure
3.13-2

Date: *February 2008*

# 3.5 Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat *(supplements Section 3.14 of DEIS, page 3-136)*

Supplementary information is provided on changes to the species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the status of wildlife crossing research being conducted in Blaine County.

## *3.5.1 ESA Species*

Since publication of the DEIS, the Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus)* has been removed from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) list and is no longer listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Bald eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. At the time of de-listing, USFWS provided National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines[16].

The Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office of the USFWS issues a 90-day species list that updates the list of threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species that occur in Idaho. Species list 2008-SL-0073 was provided to ITD in December 2007. This list includes the following species, all of which were considered in the DEIS and evaluated in the Programmatic Biological Assessment included in Volume III Technical Reports, Tab 1 of the DEIS:

- Gray wolf (*Canis lupus)*
- Canada lynx *(Lynx canadensis)*
- Yellow-billed cuckoo *(Coccyzus americanus)*

## *3.5.2 Wildlife Crossing Research Update*

At the time of publication of the DEIS, Blaine County had applied for enhancement funding to gather empirical data on wildlife crossing incidents along SH-75. Subsequent to obtaining that funding, Blaine County, in cooperation with Idaho Transportation Department, hired the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University (WTI-MSU) to gather more information about the wildlife-vehicle collisions and the potential installation of an animal detection system along SH-75 between the US-20 Timmerman Junction and Ketchum. The ultimate goal is to reduce animal-vehicle collisions, especially with mule deer and elk. The data collection program is referred to as "Ketchum on the Road: Wildlife Sightings". The public is being asked to participate in this effort through submitting wildlife sightings (dead or alive) along this road section. Instructions for, and the reporting is done through a website (www.blainecounty.org) that has been up since March 2007. The data is being collected through March 2008. The analysis of the data and recommendations for any additional wildlife crossing mitigation are scheduled for completion by fall of 2008.

# 3.6 Fisheries *(supplements Section 3.15 of the DEIS, page 3-159)*

The Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office of the USFWS issues a 90-day species list that updates the list of threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species that occur in Idaho. Species list 2008-SL-0073 was provided to ITD in December 2007. This list includes the following species, all of which were considered in the DEIS and evaluated in the Programmatic Biological Assessment included in Volume III Technical Reports, Tab 1 of the DEIS:

- Bull trout *(Salvelinus confluentus)*
- Sockeye salmon Spring/summer Chinook salmon *(Oncorhynchus tshawytscha)*
- Steelhead trout *(Oncorhynchus mykiss)*
- Spring/summer Chinook salmon *(Oncorhynchus tshawytscha)*
- Utah Valvata snail (*Valvata utahensis)*

[16] This guidance is available at the following website:
http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/issues/BaldEagle/NationalBaldEagleManagementGuidelines.pdf

# 4.0 TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS

The transportation impacts of the Preferred Alternative as described in Section 2.3 of this FEIS are discussed in this Chapter. The transportation impacts of Alternative 2 (Four Lane with Center Turn Lane) and Alternative 3 (Four Lane with Center Turn Lane and HOV) were analyzed and compared to Alternative 1 (No Build) in the DEIS. The transportation impacts of all three alternatives are shown again in this chapter to facilitate comparison and to provide information on the travel performance of potential HOV operations. Because the Idaho Transportation Department, in consultation with the Corridor Management Committee described in Section 2.2.2.2, may decide to implement HOV operations between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road in the future under the conditions described in Section 2.2.2.2, the transportation impacts of HOV operations for this section of SH-75 is included. These operations were analyzed under Alternative 3 in the DEIS.

## 4.1 Summary of Travel Performance Impacts

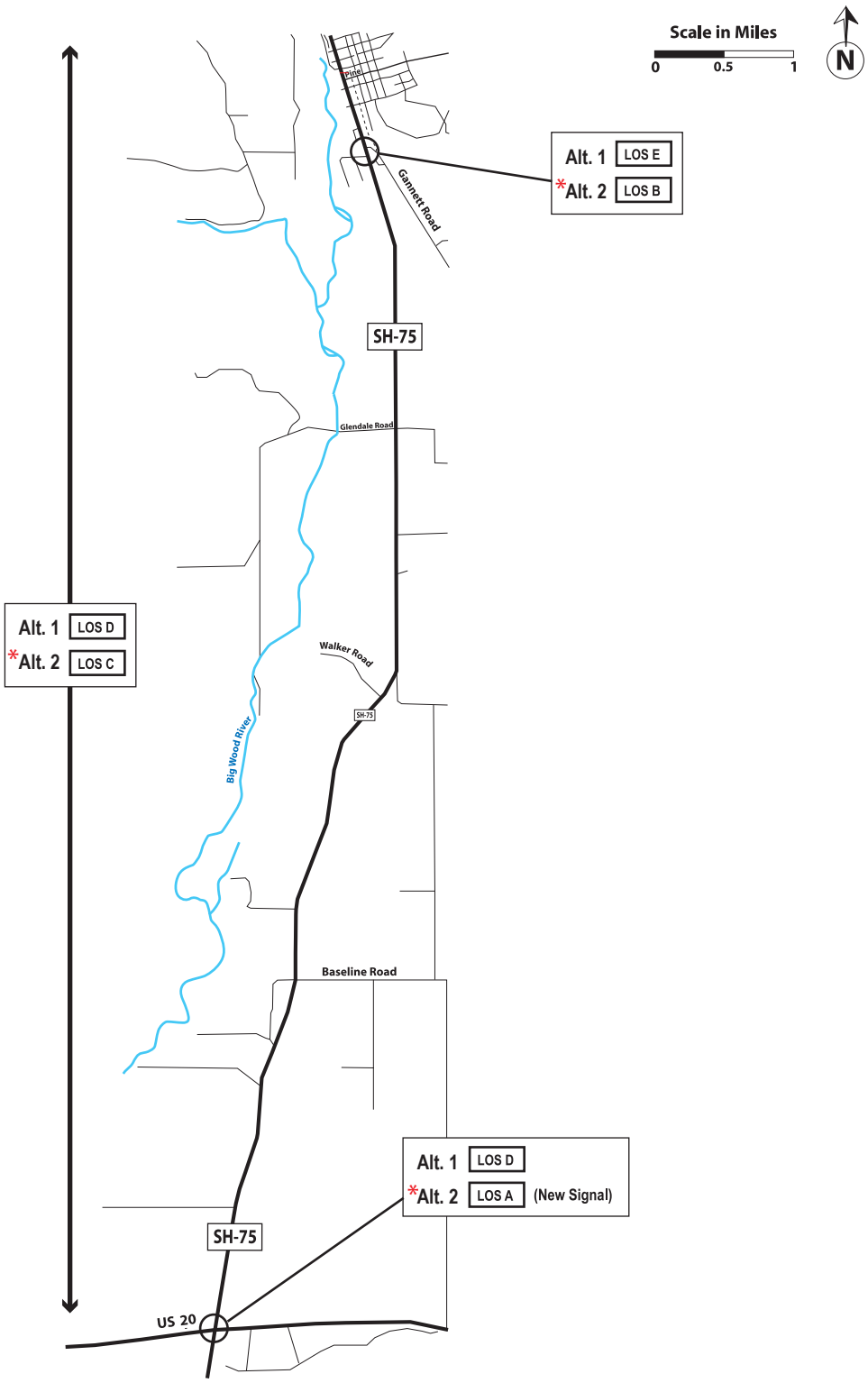
### *4.1.1 Level of Service and Travel Time*

Figures 4-1 through 4-5 show the year 2025 Level of Service by geographic segment of SH-75 for the three alternatives considered in the DEIS. Compared to Alternative 1 No-Build, both Alternatives 2 and 3 provide improved Levels of Service for SH-75 mainline and intersections for the highway segment between US-20 and McKercher Boulevard in Hailey during both the peak hour and during non-peak times. Between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road, Preferred Alternative 2 provides substantially improved Levels of Service compared to Alternative 1. With HOV operations between McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road, as analyzed under Alternative 3 in the DEIS, this geographic segment has LOS A for the HOV lane but LOS D between McKercher Boulevard and Ohio Gulch and LOS F from Ohio Gulch to Elkhorn Road for the general purpose lane.

**Table 4-1: Summary of Peak Hour Travel Performance Information (Year 2025)**

| Criterion | Alternative 1: No-Build | Preferred Alternative 2: Four Lanes with Center Turn Lane | Alternative 3: Four Lanes with HOV and Center Turn Lane[17] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Corridor Travel Time (minutes) | 60 | 49 | 58 (60 General Purpose, 49 HOV) |
| Number of intersections at LOS E/F | 10 | 1 | 8 |
| Lane-miles at LOS E/F | 7 | 0.1 | 10 |
| Corridor Delay (vehicle hours in peak period) | 349.1 | 149.7 | 265.9 |
| Work Trip Person Trips – Drive Alone | 25,200 | 25, 100 | 24,600 |
| Work Trip Person Trips - Carpool | 10,400 | 10,500 | 10,850 |
| Work Trip Person Trips - Transit | 1,160 | 1,160 | 1,220 |
| Percent of study area trips in carpools, transit | 31% | 32% | 33% |

[17] As analyzed in the DEIS.

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Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

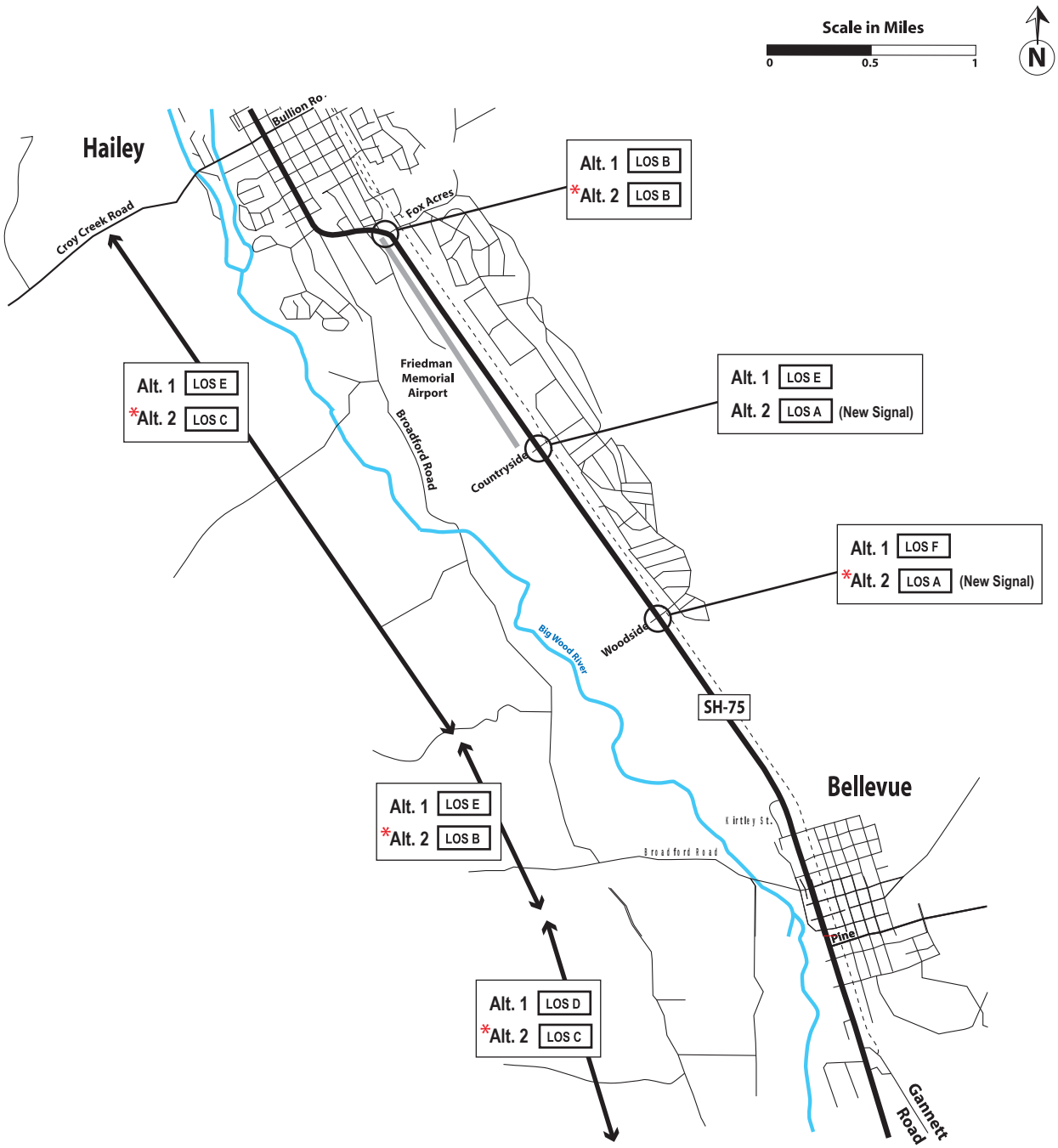
**2025 Peak Hour Level of Service for Alternatives 1 and 2**
***US-20 to Gannett Road***

Figure

4-1

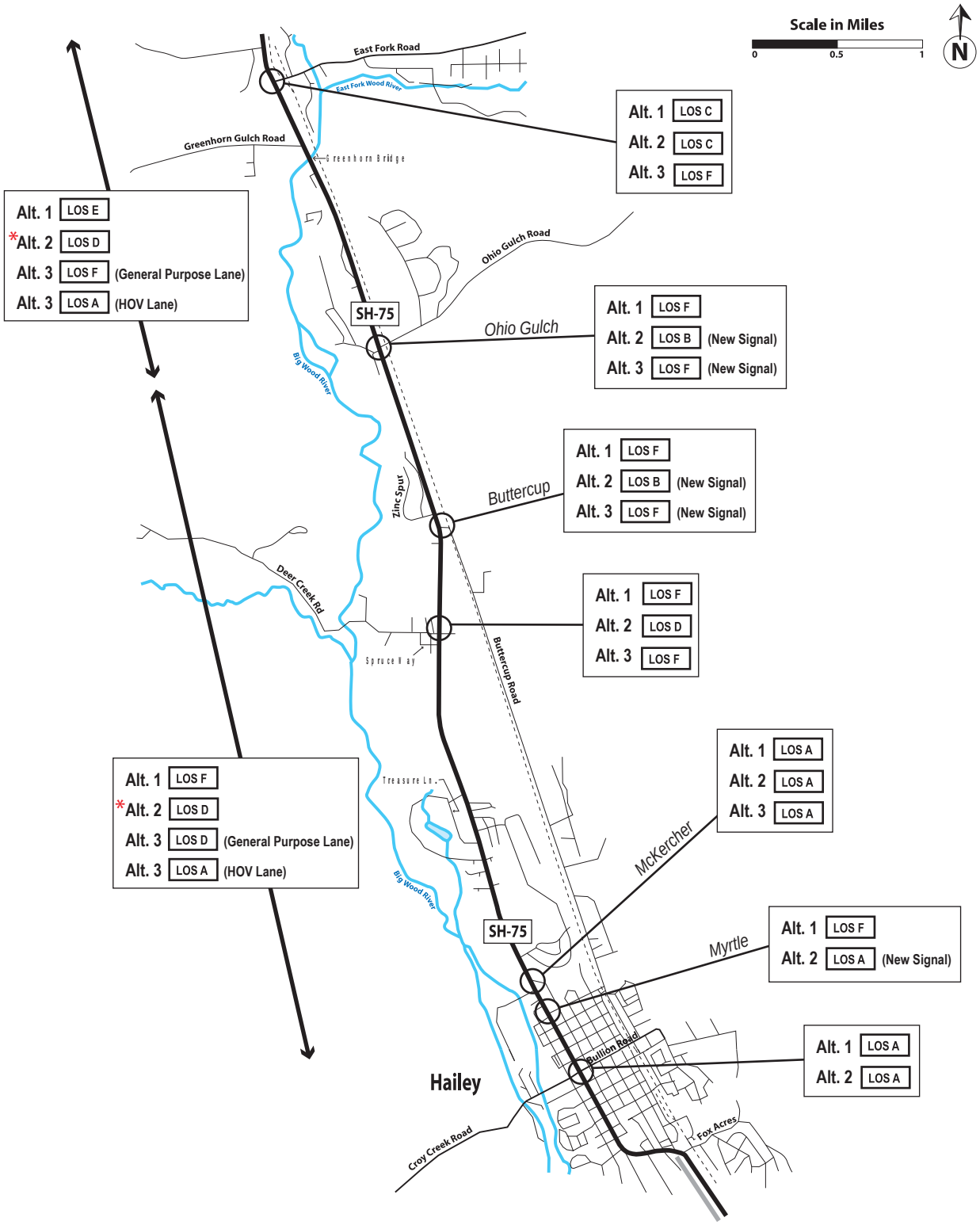
Date: *February 2008*

* Preferred Alternative




| SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS | |
|---|---|
| Project No. STP-F-2392(035)<br>Key No. 3077 | |
| Title<br>**2025 Peak Hour Level of Service for Alternatives 1 and 2**<br>***Gannett Road to Fox Acres*** | Figure<br>4-2 |
| | Date: *February 2008* |

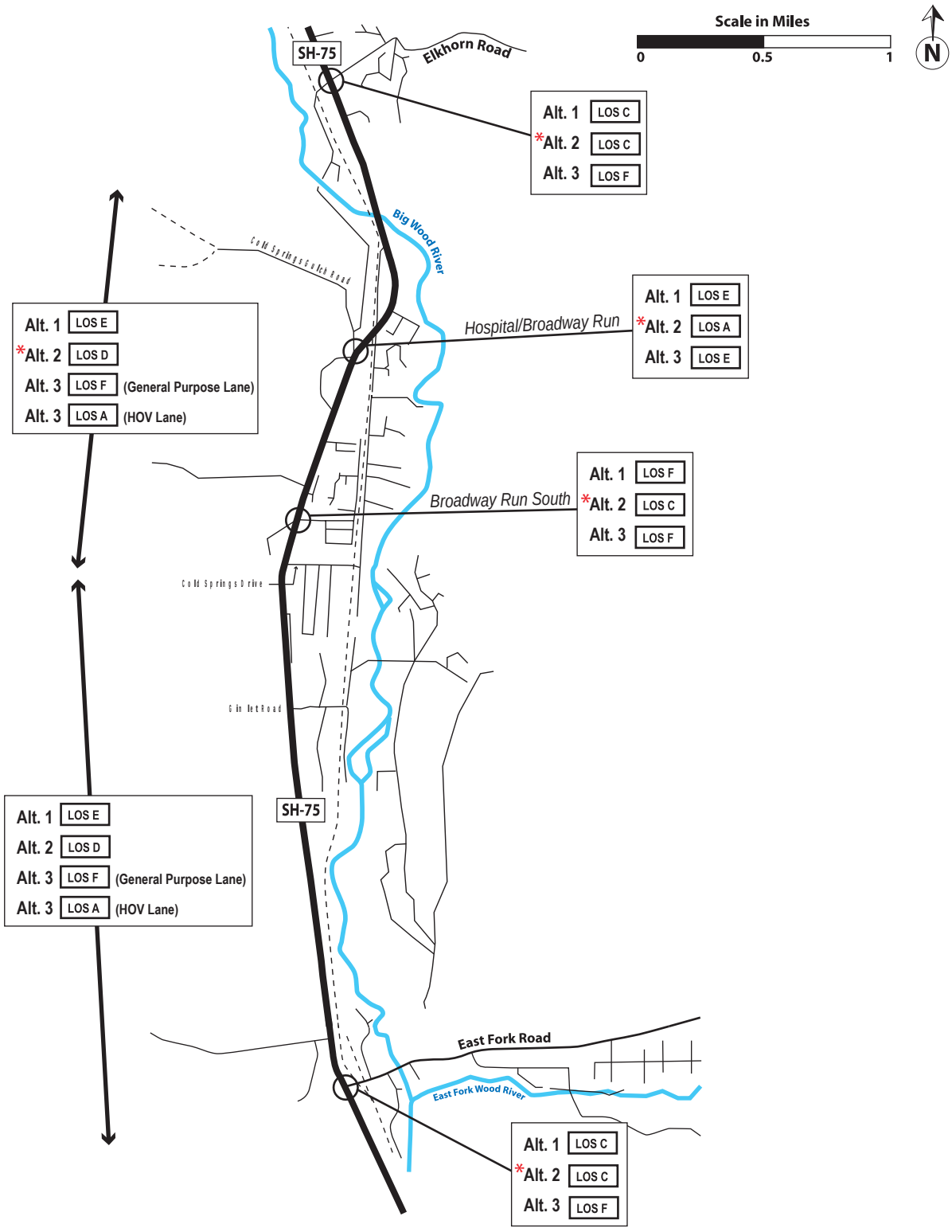
* Preferred Alternative




* Preferred Alternative

Note:
Alternative 3 LOS included showing impact of future conversion to HOV under conditions specified in section 2.2.2.2, page 2-6

| SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS | |
|---|---|
| Project No. STP-F-2392(035)<br>Key No. 3077 | |
| Title<br>**2025 Peak Hour Level of Service for Alternatives 1, 2, 3 *Fox Acres to East Fork Road*** | Figure<br>4-3 |
| | Date: *February 2008* |




