

Appendix I
PEL Questionnaire



PEL QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: These questions should be used as a guide throughout the planning process, not just answered near completion of the process. When a PEL study is started, this questionnaire will be given to the project team. Some of the basic questions to consider are: "What did you do?", "What didn't you do?" and "Why?". When the team submits the study to FHWA for review, the completed questionnaire will be included with the submittal. FHWA will use this questionnaire to assist in determining if the study meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.212 or 450.318. The questionnaire should be included in the planning document as an executive summary, chapter, or appendix.

1. **Background:**

A. Who is the sponsor of the PEL study? (state DOT, Local Agency, Other)

Idaho Transportation Department (ITD)

B. What is the name of the PEL study document and other identifying project information (e.g., sub-account or STIP numbers, long-range plan, or transportation improvement program years)?

PEL Study Name: SH-44, I-84 to Star Rd PEL and NEPA Study

Key Number (KN): 23630

C. Who was included on the study team (Name and title of agency representatives, consultants, etc.)?

FHWA: Kyle Holman, Field Operations Engineer, FHWA Idaho Division

The following table includes agency and consultant representatives involved in coordination meetings.

TEAM MEMBER	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
Jason Brinkman	District Engineer	ITD, District 3
Vince Trimboli	Deputy Administrator	ITD, District 3
Mark Wasdahl	Project Manager	ITD, District 3
Aaron Bauges	Planning Manager	ITD, District 3
Greg Vitley	Senior Environmental Planner	ITD, District 3
Wendy Howell	Senior Transportation Planner	ITD, District 3

SH-44, I-84 TO STAR ROAD

TEAM MEMBER	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
Jill Youmans	Senior Communications Manager	ITD, District 3
Ester Ceja	Senior Environmental Planner	ITD, Headquarters
Bella Loera	Transportation Planner	Ada County Highway District (ACHD)
Cody Homan	Senior Project Manager	ACHD
Chris Dayley	Project Manager	ACHD
Kristy Inselman	Supervisor, Planning and Programming	ACHD
Leslie Van Beek	County Commissioner	Canyon County
Debbie Root	Director, Development Services Department	Canyon County
Aaron Williams	Director of Constituent Services	Canyon County (formerly ACHD)
Chris Hopper	District Engineer	Highway District No. 4
Jackie Hutchison	Mayor	City of Middleton
Tim O'Meara	City Council	City of Middleton
Jason Van Gilder	Public Works Director	City of Middleton
Roberta Stewart	Planning & Zoning Official	City of Middleton
Monica Hobbs	City Administrator/City Clerk	City of Middleton
Trevor Chadwick	Mayor	City of Star
Shawn Nickel	Planning & Zoning Administrator	City of Star
Ryan Morgan	City Engineer	City of Star
MaryAnn Waldinger	Principal Planner	Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS)
Austin Miller	Principal Planner	COMPASS
Craig Raborn	Executive Director	COMPASS
Marc Gee	Superintendent	Middleton School District
Kate Dahl	Principal Planner	Valley Regional Transit
Stephen Hunt	Chief Development Officer	Valley Regional Transit
David Witthaus	Consultant Project Manager	David Evans and Associates, Inc (DEA)
Stacy Tschuor	Consultant PEL Lead	DEA
Doug Self	Consultant Public Involvement Lead	Atlas Strategic Communications
Nicole Parks	Consultant Environmental Lead	DEA
Lewis Venard	Consultant Traffic Lead	DEA
Jim Baker	Consultant Design Lead	DEA

D. Provide a description of the existing transportation facility within the corridor, including project limits, modes, functional classification, number of lanes, shoulder width, access control and type of surrounding environment (urban vs. rural, residential vs. commercial, etc.)

The 10.4-mile corridor study limits are east of the I-84 interchange through the N. Star Road intersection. The SH-44 study corridor is located in Canyon and Ada Counties and passes through the City of Middleton and the City of Star within the study area.

SH-44 is a two-lane highway at the western end of the study corridor within a rural environment with residential and agricultural access. It continues as a two-lane highway heading east until Emmett Road where it becomes a three-lane road (one travel lane in each direction with a center turn lane) as the area transitions to semi-urban with adjacent residential and commercial properties and travels through the Middleton downtown core with established commercial properties and frequent driveways. Approximately half way between N. Middleton Road and Duff Lane, the road returns to a two-lane cross section with surrounding development growth for residential neighborhoods and commercial properties. From N. Can Ada Road to N. Star Road, the road widens to a five-lane cross section (two travel lanes in each direction with a center turn lane) in the urban area of Star. There are left-turn and right-turn lanes at various intersections along the study corridor.

The posted speed limit along the SH-44 study corridor is generally 55 miles per hour (mph) in the two-lane sections of the highway. It gradually transitions to 25 mph in the City of Middleton and the City of Star. At the western end of the study corridor, the posted speed limit is 45 mph approaching I-84.

Shoulder widths on SH-44 in the rural section east of I-84 range from six to ten feet wide. Approaching the west side of Middleton, the shoulders narrow to between two and four feet. The curbed section of SH-44 in the urban area of Middleton (between the Willow Creek bridge at Picadilly Park and Skyline Drive east of South Middleton Road) has shoulders of about four feet or on-street parking. In the developing area between Middleton and Star, shoulder widths are variable, ranging from two to ten feet. In the urban area of Star (east of Center Street to Star Road), the highway is curbed with no painted shoulder.

The SH-44 highway functional classification within the study area is designated by ITD as Other Principal Arterial. These types of highways provide long-distance connections and serve major centers of metropolitan areas, providing a high degree of mobility with partially controlled access facilities.

E. Provide a brief chronology of the planning activities (PEL study) including the year(s) the studies were completed.

The PEL study contract was initiated in May 2023. An agency Project Development Team (PDT) was created to collaborate and provide input to the SH-44 PEL process. The PDT included representatives from ITD, FHWA, ACHD, Canyon County, Highway District No. 4, City of Middleton, City of Star, COMPASS, Middleton School District,

and Valley Regional Transit. The major steps in the process and the points of input from the PDT and public at each step are outlined below.

