



Cooperatively Developing a Transportation System for all of Kootenai County, Idaho

City of Coeur d' Alene
City of Post Falls
City of Hayden
City of Rathdrum
Coeur d' Alene Tribe
East Side Highway District
Idaho Transportation Department
Kootenai County, Idaho
Lakes Highway District
Post Falls Highway District
Worley Highway District

State Highway 97 Corridor Plan Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions were asked at the Open House April 3, 2007.

How is the study being funded?

The \$200,000 study is being funded through the Idaho Transportation Department planning funds. There was initially talk of having developers help pay the study costs, but to date that has not happened.

What is KMPO?

Kootenai County became a metropolitan statistical area (urbanized population of 50,000) with the Census 2000 population count. With this population number (70,000 county-wide), a Metropolitan Planning Organization became mandated for Kootenai County by Federal regulations. KMPO was formed to address the county's transportation planning needs. Regional transportation planning requires an understanding of the past, recognition of current conditions, and the ability to provide an economically achievable, environmentally balanced, and consumer-friendly transportation system that enables the region to reach its full potential. KMPO provides a coordinated planning effort between the public, cities, small towns, the county, the state, transit providers, and tribes.

Why do we have to send our comments to a Spokane address?

The KMPO Board has contracted with Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC), the MPO for Spokane County, WA, for day-to-day operational and administrative needs to serve as staff for KMPO. SRTC operates at the pleasure of the KMPO Board.

Who is doing the study?

Under KMPO, through a competitive bid process, the Ruen-Yeager and Associates team was selected. The project manager is Christine Fueston; sub-consultants include HDR, EcoNorthwest, Hatch-Mueller, USKH, Northwest Dynamics, and Robinson Research.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to look at potential improvements and/or new roadways to address existing and future mobility needs along SH 97 and potential funding alternatives.

How much money is there for the improvements being studied?

At this time, money has not been allocated for any future improvements by either East Side Highway District or the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD).

Then why is it being studied?

Prior to any roadway improvements being approved for funding consideration, a study of potential improvement alternatives and impacts needs to be completed to be eligible for state or federal funding. Roadway improvements must address a given need such as safety or capacity.

Why not use the money for other projects, like US 95?

Agency funding under KMPO is not available for capital construction projects such as US 95. KMPO has designated planning funds to complete studies such as this.

Who received the surveys?

Surveys were sent to just over 2,300 property owners (based on Kootenai County Assessor records) in the vicinity of SH 97, one per household. Multiple property owners also received just one survey each, not one for each piece of property owned. Both seasonal and year-round residents were mailed surveys. Surveys were returned from all over the country.

How will the information from the surveys and this open house be used?

One of the first steps in the study is to identify key issues and develop overall goals. The issues and goals will be a product of feedback from the surveys and comment forms; discussions with local officials and agency representatives; and, discussions with the project Strategic Advisory Committee and project team members. The issues and goals will be used to form a foundation to develop and evaluate potential alternatives and project solutions. Additionally, the information gathered from the public will be used to assist in the development of a baseline analysis, which describes existing conditions and problems/challenges on SH 97.

What is the Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC)?

This is a group of stakeholders who serve in an advisory capacity (not decision-making) to the project team. The SAC will assist the project team to identify issues, disseminate information, test alternatives, and collect community feedback about specific items of concern throughout the study process. The Strategic Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives of the following groups/agencies: KMPO, Kootenai County, Town of Harrison, the Idaho Transportation Department, East Side Highway District, businesses adjacent to SH 97, citizen groups, and/or individual property owners in the corridor, and developers pursuing projects within the study area.

What happens next?

A detailed schedule is available on the KMPO website; a brief summary is provided below. There are two parallel activities in the study: public involvement and technical studies.

The public involvement is ongoing throughout the study and will include two more public Open Houses, approximately to be held in October 2007 and April 2008. The study will also include focus group activities, SAC meetings, and additional meetings, as needed.

The information gathered through the public involvement activities will be merged with the technical data in order to develop the following key elements of the study:

- Purpose and Need Statement
- Key Issues
- Study Goals
- Baseline Analysis (Existing Conditions)
- Study Alternatives

The Technical Studies are now in the data collection stage for the following:

- Traffic Analysis and Forecasts
- Existing Conditions
- Environmental Scan
- Development of Alternatives
- Planning Level Cost Estimates
- Cost/Benefit Analysis
- Funding Options
- Project Priorities