* Preferred Alternative

Note:
Alternative 3 LOS included showing impact of future conversion to HOV under conditions specified in section 2.2.2.2, page 2-6

SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

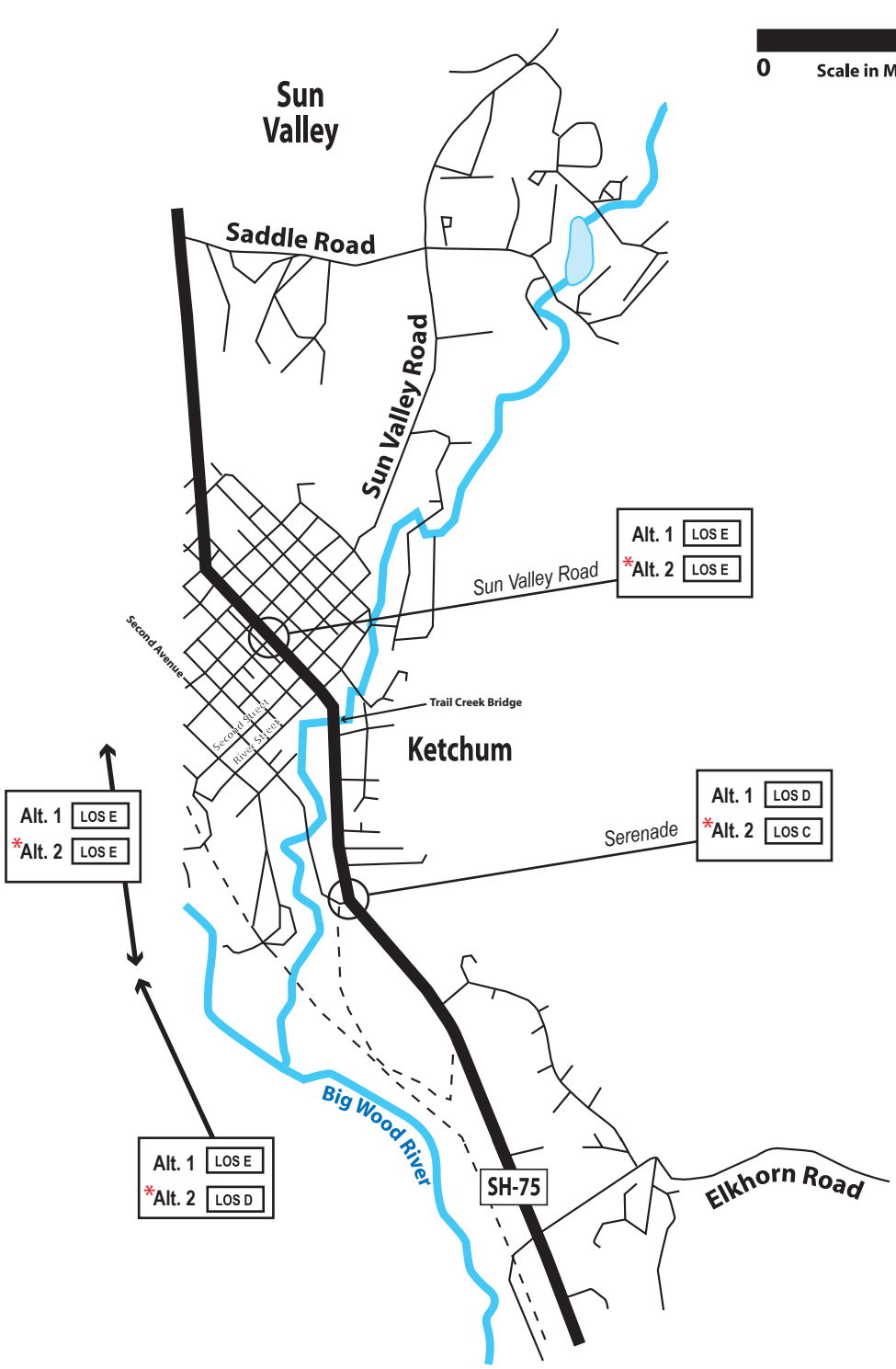
Title

**2025 Peak Hour Level of Service for Alternatives 1, 2, 3 *East Fork Rd to Elkhorn Rd***

Figure

4-4

Date: *February 2008*




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title

**2025 Peak Hour Level of Service for Alternatives 1, 2, 3**
***Elkhorn Rd to Saddle Rd***

Figure

4-5

Date: *February 2008*

* Preferred Alternative

Travel time for Preferred Alternative 2 will improve by 11 minutes over Alternative 1 No Build, and the LOS at intersections and on the SH-75 mainline will see substantial improvement. Corridor delay during the peak travel period will be more than halved. A minor shift to carpools will occur.

**Table 4-2: Comparative Peak Hour Travel Speed and LOS**

| SH-75 Geographic Segments | Alternative 1: No Build | | Preferred Alternative 2 | | Alternative 3 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Speed** | **LOS** | **Speed** | **LOS** | **Speed** | **LOS** | |
| US-20 to Gannett Road | 40-45 | D | 45-50 | C | 45-50 | C | No HOV operations in these sections. |
| Gannett Road to Fox Acres Road | | | | | | | |
| • Gannett Road to Woodside Boulevard | 25-30 | E | 40-45 | B | 40-45 | B | |
| • Woodside Boulevard to Fox Acres Road | 25-30 | E | 30-35 | C | 30-35 | C | |
| Fox Acres to McKercher Boulevard | 20 - 25 | C | 20 - 25 | C | 20 - 25 | C | |
| | | | | | **Alternative 3 (General purpose lane)** | | **Alternative3 (HOV Lane)** | |
| | **Speed** | **LOS** | **Speed** | **LOS** | **Speed** | **LOS** | **Speed** | **LOS** |
| McKercher to Ohio Gulch | 15-25 | E/F | 30-35 | D | 30-35 | D | 40-45 | A |
| Ohio Gulch to Elkhorn | 25-30 | E | 30-35 | D | 15-20 | F | 30-35 | A |
| | **Speed** | **LOS** | **Speed** | **LOS** | **Alternative 3** | | No HOV operations in these sections. | |
| Elkhorn to River Street | 20-25 | E | 25-30 | D | 25-30 | D | | |
| River Street to Saddle Road | 15-20 | E | 15-20 | E | 15-20 | E | | |

Travel speeds throughout the SH-75 corridor will improve with the greatest improvements between Gannett Road in southern Bellevue and Fox Acres Boulevard in Hailey, and between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road. LOS relative to the No Build will also improve. In the urban section of the City of Hailey (Fox Acres to McKercher Boulevard), travel speeds are set by the 25 mile per hour speed limit and will not be affected by the Preferred Alternative.

Eleven intersections evaluated in the DEIS will have substantial improvement in LOS, as shown in bold in Table 4-3.

Substantial reduction in travel times will occur in the Gannett Road and Fox Acres Road segment and the McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road segment.

In the event that HOV operations are implemented by ITD for the McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road segment, peak hour traffic performance is expected to be similar to that modeled for Alternative 3. Travel performance is summarized in Tables 4-2 to 4-4 and shown in Figures 4-3 and 4-4. In summary, the LOS in the HOV lane would be A for both the McKercher Boulevard to Ohio Gulch and Ohio Gulch to Elkhorn segments, which is better than the projection of LOS D for both segments under the Preferred Alternative. However, the LOS in the general purpose lane would be LOS D and LOS F for these two segments, respectively, and speeds in the general purpose lane from Ohio Gulch to Elkhorn would be in the 15 to 20 mph range. Peak hour travel time for the HOV lane would be 16 minutes, about the same as for both lanes in the Preferred Alternative, but the general purpose lane would be 27 minutes.

The projection that the travel time would be approximately the same for the HOV lane as for the two general purpose lanes under the Preferred Alternative appears to be counterintuitive, since the HOV lane has a better LOS and also a higher travel speed for the McKercher Boulevard to Ohio Gulch segment compared to the same segments in Alternative 2. The travel demand forecasting modelers have confirmed this projection, however, on the basis that the travel demand forecasting model indicates that many, but not a majority, of the HOV vehicles enter the corridor north of McKercher Boulevard, or leave the corridor before reaching Elkhorn Road.

During peak periods when the HOV lane is in operation in the travel model, vehicles turning onto and exiting from SH-75 will need to merge into, or across, the HOV lane. HOV eligible vehicles making a left turn to enter SH-75 must turn across the highly congested, much slower-flowing general purpose lane in order to enter the HOV lane. During both the AM and PM peak, vehicles in the HOV lane that need to make a left turn to exit SH-75 must merge left into the slower-moving general purpose lane to access the left turn lane. For single occupant vehicles and other non-HOV lane eligible vehicles turning right onto SH-75, they must first enter the HOV lane and then merge into the congested general purpose lane.

In both of the cases described above, HOV lane vehicles are delayed during the merge/weave movements by a measurable amount, which results in delays to these vehicles that offset the improvement in travel time compared to Preferred Alternative 2. Transit buses in the HOV lane will be slowing to enter the bus pullouts to drop off and pick up passengers, also contributing to delay for HOV lane vehicles. The result is that for the HOV lane, the average travel time is approximately the same as for vehicles traveling in either lane under Preferred Alternative 2, about 16 minutes.

**Table 4-3: Comparative Peak Hour Levels of Service for Intersections**

| SH-75 Intersection at | Year 2000 | Year 2025 Alternative 1 | Year 2025 Preferred Alternative 2 | Year 2025 Alternative 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| US-20** | B | D | **A** | **A** |
| Gannett Road | B | E | **B** | **B** |
| Woodside Boulevard** | D | F | **A** | **A** |
| Countryside Road** | E | E | **A** | **A** |
| Fox Acres Road* | B | B | B | B |
| Bullion Street* | A | A | A | A |
| Myrtle Street** | D | F | **A** | **A** |
| McKercher Boulevard* | N/A | A | A | A |
| Deer Creek Road | C | F | **D** | F |
| East Fork Road* | C | C | C | F |
| Buttercup Road** | C | F | **B** | F |
| Ohio Gulch** | C | F | **B** | F |
| Broadway South | F | F | **C** | F |
| Hospital Drive/Broadway Run* | B | E | **A** | E |
| Elkhorn Road* | A | C | C | F |
| Serenade Lane | B | D | **C** | **C** |
| Sun Valley Road* | C | E | E | E |

* Intersections with existing traffic signals ** Additional intersections signalized in Preferred Alternative

**Table 4-4: Comparative Peak Hour Travel Time (Minutes)**

| SH-75 Geographic Segment | Alternative 1 | Preferred Alternative 2 | Alternative 3 | Alternative 3 (General Purpose Lane) | Alternative 3 (HOV Lane) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| US-20 to Gannett Road | 12 | 11 | 11 | 11 | |
| Gannett Road to Fox Acres Road | 12 | 7 | 7 | 7 | |
| Fox Acres Road to McKercher Boulevard | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | |
| McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road | **21** | **16** | **25** | **27** | **16** |
| Elkhorn Road to River Street | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | |
| River Street to Saddle Road | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | |
| **Total** | 60 | 49 | 60 | 60 | 49 |

### 4.1.2 Clarification of HOV Operations

During the development of the DEIS, the traffic operations analyses for Alternative 2 and for Alternative 3 were presented at public open houses, Work Group meetings, storefront office events, and at the public hearing. The analyses presented included the HOV operations as part of Alternative 3. Notwithstanding this information, Blaine County, the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley, Blaine County Citizens for Smart Growth, and many individuals provided both verbal and written comment during the DEIS process, as well as on the DEIS that support HOV. These comments indicated that the County, Cities, other organizations, and individuals expect that the HOV lane will attract more users than the traffic analysis in this EIS predicts. They believe the continued development of programs to encourage and incentivize transit, carpooling, and changes to travel habits will support a much higher usage of the HOV lane.

The Blaine County Commissioners submitted a letter during the DEIS comment period that specifically requested additional information on the potential operations of HOV, should it be implemented. The specific comments and responses to them are included in Appendix B, pages B-19 to B-21. As the majority of SH-75 between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Way lies within Blaine County and the Blaine County Sheriff's office will have primary responsibility for enforcing an HOV lane, the requested information is included in this FEIS.

Should ITD implement HOV operations under the conditions described in Section 2.2.2.2 (page 2-? of this FEIS), the curb lane from the intersection of McKercher Boulevard and SH-75 to the intersection of Elkhorn Road and SH-75 will operate as a designated HOV lane. The curb lane for northbound traffic will operate as an HOV lane during the morning peak period, while the southbound curb lane will operate as an HOV lane in the afternoon peak period. The HOV lane will be restricted to buses and other vehicles carrying two or more persons. Trucks less than 10,000 pounds gross weight with two or more persons will be allowed in the HOV lane. Large trucks, those heavier than 10,000 pound gross vehicle weight or with three or more axles, will be restricted from using the HOV lanes. This 10,000 pound threshold restriction is based on state-of-the-practice for HOV lanes in the United States and is intended to maximize the traffic operations of the HOV lane. [18] The 8-foot shoulders will be used for enforcement by the Blaine County Sheriff's Department. The remaining through lane will be the designated general purpose lane (GP lane).

The HOV lane will begin for northbound traffic at the intersection of McKercher Boulevard and SH-75 and end at Elkhorn Road. The HOV lane will be ended at a point where the designated HOV lane will continue as a general purpose lane; for northbound traffic, this will be north of the Elkhorn Road intersection. For southbound traffic, the HOV designation will end at the McKercher Boulevard and SH-75 intersection. This approach to terminating the HOV operation at a geographic location where the roadway cross-section is a continuous five-lanes will minimize the accident risk. Ending or beginning the HOV operation after a traffic signal, and away from a location where the lane physically ends, minimizes traffic weaving and provides for more orderly traffic operations as vehicles distribute between the general purpose lane and the HOV lane. Advanced warning signs will be placed prior to and just after the signal to announce the end of the HOV lane designation (such as "HOV restriction ends, 1/2 mile" or "HOV restriction ends, 500 feet") to allow vehicles to safely distribute between two lanes. As the speeds approaching the SH-75 and McKercher Boulevard at the south terminus of HOV and SH-75 and Elkhorn Road at the north terminus of HOV will be 35 miles per hour or less, the ability of vehicles to weave and avoid accidents is improved over higher speed termination locations.

Traffic in the GP lane wishing to exit from SH-75 onto a side street or driveway will need to safely merge to the right across the HOV lane to make right turns. This merging of traffic will have a higher risk of vehicle

[18] The traffic modeling for the SH-75 project excluded all trucks greater than 10,000 pounds gross weight from the HOV lane.

collisions than if both lanes were general purpose. To mitigate this risk, the HOV lane could be signed to allow a certain length of road in advance of the right turn where both HOV traffic and right-turning vehicles will be allowed.

Traffic on side streets wishing to turn right onto SH-75 from uncontrolled side streets will use the HOV lane to accelerate and, if not eligible to use the HOV lane, merge into the GP lane. This maneuver will have some risk of rear-end collisions with faster-moving HOV vehicle that come up behind general purpose lane traffic merging left.

HOV restrictions may be difficult to enforce during heavy snow conditions. It is likely that during snow emergencies, law enforcement staff will have a higher priority than enforcing HOV lane restrictions, including incident management. Maintaining the visibility of lane markings during heavy snow events that will enable enforcement of HOV restrictions will likely be difficult. Under what road conditions and how information will be disseminated to the traveling public will be determined by the SH-75 Corridor Operations Management Team.

## 4.2 Other Transportation Modes

The DEIS considered the impacts of Alternatives 2 and 3 on freight movements, transit operations, bicyclists and pedestrian movements and crossings of SH-75. The description of the analysis of these modes in Chapter 4 of the DEIS for these other transportation modes is still valid and generally unchanged in this FEIS. A summary of these impacts is given below.

### *4.2.1 Transit and HOV Vehicles*

The Preferred Alternative will provide buses and carpools with the same travel times and safety benefits as other vehicles using the roadway. Buses will use the bus pullouts to pick up and discharge passengers.

Although a conversion to HOV operations is not part of the Preferred Alternative, this discussion is included to inform Blaine County, the cities in the Wood River Valley, and other organizations and individuals who provided comment on the DEIS that support HOV, and also because the potential future conversion to HOV operations is reasonably foreseeable.

The impacts of HOV operations on transit were analyzed under Alternative 3 in the DEIS. This analysis is relevant to a potential future conversion to HOV operations between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road under the conditions described in Section 2.4 of this FEIS. As previously described, the local governments believe that HOV operations will perform better than projected in the DEIS and this FEIS.

Should HOV operations between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road be implemented under the conditions specified in Section 2.3.4 of this FEIS, buses, carpools and other HOV lane eligible vehicles will have a travel-time advantage between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road, relative to vehicles in the general purpose lane. This travel time for HOV lane users will be the same as for all users, including transit and carpools, of both travel lanes under Alternative 2. Transit buses will have travel times longer than other HOV lane users as they will be stopping to load and unload passengers, adding approximately 5 minutes to the bus travel time. Bus transit users will have a six-minute travel-time advantage over the general purpose lane user. Between US-20 and McKercher Boulevard, there will be no HOV operations. Vehicles carrying 2 or more persons and buses will operate in the general purpose lanes and will experience the same Levels of Service and travel times described in Section 4.1 above.

### *4.2.2 Freight Movement*

Freight movements under the Preferred Alternative will experience the same LOS and safer operations, relative to the No Build, as other traffic. Other vehicles will be able to safely pass slower moving vehicles

using either the passing lanes in the US-20 to Gannett Road geographic segment, or one of the two travel lanes throughout the rest of the SH-75 corridor. With the additional through lanes, center turn lane, 8-foot shoulders, and right-turn lanes, truck traffic will experience greater levels of safety compared to Alternative 1 No Build.