- ✦ Project visioning
 - » The vision was developed by community stakeholders in a visioning session on September 6, 2023 with ITD and technical and executive staff from the local agencies along the corridor.
 - » The outcomes of the visioning session and the initial purpose, needs, and goals were presented and discussed with the PDT at a meeting held on October 30, 2023.
- ✦ Data collection and technical analysis of land use, transportation, and environmental resources
 - » Corridor conditions study results for transportation related to the development of the corridor needs were discussed with the PDT at a meeting held on November 30, 2023 and presented at public meetings held in January 2024.
- ✦ Development of the project Purpose and Need and goals
 - » The draft Purpose and Need and goals statement was presented and discussed with the PDT at a meeting held on November 30, 2023. With review, comments, and additional data received in December 2023, the PDT aligned on the draft Purpose and Need and goals, understanding that they will be used to evaluate and screen alternatives.
 - » The draft Purpose and Need and goals were shared at public meetings held in January 2024.
- ✦ Development and screening of Level 1 concept alternatives
 - » Level 1 concept alternatives were reviewed by the PDT in February and March 2024 and shared at public meetings held in April 2024.
- ✦ Development and screening of Level 2 alternatives, providing more detailed concept design and evaluation than Level 1.
 - » Level 2 alternatives and screening were reviewed by the PDT in May and August 2024 and shared at public meetings held in September 2024.
- ✦ Determination of the Recommended Alternatives to advance to the NEPA process with the No Action alternative.
 - » The Recommended Alternatives were discussed and shared with the PDT in May and July 2025 and shared at public meetings held in August 2025.
- ✦ PEL report and questionnaire preparation (draft report October 2025)

F. Are there recent, current or near future planning studies or projects in the vicinity? What is the relationship of this project to those studies/projects?

Previous and on-going studies and planning efforts within the study area have helped set the stage for this PEL study and frame its planning context. Their identified goals, issues, and needs helped confirm the needs for this study and were

incorporated in the PEL study analyses. The studies that informed the PEL study are listed below.

- ✦ City of Middleton Comprehensive Plan (update conducted in parallel with this study and adopted in February 2025)
- ✦ COMPASS Communities in Motion 2050 (adopted December 2022)
- ✦ SH-44, Corridor Study, Junction I-84 to Eagle EA – Logical Termini and Independent Utility Memorandum (May 12, 2022)
- ✦ ACHD 2022-2026 Integrated Five-Year Work Plan (2022)
- ✦ City of Star Pathway Master Plan (2022)
- ✦ City of Star Comprehensive Plan (2022)
- ✦ Valley Regional Transit 2023-2027 Transportation Development Plan (2022)
- ✦ Highway District No. 4 Mid-Star Service Area Capital Improvements Plan (2021)
- ✦ ACHD Bicycle Facilities Inventory Report (2021)
- ✦ SH-44, I-84 to Eagle, Corridor Study Traffic Analysis and Access Management (February 8, 2019)
- ✦ Ada County Highway District (ACHD) Roadways to Bikeways (2018)
- ✦ City of Middleton Transportation Plan (2016)
- ✦ ACHD Strategic Plan 2035 (2016)
- ✦ City of Middleton Connects City Vision Map (2015)

2. Methodology used:

A. What was the scope of the PEL study and the reason for completing it?

The purpose of the PEL study was to evaluate needs and identify transportation improvements along SH-44 between I-84 and Star Road. The PEL process was initiated to streamline future NEPA processes and facilitate the transition to NEPA by completing work that is NEPA compliant. The desired results of the PEL process were to:

- ✦ Identify alternatives to advance into NEPA
- ✦ Understand community support and concerns for alternatives identified and screened
- ✦ Conduct a collaborative and transparent evaluation to achieve high-level stakeholder acceptance for the project decision-making process

B. Did you use NEPA-like language? Why or why not?

Yes, NEPA-like language was used to be consistent with the NEPA process and to facilitate the adoption of recommendations into future NEPA studies.

C. **What were the actual terms used and how did you define them? (Provide examples or list)**

- ✘ Purpose and Need Statement – defines the project intent and the problems to be addressed.
- ✘ Reasonable Alternatives – alternatives that are technically and economically feasible and meet the project Purpose and Need.
- ✘ No Action Alternative – Alternative that would leave the transportation system as it currently is without improvements.
- ✘ Evaluation Criteria – evaluation measures derived to assess an alternative's ability to address the project Purpose and Need and goals.
- ✘ Fatal Flaw – a flaw that is serious enough and obvious enough that a judge (or an agency legal counsel) would deem an environmental document unacceptable as written.
- ✘ Eliminated – does not meet project Purpose and Need, has a fatal flaw, and/or is considered unreasonable.
- ✘ Carried Forward – carried forward for further evaluation in next level of screening.
- ✘ Recommended – considered reasonable and feasible and recommended for consideration as the Preferred Alternative during subsequent NEPA and project development.
- ✘ Not Recommended – alternative will not be evaluated further in the PEL study due to comparatively negligible benefits and higher impacts than other alternatives, but may be studied further with subsequent NEPA and project development.

D. **How do you see these terms being used in NEPA documents?**

These terms will be used in NEPA documents in a similar fashion as they were used in the PEL study.

E. **What were the key steps and Coordination Points in the PEL decision-making process? Who were the decision-makers and who else participated in those key steps? For example, for the corridor vision, the decision was made by state DOT and the local agency, with buy-in from FHWA, USACE, and USFWS and other resource/regulatory agencies.**

ITD consulted with FHWA for acknowledgement of final deliverables for the PEL process at the FHWA PEL Coordination Points defined in the ITD PEL Procedures manual (2024):

- ✘ Determination of reason for PEL study and desired outcomes
- ✘ Project Purpose and Need and goals, and operations analysis methodology
- ✘ Alternatives development and screening process and results
- ✘ Recommended Alternatives and PEL document

SH-44, I-84 TO STAR ROAD

ITD worked collaboratively with agency staff as PDT members to develop the Purpose and Need, goals, evaluation criteria, alternatives, evaluation, and recommendations.

Specific decision points and the schedule with the PDT meetings are shown below.

KEY MILESTONES	SCHEDULE
Visioning Workshop	September 2023
PDT Charter Study Goals & Objectives	PDT Meeting #1 October 2023
Purpose and Need Statement * Including Purpose, Needs, and Goals	PDT Meeting #2 November 2023
Evaluation Criteria * Initial Alternatives Developed	PDT Meeting #3 February 2024
Level 1 Alternatives Screening Results	PDT Meeting #4 March 2024
Level 2 Alternatives Level 2 Evaluation Criteria	PDT Meeting #5 May 2024
Level 2 Alternatives Screening Results *	PDT Meeting #6 August 2024
Level 2 Alternatives Screening Refinements	PDT Meeting #7 October 2024
Draft Recommendations *	PDT Meeting #8 May 2025
Final Study Recommendations * Final PEL Report	Study Completion

* FHWA PEL Coordination Points

In addition, a Project Executive Committee (PEC) was formed to present information and gather input from executive-level representatives from the same agencies on the PDT to facilitate decision-making at major milestones. The agency executives participated in the corridor visioning workshop held at the start of the study. A PEC meeting was held in June 2024 with discussion and input on the project Purpose and Need and goals, and alternatives evaluation process, including evaluation criteria. A joint PDT/PEC meeting was held in May 2025 to present and gather input on the refined Level 2 alternatives screening and next steps for the project to move forward into the NEPA process.

