

Our City

“Size matters!” I heard from across the room. “It’s not to scale!” Was the response. “Well, I don’t like it regardless,” stated the one who said size matters then finished with “I want it bigger!”

Perhaps you have heard a similar conversation; but, I doubt it was related to the same topic that I overheard. Last Wednesday from 4:00 to 6:30 pm. the Idaho Department of Transportation (ITD) held an open house on the proposed reconfiguration of the Pocatello Avenue and Highway 39 intersection, which, in my opinion has been less than effective since it was built. Something needs to be done to improve it. That is why I started the conversation with ITD over three years ago. As I stated last week in regard to the Seagull Bay to Massacre Rocks Trail the wheels of government turn slowly in most cases. But, they do turn, most of the time.

Despite their very best intentions the drawings presented at the open house by ITD did not portray the proposed project in a very good light. Size and scale does matter! It really matters when you put it in the context of a round-about that triple trailered semis and huge farm equipment have to navigate. The drawings or plans presented by ITD were not to scale; they were simply renderings placed over a picture of the intersection. Many of the folks at the open house had expressed interest in the idea of a round-about years previous. Of course those that originally supported the idea thought it would be designed to a scale that would accommodate the kind and sizes of vehicles that would use it.

In my conversations with Dan Harelson of ITD, towards the end of the open house I expressed my concerns about the portrayed size of the round-about. He agreed that it wasn’t to scale and that the diagrams shown to the public had several flaws. I suggested we try again with proposed plans that would actually do what they were intended to do. Harelson indicated that he thought the public comments were about 50-50 in favor and opposed to the project so no clear direction was really gained from the open house. He added that once the actual proposed plans were finished a more formal public hearing would be set to take recorded comments prior to a decision being made by ITD on how to proceed.

Sometimes; however, decisions need to be made immediately, if not sooner. We have City employees capable of such action. This past Thursday Pete Cortez was in his office catching up on some work after being in Boise for three days learning about how to better process waste water. If you know our City employees you know they are good natured and at times pranksters; Pete is the chief among them in the latter for sure. Thursday morning Pete got his. A Go-Pro recorded him working on his computer as fake smoke began to billow out from the corner of his office and under his desk. Sound was also recorded as Pete noticed the smoke and leaped from his chair to inspect the source shouting, “What the!” Really that’s all he said; I too expected the bomb to drop. He ran to the hall retrieved the fire extinguisher and was ready for battle in less than 10 seconds. Of course he is a trained fireman; but I am sure that neither his training nor the fire extinguisher could abate the laughter coming from the other personnel that just happened to be around.

Sometimes things turn out exactly like you plan them; yet like the results of the ITD open house on the round-about, they don't, and require further planning and development to get the desired results. I am glad I work with folks who take the time to find the humor in life yet are willing to do what it takes to get things done right even if it means doing it twice. I look forward to our continued efforts with our partners at ITD.

Until next week...