The impacts of HOV operations on freight movement were analyzed under Alternative 3 in the DEIS. This analysis is relevant to a potential future conversion to HOV operations between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road under the conditions described in Section 2.4 of this FEIS. Should HOV operations be implemented between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road, trucks over 10,000 pounds gross weight will not be allowed in the HOV lane and will be restricted to the general purpose lane. Between McKercher and Elkhorn, truck trip travel times will be the same as for other general purpose lane users.

As shown in Table 4-2, the LOS in the general purpose lane of the HOV section of SH-75 will be D from McKercher Boulevard to Ohio Gulch and F from Ohio Gulch to Elkhorn Road. The stop-and-go conditions typical of this level of congestion will increase the potential for trucks over 10,000 pounds gross weight to be involved in rear-end accidents in the general purpose lane. Gaps in traffic from the traffic signal operations at these intersections will enable slower, left-turning trucks to execute turns more safely across oncoming traffic.

### *4.2.3 Pedestrians and Bicyclists*

The Preferred Alternative will enhance pedestrian travel in the SH-75 corridor through the addition of pedestrian underpasses at Treasure Lane, Spruce Way, and Buttercup/Zinc Spur. The installation of traffic signals at the intersections of SH-75 and Myrtle Street in Hailey, Buttercup/Zinc Spur and Ohio Gulch/Starweather will also facilitate pedestrian and bicyclist crossings of SH-75.
Bus pullouts will be incorporated into the Preferred Alternative to facilitate pedestrian access to transit and support transit use. These will be provided at McKercher Boulevard, Buttercup Road/Zinc Spur, Ohio Gulch/Starweather, East Fork Road, and Broadway Run/Hospital Drive. The Sun Valley Ketchum Transit Authority (KART) and the Peak Bus service have recently been combined into a regional transit authority and are beginning planning for a regional service and its infrastructure requirements. The resultant plan may identify locations where additional bus pullouts and bus shelters are needed along SH-75. These locations could then be incorporated into SH-75 during the design phase.

# 5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The impacts of Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 of the DEIS on the affected environment of the Wood River Valley was described in Chapter 5 Environmental Impacts of the DEIS. Since publication of the DEIS, additional analysis has been conducted for some resources, in response to comments received on the DEIS. There have also been regulatory changes since the DEIS was published. This chapter describes changes and updates to the impacts of Alternative 2, the Preferred Alternative. Appendix D contains the full text of the DEIS.

## 5.1 Land Use *(page 5-1 of the DEIS)*

The impacts of the Preferred Alternative on land use as described in the DEIS are unchanged; however, Blaine County and the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum, and Sun Valley submitted more detailed written descriptions of the relevant transportation elements of their respective plans. These are presented as supplemental information in Chapter 3 of this FEIS.

### *5.1.1 Consistency with Plans*

The consistency of the Preferred Alternative with the comprehensive plans and transportation plans discussed in Section 3.1.1 of this FEIS was evaluated. These plans include policies and objectives that support the use of transit, carpooling, pedestrians and bicyclists. This section supplements the discussion presented in 5.1 Land Use of the DEIS.

#### 5.1.1.1 Blaine County

The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, is consistent with the *Blaine County Comprehensive Plan*'s Recommendation 24. The County was an active participant in the development of SH-75 alternatives considered in the DEIS. The *Blaine County Public Transit Feasibility Study* transit recommendations were taken into account when developing the transit assumptions included in the travel demand forecasting model for the alternatives evaluated in the DEIS.[19] The conceptual design for Alternative 2 includes provision for bus pullouts at several locations between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road.

The Transit Feasibility Study calls for HOV queue bypass lanes[20] and for HOV lanes on SH-75. As described in Section 2.2 Preferred Alternative of this FEIS, the future conversion of the outside lane of Alternative 2 to HOV operation as considered under Alternative 3 in the DEIS is consistent with the future provision for HOV lanes. HOV queue bypass lanes will be redundant with the HOV operations as described in Section 4.1.2 of this FEIS.

The Study's recommended development of local transit operations and supporting infrastructure is not precluded by Alternative 2 or conversion to HOV operations between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road. With the implementation of a Blaine County regional transit authority on May 1, 2006, the determination of these transit operations and infrastructure will be determined by this transit authority. The Preferred Alternative does not presuppose the results of this local planning process but provides the highway improvements upon which transit vehicles will operate, and provides bus pullouts between

[19] These are detailed in *Transit Considerations*, Tab 5 of Volume III of the SH-75 DEIS.

[20] A queue bypass lane refers to traffic operations at a traffic signal whereby vehicles in the HOV lane are given priority. This may be either through the use of an additional signal phase to allow the HOV lane to proceed before the single occupancy vehicle lane, or through the use of a separately constructed lane that will bypass the main traffic queue. The feasibility study did not specify a specific form for the HOV queue bypass lane.

McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road. The Preferred Alternative contributes to the accomplishment of the Study's objective and is therefore generally consistent with the Plan.

The Preferred Alternative's consistency with the Blaine County Scenic Overlay District was evaluated, relative to proposed noise barriers. Should the two noise barriers described in Section 5.7.3 of the DEIS, and Section 5.7 of this FEIS be constructed, ITD will need to obtain a site alteration permit, conditional use permit, or variance for these barriers to be consistent with, and comply with, Chapter 21A Scenic Overlay District of the Blaine County Code.

#### 5.1.1.2 City of Bellevue

The *Comprehensive Plan for the City of Bellevue* does not contain policies specific to SH-75. The Preferred Alternative does provide additional sidewalks at the southern end of Bellevue that will contribute to pedestrian mobility and safety. The Preferred Alternative's continuous five-lane SH-75 cross-section throughout the City will contribute to safe traffic movement on SH-75. These infrastructure elements are consistent with the guiding policies described in Section 3.1.1.5.

#### 5.1.1.3 City of Hailey

The City of Hailey's planning and transportation plans focus on goals and policies that relate to traffic circulation within the City and integration of land use and transportation elements city-wide. The

preliminary results of their current Transportation Master Plan process confirm the need to maintain 5-lanes on Main Street (SH-75) and for traffic signals at SH-75 intersection to improve access to SH-75. Although this transportation plan has not yet been adopted, the Preferred Alternative 2 is consistent with the draft transportation plan recommendations.

#### 5.1.1.4 City of Ketchum

The 2004 Ketchum Transportation Study includes several policies and goals that focus on increasing the role of transit in addressing both internal circulation needs and travel on the SH-75 corridor. The Preferred Alternative and the ability to implement HOV operations when the conditions outlined in Section 2.3.4 "Future Conversion to HOV Operations from McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road" of this FEIS are consistent with these policies and goals. The travel demand forecasting model developed for the DEIS included aggressive transit operations assumptions for the year 2025. Alternative 2 is based upon those assumptions.

The formation of Mountain Rides, the regional transit authority, provides the institutional mechanism to help meet the City of Ketchum's goals of valley wide transit. Preferred Alternative 2 provides the infrastructure, including bus pullouts, wide shoulders, and pedestrian underpasses located at likely transit stops between McKercher Boulevard and East Fork Road.

The Downtown Ketchum Master Plan does not call for any improvements to SH-75 but does emphasize the importance of transit and pedestrian activity. It also recommends consideration of a 3-lane striping of SH-75, rather than the existing 4-lanes. Within the City of Ketchum, the Preferred Alternative does include improvements between Serenade Lane and River Street that will provide improved pedestrian movements across the reconstructed Trail Creek Bridge as well as for transit vehicles entering the City of Ketchum.

#### 5.1.1.5 City of Sun Valley

The City's comprehensive plan of 2005 does not specifically address SH-75. The highway forms the western boundary of the city such that it provides access to Sun Valley but does not pass through it. The plan does express a desire to improve mass transit. The formation of a regional transit authority in May 2006 provides the City of Sun Valley with the institutional mechanism to help meet their goals of valley wide

transit. Preferred Alternative 2 provides the infrastructure, including bus pullouts, wide shoulders, and pedestrian underpasses located at likely transit stops between McKercher Boulevard and East Fork Road.

## 5.2 Social Impacts *(page 5-3 of the DEIS)*

The impacts of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2 (including the changes described in Section 2.3.2.1 of this FEIS) on the population and community resources as described in the DEIS are unchanged.

## 5.3 Environmental Justice *(page 5-7 of the DEIS)*

The impacts of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2 (including the changes described in Section 2.3.2.1 of this FEIS) on environmental justice populations as described in the DEIS are unchanged.

## 5.4 Relocation *(page 5-10 of the DEIS)*

The addition of the Gannett Road roundabout and the Spruce Way pedestrian underpass, as described in Section 2.3.2.1 of Chapter 2 of this FEIS increase the acreage of right-of-way that will be acquired for Alternative 2. The Gannett Road roundabout will add 0.31 acres; the Spruce Way pedestrian underpass will add 1.08 acres of new right-of-way. This additional right-of-way will not require the displacement of any additional housing units or commercial properties.

Table 5.4-1 Residential and Business and Commercial Relocations on page 5-11 of the DEIS is therefore amended. The change to the table is highlighted in bold below.

**Revised Table 5.4-1 Residential and Business Commercial Relocations**

| Geographic Segment | Acres of Right-of-Way To Be Acquired | Residential Properties To Be Relocated | Commercial Properties To Be Relocated |
|---|---|---|---|
| US 20 to Gannett Road | **79.21** | 0 | 0 |
| Gannett Road to Fox Acres Road | 3.5 | 0 | 0 |
| Fox Acres to McKercher Boulevard | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road | **51.54** | 8 homes<br>4 mobile homes | 2 |
| Elkhorn to River Street | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| River Street to Saddle Road | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | **134.25** | 12 | 2 |

The Gannett Road roundabout discussed in Section 2.2.1 adds 0.31 acres of additional ROW. The removal of the Ohio Gulch/Starweather pedestrian underpass reduces the ROW required by 0.44 acres; however, the Spruce Way pedestrian underpass adds 1.80 acres to the needed ROW. The total ROW required is 134.25 acres. Changes to the location of the pedestrian underpass is described in Section 2.2.2 of this FEIS.

## 5.5 Farmlands, Agriculture, Soils and Geology *(page 5-13 of the DEIS)*

The impacts of the Preferred Alternative on prime farmlands and agricultural operations and the interrelationship with area soils and geohazards as described in the DEIS are unchanged.

## 5.6 Economic Impacts *(page 5-15 of the DEIS)*

The impacts of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, on the economy of the Wood River Valley as described in the DEIS are unchanged.

## 5.7 Noise *(page 5-21 of the DEIS)*

During preparation of the DEIS, many Blaine County home owners expressed concern with noise levels in the Wood River Valley and from SH-75 specifically. Section 5.7 of the DEIS described the comprehensive noise analysis that was conducted. A special public open house on noise impacts and mitigation was conducted on August 19, 2003 to share the results of the analysis with the general public and homeowners.

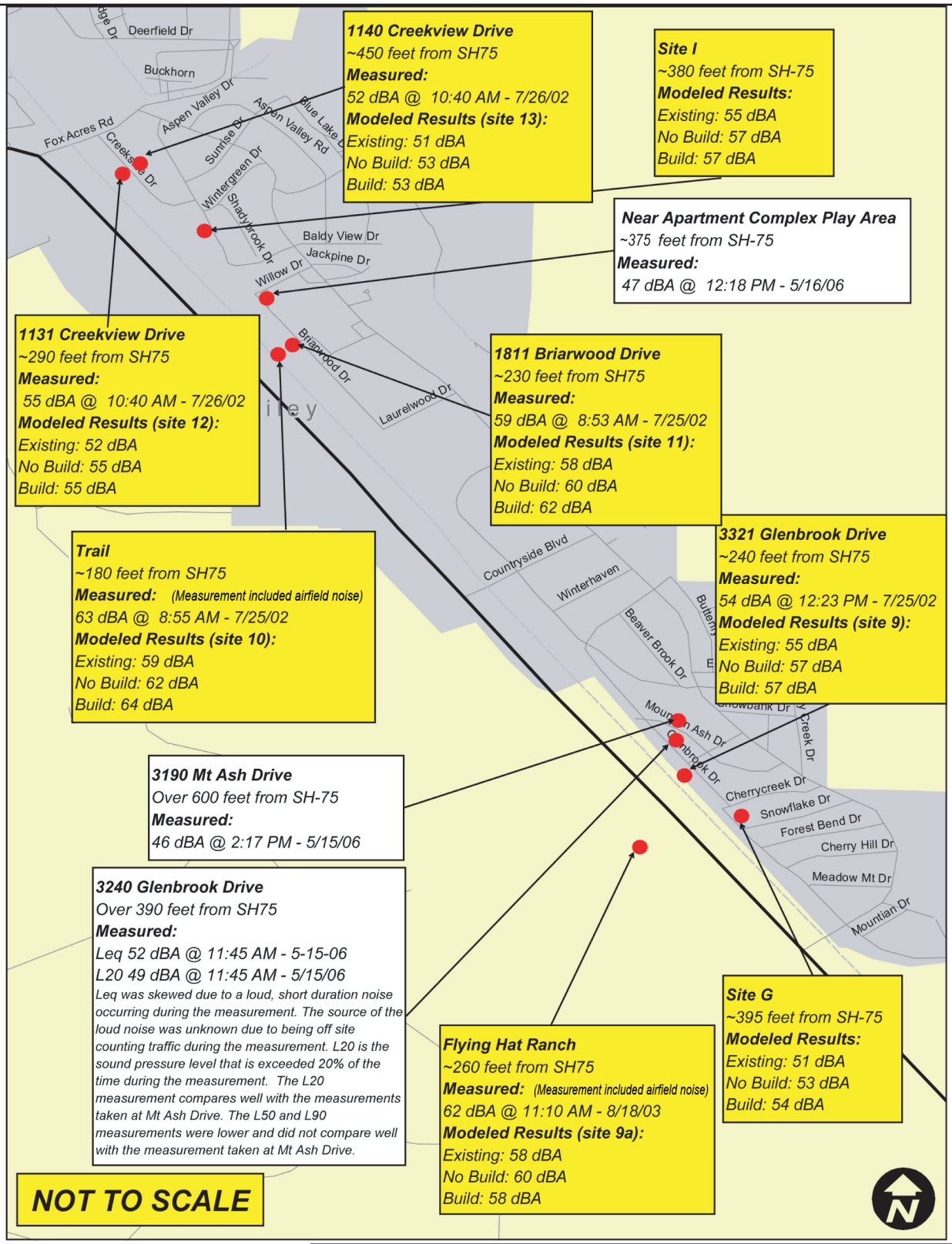
Many comments on the DEIS raised concerns with noise impacts. Comments were divided between those who felt that their property should receive noise mitigation from SH-75, while other commenters opposed any form of noise barriers in the valley. To provide additional information to address these comments, additional noise measurements were taken and additional noise barrier analyses conducted. Although the analyses and information contained in the following sections is helpful to address comments on the DEIS, the impacts of the Preferred Alternative on noise sensitive receptors and the required mitigation as described in the DEIS are unchanged.

### *5.7.1 Additional Noise Measurements and Analysis*

Noise measurements were taken at nine additional locations corresponding with the addresses of those who requested noise mitigation in their comments on the DEIS. These additional measurements were taken the week of May 22, 2006. The locations of these measurements, the measured level and distance from SH-75 are shown on Figures 5-1, 5-2, and 5-3. The information presented in yellow boxes on these figures are the receptors that were analyzed as part of the DEIS noise measurement and analysis work (2002 and 2003). The information in white boxes presents data for the nine new measured locations.

A comparison of the noise levels measured in 2002 and 2003 with those taken in May 2006 shows that the measured noise levels are generally consistent over time for the same general locations and distances of the receptors from SH-75. Table 5-1 Comparison of Noise Levels compares the noise levels measured in May 2006 with those of sites evaluated in the DEIS that have comparable distances from SH-75. A comparison of traffic volumes in 2002 and 2003 with the most recent traffic count data available confirms that traffic levels are comparable between when counts were taken in 2002 and 2003 and when the additional noise measurements were taken in May 2006.

As the new measured levels are consistent with the previous analysis and traffic volumes have not changed, the Traffic Noise Model (TNM) predictions for 2025 noise levels for Alternatives 2 and 3 in the DEIS are valid for the additional measurement locations and are applicable to the Preferred Alternative 2 in this FEIS.