Information was distributed to representatives for the study resource agencies (listed in section 3.A.) at three points during the study. Early in the study, a letter was mailed as an introduction to the PEL study and confirmation of preferred contact information was requested. A second letter requested review of the *Environmental Scan Report* related to their specific resource(s). The final letter provided a memorandum summarizing the alternatives evaluation results and Recommended Alternative recommendations for review of the potential resource impacts and requested information on the next steps required for the NEPA process. With all

outreach, review comments and input were requested on the data and recommendations.

F. How should the PEL information be presented in NEPA?

In NEPA, the PEL process will be summarized with reference to the FHWA-acknowledged PEL study deliverables for additional information.

3. Agency coordination:

A. Provide a synopsis of Coordination with Federal, tribal, state and local environmental, regulatory and resource agencies. Describe their level of participation and how you coordinated with them.

Input from resource agencies was carefully considered and documented. The following environmental resource agencies were notified of the SH-44 PEL Study and coordinated with for scoping and provided input on the environmental scan information utilized in the alternatives evaluation process:

- ✦ Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – responded saying currently do not have feedback but are interested in receiving the PEL report when available and other project updates.
- ✦ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – no response
- ✦ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – no response
- ✦ Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) – responded with general, non-project-specific information on requirements for air quality, wastewater and recycled water, drinking water, and surface water, solid waste, hazardous waste, and ground water contamination.
- ✦ Idaho Department of Water Resources – responded with agreement of permitting requirements noted in the environmental scan report, and information regarding the hydrologic and hydraulic analysis required.
- ✦ Idaho Fish and Game – responded with Best Management Practices (BMPs) to consider to support pollinators and pollinator habitat along roadways.
- ✦ Bureau of Reclamation – no response
- ✦ Natural Resources Conservation Service – responded with no comments.
- ✦ Idaho Department of Lands – no response
- ✦ Southwest District Health – no response
- ✦ Caldwell Executive Airport – no response
- ✦ Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) – responded noting that an Obstruction Evaluation/Airport Airspace Analysis, FAA Form 7460-1, Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration may be required for the project and that the nearest airport is Caldwell Executive Airport.
- ✦ Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation – no response

Information was distributed to representatives for the study resource agencies listed above at three points during the study. Early in the study, a letter was mailed as an

introduction to the PEL study and confirmation of preferred contact information was requested. A second letter requested review of the Environmental Scan Report related to their specific resource(s). The final letter provided a memorandum summarizing the alternatives evaluation results and Recommended Alternative recommendations for review of the potential resource impacts and requested information on the next steps required for the NEPA process. With all outreach, review comments and input were requested on the data and recommendations.

B. What transportation agencies (e.g., for adjacent jurisdictions) did you coordinate with or were involved in the PEL study?

- ✦ Federal Highway Administration
- ✦ Idaho Transportation Department
- ✦ Ada County Highway District (ACHD)
- ✦ Canyon County
- ✦ Highway District No. 4
- ✦ City of Middleton
- ✦ City of Star
- ✦ Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS)
- ✦ Valley Regional Transit

C. What steps will need to be taken with each agency during NEPA scoping?

Once ITD determines which alternative(s) move forward, the agency will need to coordinate with FHWA to determine the class of NEPA action for the project. Once determined, agency coordination will be completed. The alternative(s) that move forward may include improvements to facilities owned by a city or county or would be enhancements to other off-highway transportation systems, and the agencies will need to coordinate during pre-scoping activities to determine who should lead those projects.

- ✦ FHWA (Lead) – will assist ITD in determining the class of NEPA action that will be developed for the corridor and/or individual projects. FHWA will be the lead agency during the NEPA process for the project.
- ✦ ITD (Lead) – will be the lead state DOT.
- ✦ City of Middleton (Participating) – will assist ITD as a technical partner.
- ✦ City of Star (Participating) – will assist ITD as a technical partner.
- ✦ Ada County (Participating) – will assist ITD as a technical partner.
- ✦ Canyon County (Participating) – will assist ITD as a technical partner.
- ✦ ACHD (Participating) – will assist ITD as a technical partner.
- ✦ Highway District No. 4 (Participating) – will assist ITD as a technical partner.
- ✦ COMPASS (Participating) – will assist ITD as a technical partner.

- ✦ USACE (Cooperating) – will assist ITD as wetland delineations are developed, impacts are assessed and permitted, and mitigation determined.
- ✦ USFWS (Cooperating) – will provide guidance on endangered species survey work and impact assessment if needed.
- ✦ National Park Service (NPS) (Cooperating) – will be involved to review impacts to Section 6(f) properties and determine sufficiency of mitigation.
- ✦ USDA NRCS (Participating) – will be involved in the review of prime farmland conversions and potential mitigation.
- ✦ State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) (Participating) – will be involved to review impacts to Section 4(f) properties and determine sufficiency of mitigation.
- ✦ Idaho Department of Water Resources (Participating) – will review permitting associated with stream alterations and floodplain encroachments.
- ✦ Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (Participating) – will review water quality permitting for the project, as well as provide input on hazardous material records and potential concerns.
- ✦ Idaho Fish and Game (Participating)– will review and provide data on sensitive species and habitats.
- ✦ Idaho Department of Lands (Participating)– will review impacts associated with state owned streams/rivers and mineral resources.
- ✦ Officials with jurisdiction over Section 4(f) properties (Participating) – will review impacts and determine Section 4(f) applicability.

At the conclusion of the PEL study, the resource and regulatory agencies will be sent the final PEL document and information about next steps. During the subsequent NEPA process, ITD will conduct scoping meetings to discuss the level of analysis and documentation required for each resource based on the proposed action.

4. **Public coordination:**

A. **Provide a synopsis of your coordination efforts with the public and stakeholders.**

Public engagement for the SH-44 PEL Study included presentation of materials with opportunities to review and provide input on the Purpose and Need, alternatives development and screening (Level 1 and Level 2), and the recommendations. For any public-facing materials, notice was given that the PEL outcomes may be adopted during environmental review process per 23 U.S.C. 168.

