

July 27, 2022

Peter Hartman, Idaho Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
3050 Lakeharbor Lane, #126  
Boise, ID 83703

Re: Notification of Project Initiation on US-20, JCT I-15 Connector (Idaho Falls Key Number: 22222; Project Number: A022(222)—I-15/US-20 Connector Project

Dear Mr. Hartman:

The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is initiating the environmental review process pursuant to Title 23 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) 139 and Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 771 for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed I-15/US-20 Connector project. This is a highway improvement project proposed in Idaho Falls, Bonneville County, Idaho. The proposed project involves improvements to interchanges and roadway linkages to I-15 and US-20 (a project vicinity map is included in the enclosed Notice of Intent (NOI) Supplementary Information document). The purpose of the project, as currently defined, is to identify and analyze improvements to address safety, congestion, mobility, and travel time reliability for efficient movement of people, goods, and services on I-15 and US-20 in or near Bonneville County and Idaho Falls.

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 139 and 23 CFR Part 771, FHWA must serve as the lead federal agency for this project, and ITD will serve as a joint lead agency/project sponsor. The responsibilities of the lead agencies are to:

- Establish a list of potentially participating and cooperating agencies.
- Prepare and send invitations to potentially participating agencies.
- Develop an Agency Coordination Plan with schedule.
- Provide opportunities for the public and participating agencies involvement in defining Purpose and Need and range of alternatives.
- Consult with participating agencies in determining methodologies and the level of detail for the analysis of alternatives.

ITD has secured funding for the preliminary design and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Since different alternatives will be analyzed during the NEPA process, the funding needed for completion of the project will not be known until a preferred alternative is selected. However, ITD is already taking action to secure funding for the subsequent phases of project development and construction. ITD will be adding phases to the Idaho Transportation Investment Program (ITIP) the spring of 2022. The project is on the Transportation Expansion and Congestion Mitigation (TECM) corridor for ITD District 6 and could be advanced with bonds. The Governor recently proposed an additional \$200 million of ongoing transportation funds, some of which may become available for this project. Also, the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) may result in an additional \$80 million per year for Idaho, which may contribute to this project. Based on these funding opportunities, ITD is highly confident of our ability to secure funding for the project prior to completion of the NEPA process.

ITD and FHWA are also requesting that the attached (draft) NOI for the I-15/US-20 Connector project be modified as needed and submitted for publication in the Federal Register. Please consult with ITD on any needed modifications to the NOI prior to submitting it for publication.

ITD anticipates that this project will require a Section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act.

If you have any questions on the attached NOI or would like to discuss in more detail the I-15/US-20 Connector project or the process as it pertains to this project, please contact me at [Jason.Minzghor@itd.idaho.gov](mailto:Jason.Minzghor@itd.idaho.gov) or 208-

745-7781; or Lisa Applebee, FHWA, 208-334-9180; email: [lisa.applebee@dot.gov](mailto:lisa.applebee@dot.gov). Thank you for your cooperation and interest in this project.

Sincerely,

Jason Minzghor, District Engineer  
Idaho Transportation Department, District 6

Enclosures:

- Project Initiation Information (this letter)
- Draft Federal Register Notice of Intent
- NOI Supplementary Information
  - Purpose & Need
  - Preliminary Alternatives
  - Draft Agency Coordination Plan with Permitting Timetable and Schedule
  - Draft Public Involvement Plan