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

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Key No. 3077

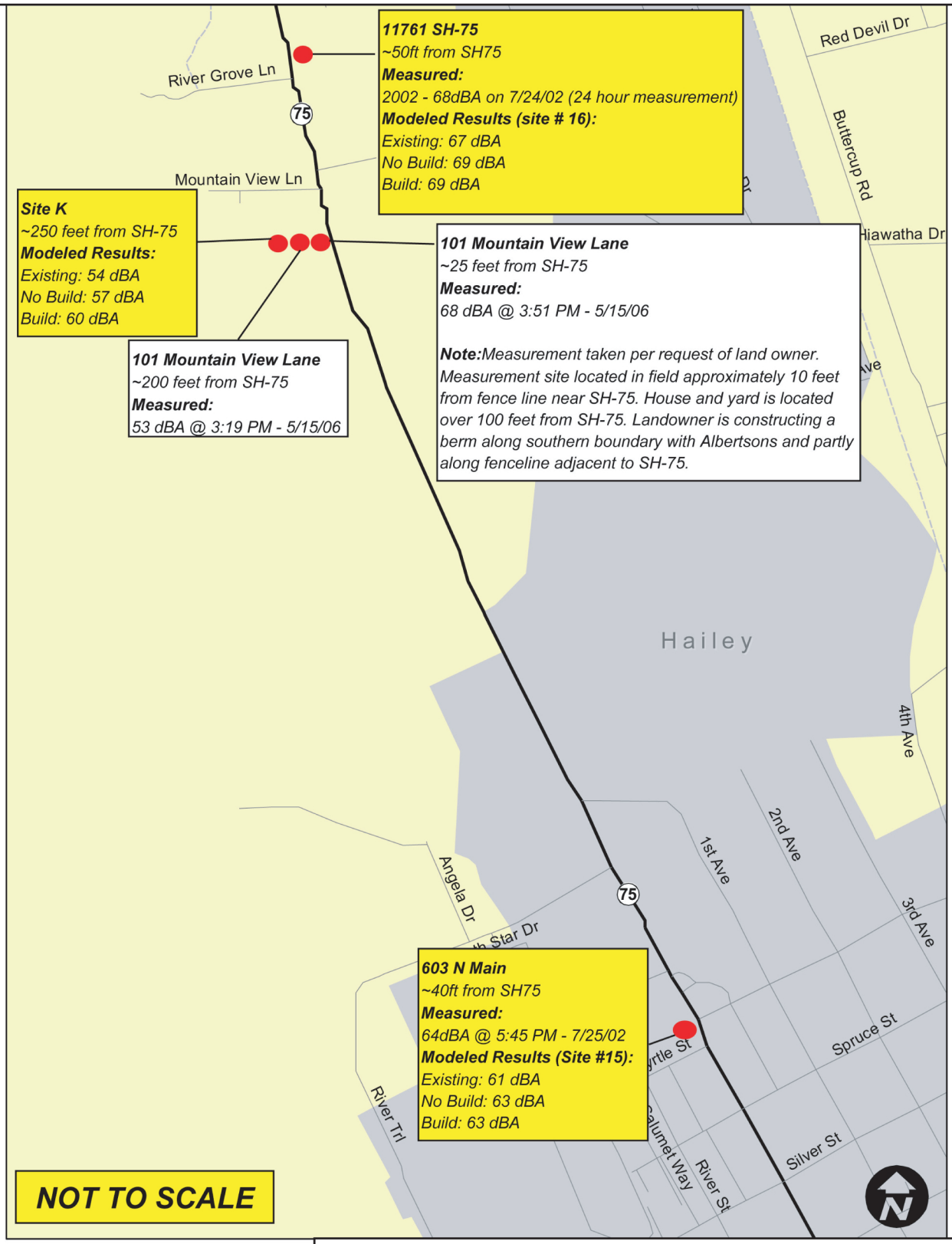
Title

**Noise Measurements Comparison**
***South***

Figure

**5-1**

Date: ***February 2008***




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

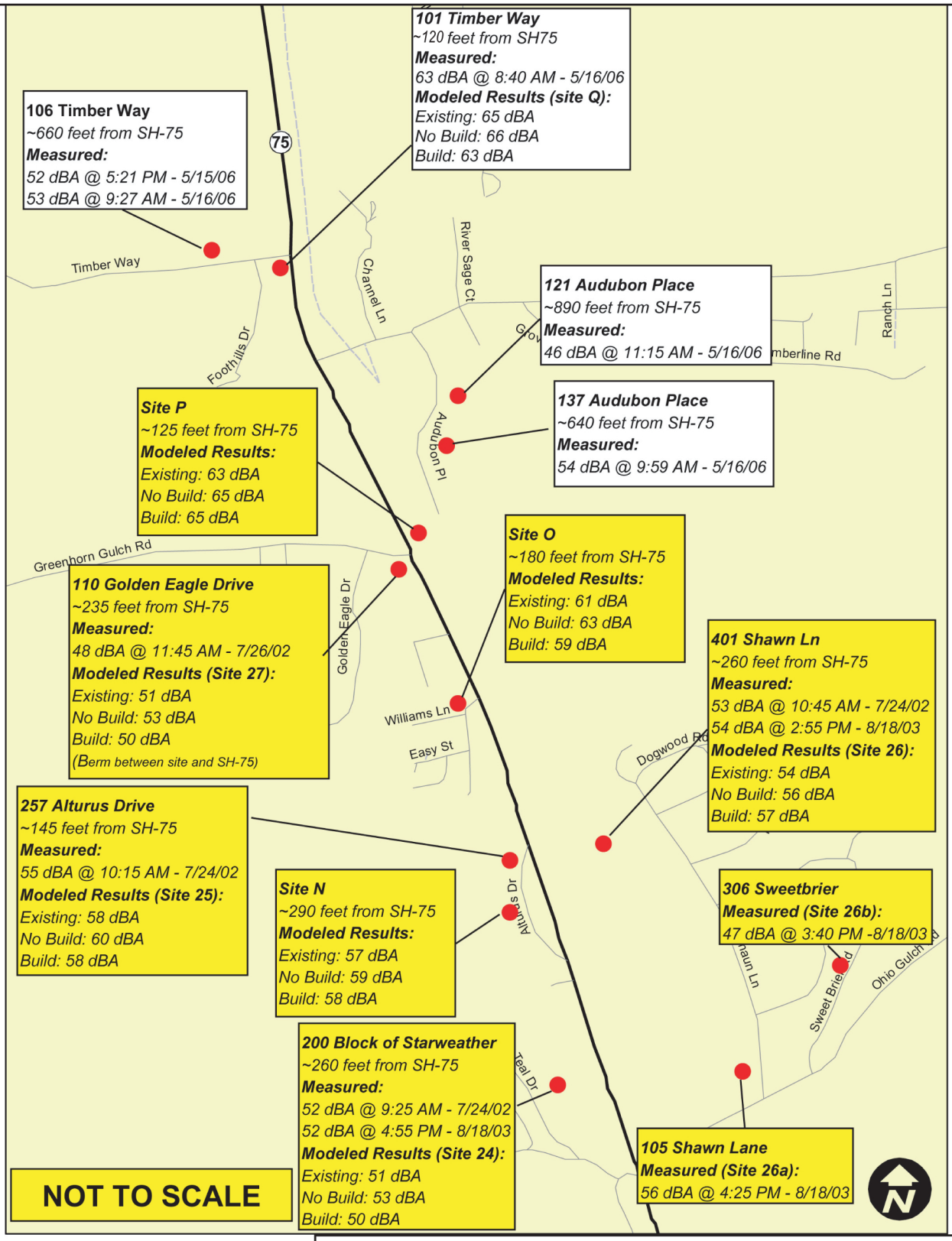
Title

**Noise Measurements Comparison**
*Central*

Figure

**5-2**

Date: *February 2008*




SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

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Title

**Noise Measurements Comparison**
*North*

Figure

**5-3**

Date: *February 2008*

With two exceptions, the noise levels at the additional measurement locations are well below 60 dBA and well below ITD's Noise Policy that defines a noise impact as at or exceeding 66 dBA (within 1 dBA of the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) of 67 dBA[21]). One measurement taken at 25 feet from the existing SH-75 was 68 dBA; however, the actual receptor (residence at 101 Mountain View Lane) is located almost 200 feet from SH-75 and showed a noise level of 53 dBA. As the measurement taken at 25 feet is not a true receptor, it is not included in Table 5.7-1. The measurement at 101 Timber Way was 63 dBA but below the ITD Noise Policy level.

Based on the TNM analysis for Year 2025 traffic levels done for comparable sites in the DEIS, these locations do not warrant noise mitigation under the ITD Noise Policy and under 23 CFR Part 772.

**Table 5.7-1: Comparable DEIS Receptor and Year 2025 Noise Level**

| 2006 Location and Measured Noise Level (Distance from SH-75 in feet) | Comparable DEIS Receptor | Year 2025 Noise Level for Preferred Alternative |
|---|---|---|
| 101 Mountain View Lane (200') – 53 dBA | Site K (250' from SH-75) | 60 dBA |
| 106 Timber Way (660') – 53 dBA | Site 27 (235' from SH-75)<br>Site N (290' from SH-75) | 50 dBA<br>58 dBA |
| 101 Timber Way (120') – 63 dBA | Site Q (140' from SH-75) | 63 dBA |
| 121 Audubon Place (890') – 46 dBA | Site 26 (260' from SH-75)<br>Site 26b (>1000' from SH-75) | 57 dBA<br>47 dBA (2003 measured level) |
| 137 Audubon Place (640') – 54 dBA | Site 26 (260' from SH-75)<br>Site H (395' from SH-75) | 57 dBA<br>58 dBA |
| 3240 Glenbrook Drive (390') – 52 dBA | Site I (380' from SH-75)<br>Site G (395' from SH-75)<br>Site H (395' from SH-75) | 57 dBA<br>54 dBA<br>58 dBA |
| 3190 Mount Ash Drive (>600') – 46 dBA | Site 13 (450' from SH-75<br>Site G (395' from SH-75)<br>Site H (395' from SH-75) | 53 dBA<br>54 dBA<br>58 dBA |
| Apartment complex in Woodside (375')– 47 dBA | Site I (380' from SH-75)<br>Site G (395' from SH-75)<br>Site H (395' from SH-75) | 57 dBA<br>54 dBA<br>58 dBA |

## *5.7.2 Supplemental Noise Barrier Analysis*

Additional noise barrier analysis was conducted to address comments received on the DEIS. Site 17 "Treasure Lane" was examined as the residents of Treasure Lane had repeatedly expressed their desire for a noise barrier at their location. The analysis of this site in the DEIS concluded that a noise barrier was not warranted.

Additional analysis was conducted for Site 29 "12457 SH-75 Country Chalet", and Site 32 "12556 SH-75". The DEIS had found that noise barriers were feasible to mitigate noise at these locations. As described in Section 3.1.1.1 of this FEIS, Chapter 21A Scenic Highway Overlay District of the Blaine County Code limits the height of walls, berms, and fences adjacent to SH-75. This height is variable depending upon the

[21] 23 CFR Part 772 Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise

distance from the centerline of SH-75. This ordinance is intended to preserve the scenic vistas as viewed from SH-75. As the barriers for Site 29 and Site 32 will not comply with these height restrictions, additional analysis was conducted to determine whether a shorter barrier that could comply with the code would also be effective at mitigating noise

The DEIS and FEIS must evaluate noise impacts of the Preferred Alternative in accordance with 23 CFR 772 procedures and ITD Noise Policy requirements in order to comply with federal regulations.

#### 5.7.2.1 Site 17 "Treasure Lane"

The noise analysis conducted for the DEIS found that this area did not warrant noise mitigation. An analysis of the noise mitigation effectiveness of a 6-foot high barrier was completed in response to numerous comments received from Treasure Lane residents, and in recognition of the Blaine County ordinance limiting wall height. ITD conducted an additional analysis to determine whether a six-foot privacy fence that will comply with the Blaine County berm ordinance and be constructed to noise barrier standards will provide any noise attenuation for Treasure Lane residents.

Three receptors (17, 17a and 18) were used to characterize traffic noise levels in the vicinity of Site 17 to provide additional data resolution for noise barrier analysis. Receptors 17 and 17a are located in the first row of houses next to SH-75 and receptor 18 is in the second row. Noise levels at Site 17 were predicted to be 61 to 62 dBA for first row residences and 57 dBA for second row residences under the Build Alternatives 2 and 3. A noise wall approximately 1,090 feet long and 6 feet high, with an area of 6540 square feet was evaluated at the right of way line between the receptor and the SH-75. The construction planning cost of this wall is estimated to be $163,500.

The noise wall will not be effective at 6 feet tall because it will not provide a 5 dBA reduction at the receptors of concern in accordance with ITD Noise Policy definition of effectiveness. The barrier will provide the minimum noise reductions required by policy of 10 dBA at 10 feet from the wall and 5 dBA at 100 feet from the wall. However, it will not provide the required 5 dBA reduction at sensitive receptors of concern (receptors 17, 17a, and 18). In addition, this height will not provide protection from $L_{max}$ noise levels associated with truck pass-bys because it will not block the line of sight to truck exhaust stacks. Noise levels will be reduced by 2 to 11 dBA depending on how close to the wall the receiver is located (Table 5.7-2).

**Table 5.7-2: Noise Levels and Reductions at Site 17 (dBA)**

| Receptor | Existing Year 2000 | No Build Year 2025 | 2025 Build No Wall | 2025 Build With 6ft Wall | Noise Reduction Compared to No Wall |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 feet* | N/A | N/A | 70 | 59 | -11 |
| 100 feet* | N/A | N/A | 62 | 57 | -5 |
| 17 | 64 | 65 | 62 | 59 | -3 |
| 17a | 63 | 65 | 61 | 59 | -2 |
| 18 | 56 | 58 | 57 | 53 | -4 |

** Barrier insertion was modeled 10 feet and 100 feet behind the barrier in accordance with ITD policy. These locations do not represent sensitive receptors; therefore they were not modeled for existing or future No Build conditions.*

The noise levels in this area will not approach or exceed the NAC (67 dBA) and therefore a substantial noise impact will not occur under the ITD Noise Policy.

Although a solid six foot fence will provide some attenuation and comply with the Blaine County ordinance, it will not be eligible for funding by FHWA as a noise barrier.

### 5.7.2.2 Site 29 "12457 SH-75 Country Chalet"

Receptor 29, representing 16 housing units in the mobile home park north of Gimlet Road, will experience an impact of 66 dBA from the increased traffic on SH-75 in Year 2025 under Preferred Alternative. A 10 to 12-foot high noise wall was previously analyzed at this site, documented in the DEIS, and was found to be feasible and eligible for federal funding. The reasonableness of the barrier needed to be evaluated further regarding consistency with Blaine County wall and berm height restrictions and acceptance by affected land owners and residents.

A six-foot high noise wall approximately 650 feet long, with an area of approximately 3,900 square feet was evaluated at the right of way line between the receptor and the SH 75. The walls estimated construction planning cost is $97,500.

A six-foot noise wall does not meet the minimum noise reduction requirements of 10 dBA at 10 feet from the wall and 5 dBA at 100 feet from the wall, required by the ITD Noise Policy. In addition the wall will not provide a reduction of 5 dBA at receptors 29, S, and T (Table 5.7-3). Receptors S and T are located immediately south of, and immediately north of Receptor 29, respectively. A six foot wall may not provide protection from $L_{max}$ noise levels because it will not block the line of sight to truck exhaust stacks. As a 6-foot wall will not provide the level of attenuation required by ITD's Noise Policy, the 6 foot wall will not be eligible for funding by FHWA.

**Table 5.7-3: Noise Levels and Reductions at Site 29 (dBA)**

| Receptor | Existing Year 2000 | No Build Year 2025 | 2025 Build No Wall | 2025 Build With 6ft Wall | 2025 Build Noise Reduction from 6' Wall Compared to No Wall | 2025 Build Noise Reduction from 10-12' Wall Compared to No Wall |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 feet | N/A | N/A | N/A | 65 | -9 | -14 |
| 100 feet | N/A | N/A | N/A | 60 | -4 | -6 |
| 29 | 66 | 68 | 66 | 63 | -3 | -3 |
| S | 62 | 64 | 62[1] | 59 | -3 | -4 |
| T | 61 | 62 | 60[1] | 60 | 0 | -1 |

### 5.7.2.3 Site 32 "12556 SH-75"

Receptor 32, representing 8 mobile homes west of SH-75 just south of Hospital Drive/Broadway Run North, will experience a noise impact of 67 dBA in Year 2025 from Preferred Alternative. A noise wall was previously analyzed at this site and was found to be feasible. The reasonableness needed to be evaluated further regarding consistency with county ordinances restricting barrier heights to 6 feet and acceptance by affected land owners and residents.

A noise wall approximately 610 feet long and 6 feet high, with an area of approximately 3,660 square feet was evaluated at the right of way line between the receptor and SH-75. The estimated planning level construction cost of the wall is $91,500.

The noise wall will be effective at 6 feet tall; however, this height may not provide protection from $L_{max}$ noise levels because it will not block the line of sight to truck exhaust stacks. Noise levels will be reduced by 6 to 11 dBA depending on how close to the wall the receiver is located (Table 5.7-4).

**Table 5.7-4: Noise Levels and Reductions at Site 32 (dBA)**

| Receptor | Existing Year 2000 | No Build Year 2025 | 2025 Build No Wall | 2025 Build With 6ft Wall | 2025 Build Noise Reduction from 6' Wall Compared to No Wall | 2025 Build Noise Reduction from 10-12' Wall Compared to No Wall Design |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 feet | N/A | N/A | N/A | 60 | -11 | -12 |
| 100 feet | N/A | N/A | N/A | 59 | -6 | -7 |
| 32 | 67 | 68 | 67 | 61 | -6 | -7 |

As a six-foot high barrier at this location does meet the attenuation requirements set forth by the ITD Noise Policy, and will be eligible for federal funding, it should be considered during final design in accordance with the noise barrier implementation procedures described in the following section.

### *5.7.3 Noise Barrier Implementation*

The DEIS documents that under FHWA and ITD regulations and policy, noise mitigation is feasible at two locations, Site 29 (10' to 12' wall would be required for full mitigation) and Site 32 (8' wall required for full mitigation). The height of these noise walls would be inconsistent with the Scenic Highway Overlay District of the Blaine County Code. The relevant portion of the code is described in Section 3.1.1 of this FEIS. This inconsistency is noted in sub-section 5.16.3.4 of Section 5.16 Visual Impacts of the DEIS (page 5-139).

The code also specifies a process for construction of walls, berms, fences and trees that do not qualify as a categorical exclusion under the code:

> Unless a categorical exclusion applies, construction of freestanding walls, earthen berms, fences and sight obscuring screens of trees within the Scenic Highway Overlay District require a site alteration permit, which is a type of special use permit authorized by Idaho Code section 67-6512.

In light of this inconsistency with the Code, the FEIS assessed shorter fences (6' height) at sites 29 and 32, as discussed above. The analysis showed that would both attenuate noise, and that the level of attenuation would be sufficient to justify FHWA funding at Site 32 but not at site 29.

Section 1350.06 ITD Traffic Noise Analysis and Abatement Policy and Procedures of ITD's June 2007 Noise Policy states:

> Noise abatement will not be implemented if the majority (50% +1) of the impacted people are in opposition or indifferent to noise mitigation. Opposition to barrier construction shall be documented in writing, such as formal surveys or petitions.

Other comments were received during preparation of the DEIS and on the DEIS on the undesirable impacts of noise walls, in addition to potential inconsistency with the Blaine County Code. These include the visual impact of a high barrier along the SH-75 Scenic Highway corridor, blocked views of the valley vistas and mountains, localized decrease in wildlife permeability that may trap animals on the highway, and possible restriction of future additional SH-75 access to properties. Based on these comments, it is recognized that the survey or petition results may not support the implementation of noise barriers at Sites 29 and/or 32.

The owners of record for the properties that will be directly impacted by the two noise barriers have been contacted by ITD as of the time of publication of this FEIS. Should the majority of impacted people (50% + 1) support the full-height noise barriers for Receptors 29 and 32, ITD will apply for a site alteration permit or a conditional use permit or variance under Section 9-21A of the Blaine County Code. If a majority vote for noise-barriers sized to be consistent with the Code, no special permit or variance will be needed, but the barrier for site 29 would not be eligible for federal funding. It is not possible to predict whether a majority will vote for noise barriers, the height of any approved barriers, or whether a special permit or variance would be granted by the County if applied for.

# 5.8 Air Quality *(page 5-32 of the DEIS)*

## *5.8.1 Revised Section 600 "Air Quality" of the ITD Environmental Process Manual*

Subsection 650.02 "Areas of Concern" of the ITD Environmental Process Manual does not identify Blaine County as a federally-designated air quality non-attainment/maintenance area for carbon monoxide or particulates. In accordance with Subsection 650.03 "Project Screening, Analysis and Documentation for CO, PM or MSAT", the Preferred Alternative "is not within a Federally designated air quality non-attainment or maintenance area nor is it within an IDEQ air quality area of concern. Therefore, the project has minimal likelihood of exceeding Federal air quality standards." The air quality analysis conducted in Section 5.8 of the DEIS demonstrates that the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 2 in the DEIS) will not exceed the NAAQS for maximum one-hour average CO concentrations (Table 5.8-1, page 5-35 of the DEIS) nor for maximum eight-hour average CO concentrations (Table 5.8-2, page 5-36 of the DEIS).

## *5.8.2 Preferred Alternative Air Toxics Analysis*

Preferred Alternative is defined as a "minor widening project". Minor highway widening projects are those efforts for which the ultimate traffic level is predicted to be less than 150,000 AADT. Widening projects that surpass this projection are considered major endeavors.

For the alternatives considered in the DEIS and for Preferred Alternative in this FEIS, the amount of MSATs emitted will be proportional to the vehicle miles traveled, or VMT, assuming that other variables such as fleet mix are the same for each alternative. Based on the Year 2025 travel forecasting model described in Chapter 4 of the DEIS, the total daily traffic and corresponding VMT will increase over time, relative to existing conditions. The emissions increase from this higher VMT is offset somewhat by lower MSAT emission rates due to increased speeds; according to EPA's MOBILE6 emissions model, emissions of all of the priority MSATs except for diesel particulate matter decrease as speed increases. The extent to which these speed-related emissions decreases will offset VMT-related emissions increases cannot be reliably projected due to the inherent deficiencies of technical models.

Because the estimated VMT under each of the Alternatives is the same, it is expected there will be no appreciable difference in overall MSAT emissions among Alternatives 2 and 3 in the DEIS and the Preferred Alternative in this FEIS. Also, regardless of the alternative chosen, emissions will likely be lower than present levels in the design year as a result of EPA's national control programs that are projected to reduce MSAT emissions by 57 to 87 percent between 2000 and 2020. Local conditions may differ from these national projections in terms of fleet mix and turnover, VMT growth rates, and local control measures. However, the magnitude of the EPA-projected reductions is so great (even after accounting for VMT growth) that MSAT emissions in the study area are likely to be lower in the future in nearly all cases.