The following table outlines the types of public engagement and input gathered at the key milestones of the study:

SH-44, I-84 TO STAR ROAD

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT POINT	OUTREACH TACTICS	INPUT GATHERED
<p>Public Meetings – Round #1 Middleton and Star In-person January 11 and 17, 2024 Online open January 11 – 31, 2024</p>	<p>Open Houses (2 locations) Online Open House <u>Marketing:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Project Website ✦ News Release ✦ Print Ads ✦ Social Media ✦ Direct Mail Postcards </p>	<p><u>Content:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ About the Project ✦ PEL Process ✦ Project Timeline ✦ Draft Purpose, Needs, and Goals ✦ Existing and Future Conditions <u>Input Considerations:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Language edits to Purpose and Needs for clarification and public understanding ✦ Emphasized highway congestion related to school traffic as a need </p>
<p>Public Meetings – Round #2 Star and Middleton In-person April 3 and 4, 2024 Online open April 3 – 17, 2024</p>	<p>Open Houses (2 locations) Online Open House <u>Marketing:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Project Website ✦ News Release ✦ Print Ads ✦ Social Media ✦ Direct Mail Postcards </p>	<p><u>Content:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ About the Project ✦ PEL Process ✦ Project Timeline ✦ Purpose, Needs, and Goals ✦ Alternatives Evaluation Process ✦ Level 1 Concepts ✦ Draft Level 1 Screening Matrix <u>Input Considerations:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Concerns with right-of-way impacts and property owner/business impacts of all concepts (included in Level 2 criteria) ✦ Concerns with impacts to downtown Middleton (Level 2 alternatives considered to reduce downtown impacts) </p>
<p>Public Meetings – Round #3 Middleton and Star In-person September 10 and 11, 2024 Online open September 10 – October 9, 2024</p>	<p>Open Houses (2 locations) Online Open House Middleton Canvassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Visited 108 residences that may be directly impacted by alternatives <u>Marketing:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Project Website ✦ News Release ✦ Print Ads ✦ Social Media ✦ Direct Mail Postcards </p>	<p><u>Content:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ About the Project ✦ PEL Process ✦ Project Timeline ✦ Purpose, Needs, and Goals ✦ Alternatives Evaluation Process ✦ Level 2 Concepts ✦ Draft Level 2 Screening Matrix <u>Input Considerations:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ General agreement on draft Level 2 screening ✦ Concerns for property and access impacts for alternatives south of Middleton (additional data analysis of impacts added to Level 2 screening) ✦ Polarizing opinions on one-way alternative with interest in keeping SH-44 closer to downtown Middleton, but concerns about impacts (additional data analysis of impacts added to Level 2 screening) ✦ Concerns with impacts to downtown Middleton (Level 2 alternatives considered to reduce downtown impacts) </p>

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT POINT	OUTREACH TACTICS	INPUT GATHERED
<p>Public Meetings – Round #4 Middleton and Star In-person August 26 and 27, 2025 Online open August 26 – September 10, 2025</p>	<p>Open Houses (2 locations) Online Open House Middleton Canvassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Visited 114 residences that may be directly impacted by alternatives <u>Marketing:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Project Website ✦ News Release ✦ Print Ads ✦ Social Media ✦ Direct Mail Postcards </p>	<p><u>Content:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ About the Project ✦ PEL Process ✦ Project Timeline ✦ Purpose, Needs, and Goals ✦ Alternatives Evaluation Process ✦ Level 1 Overview ✦ Level 2 Overview ✦ Study Recommendations Moving Forward <p><u>Input Considerations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ General agreement on Recommended Alternatives to move forward into NEPA and the alternatives not recommended for further study ✦ Concerns for property and access impacts along SH-44 for the on-alignment and new alignment sections ✦ Overall sentiment that improvements are needed for corridor and to move forward as quickly as possible with project

5. Purpose and Need for the PEL study:

A. What was the scope of the PEL study and the reason for completing it?

The purpose of the PEL study was to evaluate needs and identify transportation improvements along SH-44 between I-84 and Star Road. The PEL process was initiated to streamline future NEPA processes and facilitate the transition to NEPA by completing work that is NEPA compliant. The desired results of the PEL process were to:

- ✦ Identify alternatives to advance into NEPA
- ✦ Understand community support and concerns for alternatives identified and screened
- ✦ Conduct a collaborative and transparent evaluation to achieve high-level stakeholder acceptance for the project decision-making process

B. Provide the purpose and need statement, or the corridor vision and transportation goals and objectives to realize that vision.

Purpose

The purpose of the transportation projects recommended by this study is to improve travel safety and operations along the SH-44 highway corridor and accommodate all corridor users by enhancing pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity along and across SH-44 in Canyon and Ada Counties from east of the I-84 interchange through the Star Road intersection.

Needs

Transportation improvements are needed along SH-44 due to:

- ✦ Recurring congestion along the SH-44 corridor and on side roads accessing or crossing the highway
- ✦ Existing and future travel demands along the SH-44 corridor
- ✦ Safety concerns for vehicular and multimodal travel along the SH-44 corridor
- ✦ Lack of multimodal connectivity along and across the SH-44 corridor

C. What steps will need to be taken during the NEPA process to make this a project-level purpose and need statement?

The PEL Purpose and Need will be used as an initial draft for the project-level NEPA Purpose and Need statement(s). FHWA and ITD will determine the class of action and revise the PEL Purpose and Need to reflect any changes that have occurred since the PEL study.

6. Range of alternatives:

Planning teams need to be cautious during the alternative screen process; alternative screening should focus on purpose and need/corridor vision, fatal flaw analysis, and possibly mode selection. This may help minimize problems during discussions with resource agencies. Alternatives that have fatal flaws or do not meet the purpose and need/corridor vision will not be considered reasonable alternatives, even if they reduce impacts to a particular resource. Detail the range of alternatives considered, screening criteria, and screening process, including:

A. What types of alternatives were looked at? (Provide a one or two sentence summary and reference document.)

Project concepts were developed to address the project's Purpose and Need and issues identified in the evaluation of existing conditions with input from the PDT and general public. The concepts were developed considering the 2050 traffic volumes reports from project travel demand forecasting, utilizing the latest approved COMPASS 2050 travel demand model with the land use and travel demand forecasting data from the latest adopted Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan, Communities in Motion 2050. Projects programmed in the COMPASS 2050 plan, and by ITD and the local agencies were considered in the development of Action concepts.

The No Action concept was carried forward through the analysis as a baseline for comparison, even though it does not address the project Purpose and Need. Under the No Action condition, all programmed improvements included in the COMPASS Communities in Motion 2050 would be completed with the exception of improvements along the SH-44 study corridor.

Alternatives included improvements on the existing SH-44 alignment, as well as new alignments. Alternatives and the screening process are described in greater detail in the Alternatives Development and Screening section of the PEL Report.

B. How did you select the screening criteria and screening process?

ITD and the consultant team developed draft evaluation criteria based on the project Purpose and Need and goals, then identified relevant evaluation performance measures. These were then reviewed and modified with agency representatives during PDT meetings to make sure that the needs and concerns of the agency stakeholders and broader community would be considered in the alternatives development and evaluation process.

Two levels of screening took place and each had a set of defined evaluation criteria. At each level of screening the criteria and performance measures were assessed and modified to make sure they were clear to the stakeholders and meaningful in differentiating alternatives.

C. For alternative(s) that were screened out, briefly summarize the reasons for eliminating the alternative(s). (During the initial screenings, this generally will focus on fatal flaws.)