The additional travel lanes contemplated as part of the Preferred Alternative will have the effect of moving some traffic closer to nearby homes, schools and businesses; therefore, there may be localized areas where ambient concentrations of MSATs could be higher than with Alternative 1 No Build. The localized increases in MSAT concentrations will likely be most pronounced along the expanded roadway sections that will be built between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn. However, as discussed above, the magnitude and the duration of these potential increases compared to the No-build Alternative cannot be accurately quantified due to the inherent deficiencies of current models. In sum, when a highway is widened and, as a result, moves closer to receptors, the localized level of MSAT emissions for the Build Alternative (Preferred Alternative) could be higher relative to the No Build Alternative, but this could be offset due to increases in

speeds and reductions in congestion (which are associated with lower MSAT emissions). Also, MSATs will be lower in other locations when traffic shifts away from them. However, on a regional basis, EPA's vehicle and fuel regulations, coupled with fleet turnover, will over time cause substantial reductions that, in almost all cases, will cause region-wide MSAT levels to be significantly lower than today.

## 5.9 Water Resources *(page 5-37 of the DEIS)*

The Environmental Protection Agency submitted comments on the DEIS. A response to their comments is included in Appendix B, pages B-2 of this FEIS. A subsequent meeting with the EPA, the US Army Corps of Engineers, FHWA and ITD was held on April 5, 2006 to discuss these comments. EPA clarified that additional information is needed concerning the specific Big Wood River bridge design to fully understand and evaluate the impacts of the bridge and to ensure that it meets wit the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines of the Clean Water Act. EPA therefore requested additional coordination during the final design of this bridge. This commitment is included in Section 7.3 Commitments on page 7-12 of this FEIS.

Section 5.9.3 Mitigation of Water Resource Impacts of the DEIS stated that National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits are issued by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ). In Idaho, there has not been full delegation of the Clean Water Act to the State, such that the NPDES permit is issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), not IDEQ.

## 5.10 Vegetation *(page 5-46 of the DEIS)*

The impacts of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, on vegetation as described in the DEIS are unchanged.

## 5.11 Wetlands *(page 5-51 of the DEIS)*

The DEIS described a conceptual wetlands mitigation plan for the Boulder Flats area in Section 5.11.5 that will mitigate for impacts to natural wetlands and irrigation dependent wetlands, in order to comply with Executive Order 11990, 23 CFR Part 777 and Department of Transportation Order 5660.1A. FHWA has a policy of no net loss of wetlands that is not dependent on wetland type or source of hydrology. The following discussion supplements Section 5.11.5 of the DEIS.

Since this concept plan was developed, additional technical work has been conducted. A topographic survey of the Boulder Flats area was conducted. Wetlands delineation of the Boulder Flats wetlands was completed and considered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. More detailed conceptual engineering of the wetlands mitigation concept plan was done, using the survey and wetlands delineation information.

A revised wetlands mitigation concept plan was developed and is shown in Figure 5-4; it supersedes Figure 5.11-2 on page 5-61 of the DEIS. Based on the more detailed engineering using surveyed topographical mapping and delineated wetlands in the Boulder Flats area, it was determined that the relocation of SH-75 in the Boulder Flats area will impact 1.07 acres of natural wetlands. This is in addition to the 1.19 acres of natural wetlands in the project area and 1.18 acres of irrigation-dependent wetlands disclosed in the DEIS. The Preferred Alternative, including the realignment of SH-75 in the Boulder Flats area, will therefore impact a total of 3.44 acres of wetlands.

In response to the EPA's comments on Section 5.11.5 of the DEIS, additional analysis of the proposed wetlands impacts and mitigation and justification for a conclusion of no net loss of wetlands has been developed and is described below.

Natural wetlands, including those impacted in the Boulder Flats area, will be replaced by restoration wetlands at the Boulder Flats site. Details of the restoration are discussed below. Replacement ratios

commonly used to estimate the replacement of wetland areas are 3:1 for natural Palustrine emergent (PEM) and Palustrine scrub-shrub (PSS) wetlands and a 5:1 ratio for natural Palustrine forested (PFO) wetlands. These mitigation ratios generally account for temporal loss of wetland functions while the wetlands are establishing and as a contingency for failure of wetlands to establish (for example, lack of hydrology). Based on these ratios it is estimated that 7.14 acres of constructed wetlands will be needed to offset the impacts of Preferred Alternative to natural wetlands. The mitigation ratios and acreages required to fully replace the natural wetland functions and values affected by these wetland losses are shown in Table 5-1.

**Table 5-1: Estimated Wetland Mitigation Area Required for Natural Wetlands (acres)**

| Wetland Type | Natural Wetlands | Mitigation Site Wetlands | Mitigation Ratio | Total Area Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Palustrine emergent | 0.73 | NA | 3:1 | 2.19 |
| Palustrine scrub-shrub | 0.28 | NA | 3:1 | 0.84 |
| Palustrine forested | 0.18 | NA | 5:1 | 0.90 |
| Palustrine scrub-shrub | NA | 1.07 | 3:1 | 3.21 |
| **Totals** | **1.19** | **1.07** | **NA** | **7.14** |

* Mitigation will be accomplished by moving canal/ditch to adjacent property.

The following discussion illustrates how the wetland functions and values from the mitigation site will account for the functions and values lost by construction of Preferred Alternative, including the 1.18 acres of I-D wetlands, 1.19 acres of project impacted natural wetlands, and the Boulder Flats impacted wetlands.

On its current alignment, SH-75 cuts off 19 acres of wetlands from a natural wetland complex in the Boulder Flats area. The location of these 19 acres is shown graphically on Figure 5-4. Removal of the SH-75 roadbed at the Boulder Flats site will create 6.11 acres of wetlands and reconnect these additional 19 acres of wetlands to the Big Wood River floodplain.

The Montana Department of Transportation's Wetlands Assessment Method categorizes wetlands based on their quality. This method was adopted for use on this project.

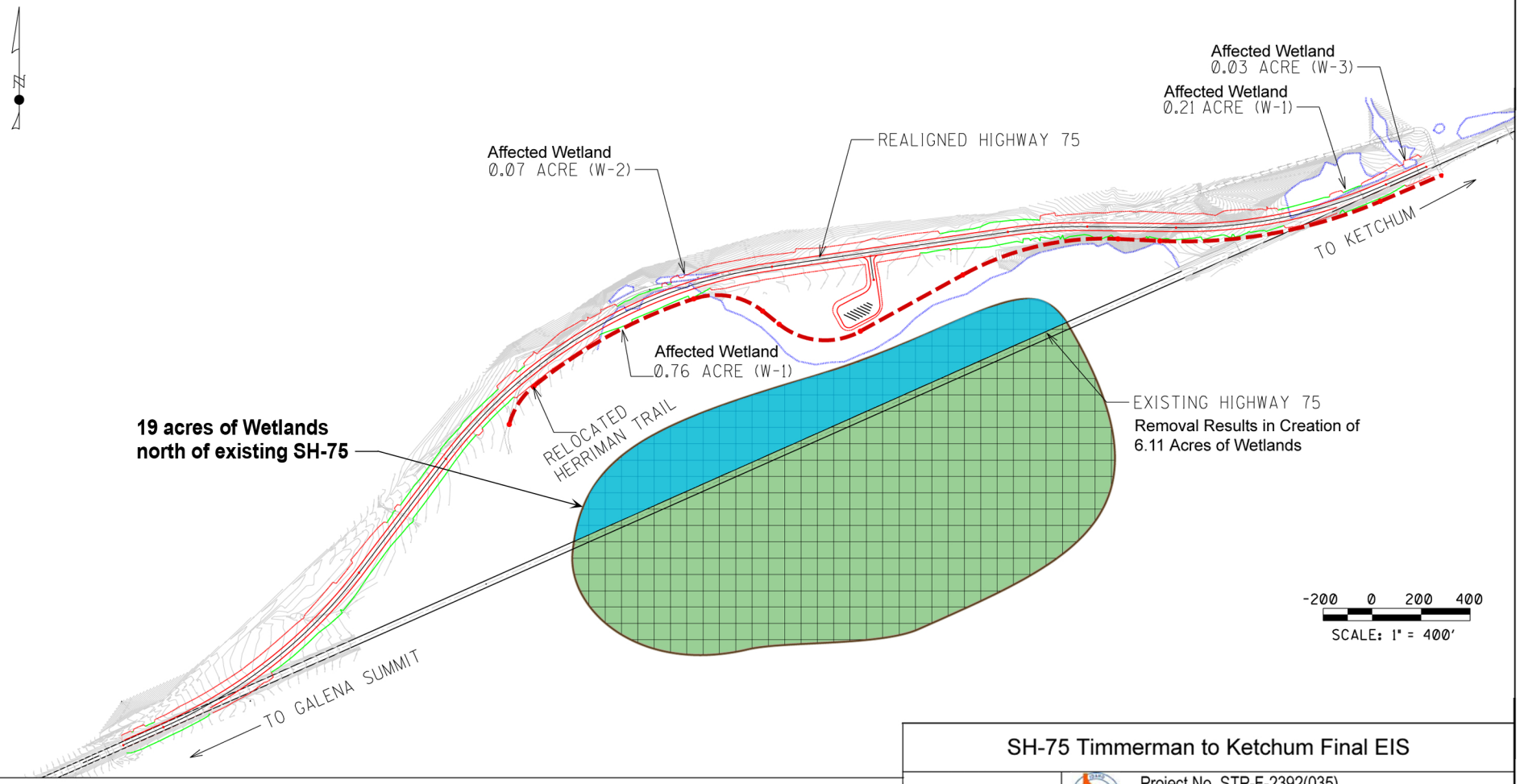
Category I wetlands are of exceptionally high quality, or are important from a regulatory standpoint. They can represent a high quality example of a rare wetland type, provide irreplaceable ecological functions, exhibit exceptionally high flood attenuation capability, be rated exceptionally high for Plant Community Composition, or are assigned high ratings for most of the assessed functions.

Category II wetlands are those that provide habitat for sensitive plants or animals, function at very high levels for wildlife/fish/amphibian habitat, or are assigned high ratings for many of the assessed functions.

Category III wetlands generally have moderate to low Plant Community Composition rating, and have a higher level of disturbance than Category I and II wetlands. They can provide many functions and values, although they may not be assigned high ratings for as many parameters as are Category I and II wetlands.

Category IV wetlands are generally small, isolated, and are typically rated low for Plant Community Composition. These wetlands provide little in the way of wildlife habitat.

Based on the Montana Department of Transportations Wetlands Assessment Method, it is estimated that the creation or enhancement of the Boulder Flats wetlands will result in Category II wetlands. These created or enhanced wetlands will have sufficient functions and values to replace the Category III and IV wetlands that make up the majority of wetlands that will be impacted by the project. They will also have equivalent functions and values when compared to the 0.18 acres of Category II PFO wetlands that will be impacted at the Big Wood River crossing.




key:

Generalized Area of Wetlands.

SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Final EIS

Project No. STP-F-2392(035)
Key No. 3077

Title
**Boulder Flats Wetland Mitigation**
***Site Concept***

Figure
**5-4**

Date: ***February 2008***

The primary reason for the higher functions and values for the created or enhanced wetlands will be the result of removal of the roadside disturbances, reconnection of the floodplain, improvement of safety for those on the Harriman Trail and provision of interpretative signing associated with the pullout and parking area, shown schematically on Figure 5-4. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and EPA indicated that the potential educational value of the mitigation plan is a contributor to the no net loss determination for the project, based on an April 5, 2006 coordination meeting to discus EPA's comments on the DEIS.

By moving the existing SH-75 roadway out of the wetland area, the mitigation will not only create a structurally diverse PSS wildlife habitat, but it will also remove roadside impacts out of the these wetland areas. Common roadside impacts include disturbances from vehicle traffic, noise, increased human activities, habitat modification (mowing), weed introduction and chemical introductions via salt or herbicide applications. The reconnection of 19 acres to the Big Wood River floodplain will increase short and long term surface water storage to the basin and provide enhanced floodwater storage, groundwater recharge, sediment removal, and production export/food chain support.

In connection with the relocation of SH-75 in the Boulder Flats area, a section of the Harriman Trail will also be relocated. The Harriman Trail is located on U.S. Forest Service land and will be relocated onto U.S. Forest Service land; no portion of the trail will be incorporated into highway right-of-way. The relocation of the Harriman Trail will eliminate two locations where the Harriman Trail crosses SH-75 at-grade. This relocation will increase the safety for the hikers, bikers and skiers on the Harriman Trail by eliminating these at-grade crossings. This adjustment of the trail also reduces trail maintenance that requires cutting and mowing of willows in the wetlands. An opportunity for wetland education will also be created at a location over looking the mitigation area where a vehicle pullout and parking area will be created and interpretive signs installed. This parking area is shown on Figure 5-4.

Based on the size of the mitigation area, the improved wetland functions and values provided by the mitigation site, and the future educational opportunity, there will be no net loss of wetlands associated with Preferred Alternative.

## 5.12 Wildlife *(page 5-64 of the DEIS)*

### *5.12.1 Bald Eagle Impacts*

Bald Eagles were recently removed from the USFWS list and are no longer listed under the ESA. Bald Eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. At the time they were de-listed, US Fish and Wildlife Service provided National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines. The intent of the guidelines is to provide guidance on permitted activities and recommended timing of activities to ensure the continued viability of habitat for bald eagles and compliance with the two acts. This project will follow the recommendations contained in the National Bald Eagle Guidelines.

ITD will monitor the Big Wood River and Trail Creek crossings for the presence of bald eagles prior to initiating bridge and road construction in these areas. Should bald eagles or their nests be observed, ITD will follow the timing and proximity recommendations in the National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines.

### *5.12.2 Trail Creek Bridge and Habitat Permeability*

At the time of the publication of the DEIS, several options for the widening of SH-75 into Ketchum were evaluated. Some will require the reconstruction of the Trail Creek Bridge. The City of Ketchum submitted a letter during preparation of this FEIS that stated their preference for the option shown as Cross-Section 2 on Figure 2-9 of this FEIS. This option will require the replacement of the Trail Creek Bridge. This bridge replacement is now a part of the Preferred Alternative. Regarding the habitat permeability impacts, the text

on page 5-71 of the DEIS, fourth paragraph, is amended in the following paragraph. The corrected sentence is shown in italics.

The existing 20-foot long by 48-foot wide concrete box culvert will be replaced with a 58-foot 4-inch long by 66-foot 8-inch wide single-span bridge. Currently, the box culvert provides some crossing opportunity for terrestrial wildlife during low water and none during high water. The new bridge will provide about 154 feet of horizontal space and 5 feet of vertical space on each side of the stream channel during a 50-year high water flood, with more space available at lower, more typical water elevations. This effect on habitat connectivity and permeability will be beneficial because it removes an n existing impediment to wildlife movement along a critical riparian corridor in Ketchum, where sheltered, riparian crossing opportunities are increasingly rare.

## 5.13 Fisheries *(page 5-81 of the DEIS)*

The impacts of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, on fisheries and aquatic habitat, as described in the DEIS, are unchanged, with one exception. As stated above in Section 5.12 of this FEIS, the replacement of the Trail Creek Bridge is now a part of the Preferred Alternative. The assessment of impacts of this replacement on riparian habitat discussed on the last paragraph of page 5-85 of the DEIS is therefore amended with language that includes reconstruction of the Trail Creek Bridge. The corrected sentence is shown in italics in the following paragraph.

The reconstruction of the Trail Creek Bridge will result in an estimated loss of 115 linear feet of riparian habitat. This will result from the replacement of the existing 20-foot by 48-foot box culvert with a 58-foot 4-inch long by 66-foot 8-inch wide single-span bridge. Of this total, 30 linear feet will be affected at this bridge site. The remaining linear feet affected will occur upstream where widening of SH-75 north of the bridge crossing requires fill in the channel's floodplain/riparian zone and the removal of some mature cottonwood trees.

## 5.14 Cultural Resources *(page 5-90 of the DEIS)*

The impacts of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, on cultural resources, as described in the DEIS, are unchanged.

## 5.15 Section 4(f) *(page 5-97 of the DEIS)*

The Section 4(f) evaluation summarized in Section 5.15 of the DEIS and fully described in Appendix D of the DEIS is unchanged.

As discussed above in Section 5.11 Wetlands, portions of the Harriman Trail will be relocated as part of the wetlands mitigation plan. The Harriman Trail is located on U.S. Forest Service land and will be relocated onto U.S. Forest Service land. No portion of the trail will be incorporated into SH-75 right-of-way. This relocation will therefore not result in a Section 4(f) use of the Harriman Trail.

## 5.16 Visual Impacts *(page 5-130 of the DEIS)*

The impacts of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, on the visual resources, as described in the DEIS, are unchanged.

# 5.17 Parks and Recreation *(page 5-141 of the DEIS)*

Section 5.17 Parks and Recreation of the DEIS evaluated the impacts of alternatives on parks and recreation resources. This section supplements the information contained in that section of the DEIS.

## *5.17.1 Access to Big Wood River*

The DEIS identified a need for better access to the Big Wood River at two locations and suggested mitigation measures. The discussion of mitigation in Section 5.17.3 Mitigation of Parks and Recreation Impacts in the DEIS (page 5-143) is replaced with the following information.

In response to comments received on the DEIS, ITD re-examined the feasibility and safety of providing a pullout south of the Big Wood Bridge in the McCammon area to accommodate parking for angler access. The Preferred Alternative will replace the Big Wood Bridge with a new structure. The parapets associated with the new bridge will reduce sight distance for southbound drivers immediately south of the bridge structure. Placement of a pullout on the west side of SH-75 between the parapets and the north entrance to Hospital Drive will introduce additional turning movements into/out of a parking area that will not be fully visible to southbound drivers. It will also potentially conflict with the right turn movements at the north entrance to Hospital Drive. A pullout in this location will increase the potential for vehicle/vehicle conflicts and vehicle/pedestrian conflicts and so is not being considered.

Through discussions with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, ITD determined that there is ample public parking on Hospital Drive. Anglers can use the existing public parking along Hospital Drive and walk a short distance to the Wood River.

Improved angler access and parking in the general vicinity of Box Car Bend was incorporated into the SH-75 Alturas to Timber Way construction project at East Fork Road. Access was maintained for vehicular parking on the north-upstream quadrant of this area. Footpath access was constructed below the new bridge along both riverbanks to provide access for people and wildlife.

## *5.17.2 Harriman Trail Impacts*

The wetlands mitigation plan described in Section 5.11 of this FEIS includes the relocation of the Harriman Trail within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area of the U.S. Forest Service. The Harriman Trail is currently located on U.S. Forest Service land and will be reconstructed on U.S. Forest Service land. The continuity of the trail will be maintained. The relocation of the trail will eliminate two locations where the Harriman Trail crosses SH-75 at-grade. Elimination of these two crossings will improve the safety of trail users as well as the safety of vehicles on SH-75.

# 5.18 Utilities *(page 5-143 of the DEIS)*

The impacts of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, as described in the DEIS, are unchanged.

# 5.19 Hazardous Materials *(page 5-148 of the DEIS)*

How the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, will be impacted by any identified hazardous materials sites and whether the Preferred Alternative will generate any hazardous materials, as described in the DEIS, are unchanged.