The following three concepts were eliminated from further consideration at the Level 1 screening level because they do not meet the project Purpose and Need, as described below:

✦ Concept 5 – SH-44 North Alternate Route around Middleton (Options A & B)

With distance north of Middleton Middle School campus, concept would not provide opportunities for added access to reduce V/C ratio on roadway adjacent to school. New highway adjacent to Middleton Heights Elementary School would greatly increase traffic adjacent to that school and degrade pedestrian and bicyclist safety accessing the school. An alignment north of downtown Middleton would not support effective connections to existing and planned multimodal facilities south of town.

Concept also would not improve travel time on full length of SH-44 route (I-84 to Star Road) due to increase in overall route length (Option A or B) to fit through existing development north of Middleton. Therefore, the concept does not meet the project Purpose and Need.

✦ Concept 6 – New North Road Connection (I-84 to SH-16)

The origin-destination analyses conducted for the PEL study show that most of the traffic along the SH-44 study corridor is local, turning on and/or off the highway somewhere between I-84 and Star Road, and less than 10% of traffic on SH-44 travels between I-84 and Star Road in the morning and evening peak periods in both directions. With types of trips on the SH-44 study corridor, a new road would not draw enough traffic from SH-44 to improve safety or reduce congestion on the SH-44 corridor in peak periods and does not improve multimodal connections along SH-44. Therefore, the concept does not meet the project Purpose and Need.

- ✦ Concept 7 – Added North-South Boise River Crossing

With a new road connection across the Boise River, traffic circulation around Middleton and Star would still require travel on long portions of SH-44, so the new road would not draw enough traffic from SH-44 to improve safety or reduce congestion on the SH-44 corridor and does not improve multimodal connections along SH-44. Therefore, the concept does not meet the project Purpose and Need.

The Level 2 evaluation was a more detailed evaluation of the concepts that passed the first level of screening, i.e. more details of the concepts were added, as appropriate, to understand the projected travel demand, operations, multimodal circulation, and physical footprint.

The alternatives evaluated in the Level 2 screening were:

- ✦ No Action Alternative
- ✦ Alternative 1: SH-44 Widening and Improvements on Existing Alignment
- ✦ Alternative 2: SH-44 South Alternate Route around Middleton at Ballard Lane
- ✦ Alternative 3: SH-44 South Alternate Route around Middleton at Cemetery Road
- ✦ Alternative 4: SH-44 One-Way Couplet through Middleton to South

The following two action alternatives were Not Recommended for further evaluation in the study due to comparatively negligible benefits and higher impacts than other alternatives as described below:

- ✦ Alternative 1: SH-44 Widening and Improvements on Existing Alignment
 - » Less effective in meeting the traffic operations, safety, and multimodal needs of the corridor in comparison to Alternatives 2 and 3
 - » More property impacts than Alternatives 2 and 3
 - » Greater potential built environmental impacts than Alternatives 2 and 3
 - » Greater construction complexity and impacts than Alternatives 2 and 3 with widening existing highway through downtown Middleton
- ✦ Alternative 4: SH-44 One-Way Couplet through Middleton to South
 - » Major impacts to travel circulation in downtown Middleton and emergency response from downtown Middleton fire station
 - » Less effective in meeting the safety and multimodal needs of the corridor in comparison to Alternatives 2 and 3 due to higher volumes on local residential streets between one-way roads
 - » Less effective in meeting the capacity needs of the corridor with a v/c ratio of 1.0 through Middleton
 - » Highest number of property impacts of action alternatives
 - » Greatest potential built environmental impacts of action alternatives, as well as greater potential natural environmental impacts than Alternatives 1 and 3
 - » Highest construction/total cost

- » Greatest construction complexity and impacts of action alternatives with construction on existing highway through downtown Middleton and additional side street reconstruction.

The alternatives evaluation and screening process is described in greater detail in the Alternatives Development and Screening section of the PEL Report.

D. Which alternatives should be brought forward into NEPA and why?

Based on the alternatives evaluation, Alternatives 2 and 3 are the Recommended Alternatives from the PEL study for consideration as the Preferred Alternative during subsequent NEPA. Although Alternatives 2 and 3 scored overall the same, Alternative 2 rated higher in meeting the traffic operations and capacity needs of the corridor while Alternative 3 had less potential impacts to the natural environment. Alternative 2 impacts the lowest number of properties with the least congestion (lowest v/c ratio) along SH-44 through Middleton and a lower cost estimate than Alternative 3. When the Level 2 alternatives were presented to the public for input, comments were more favorable to Alternative 2 than Alternative 3.

As the project moves forward into further project development and NEPA, continued coordination with the SH-44 PDT, including City of Middleton staff and elected officials, will be conducted as a pre-NEPA phase to refine and evaluate further Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 between Canyon Lane and Marjorie Avenue (generally through the City of Middleton) with more detail using survey and technical data. The project team will conduct PDT workshops and additional stakeholder coordination meetings to review and refine alternatives to minimize impacts and address concerns. Based on this additional pre-NEPA analysis and stakeholder input, Alternatives 1 and 4 may be brought forward into NEPA.

E. Did the public, stakeholders, and agencies have an opportunity to comment during this process?

After each round of alternative screening, the alternatives and screening results were presented to the PDT and at online and in-person public meetings where the public and stakeholders had the opportunity to provide feedback and input to the results and refinement of alternatives.

The draft Level 1 screening and results were presented for review and input to the PDT in March 2024 and to the public at open houses held on April 3 and 4, 2024, with an online public meeting open April 3 – 17, 2024. A summary of the public meeting outreach and comments received is provided in Appendix F of the PEL Report. Public comments gathered showed general agreement with the Level 1 screening results and no changes were made.

The draft Level 2 screening and results were presented for review and input to the PDT in August 2024 and to the public at open houses held on September 10 and 11, 2024, with an online public meeting open September 10 – October 9, 2024. A summary of the public meeting outreach and comments received is provided in appendices to the PEL Report. Public comments gathered showed general agreement with the Level 2 screening results through survey questions considering the recommendation for each alternative. Feedback was provided on the evaluation

criteria and alternatives and refinements were completed on both to better differentiate the evaluation and reduce potential impacts.

The study recommendations for alternatives to be considered in the NEPA process were presented for review and input to the PDT in May 2025 and to the public at open houses held on August 26 and 27, 2025, with an online public meeting open August 26 – September 10, 2025. A summary of the public meeting outreach and comments received is provided in Appendix D of the PEL Report. Members of the public were invited to provide feedback on written comment forms that could be submitted during the open houses or sent to ITD via email or mail. The public could also provide their comments via an online survey.

With the final public open houses held in August 2025, a survey question for each alternative asked whether the respondent believes the alternative should advance to the next phase of the project, with 'Yes,' 'No,' and 'Unsure' choices. Alternative 1 drew the strongest percentage in agreement among respondents, with 91% of all respondents indicating that they do not believe Alternative 1 should advance to the next phase. This is consistent with the study result of Not Recommended for this alternative.

Alternative 2 also had a strong majority of respondents agreeing with the recommendation, with 77% of respondents signaling their belief that Alternative 2 should advance to the next phase, consistent with the study result identifying this as a Recommended Alternative.

Alternative 3 had the most evenly divided level of agreement, with respondents in a 44% 'Yes,' 44% 'No,' and 12% 'Unsure' tally about the alternative advancing to the next phase.

For Alternative 4, a strong percentage of 75% of respondents indicated their belief that Alternative 4 should not advance to the next phase, which is consistent with the study result of Not Recommended for this alternative.

These survey responses were consistent with the feedback received on each alternative during the public meetings presenting the draft Level 2 screening results in September 2024, except for a stronger response that Alternative 3 should not advance to the next phase.

As the differences between the alternatives primarily affect the Middleton area with the on-alignment and bypass alternatives, the project team considered both the overall dataset and data from those that identified themselves as Middleton residents. Responses from only Middleton residents closely aligned with the overall group responses, with less than a 3% difference between the highest percentages of the two datasets, except for Alternative 3. Middleton residents had a stronger response (54%) that Alternative 3 should not advance to the next phase.

Several topics consistently emerged as central themes in the public feedback throughout the PEL study's public involvement process. The list below represents common concerns heard by the project team.

- ✘ Traffic operations near Middleton Middle School, particularly around drop-off and pick-up times
- ✘ Impact on businesses in downtown Middleton
- ✘ Impact to residences and personal property
- ✘ Increased traffic on cross streets in Middleton
- ✘ Right-of-way requirements (farmland, businesses, residences)
- ✘ A bypass would "split the town" of Middleton
- ✘ Impact on highway access/driveways
- ✘ Need for safety improvements at highway intersections
- ✘ Impacts to the City of Middleton wastewater treatment properties

F. Were there unresolved issues with the public, stakeholders and/or agencies?

The Recommended Alternatives and associated impacts are based on a conceptual level of design. As the project moves forward with preliminary design during NEPA, additional issues related to utilities, right-of-way, and property impacts may surface.

The Recommended Alternatives will require additional design information and analysis to respond to public comments related to:

- ✘ Traffic operations near Middleton Middle School, particularly around drop-off and pick-up times
- ✘ Impact to residences and personal property
- ✘ Right-of-way requirements (farmland, businesses, residences)
- ✘ A bypass would "split the town" of Middleton
- ✘ Impact on highway access/driveways
- ✘ Need for safety improvements at highway intersections
- ✘ Impacts to the City of Middleton wastewater treatment properties

A letter from the City of Middleton project PEC representative and City Councilman in September 2025 and an additional letter in January 2026 stated objections to the recommendations from the PEL study for Alternatives 2 and 3 as the Recommended Alternatives. The letter outlined the following concerns:

- ✘ Impacts to the City of Middleton wastewater treatment properties and area available for effluent land application
- ✘ Impacts to the Crane Creek Urban Redevelopment Area
- ✘ Reimbursement for city investment in constructing the roundabout at Sawtooth Parkway and Middleton Road

- ✦ Future ownership and maintenance of the existing SH-44 highway through Middleton with SH-44 realignment
- ✦ Design and impacts of a Viking Street extension to add access to/from Middleton Middle School to a SH-44 alignment south of downtown Middleton, as well as future ownership and maintenance of the new roadway connection
- ✦ Construction phasing for the SH-44 section through Middleton to precede increasing the capacity of adjacent sections
- ✦ Impacts to the floodway boundary in the City of Middleton
- ✦ Impacts to stormwater treatment associated with the additional asphalt roadway in the project
- ✦ Location and design of pedestrian/bicyclist facilities and grade-separated highway crossings
- ✦ Design for individual property accesses along the corridor, specifically the City maintenance facility, Wastewater Treatment Plant, private residence on Wiffen Lane, and areas currently planned for effluent land application
- ✦ Coordination with developers and property owners to minimize project impacts to planned development
- ✦ Design for intersections at connections between a new SH-44 alignment and the existing highway/Main Street to provide full access
- ✦ Reserved utility corridors along SH-44 for the City's domestic water and wastewater utilities

As the project moves forward into further project development and NEPA, continued coordination with the SH-44 PDT, including City of Middleton staff and elected officials, will be conducted as a pre-NEPA phase to refine and evaluate further Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 between Canyon Lane and Marjorie Avenue (generally through the City of Middleton) with more detail using survey and technical data. The project team will conduct PDT workshops and additional stakeholder coordination meetings to review and refine alternatives to minimize impacts and address concerns. Based on this additional pre-NEPA analysis, all four alternatives may not continue throughout the NEPA process.

7. **Planning assumptions and analytical methods:**

A. **What is the forecast year used in the PEL study?**

2050 was the planning horizon year.

B. **What method was used for forecasting traffic volumes?**

Land use and travel demand forecasting data were provided by COMPASS. COMPASS is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Treasure Valley-area of Southwest Idaho including Ada and Canyon Counties.

The land use and travel demand forecasting data are from the latest adopted Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan, Communities in Motion 2050. The plan

forecasts growth to the year 2050 using adopted land use assumptions in number of households and number of jobs.

Future year 2050 traffic volumes were developed using future travel demand model plots provided by COMPASS.

C. Are the planning assumptions and the corridor vision/purpose and need statement consistent with each other and with the long-range transportation plan? Are the assumptions still valid?

Yes and yes.

D. What were the future year policy and/or data assumptions used in the transportation planning process related to land use, economic development, transportation costs, and network expansion?

The PEL study used the same assumptions as in the COMPASS Communities in Motion 2050 plan established regarding population and employment. The following planning studies relate to the planning process:

Transportation

- ✦ COMPASS Communities in Motion 2050 (adopted December 2022)
- ✦ ACHD 2022-2026 Integrated Five-Year Work Plan (2022)
- ✦ City of Star Pathway Master Plan (2022)
- ✦ Valley Regional Transit 2023-2027 Transportation Development Plan (2022)
- ✦ Highway District No. 4 Mid-Star Service Area Capital Improvements Plan (2021)
- ✦ ACHD Bicycle Facilities Inventory Report (2021)
- ✦ SH-44, I-84 to Eagle, Corridor Study Traffic Analysis and Access Management (February 8, 2019)
- ✦ Ada County Highway District (ACHD) Roadways to Bikeways (2018)
- ✦ City of Middleton Transportation Plan (2016)
- ✦ City of Middleton Connects City Vision Map (2015)