# 5.20 Construction Impacts *(page 5-148 of the DEIS)*

## *5.20.1 Phasing*

The phasing scenario contained in the DEIS has changed since publication of the DEIS, in response to changes in existing and anticipated funding and local preferences. A revised phasing is described in Section 2.4 of this FEIS.

## *5.20.2 Traffic Impacts of Revised Phasing*

The Preferred Alternative will be implemented in phases that include preliminary engineering, preparation of right-of-way plans, right-of-way acquisition, and construction.

For each phase discussed below that involves construction, this construction of will inconvenience SH-75 users. During construction, legal access points and side roads will be kept open and traffic maintained. Lane restrictions, temporary pavement and flagging activities to enable movement of construction vehicles will contribute to delay for motorists. Speed limits will be reduced. Construction related congestion will increase travel times for all motorists, transit riders, and truck traffic, and affect emergency response times, particularly during peak travel periods.

### 5.20.2.1 First Phase

The first phase of the revised phasing plan includes the construction of improvements between Timberway and Hospital Drive. It also includes development of preliminary engineering and right-of-way plans and right-of-way acquisition, activities that will not have traffic impacts.

The traffic impact of the construction between Timberway and Hospital Drive was described in the DEIS as Phase 4 (page 5-160 of the DEIS). These impacts are still valid. In addition to the general impacts described in 5.20.2 above, the following additional impact will occur.

There is no continuous alternative route that could provide a detour through this area. Broadway Run could be used as a temporary detour for a portion of this section of SH-75. Through traffic and emergency response vehicles can be directed to Broadway Run and reconnect with SH-75 at the Hospital Drive/Broadway Run/SH-75 intersection. This detour will temporarily adversely affect local traffic on Broadway Run. These impacts could include increased traffic volumes, increased number of trucks, and associated traffic noise.

### 5.20.2.2 Subsequent Phases

Two of the later phases described in Section 2.4 of this FEIS are for acquisition of right-of-way only for the portions of SH-75 between McKercher Boulevard and Alturas Way, and between US-20 and Gannett Road. These will not have traffic impacts.

Subsequent phases of construction will also have traffic impacts.

***Main Street in the Cities of Bellevue and Hailey***

Construction of improvements on Main Street in the Cities of Bellevue and Hailey will be a minor inconvenience to motorists as there are four through lanes of traffic in each direction, and there are parallel streets that can be used to detour traffic. This will allow for continuous traffic flow with a minimum of traffic restrictions. Any detoured traffic will temporarily adversely affect local traffic on these streets.

***McKercher Boulevard to Greenhorn Bridge***

Construction of improvements between McKercher Boulevard to Greenhorn Bridge is the same geographic area described as Phase 3 in the DEIS. The traffic impacts of this construction are disclosed in the DEIS on page 5-160 and repeated here.

Traffic will be maintained at all times but lane restrictions will be needed. Some SH-75 motorists will likely choose to divert to Buttercup Road to bypass construction, re-entering SH-75 at the Buttercup/SH-75 intersection. Emergency service providers will have the potential to use Buttercup Road to avoid some of the construction activity and minimize impacts to their response times.

This potential additional traffic on Buttercup Road will have short-term adverse impacts on the adjacent residential areas. These impacts could include increased traffic volumes, increased number of trucks, and associated traffic noise.

The intersection of Spruce Way and SH-75 and the north entrance to Treasure Lane will be permanently closed as part of the Preferred Alternative and as evaluated in Alternative 2 of the DEIS. Motorists will be diverted to Deer Creek Road and the south Treasure Lane entrance, respectively.

Because this section of SH-75 has many private driveway access points, motorists entering SH-75 from these driveways and side roads will experience long delays entering the stream of traffic. Through traffic on SH-75 will be congested, particularly during the peak travel hours.

***Bellevue to Hailey***

Construction of improvements in this section of SH-75 will have impacts similar to those described for Phase I on page 5-159 of the DEIS. However, the construction of improvements on Main Street in Bellevue will already have been constructed as part of Phase I described in Section 5.20.2.1 above. Traffic impacts will therefore occur between north Bellevue and Fox Acres.

Congestion will be expected throughout the day during hours of construction as slower speed limits, temporary pavement sections, and narrow lanes restrict free flow of traffic. A detour is feasible as Woodside Road runs north/south through the adjacent communities east of SH-75. Some motorists will likely choose to exit SH-75 at Woodside Boulevard and Countryside Boulevard and use Woodside Road to bypass construction, re-entering SH-75 at the Fox Acres/SH-75 signalized intersection at the southern end of the City of Hailey. Emergency vehicles will likely choose this route to avoid construction delays and minimize response times. This potential additional traffic through the light industrial and residential areas will have short-term adverse impacts, primarily on adjacent residences. These impacts could include increased traffic volumes, increased number of trucks, and associated traffic noise.

#### 5.20.2.3 Mitigation

Mitigation of traffic and access impacts during construction will be provided by a traffic control plan to be prepared by ITD in accordance with ITD standard traffic control drawings and the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The traffic control plan will provide for the maintenance of two-way traffic on SH-75 during construction. The traffic control plan will provide for access to all existing legal access points, including residences, businesses, farming operations, and arterial streets.

A public information plan will be developed and implemented to inform Wood River Valley residents, businesses, visitors, and other users of SH-75 corridor of construction phasing, detours, and durations.

## *5.20.3 Construction Noise*

The June 2007 revision to Section 1300.00 Noise of the ITD Environmental Design Manual includes Exhibit 1300-7 Construction Noise that describes the mitigation for construction noise:

The most prevalent construction noise source is equipment powered by internal combustion engines (usually diesel). Noise from equipment likely to be used on this project (tractors, trucks, graders, pile drivers, etc.) will range to about 95 decibels (dBA) when measured from a distance of 50 meters (50'). To reduce the impact of construction noise, most construction activities will be confined to the period least disturbing to adjacent and nearby residents, between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekdays. Mitigation of potential highway construction noise impacts shall incorporate low-cost, easy-to implement measures into project plans and specifications (e.g. equipment muffler requirements, work-hour limits).

Consistent with this section of the ITD Noise Policy, the following mitigation will be followed:

- Construction activities will be limited to between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. to reduce construction noise levels during sensitive night-time hours.
- Construction equipment engines will be required to have adequate mufflers, intake silencers, and engine enclosures to reduce their noise by 5 to 10 dBA (U.S. EPA, 1971).
- Construction equipment will be turned off during prolonged periods when equipment is not in active use to eliminate noise from construction equipment during those periods.

## 5.21 Energy Impacts *(page 5-163 of the DEIS)*

The energy impacts of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, as described in the DEIS, are unchanged.

## 5.22 Secondary and Cumulative Impacts *(page 5-165 of the DEIS)*

The secondary and cumulative impacts of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, as described in the DEIS, are unchanged.

## 5.23 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources *(page 5-170 of the DEIS)*

The analysis of the how the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, commits resources, as described in the DEIS, is unchanged.

## 5.24 Short-Term Uses Versus Long-Term Productivity *(page 5-171 of the DEIS)*

The analysis of the how the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, will have short-term versus long-term impacts on productivity, as described in the DEIS, is unchanged.

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# 6.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

The agency and public review of the DEIS, response to comments, and additional coordination with federal, state and local agencies conducted since issuance of the DEIS is summarized in this chapter.

## 6.1 Agency and Public Review of DEIS

The DEIS was made available as of December 19, 2005 in the project area. A Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register on December 23, 2005.

A printed copy of the DEIS and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation was made available for public review at each of the following locations:

- City of Bellevue, City Hall and Library, 115 Pine Street, Bellevue, ID
- City of Hailey City Hall, 115 South Main Street, Hailey, ID
- City of Ketchum City Hall, 480 East Avenue North, Ketchum, ID
- City of Sun Valley, City Hall, 81 Elkhorn Road, Sun Valley, ID
- Blaine County Planning and Zoning, 219 First Avenue South, Suite 208, Hailey, ID
- Community Library, 415 Spruce Avenue North, Ketchum, ID
- Idaho Transportation Department, District 4, 216 South Date Street, Shoshone, ID
- Idaho Transportation Department, 3311 West State Street, Boise, ID
- Federal Highway Administration, 3050 Lakeharbor Lane, #126, Boise, ID

Printed and/or electronic copies of the DEIS and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation were distributed to the following federal, state and local agencies:

- Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Idaho Division of Water Resources
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
- City of Ketchum
- Blaine County
- City of Hailey
- City of Sun Valley
- City of Bellevue
- City of Ketchum

A letter notifying project participants of the availability of the DEIS and notification of the public hearing was mailed by regular mail to the project mailing list and to all registered land owners for properties that abut SH-75. Electronic copies of the DEIS and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation on CD ROM were mailed upon request to 59 persons.

Notification of the public hearing and close of public comment period was advertised in the following newspapers: Idaho Mountain Express, Wood River Journal, Idaho Unido (Spanish and English language), The Idaho Statesman, and the Northside News and Gooding County Leader (January 19, 2006).

A public hearing was held on January 26, 2006 at the Blaine County Senior Center, Hailey, Idaho from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. A total of 176 people signed in.

Approximately 140 comments were received at the public hearing, by mail, fax and email by the close of the public comment period on February 24, 2006.

## 6.2 Response to Comments

The SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was issued in December 2005. The general public, resource and regulatory agencies were offered the opportunity to review and comment on the DEIS during the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) public review process, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This process included a public hearing held in the project area, a public and governmental comment period, and continuation of the agency coordination and public coordination programs.

Comments were received on the DEIS in the form of written and oral testimony at the public hearing, as well as letters, faxes, and emails. Appendix B of this FEIS provides responses to comments received from Federal and State of Idaho agencies, the six affected local governments, and local organizations. These testimonies and letters received during the public comment period and at the public hearing and the response to these comments are included in Appendix B of this FEIS and are available on the project website at www.sh-75.com. For the non-agency comments, the comments were grouped by common subject matter or theme and responded to in that format, with reference to each of the comment letters or testimonies addressed by the response. Responses to these comments are also included in Appendix B.

## 6.3 Coordination and Consultation

Additional agency coordination was conducted to address comments received on the DEIS. Table 6-1 summarizes that coordination.

Appendix A Agency Consultation and Coordination contains agency correspondence received during preparation of the DEIS, in response to the DEIS, and subsequent to close of the comment period on the DEIS.

1 **Table 6-1: Federal, State and Local Jurisdiction Coordination Meetings**

| Date/Location | Agency or Jurisdiction | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| April 5, 2006<br>Boise, Idaho | Federal Highway Administration<br>Environmental Protection Agency<br>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers<br>U.S. Forest Service<br>Idaho Transportation Department | Resolution of EPA's comments on DEIS. Clarification of wetlands mitigation concept plan and analysis. |
| April 5, 2006<br>Boise, Idaho | Idaho Transportation Department,<br>Public Transportation Division | Transit funding and plans in Blaine County |
| April 13, 2006 | Federal Highway Administration<br>Idaho Transportation Department | DEIS comment resolution, FEIS format |
| May 15, 2006 | Idaho Transportation Department<br>Blaine County State Legislators | Briefing on DEIS comments, additional community coordination, FEIS process |
| May 15, 2006<br>Bellevue, Idaho | City of Bellevue<br>Idaho Transportation Department | Resolution of Bellevue comments on DEIS |
| May 17, 2006<br>Twin Falls, Idaho | Idaho Department of Environmental Quality | Approach to TMDL issues and water quality in the FEIS |
| May 22, 2006<br>Sun Valley, Idaho | City of Sun Valley<br>City of Ketchum<br>Idaho Transportation Department | Resolution of Ketchum and Sun Valley comments on DEIS |
| May 22, 2006<br>Hailey, Idaho | Blaine County Recreation District | Resolution of comments on the DEIS |
| May 23, 2006<br>Hailey, Idaho | Blaine County Commissioners<br>Idaho Transportation Department | Resolution of Blaine County comments on DEIS |
| May 23, 2006<br>Hailey, Idaho | City of Hailey | Resolution of Hailey's comments on DEIS |
| May 6, 2006<br>(Teleconference) | Federal Highway Administration, Idaho Transportation Department,<br>City of Ketchum, City of Sun Valley | Discussion of selection of a preferred alternative. |
| May 13, 2006<br>(Teleconference) | Idaho Transportation Department<br>City of Ketchum, City of Sun Valley | Discussion of selection of a preferred alternative. |
| June 14, 2006<br>(Telephone conference) | Idaho State Police | Comments on HOV operation and enforcement |
| June 15, 2006 | Federal Highway Administration<br>Idaho Transportation Department | Selection of a Preferred Alternative |
| May 2, 2006<br>(by telephone) | Idaho Department of Fish and Game<br>Idaho Transportation Department | Fisherman access to Big Wood River from SH-75 |
| April 26, 2006 | Shoshone-Bannock Tribes<br>Idaho Transportation Department | Additional request for comment |
| March 14, 2006 | City of Ketchum, City of Sun Valley | Discussion of a preferred alternative between Elkhorn Road and River Street |
| December 14, 2006 | Federal Highway Administration<br>Idaho Transportation Department | Discussion of a preferred alternative between Elkhorn Road and River Street |
| December 10, 2007 | Federal Highway Administration<br>Idaho Transportation Department | Selection of a Preferred Alternative |

## 6.4 Next Steps

In accordance with 23 CFR 771.127, this FEIS will be available for review for a minimum of 30 days from the time the Environmental Protection Agency publishes a notice of availability in the Federal Register. Notification of its availability will also be published in the printed and electronic news media in Blaine County, Idaho.

The FEIS has been made available to federal, state, and local agencies, private organizations, and members of the public who provided substantive comments on the DEIS. Reference copies of the FEIS have also been placed in the following locations:

- City of Bellevue, City Hall and Library, 115 Pine Street, Bellevue, ID
- City of Hailey City Hall, 115 South Main Street, Hailey, ID
- City of Ketchum City Hall, 480 East Avenue North, Ketchum, ID
- City of Sun Valley, City Hall, 81 Elkhorn Road, Sun Valley, ID
- Blaine County Planning and Zoning, 219 First Avenue South, Suite 208, Hailey, ID
- Community Library, 415 Spruce Avenue North, Ketchum, ID
- Idaho Transportation Department, District 4, 216 South Date Street, Shoshone, ID
- Idaho Transportation Department, 3311 West State Street, Boise, ID
- Federal Highway Administration, 3050 Lakeharbor Lane, #126, Boise, ID

A Record of Decision (ROD) will be signed by FHWA no sooner than 30 days after the Notice of Availability of the FEIS is published in the Federal Register. The ROD will explain the reasons for the project decision, summarize any mitigation measures that will be incorporated into the project, and document the required Section 4(f) approval. The ROD will include the following key items: a decision on the selected alternative; alternatives considered; Section 4(f); measures to minimize harm; monitoring or enforcement program; and comments and responses to any comments received on the FEIS.

FHWA may publish a notice in the Federal Register, pursuant to 23 USC §139(l), indicating that one or more Federal agencies have taken final action on permits, licenses, or approvals for a transportation project. If such notice is published, claims seeking judicial review of those Federal agency actions will be barred unless such claims are filed within 180 days after the date of publication of the notice, or within such shorter time period as is specified in the Federal laws pursuant to which judicial review of the Federal agency action is allowed. If no notice is published, then the periods of time that otherwise are provided by the Federal laws governing such claims will apply.

FHWA has not determined whether it will publish such a notice for the SH-75 Project. FHWA plans to indicate in the ROD whether or not it will be publishing such a notice regarding the final NEPA action.

# 7.0 FINDINGS, MITIGATION, AND COMMITMENTS

This chapter documents the findings, mitigation and commitments associated with the Preferred Alternative. The mitigation and commitments will be implemented during final design and construction of the project.

## 7.1 Findings

Major findings associated with evaluations conducted for the Preferred Alternative include those under the Clean Water Act (Section 404), The Endangered Species Act (Section 7), the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106), Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act and Executive Order 12898.

### *7.1.1 The Clean Water Act, Executive Order 11990, Department of Transportation Department Order 5660.1A*

The Preferred Alternative will result in "no net loss of wetlands" for both natural wetlands and irrigation dependent wetlands, in compliance with Executive Order 11990, 23 CFR 777 and Department of Transportation Order 5660.1A. FHWA has a policy of no net loss of wetlands that is not dependent on wetland type or source of hydrology. Appendix B Response to Comments (Comments 1, 2 and 13), the results of subsequent consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency on April 5, 2006, and Section 5.1.2 of this FEIS and Section 5.11 of the DEIS support this finding.

### *7.1.2 Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA)*

The Biological Assessment conducted for the project resulted in the following findings:

**Table 7-1: Section 7 FIndings**

| Species | Finding |
|---|---|
| Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) | May affect, not likely to adversely affect |
| Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus)* | No effect |
| Bald Eagle *(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)* | May affect, not likely to adversely affect<br>*Subsequent to the BA, the Bald Eagle has been delisted. See below.* |
| Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Coccyzus americanus) | May affect, not likely to adversely affect |
| Bull Trout, Steelhead, Spring/Summer Chinook Salmon, Sockeye Salmon | No effect |
| Utah Valvata Snail *(Valvata utahensis)* | May affect, not likely to adversely affect |

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) is a candidate species and does not have any special protection under ESA. Formal determinations of No Effect are not applicable to candidate species. However, effects of Alternatives 2 and 3 were evaluated, as described in the DEIS, and no effects upon this candidate species are expected.

Bald Eagles were recently removed from the USFWS list and are no longer listed under the ESA. Bald Eagles are still protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). At the time they were de-listed, US Fish and Wildlife Service provided National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines. No Bald Eagle habitat will be taken as part of this project. The management guidelines will be followed.

Section 5.12 and 5.13 of the DEIS provide a full description of these findings. Appendix A Agency Coordination and Correspondence of this FEIS contains a concurrence letter from the USFWS.

### *7.1.3 Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act*

For all of the historic resources potentially affected by the Preferred Alternative, a finding of "no effect" or "no adverse effect" was found and concurred with by the Idaho State Historical Society. This finding is included in Appendix A Agency Coordination and Correspondence contains the Determination of Eligibility and Determination of Effect letter from the Idaho State Historical Society.

### *7.1.4 Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act*

The Preferred Alternative will have *de minimus* impacts on the following resources that are subject to Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act:

- District Canal
- Bypass Canal
- Hiawatha Canal
- Cove Canal
- Red Top Meadows
- Mizer Ditch
- Ketchum-Stanley Stock Driveway
- Comstock Ditch

### *7.1.5 The Clean Air Act (as amended 1990)*

Preferred Alternative will have no adverse impacts on air quality and is in compliance with the Clean Air Act. Section 5.8 of the DEIS and Section 5.1.1 Air Toxics of this FEIS document the analysis of air quality impacts of the Preferred Alternative.

### *7.1.6 Executive Order 12898, Department of Transportation Order 5610.2, and FHWA Order 6640.23*

Preferred Alternative will result in no disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority or low-income populations. Section 5.3 Environmental Justice of the DEIS appended in CD ROM format documents the analyses supporting this finding.

## 7.2 Mitigation

The analysis of impacts in the DEIS documented in Chapter 5 Environmental Impacts included mitigation measures for many resources. This section of the FEIS documents those mitigation measures. They will be incorporated into the design of the Preferred Alternative and reflected in the construction documents. The section of the DEIS that contains this mitigation is referenced in parentheses.

### 7.2.1 Noise *(Section 5.7.3, page 5-27 of the DEIS)*

Pursuant to 23 CFR 772.11(c) and 772.13(c) and the ITD Noise Policy, a noise impact will occur at eight locations. Of these locations, mitigation is feasible at only two locations, Receptor 29 and Receptor 32.