Land Use

- ✦ COMPASS Communities in Motion 2050 (adopted December 2022)
- ✦ City of Middleton Comprehensive Plan (update conducted in parallel with this study and adopted in February 2025)
- ✦ City of Star Comprehensive Plan (2022)

Economic Development

- ✦ City of Middleton Comprehensive Plan (update conducted in parallel with this study and adopted in February 2025)
- ✦ City of Star Comprehensive Plan (2022)

Transportation Costs

- ✦ COMPASS Communities in Motion 2050 (adopted December 2022)
- ✦ ACHD 2022-2026 Integrated Five-Year Work Plan (2022)
- ✦ Highway District No. 4 Mid-Star Service Area Capital Improvements Plan (2021)

Network Expansion

- ✦ COMPASS Communities in Motion 2050 (adopted December 2022)
- ✦ SH-44, Corridor Study, Junction I-84 to Eagle EA – Logical Termini and Independent Utility Memorandum (May 12, 2022)
- ✦ SH-44, I-84 to Eagle, Corridor Study Traffic Analysis and Access Management (February 8, 2019)

8. Environmental resources (wetlands, cultural, etc.) reviewed. For each resource or group of resources reviewed, provide the following:

A. In the PEL study, at what level of detail were the resources reviewed and what was the method of review?

An environmental scan of the corridor was completed for the PEL study in 2024 to identify existing environmental conditions in the study area for the built and natural environment. These environmental conditions, along with the conceptual design of each alternative, were utilized to assess the potential impacts for each alternative shown in the Level 2 evaluation matrix. The Environmental Scan is included as Appendix D in the PEL Report.

See information for each resource in following table.

B. Is this resource present in the area and what is the existing environmental condition for this resource?

See information for each resource in following table.

C. What are the issues that need to be considered during NEPA, including potential resource impacts and potential mitigation requirements (if known)?

See information for each resource in following table.

D. How will the planning data provided need to be supplemented during NEPA?

See information for each resource in following table.

NEPA Considerations

RESOURCE	METHODOLOGY/ DATA USED	PRESENCE IN STUDY AREA AND IMPACTS	NEXT STEPS
Land Cover	The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2023 Idaho Cropland data layer was utilized with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) capabilities to identify the land cover types in the study area.	The highest land cover/cropland type includes grassland/pasture, shrubland, developed/open space, and alfalfa. The Recommended Alternatives have a minimal likelihood of impacting land cover.	ITD will coordinate with the USDA to determine the level of land cover analysis, if any, that will be required for the Recommended Alternatives.
Soils Resources and Prime Farmlands	The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) website was reviewed to determine soil classifications within the project.	Much of the project area is mapped as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Alternatives 2 and 3 would involve the conversion of approximately 270 acres designated prime farmland.	In accordance with the FPPA, the NRCS Prime Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form (Form AD-1006) will be completed in coordination with NRCS.
Air Quality	ITD's Air Quality Policy was referenced. In addition, IDEQ Administrative Boundaries for Sensitive Air Quality map was reviewed.	Both Ada and Canyon Counties are in attainment with all National Ambient Air Quality Standards criteria for pollutants established by the Clean Air Act. Therefore, the Recommended Alternatives have a minimal likelihood of exceeding air quality standards.	ITD will coordinate with IDEQ to determine the level of air quality analysis, if any, that will be required for the Recommended Alternatives.
Surface Waters	Topographic maps, aerial photographs, and U.S. Geological Survey National Hydrology Dataset were reviewed. IDEQ stream layer geographic data was used to identify water quality impaired waterbodies.	Most surface waters identified along the study area are irrigation-related with some natural drainages. The Recommended Alternatives have the potential to impact surface waters, including irrigation canals and natural streams. Alternative 2 would affect approximately 15,740 linear feet of irrigation canals and 820 linear feet of natural streams, while Alternative 3 would impact approximately 13,000 linear feet of irrigation canals and 790 linear feet of natural streams.	An Idaho Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (IPDES) permit and a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be prepared for the project. Additionally, an Aquatic Resource Delineation will be conducted during the NEPA phase to determine the extent of aquatic resources within the study. This information will support permitting and coordination with regulatory agencies and irrigation districts.
Floodplains	Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain GIS data layer was used in mapping and online maps were reviewed.	Mapped floodplains were identified along the Boise River, West Harley Gulch, East Hartley Gulch, Willow Creek, and Mill Slough. The Recommended Alternatives will impact floodplains as a result of the construction of the new alignment, as well as the addition and expansion of existing bridges.	Detailed floodplain analysis will be conducted during the NEPA phase. Coordination with resource agencies and local floodplain administrators will be initiated, and applicable permits and approvals will be obtained.

SH-44, I-84 TO STAR ROAD

RESOURCE	METHODOLOGY/ DATA USED	PRESENCE IN STUDY AREA AND IMPACTS	NEXT STEPS
Wetlands	USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps were reviewed.	NWI maps revealed 20 riverine, four freshwater emergent wetlands, and three freshwater ponds within the study area. All of these polygons, except portions of three freshwater wetlands and five riverine polygons, were field verified as being present during a windshield survey of the project corridor. The Recommended Alternatives may impact up to one acre of wetlands.	An Aquatic Resource Delineation will be conducted during the NEPA phase to determine the extent of wetlands within the study area. This information will support permitting and coordination with regulatory agencies.
Groundwater/ Sole Source Aquifer	Reviewed the EPA Sole Source Aquifers (SSA) map for Idaho.	There are no designated Sole Source Aquifers located in the vicinity of the project corridor.	ITD will coordinate with the IDEQ to determine the level of groundwater analysis, if any, that will be required for the alternatives evaluated.
Hazardous Materials	Regulatory mapping programs were reviewed for properties adjacent to the project corridor using DEQ's Terradex mapper and EPA's Environfacts mapper.	Thirteen (13) underground storage records were identified, of which seven are still in use and seven have had one or more leaking underground storage tanks (LUST) events. Six sites are listed hazardous waste generators, seven sites are listed as general remediation, one site is listed as municipal solid waste landfill, and one is listed as other (gravel pit). The Recommended Alternatives have the potential to impact the identified hazardous materials sites.	As part of the NEPA phase, an Administrative Review will be conducted to examine federal, state, and local agency databases for relevant environmental records and resource concerns. Coordination with appropriate resource agencies will also occur to identify any areas of potential concern. A windshield survey will supplement the review to identify observable site conditions. Findings from this review will determine whether further environmental analysis is warranted.