ITD issued a revised Noise Policy in June 2007. It is part of Section 1300 of the ITD Environmental Process Manual. This policy was approved by FHWA Boise Division on June 20, 2007. Section 1350.03, page 11 of this policy states the following:

> Prior to implementation of a proposed noise wall, however, a majority of impacted property owners must agree that it is desirable. Desirability may be determined (with or without the assistance of consultants) at a public hearing, by petition, by mailed questionnaire/surveys, or as otherwise determined acceptable by the FHWA and ITD.

Section 1350.06 of the June 2007 policy further states:

> Noise abatement will not be implemented if the majority (50% +1) of the impacted people are in opposition or indifferent to noise mitigation. Opposition to barrier construction shall be documented in writing, such as formal surveys or petitions.

Comments received during preparation of the DEIS and on the DEIS referenced the undesirable impacts of noise barriers. These include the visual impact of a high barrier along the SH-75 Scenic Highway corridor, blocked views of the valley vistas and mountains, localized decrease in wildlife permeability that may trap animals on the highway, and possible restriction of future additional SH-75 access to properties. Based on these comments and concerns, the results of the survey or petition may not support the implementation of the two noise barriers.

If the majority of impacted people (50% + 1) support the noise barriers required to mitigate Receptors 29 and 32, ITD will apply for a site alteration permit or a conditional use permit or variance under Section 9-21A of the Blaine County Code. This County permit or variance will be required as the height of the noise barriers for Receptors 29 (10 to 12 feet high) and 32 (8 feet high) will exceed the Blaine County Scenic Overlay District height restrictions. As of the date of publication of this FEIS, ITD has contacted the owners of record of the properties directly impacted by the proposed noise barriers to determine their support for, or opposition to, the proposed barriers.

### 7.2.2 Floodplains *(Section 5.9.3, page 5-46 of the DEIS)*

Retaining walls adjacent to the waterway will be used at the new Big Wood River bridge and Trail Creek bridge to eliminate or minimize fill in the floodplain.

### 7.2.3 Vegetation *(Section 5.10.2.4 of the DEIS, page 5-50)*

Retaining walls adjacent to the waterway will be used at the new Big Wood River bridge and Trail Creek bridge to limit the amount of riparian vegetative clearing and fill required in the riparian vegetated area.

### 7.2.4 Wetlands Mitigation Concept Plan *(Section 5.11.5 of the DEIS and Appendix C SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Analysis of Boulder Flats Wetland Mitigation Concept Plan)*

Mitigation for wetlands will be implemented in accordance with the wetlands concept plan developed for the Boulder Flats area of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, as revised and shown on Figure 5-4 of this FEIS. The final wetland mitigation plan will be developed in consultation with the Corps and EPA and will include the timing of the mitigation work, description of removal of artificial stream bank structures,

development of performance standards for the wetland mitigation site, and description of the legal means to ensure permanent protection of the mitigation site.

### 7.2.5 Relocations *(Section 5.4.4 of the DEIS, page 5-12)*

Mitigation for relocation of the affected homes and businesses will include the following:

- An acquisition and relocation plan will be prepared that identifies the process, procedures, and time frame for right-of-way acquisition and relocation of affected residences and businesses.
- The acquisition and relocation program will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. (Uniform Act). This act is explained in ITD's *Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies and Relocation Services* brochure.

Relocation resources will be made to all relocated residential and commercial properties without discrimination. If comparable dwellings are not available at the time the project is advanced to construction, the Housing of Last Resort of the Uniform Act will be used. This provision includes construction of a new replacement dwelling, rehabilitation of an existing replacement dwelling, and special financing arrangements at a reasonable cost.

### 7.2.6 Wildlife Mitigation *(Section 5.12.6 of the DEIS, page 5-77)*

Mitigation for impacts on wildlife from Preferred Alternative includes the following:

- Landscape restoration of disturbed areas within the unpaved right-of-way will be planted with a low-growing grass-forb plant community. The plant species mix used will be designed to deter deer, elk and other wildlife from resting and/or foraging immediately adjacent to SH-75 and within its unpaved right-of-way. This will help reduce the potential for wildlife to venture onto SH-75.
- Revegetated areas within the highway right-of-way will not be irrigated or have sprinkler systems to minimize the attractiveness of these areas for herbivore foraging opportunities and as a source of cover for small mammals.
- Woody plants exceeding 24 inches in height will not be used in highway right-of-way (ROW) revegetation. The use of a low-growing grass-forb plant community will make larger animals more visible to drivers, as well as reduce the attractiveness of the ROW for big game foraging.
- Disturbed areas will be revegetated adjacent to the Big Wood River bridge and Trail Creek bridge crossings and the Willow Creek and unnamed tributary culvert crossings to provide additional riparian cover for wildlife using these riparian travel corridors. This habitat improvement will increase the likelihood for an animal to cross beneath SH-75 at these perennial water crossings rather than at grade.
- The removal of mature cottonwoods and other riparian habitat values associated with bridge construction at the Big Wood River and at the Trail Creek crossings will be minimized by using retaining walls.
- Use of arched culverts at Willow Creek and Unnamed Tributary will improve the attractiveness of these crossings to small animals. The Unnamed Tributary is located just north of the US-20 and SH-75 intersection.
- Culverts on perennial streams or irrigation ditches will have beaver dam-proof structures on the upstream side.
- Replacement of existing culverts will be with a culvert design that facilitates small animal crossings of SH-75, incorporating design features that are attractive to small mammals and amphibians.

- Wherever new fencing is installed within ITD right-of-way, such fencing will be designed and built in accordance with IDFG "wildlife friendly" fencing specifications.
- Permanent wildlife crossing signs, flashing lights, and flagging will be installed along the project corridor at known big game crossing points. Known locations are the 2-mile segment south of Bellevue and the 9-mile segment that includes the Buttercup Road South hotspot segment and the Elkhorn Road South hotspot segment. The flashing lights will be operated during peak big game migration periods. These migration periods extend from mid-October to mid-November and from mid-May to late June.
- Impacts to wetland-associated species will be fully compensated by the wetland mitigation plan.
- The use of retaining walls at the Big Wood River bridge and Trail Creek bridge will minimize the loss of mature cottonwood trees in these riparian areas, thereby reducing potential impacts on bald eagle perching and roosting habitat.
- Winter habitat for the bald eagle occurs in the project area along the Big Wood River. As the Bald Eagle has been delisted since preparation of the DEIS, mitigation will be in accordance with the National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines, which ensures compliance with the Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the MBTA.

### *7.2.7 Wildlife Habitat Permeability* *(Section 5.12 Wildlife, pages 5-68, 5-71)*

Mitigation for wildlife habitat permeability includes the following three elements:

- Landscape restoration within the SH-75 right-of-way will be planted to a low-growing grass-forb plant community less palatable to deer and elk than the habitat types currently adjacent to SH-75.
- Arched culverts will be used to replace the existing corrugate metal pipe culverts at Willow Creek and the Unnamed Tributary to be more attractive to small animals crossing SH-75.
- The existing Trail Creek culvert will be replaced with single-span bridge, affording more horizontal space and vertical space to facilitate wildlife crossings.

### *7.2.8 Fisheries* *(Section 5.13.5 of the DEIS, page 5-89)*

Measures to minimize adverse impacts to riparian/aquatic habitat and resident fish populations include:

- Natural-bottom culverts will be installed at Willow Creek and the unnamed tributary near the US-20/SH-75 Intersection to accommodate fish passage. Rock boulders and cobbles will be used to provide channel aquatic habitat and to further dissipate hydraulic energy within the culverts.
- Culvert hydraulics and water velocities under high and low flow conditions will be suitable for fish passage during all life stages (fry, juvenile, and adult).
- Culverts installed to provide fish passage will be appropriately sized to ensure that upstream water levels will be acceptable and that flow velocities will not be too high to inhibit fish movement through the culverts.
- Retaining walls will be used at the Big Wood River bridge crossing and at the Trail Creek crossing (if replaced) to minimize the amount of fill and vegetation removal required in riparian, wetland, and floodplain habitats.
- The wetland impacts and mitigation plan includes the stream channel impacts resulting from culvert installation in Willow Creek and the unnamed tributary and those resulting from bridge pier installation at the Big Wood River crossing.
- In conjunction with replacing the existing box culvert with a bridge at the Trail Creek crossing, the stream channel will be restored to a pre-culvert condition. The channel restoration concept will be to use small boulders, cobbles, and gravel to replicate riffle/glide habitat beneath the bridge.

## 7.2.9 Section 4(f) Properties *(Section 5.15.5 of the DEIS, page 5-130)*

The pre-disturbance condition of the Section 4(f) properties will be documented using black and white photographic documentation prior to construction of Preferred Alternative. ITD will submit this documentation to the Idaho State Historical Society State Preservation Office (SHPO). The SHPO will archive the documentation.

During construction, equipment will not be staged or placed on the canal or ditch banks outside the Area of Potential Effect (APE) to ensure that the banks are not crushed or disturbed. Construction-related fill will not be placed in the canals or ditches outside the APE.

## 7.2.10 Construction Mitigation

Construction of Preferred Alternative will have short term impacts on resources that require mitigation.

### 7.2.10.1 Water Quality *(Section 5.20.3.1 of the DEIS, page 5-153)*

To ensure water quality in the Wood River Valley is protected during construction, highway and drainage design features will be consistent with ITD's *Standard Specifications for Highway Construction* and with the Best Management Practices (BMPs) detailed in ITD's *Erosion and Sediment Control Manual* and in IDEQ's *Catalog of Storm Water Best Management Practices for Idaho Cities and Counties*. These standard specifications and BMPs will be incorporated into the construction contract documents, including the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), requiring that the contractor adhere to such practices.

Adverse short- and long-term impacts on hydrology, floodplains, and water quality will be minimized or avoided by adhering to the following measures and BMPs. Construction documents will require the contractor to comply with these and all other applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations regarding the control and abatement of water pollution, storm water drainage and treatment, and floodplain protection during construction.

As with all projects involving waters of the United States, a Section 404 permit issued by the U.S. Army corps of Engineers will be required for project impacts on wetlands and waters of the U.S. The SH-75 project will require a Stream Alteration Permit from the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR). These permits often incorporate regulations and stipulations on the management and maintenance of sediment control for storm water during the construction phase of a project.

Water quality certification from IDEQ and a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Storm Water Permit from the EPA will also be required. Various Blaine County, ITD, EPA, IDEQ, and other Federal and State agencies will also be involved during the permitting processes. The process established under the Clean Water Act, Section 404, ensures that Federal and State jurisdictional agencies will have the opportunity to comment on the permits and provide recommendations if desired.

Specific impact minimization and avoidance measures for the project construction will include the following:

*National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Storm water (NPDES) Permit*: ITD will prepare an NPDES Storm Water Permit for Construction Activities, including a Storm Water Pollution Prevention (SWPP) Plan, consistent with ITD Standard Specifications for Highway Construction, Section 212, Erosion and Sediment Control. The SWPP Plan will focus on erosion-sensitive areas, sediment-sensitive areas, and the control and precautionary measures to be followed. This plan will include BMPs with a description of the maintenance schedule, drainage and culvert systems, pre- and post-construction hydrology, non-storm water discharges, waste disposal, dust control, re-vegetation, and monitoring procedures.

*Sediment and Pollution Control Measures*: These measures include the following:

- Water pollution prevention control measures will be scheduled and implemented to correspond with ground-disturbing activities.
- Within 100 yards of all natural waterways, fiber wattles or other similar erosion control measures (i.e., rock check dams and retention basins) will be installed during construction to control sediment. Fiber wattles will consist of certified "noxious weed free" material and manufactured from straw, coconut fiber or wood fiber. Fiber wattles will consist of a tube of straw, coconut fiber, or wood fiber with a minimum 8" diameter, 25-feet long and wrapped with biodegradable netting of natural fiber (jute, sisal, cotton, hemp, or burlap) that will have a life expectancy of approximately one year. The ends will be securely tied with biodegradable twine.
- When fiber wattles are used, the wattles will be placed around the perimeter of existing and new inlets, outlets, ditches, or channels to slow runoff velocity and capture sediments. The fiber wattles will be staked in place and adjacent wattles will abut each other. When sediment has filled-in to overflow behind the fiber wattles, new fiber wattles will be installed either upstream or downstream as directed. Fiber wattles will be left in place after final construction unless otherwise directed.
- Only clean, granular material, rock or aggregate will be used for the construction of temporary dikes and cofferdams for equipment operation and project construction.
- Re-vegetation of the disturbed riparian zone will be accomplished by preserving all topsoil, placing additional topsoil if needed, and planting selected rooted trees and woody vegetation along with an approved riparian seed mix. This will enable the area to recover quickly and with more mature vegetation providing an almost immediate restoration of stream bank and riparian areas. All introduced cobble will be removed and/or contoured to achieve a natural appearance in the project area.
- Activities with a high potential for causing sediment, such as cofferdam placement or stream diversion, will not be conducted during periods of high flow. All in-stream diversion, and bridge pier and culvert construction in perennial waterways will be conducted during the low flow season (November through March) and in accordance with all applicable permit conditions.
- Turbidity levels caused by construction activities will be limited to the increases permitted under the guidelines issued by the EPA and IDEQ for streams in the Big Wood River basin. When necessary to perform construction work within a stream channel, the prescribed turbidity limits may be exceeded for the shortest practical period required to complete such work, subject to permit conditions. Machinery for in-stream construction work will operate from the stream bank or an approved work pad or work bridge rather than within the stream channel.
- Construction specifications will require riprap/armor materials to be free of contaminants.
- Any and all sedimentation basins that may occur in the floodplain will be restored to a natural appearance and seeded with an approved riparian seed mix reflecting native vegetative patterns.
- Demolition of existing bridges may cause some debris to enter the stream flow. Debris entering the stream flow will be minimized through the use of a suspended canvas or similar catchment device under the bridge during demolition activities. Any large debris (concrete and/or asphalt) that falls into the stream will be removed daily.
- Excess soil and rock materials will not be stockpiled or disposed of near or in wetlands, riparian areas, floodplains, or other watercourse perimeters where they could be washed away by high water or storm water runoff, or will encroach upon the water body itself.
- Water pumped during construction will not enter watercourses or other surface water features (e.g., drainage ditches) without use of turbidity control measures. These may include settling ponds,

entrapment dikes, or other approved methods. Any wastewater discharged into surface waters will be free of settleable material.

- Approved upland seed mix will be used in conjunction with compost mulching in all disturbed areas to reduce sediment loading, encourage re-vegetation, and improve water quality.
- Erosion controls consistent with BMP's will be established on all disturbed ground by snowfall, and in a manner appropriate to prevent erosion through the ensuing winter.
- All retaining walls and fill placement work near the Big Wood River, Trail Creek, and other perennial drainages will be conducted during the low flow season (November through March).
- All construction waste material will be disposed of as specified by Federal, State, and County health and pollution control regulations.
- Construction specifications will require methods that prevent entrance or accidental spillage of solid matter, contaminants, debris, and other objectionable pollutants and wastes into flowing or dry watercourses or groundwater. Potential pollutants and wastes include, but are not limited to, refuse, garbage, cement, concrete, sewage effluent, industrial waste, oil, and other petroleum products.
- Inserts will be used as described in BMP #42 of IDEQ's catalog of BMPs to aid in the removal of sediment, oil, and litter from storm water before it is discharged into the Comstock Ditch. This catalog is at http://www.deq.state.id.us/water/data_reports/storm_water/catalog/index.cfm BMP 42 is at http://www.deq.state.id.us/water/data_reports/storm_water/catalog/sec_2/bmps/42.pdf
- Settling basin and infiltration swales will conform to BMP #43 of IDEQ's catalog of BMPs. BMP 43 is at http://www.deq.state.id.us/water/data_reports/storm_water/catalog/sec_2/bmps/43.pdf
- The potential for oil and fuel spills during construction will be minimized through careful handling and designation of specific equipment repair and fuel storage areas that are at least 100 feet away from surface waters.
- Oil, petroleum waste products, chemicals, and hazardous or potentially hazardous wastes will not be drained onto the soil, but confined in sealed containers for removal to approved disposal waste sites. Waste materials known to be hazardous will be disposed of in approved treatment or disposal facilities in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations, standards, codes, and laws. Hazardous waste materials will be transported in accordance with all applicable Federal and State safety standards.
- A hazardous material safety and communication plan will be required from each contractor with special emphasis on preventing hazardous materials from entering watercourses and wetland or riparian areas, or contaminating the ground or groundwater. In the event that any hazardous materials are spilled during project construction, the Blaine County Disaster Service Office Director and IDEQ will be promptly notified.
- Any wells located within acquired right-of-way will be relocated outside the right-of-way boundary if their current location cannot be retained.
- Retaining walls will be used at the Big Wood River crossing and Trail Creek bridge crossing to minimize the amount of fill located in floodplain, riparian, and wetland areas.

#### 7.2.10.2 Vegetation *(Section 5.20.3.2 of the DEIS, page 5-156)*

Construction impacts on vegetation will be mitigated by the following:

- Construction specifications will require contractors to preserve the landscape and prevent any unnecessary destruction, scarring, or defacing of vegetation in the work vicinity. All trees, shrubs, and other vegetation will be preserved and protected from construction activities and equipment,

except where clearing and grubbing is required for fill, excavation, or other construction activities (e.g., retaining wall). All maintenance yards, field offices, and staging areas will be sited to preserve vegetation.

- Clearing and grubbing activities will be limited to that needed for project construction. All critical environmental areas including wetlands, riparian areas, stream corridors, and floodplains will be clearly delineated and marked with hazard fencing before the start of construction and avoided to the maximum practicable extent. Critical environmental areas will not be used for equipment, material storage, construction staging grounds and maintenance activities, or field offices.
- Excavated or graded materials will not be stockpiled or deposited near or on any waterways, steep slopes, or wetlands outside the approved footprint.
- As soon as an area is no longer needed for construction, stockpiling, or access, final site stabilization and landscape restoration measures will be initiated. Any lands disturbed and not permanently occupied by project facilities will be graded to provide proper drainage, covered with topsoil stripped from construction areas or stockpiled, scarified as needed, and revegetated with a low-lying, grass-forb seed mix that will be less likely to attract ungulates into the highway right-of-way.
- A retaining wall will be used at the Big Wood River bridge and Trail Creek bridge crossing to minimize the amount of fill and vegetative clearing required in wetland and associated riparian areas.
- The IDFG will be consulted to determine the final revegetation goals and recommended composition of plant species, planting dates, and seeding rates established for short- and long-term site stabilization and landscape restoration. The species mix to be used will be matched for soil drainage, climate, shading, resistance to erosion, and vegetation management goals.
- The contractors will be required to establish conditions suitable for reseeding or replanting, proper drainage, and erosion prevention. Mulching or other comparable methods will be used as a means of controlling dust and erosion, and to aid revegetation efforts.
- When no longer required by the contractor, any temporary access roads will be restored to their preconstruction original contours, graded to ensure proper drainage and erosion prevention, and made impassable to traffic. Temporary access road surfaces will be scarified to establish conditions suitable for reseeding or replanting and will be blocked from traffic to allow establishment of vegetation.
- Only certified and approved weed-free mulch will be used in accordance with the Noxious Weed-Free Forage and Straw Certification Rules (IDAPA 02, Title 06, Chapter 31).
- To ensure successful plant establishment, permanent plantings will occur during the early spring and/or fall when precipitation is sufficient for plant survival.
- To ensure successful plant establishment and long-term health and vigor, all plantings will be carefully monitored by ITD and the landscape contractor for a period extending at least through two growing seasons. If noxious weeds are identified during monitoring, measures will be taken by ITD or the landscape contractor to ensure that the landscape restoration effort succeeds.
- During the third growing season, ITD and Blaine County Weed Control will jointly conduct a final site review to determine whether a contingency revegetation plan is necessary. For the Boulder Flats wetland mitigation project, the USFS will also participate in this final site review and decision on whether the restoration is acceptable or whether a contingency plan is needed. A contingency plan will be developed by ITD and Blaine County, and with USFS for the Boulder Flats wetland mitigation site, if the landscape or wetland restoration effort is judged unacceptable by ITD on the road right-of-way, by the County on county lands, or by the USFS on Forest Service lands.

- A weed control management plan will be developed by the landscape contractor and approved by ITD prior to initiating construction. Measures to avoid the establishment and spread of noxious weeds will include at a minimum: (1) inspection and cleaning of all construction equipment, (2) use of weed seed-free mulches, topsoil and seed mixtures during landscaping and (3) use of eradication strategies in the event a noxious weed invasion occurs.

#### 7.2.10.3 Wetlands *(Section 5.20.3.3 of the DEIS, page 5-157)*

Construction impacts on wetlands will be mitigated by the following:

- Before construction begins, wetland and riparian areas outside the project footprint or edge of ITD right-of-way will be staked and flagged or marked by perimeter fencing to identify the no-work area.
- Free flow of waters into and across wetlands will be maintained by installing culverts at existing grade.
- Erosion control on the filled grade of the right-of-way will be implemented with composted ungulate manure, fiber wattles and/or rock check dams.
- Embankments, bridges, and culverts will be designed to minimize adverse impacts on wetlands, riparian areas, and drainages.
- Impacted wetland plants and soils will be identified and salvaged to the maximum practicable extent prior to construction disturbance.
- Wetlands affected by accidental fill or construction equipment in no-work areas will be restored by removing the fill, restoring the area to its pre-existing grade, and replanting with native wetland plants similar in density and species composition prior to the disturbance.
- When construction activities commence, administrative and environmental controls will be in place to ensure that wetland/riparian areas outside the project footprint are protected.
- Erosion control measures will be used to ensure that sediment from construction areas does not reach wetlands, riparian areas, or streams.
- Any changes to the construction plans by either the contractor or ITD will require review and approval by the appropriate State or Federal agency if there is the potential for impacts on wetlands or waters of the U.S. not previously identified.
- Contract specifications will ensure that all contractors are aware of Section 404 and Stream Alteration Permit conditions and of the various plans and measures developed to control and minimize wetland, riparian, and stream alteration impacts during construction. ITD will monitor contractor activities to ensure all permit conditions are met.
- Restoration of temporarily disturbed wetlands will include rough grading, if necessary, and revegetation to approximate pre-project conditions. Soils and wetland plants salvaged prior to construction will be used for onsite restoration.

#### 7.2.10.4 Fisheries *(Section 5.20.3.4 of the DEIS, page 5-158)*

Implementation of the BMPs and other environmental protection measures required by ITD, Corps, and IDEQ during project construction and the period required for site stabilization and landscape restoration will avoid or minimize these impacts. These measures will ensure that the Big Wood River's TDMLs for suspended sediment and substrate sediment loads will not be exceeded. Such exceedence could result in adverse effects on aquatic/benthic organisms, and a reduction in pool habitat, fish egg incubation/emergence, food intake, and the availability of gravel substrate for spawning. With impact avoidance and mitigation measures successfully applied, increased turbidity and sediment levels during construction will be temporary, minor, and within acceptable limits.

All in-stream diversion work, bridge pier construction work, and culvert installation in perennial waterways will be conducted during the low flow season (November through March) and in accordance with all applicable IDWR stream alteration and Corps 404 permit conditions. The water quality, vegetation, and wetlands construction-related avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures and associated BMP's will mitigate any potential adverse impacts on riparian and aquatic habitat.

#### 7.2.10.5 Traffic *(Section 5.20.4.1 of the DEIS, page 5-161)*

Mitigation of traffic and access impacts during construction will be provided by a traffic control plan to be prepared by ITD in accordance with ITD standard traffic control drawings and the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The traffic control plan will provide for the maintenance of two-way traffic on SH-75 during construction. The traffic control plan will provide for access to all existing legal access points, including residences, businesses, farming operations, and arterial streets.

A public information plan will be developed and implemented to inform Wood River Valley residents, businesses, visitors and other users of the SH-75 corridor of construction phasing, detours, and durations.

#### 7.2.10.6 Noise *(Section 5.20.4.2 of the DEIS, page 5-162)*

Construction noise will be mitigated by the following:

- Limiting construction activities to between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. will reduce construction noise levels during sensitive nighttime hours.
- Equipping construction equipment engines with adequate mufflers, intake silencers, and engine enclosures will reduce their noise by 5 to 10 dBA (U.S. EPA, 1971).
- Turning off construction equipment during prolonged periods when equipment is not in active use will eliminate noise from construction equipment during those periods.

#### 7.2.10.7 Air Quality *(Section 5.20.4.3 of the DEIS, page 5-162)*

Construction air quality impacts will be mitigated by the following:

- Spraying exposed soil with water to reduce PM10 emissions and deposition of particulate matter.
- Covering all trucks transporting materials, to substantially reduce particulates blowing off trucks during transportation.
- Wetting materials in trucks or providing adequate freeboard (space from the top of the material to the top of the truck) to reduce PM10 emissions and deposition of particulates during transportation.
- Providing wheel washers to remove particulate matter that will otherwise be carried off site by vehicles.
- Removing particulate matter deposited on paved public roads to reduce potential muddy areas.
- Routing and scheduling construction trucks to reduce traffic delays during peak travel times and reduce secondary impacts on air quality.
- Using well-maintained equipment and appropriate emission control devices on all construction equipment powered by gasoline or diesel fuel, to reduce CO emissions in vehicular exhaust.

#### 7.2.10.8 Hazardous Materials *(Section 5.20.4.4 of the DEIS, page 5-163)*

For the structures that will be demolished by Preferred Alternative 2, the potential for asbestos-containing materials will be determined by an Air Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) certified person. After the analysis results of any potential materials are received, materials and locations that contain more than 1% asbestos by weight will be handled in accordance with the EPA Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1971 standards prior to demolition or removal.

During construction, should an unanticipated discovery of hazardous waste or contamination be uncovered that has not been identified in the initial and/or preliminary site assessment, a detailed site investigation will be completed to quantify the problem and expedite remediation. Consultation with IDEQ during this process will occur.

Accidental spills of toxics through construction activities will be avoided or minimized through adherence to BMP's specified in 5.20.4.1 Water Quality.

#### 7.2.10.9 Socio-Economic *(Section 5.20.4.5 of the DEIS, page 5-164)*

A public information program will be developed and implemented to keep travelers advised during the construction period.

## 7.3 Commitments

In addition to the mitigation measures described in Section 7.2 above, ITD made a number of commitments during the EIS process and as a result of the additional coordination documented in Section 6.0 of this FEIS.

These ITD commitments include:

- ITD will create a SH-75 Corridor Operations Management Team composed of representatives from ITD, Blaine County, Mountain Rides, and the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley for the purpose of developing and implementing a program to meet the four requirements for potential conversion to peak hour HOV operations for McKercher Boulevard to Elkhorn Road, as described in Section 2.4 of this FEIS. The members of the Operations Management Team will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to commit the resources to comply with the four requirements and to develop and provide documentation to ITD that the conditions have been met.

  Formation of this Corridor Operations Management Team will occur once funding for construction of the final section of the SH-75 corridor between McKercher Boulevard and Elkhorn Road has been approved in the State Transportation Improvement Plan. ITD will be responsible for initiating formation of the Corridor Operations Management Team at that time.

- ITD will continue working with each of the Cities of Ketchum, Sun Valley, Hailey and Bellevue to help determine, fund and implement SH-75 traffic calming and pedestrian improvements within the existing SH-75 right-of-way within their respective cities. ITD will obtain any additional environmental clearances or permits that may be required for these improvements.

- ITD will conduct additional coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding the Big Wood River Bridge design during the design phase of the project. EPA clarified that additional information is needed concerning the specific Big Wood River bridge design to fully understand and evaluate the impacts of the bridge and to ensure that it meets the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines of the Clean Water Act. EPA therefore requested additional coordination during the final design of this bridge. This coordination may result in minor changes to the bridge design that will further minimize impacts to the riparian environment and further reduce impacts to riparian wetlands.

- ITD will provide EPA and the IDEQ with a sediment/erosion control plan. Upon approval, ITD will use that approved plan in their NPDES permit as part of their SWPPP. It will also be reflected in their construction plans and specifications to provide the necessary BMPs that will provide reasonable assurance that discharges will be protective of the Big Wood River, particularly where the road crosses the Big Wood River.

- ITD will evaluate additional air quality construction mitigation requirements at the time the construction specifications are being developed for the project.
- ITD issued a revised Noise Policy in June 2007. It is part of Section 1300 of the ITD Environmental Process Manual. This policy was approved by FHWA Boise Division on June 20, 2007. Section 1350.03, page 11 of this policy states the following:

  Prior to implementation of a proposed noise wall, however, a majority of impacted property owners must agree that it is desirable. Desirability may be determined (with or without the assistance of consultants) at a public hearing, by petition, by mailed questionnaire/surveys, or as otherwise determined acceptable by the FHWA and ITD.

  Section 1350.06 of the June 2007 policy further states:

  > Noise abatement will not be implemented if the majority (50% +1) of the impacted people are in opposition or indifferent to noise mitigation. Opposition to barrier construction shall be documented in writing, such as formal surveys or petitions.

  If the majority of impacted people (50% + 1) support the noise barriers required to mitigate Receptors 29 and 32, ITD will apply for a site alteration permit or a conditional use permit or variance under Section 9-21A of the Blaine County Code. This County permit or variance will be required as the height of the noise barriers for Receptors 29 (10 to 12 feet high) and 32 (8 feet high) will exceed the Blaine County Scenic Overlay District height restrictions. As of the date of publication of this FEIS, ITD has contacted the owners of record of the properties directly impacted by the proposed noise barriers to determine their support for, or opposition to, the proposed barriers.
- ITD will negotiate with Mountain Rides and the City of Bellevue to determine the mechanisms by which the ITD owned land located at Gannett Road and SH-75 will be made available for a park and ride lot.
- ITD will work with the City of Hailey to obtain additional input and analyses prior to implementation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Myrtle Street and SH-75.
- Regarding the relocated Harriman Trail in the Boulder Flats area, ITD will consider the following during final design of the wetlands mitigation plan, provided that no additional impacts to wetlands or cultural resources or additional cuts into the terrain will result:
  - Construction of the relocated Harriman Trail to the same standards and cross-section as the existing trail.
  - Set backs from the relocated SH-75 to provide adequate snow storage removal without impacting the trail.
- ITD will examine the results of the Quiet Pavement Pilot Programs and their potential applicability and sustainability for SH-75 during final design as part of the pavement design process.

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# 8.0 FEDERAL AND STATE ACTIONS AND PERMITS REQUIRED

Implementation of Preferred Alternative will require the federal and state actions and permits shown in Table 8-1.

**Table 8-1: Federal and State Permits Required**

| Action or Permit | Issuing Agency |
|---|---|
| Dredge/fill permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act | U..S. Army Corps of Engineers |
| National Pollution Discharge Elimination System under the Clean Water Act, including a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan | Environmental Protection Agency |
| Stream Alteration Permit | Idaho Department of Water Resources |
| 401 Water Quality Certification | Idaho Department of Environmental Quality |

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# REFERENCES

The following additional references are added to those included in the DEIS.

**Air Quality**

Idaho Transportation Department, *Section – 600 Air Quality of the Idaho Environmental Design Manual,* Revised December 2007

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, "Interim Guidance on Air Toxic Analysis in NEPA Documents", February 3, 2006. Found at http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/airtoxic/020306guidmem.htm

**Cultural Resources**

Shapiro & Associates, Inc. *SH-75 Timmerman to Ketchum Blaine County Idaho Archaeological and [1]Historical Survey Report, Archaeological Survey of Idaho,* 2004

**Land Use**

The Hudson Company, *Downtown Ketchum Master Plan,* January, 2006

**Noise**

Arizona Department of Transportation Intermodal Transportation Division, *Fast Facts on Quiet Pavement*:. from http://www.dot.state.az.us/Highways/EEG/QuietRoads/fast_facts.asp

Arizona Department of Transportation, Intermodal Transportation Division, *What is Rubberized Asphalt*: from http://www.dot.state.az.us/Highways/EEG/QuietRoads/what_is_rubberized_asphalt.asp

Idaho Transportation Department, *Noise Policy – Section 1300.00 of the Idaho Environmental Design Manual,* Revised June 2007

Shrouds, James M., Director, *Guidance on Quiet Pavement Pilot Programs and Tire/Pavement Noise Research:* Federal Highway Administration, Office of Natural and Human Environment. Retrieved May 26, 2006, from http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/qppppmem.htm

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *Quiet Pavements: Lessons Learned from Europe*: from http://www.tfhrc.gov/focus/apr05/04.htm

Purdue University, *Quiet Pavement Systems, FHWA/AASHTO International Technology Scan, Draft Executive Summary Report:* Purdue University. From http://tools.ecn.purdue.edu/~sqdh/wrkshp-9-04/exec-summary.pdf

Washington State Department of Transportation, State Materials Laboratory; State Acoustics Division. *Quieter Pavements: Options and Challenges for Washington State* , May 2005.

[1] This document was prepared for this EIS process and is housed at the Idaho State Historical Society, Historic Preservation, Office, Boise Idaho.

Washington State Department of Transportation, State Materials Laboratory; State Acoustics Division. *Quieter Pavements: Options and Challenges for Washington State: Executive Summary* May 2005.

**Transportation**

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), "Guide for High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Facilities, 3rd Edition", 2004

National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 414 HOV Systems Manual, National Academy Press, 1998

Parsons Brinckerhoff, Revised SH-75 Corridor Year 2025 Population and Employment Forecasts, March 2002[2]

**Wetlands**

Jankovsky-Jones, M. 1997. *Conservation Strategy for the Big Wood River Basin Wetlands*. Conservation Data Center, Idaho Department of Fish and Game. 33pp and appendices

**Wildlife**

United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines, 2007. Located at http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/issues/BaldEagle/NationalBaldEagleManagementGuidelines

[2] This document was prepared as part of the EIS. A copy of this report is on the project website at www.sh-75.com and at the offices of PB Americas, Inc. in Salt Lake City.

# List of Preparers

The DEIS, FEIS and Section 4(f) Evaluation were prepared by the following individuals:

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| Cameron Glasgow | Bridge/Operations Engineer | Comment Resolution and FEIS review |

## *Idaho Transportation Department*

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| Roy Jost | Senior Environmental Planner - Headquarters | Noise, Air Quality |
| Jackie Fields, P.E. | Project Development Engineer – District 4 | Conceptual Design Oversight |
| Bonita Koonce | Right of Way Manager – District 4 | Right-of-way Estimates |
| Gwen Smith | Public Involvement Coordinator | DEIS Public Hearing and DEIS Comment Coordinator |

## *Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.*

| Name | Title | Project Role |
|---|---|---|
| Diana Atkins, M.A. | Professional Associate | Project Manager, Lead Author |
| Chuck Green, PE | Lead Transportation and Traffic Engineer | Transportation planning, traffic engineering, traffic impacts |
| Matt Seal, P.E. | Traffic Engineer | Traffic engineering |
| William A. Davidson, M.A. | Senior Project Manager | Travel demand forecasting model oversight |
| Joel Freedman | Travel Demand Forecasting Modeler | Travel demand forecasting |
| Tyler Deke, M.S. | Transportation Planner | Travel demand forecasting and traffic impacts |
| Tad Widby, B.A. | Senior Project Manager | Travel demand management |
| Bryan K. Porter, AICP | Senior Supervising Planner | Transit considerations and analyses |
| Jason Bleyl, PE | Lead Design Engineer | Conceptual engineering design, cost estimates |
| Jon Updike, P.E. | Drainage Engineer | Conceptual drainage design |
| John Thomas, P.E. | Design Engineer | Conceptual engineering design |
| Madeline Francisco-Galang, P.E. | Utilities Engineer | Utilities impacts |
| Dan Church, P.E. | Lead Structures Engineer | Conceptual bridge concepts |
| T. Brent Baker | Lead Economist | Economics analysis |
| Gail Cheever, PG | Environmental Planner | Geology, soils and hazardous materials |
| Lawrence Spurgeon, MSE | Lead Environmental Engineer | Noise, air quality and energy analyses |
| John Barnhill | Environmental Planner | Comments and consultation, graphics |
| Chris Elison, P.E. | Environmental Planner | Document review and preparation |
| Dennis Davis, AICP | Senior Environmental Planner | Document review and preparation |

## 1 *Shapiro & Associates Environmental*[1]

| Name | Title | Project Role |
|---|---|---|
| Steve Jakubowics | Senior Environmental Planner | Natural Resource Lead, Agency Consultation, Special Status Species |
| Susan Leary | Archaeologist | Cultural Resources Lead, Section 4(f) Evaluation |
| Naomi Brandenfels | Field Archaeologist | Cultural Inventory |
| Donald Tatum | Field Archaeologist | Cultural Inventory |
| Gray Rand | Wildlife Biologist | Wildlife, Special Status Species, Biological Assessment |
| Laurence Barea | Environmental Scientist | Vegetation, Wetland Inventory |
| Brian Ellis | Environmental Scientist | Floodplains |
| Chris Johnson | Environmental Scientist | Water Resources |
| David Kordiyak | Wetland Biologist | Wetlands, Wetland Mitigation, Vegetation |
| Dick Meyers | Landscape Architect | Wetland Concept Mitigation Plan |
| Bob House | Fisheries Biologist | Fisheries Inventory |

## 2 *Landmark Design Inc.*

| Name | Title | Project Role |
|---|---|---|
| Jan Striefel, AICP, FASLA | Principal | Land use, parks and recreation, communities and neighborhoods<br>Public involvement |
| Mark Vlasic, AICP, ASLA | Lead Planner | Visual impacts, land use, parks and recreation, communities and neighborhoods. Public involvement. |

## 3 *Intermountain Demographics*

| Name | Title | Project Role |
|---|---|---|
| Dale Rosebrock | Principal | U.S. Census data analysis<br>Population and employment |

[1] Shapiro and Associates was acquired by AMEC Environmental in 2005.

## *Wilkinson Ferrari*

| Name | Title | Project Role |
|---|---|---|
| Emily Charles, AICP | Planner | Public involvement facilitation |

## *Mark Bradley Research & Consulting*

| Name | Title | Project Role |
|---|---|---|
| Mark Bradley | Principal Researcher | Stated preference survey pre-design |

## *C.J. Olson Marketing Research*

| Name | Title | Project Role |
|---|---|---|
| C.J. Olson | Principal Researcher | Survey design, administration and analysis<br>Stated preference transit survey |

## *Galena Engineering*

| Name | Title | Project Role |
|---|---|---|
| Brian Yeager | Surveyor | Surveying, right-of-way research |

## *Intermountain Aerials*

| Name | Title | Project Role |
|---|---|---|
| Tom McCullough | Principal | Aerial photography and mapping |

## *Terracon*

| Name | Title | Project Role |
|---|---|---|
| Jerry A. Peterson, P.E. | Principal | Geohazards and geology |

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