SH-44, I-84 TO STAR ROAD

RESOURCE	METHODOLOGY/ DATA USED	PRESENCE IN STUDY AREA AND IMPACTS	NEXT STEPS
Biological Resources	USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPAC) tool was used to identify threatened and endangered species in the study area.	The IPAC list identified one threatened (slickspot peppergrass) and two species for proposed (Monarch butterfly and Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee) listing under the Endangered Species Act. The Recommended Alternatives may impact proposed federally listed and proposed species, migratory birds, and Species of Greatest Conservation Need through habitat disturbance or construction-related activities.	If needed, a Biological Assessment will be prepared to evaluate potential impacts to listed species, followed by coordination with USFWS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Coordination with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game on SGCN may be conducted as needed, with mitigation measures finalized in the NEPA phase.
Socioeconomics	Data from the U.S. Census and 2017-2021 American Community Survey was obtained for the study area.	Multiple block groups within the study area indicated a higher percentage in low-income, elderly, race and ethnicity (including Black, Native American, and Hispanic communities), and limited English proficiency. This indicates that there is a higher potential for a minority and/or low-income population. The Recommended Alternatives have the potential to have community impacts, including potential displacements and relocations due to right-of-way needs.	A socioeconomic analysis will be conducted during the NEPA phase to determine the extent of impacts associated. Continued public involvement efforts will be implemented to conduct meaningful community engagement.
Cultural Resources	The SHPO Idaho Cultural Resource Information System (ICRIS) database was reviewed for historic resources along the study area. A windshield survey was conducted to verify the presence and absences of those resources.	Thirty-one (31) eligible or unevaluated resources were identified through the SHPO database. Of the 31 resources, six are no longer present, three haven't been evaluated, and 22 are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Recommended Alternatives have the potential to impact known cultural resources.	An Archaeological and Historic Survey Report will be prepared in compliance with Section 106 to identify and evaluate cultural resources within the Area of Potential Effects. Findings will inform further coordination with SHPO and determine the need for additional studies or mitigation.
Section 4(f) Resources	Parks and schools were identified by windshield survey. Zoning maps, aerial photography, and topographic maps were reviewed. The NRHP was also reviewed to identify known listed historic sites.	Thirty-one (31) potential Section 4(f) resources were identified, of which 22 are historic sites, five are public parks, and four are recreation sites. The Recommended Alternatives may impact two recreation sites and potential historic sites.	Additional evaluation will be conducted to determine Section 4(f) applicability of the affected recreation and historic sites. Coordination with SHPO and officials with jurisdiction will continue to assess impacts and identify potential mitigation.

RESOURCE	METHODOLOGY/ DATA USED	PRESENCE IN STUDY AREA AND IMPACTS	NEXT STEPS
Section 6(f) Resources	The State Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) database was reviewed. Listed sites were mapped in GIS.	Three Section 6(f) resources were identified in the project area (Piccadilly Park, Middleton Roadside Park, and Middleton Place Park). Neither Recommended Alternative will impact the identified Section (6)f resources.	Coordination with Idaho Parks and Recreation will be conducted during the subsequent NEPA process.
Land Use and Zoning	Obtained and reviewed current zoning and comprehensive plans and associated maps for the City of Middleton and Star and Canyon and Ada Counties.	Land use along the study area is a mix of residential, agricultural, mixed use, commercial, and light industrial. The Recommended Alternatives have a minimal likelihood of impacting land use and zoning.	ITD will coordinate with the cities and counties to determine the level of land use and zoning analysis, if any, that will be required for the alternatives evaluated.
Traffic Noise	A windshield survey was conducted to determine sensitive receptors along the study area. ITD's Noise Policy was referenced. A TNM ten-point transect screening analysis was conducted for alternatives to identify potential traffic noise impacts to sensitive receptors.	The analysis determined potential impacts may occur at distances ranging from approximately 75 to 100 feet from the centerline. The screening identified approximately 201 and 225 potentially impacted receptors for Alternatives 2 and 3, respectively.	The Recommended Alternatives would be considered a Type 1 project under ITD noise policy; therefore, a traffic noise analysis will be required during the NEPA process. Traffic noise abatement measures will be evaluated and considered for all impacted receptors.
Federal Aviation Administration Airspace Intrusion	The National Transportation Atlas Database was utilized with GIS capabilities to identify FAA facilities.	No public aviation facilities were identified within 20,000 feet of the study area.	ITD will coordinate with the FAA to confirm there is no level of airspace intrusion analysis that will be required for the alternatives evaluated.

9. List environmental resources you are aware of that were not reviewed in the PEL study and why. Indicate whether or not they will need to be reviewed in NEPA and explain why.

The following resources were not reviewed in the PEL study:

- ✦ Energy
- ✦ Geological Resources
- ✦ Visual Resources

The energy and geological resources were not considered in the PEL study because they were not expected to differentiate alternatives or affect recommendations. For visual resources, an evaluation with the level of design conducted during the PEL

study would not be effective with information available at this broad level in the planning process.

The steps to be taken for the energy and geological resources will depend on the type of future NEPA documentation prepared for the projects that will be implemented for the corridor. Visual resource impacts will likely be required due to noise barriers as well as related to historic resource impacts. Scoping meetings will be conducted during subsequent NEPA processes to inform resource and regulatory agencies of the findings of the PEL study and to discuss the level of analysis and documentation required for each resource based on the proposed action.

10. Were cumulative impacts considered in the PEL study? If yes, provide the information or reference where the analysis can be found.

Cumulative impacts were not evaluated during this PEL study process. The resources subject to a cumulative impact assessment will be determined on a case-by-case basis early in the NEPA process, generally as part of early coordination or scoping.

11. Describe any mitigation strategies discussed at the planning level that should be analyzed during NEPA.

See information for each resource in table under Question 8.

12. What needs to be done during NEPA to make information from the PEL study available to the agencies and the public? Are there PEL study products which can be used or provided to agencies or the public during the NEPA scoping process?

This PEL study was intended to provide the framework for the implementation of the Recommended Alternatives as funding is available, and to be used as a resource for future NEPA documentation. During the NEPA scoping period, information from the PEL study will be provided to the public and agencies along with information regarding how this information is intended to be used during the NEPA process. Materials used for the PEL public meetings specific to purpose and need, screening evaluation, and Recommended Alternatives are easily available for use during the NEPA process.

13. Are there any other issues a future project team should be aware of?

- A. **Examples: Controversy, utility problems, access or ROW issues, encroachments into ROW, problematic landowners and/or groups, contact information for stakeholders, special or unique resources in the area, etc.**

The Recommended Alternatives and associated impacts are based on a conceptual level of design. As the project moves forward with preliminary design during NEPA, additional issues related to utilities, right-of-way, and property impacts may surface.

The Recommended Alternatives will require additional design information and analysis to respond to public comments related to:

- ✦ Traffic operations near Middleton Middle School, particularly around drop-off and pick-up times
- ✦ Impact to residences and personal property
- ✦ Right-of-way requirements (farmland, businesses, residences)
- ✦ A bypass would “split the town” of Middleton
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SH-44, I-84 TO STAR ROAD

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