

**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC OF PUBLIC HEARING  
AND AVAILABILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

PROPOSED ARIA BOULEVARD and INTERSTATE 80 INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT  
PROJECT, ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
WENDOVER, Utah

The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) herewith advises all interested persons or groups that it proposes to construct a new westbound off ramp and a new eastbound on ramp at the Aria Boulevard / Interstate 80 (I-80) underpass in Wendover, Utah. The purpose of these ramp improvements are to improve local mobility and access to I-80 for the movement of goods and people between Wendover and Salt Lake City, UT. This project will maintain safe operating conditions for motorists by correcting roadway deficiencies and improving public safety at this location.

An Open Forum Public Hearing conducted by Washington Group International, consultant engineer, will be held to present the Preferred Alternative (Full Diamond Interchange) identified in the Environmental Assessment (EA). The hearing will take place on: **Tuesday, August 22, 2006, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm at Community Center, 112 Mariah, Wendover, UT.**

Any person or group unable to attend the public hearing, but wishing to give testimony pertinent to the aforementioned project, may do so in writing. This testimony may be submitted to:

**Ron Hill**  
**Project Manager**  
**Washington Group International, Inc.**  
**731 Pilot Road, Suite L**  
**Las Vegas, NV 89119**  
**Phone: 702-798-7314**  
**Fax: 702-798-7451**  
**Project e-mail: [aria.interchange@wgint.com](mailto:aria.interchange@wgint.com)**

The public is further advised that the EA defines the scope of the project, alternatives, the potential for environmental impact, and mitigation measures which might relieve potential impacts. The governing officials of Wendover, UT and West Wendover, NV are aware of this project. At any time during regular office hours **beginning on August 7, 2006, the EA will be available for public inspection** at the following locations:

- Federal Highway Administration, 2520 West 4700 South, Salt Lake City, UT
- UDOT Region 2, 2010 South 2760 West, Salt Lake City, UT
- UDOT Communications Office, 4501 S. 2700 W, Salt Lake City, UT
- Washington Group International, Inc., 731 Pilot Road, Suite L, Las Vegas, NV
- The City of Wendover-Tooele County Complex, 100 South 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Wendover, UT
- City of West Wendover City Hall, 801 Alpine Street, West Wendover, NV
- Federal Highway Administration, 705 North Plaza Street, Suite 220, Carson City, NV
- NDOT, 1263 South Stewart Street, Carson City, NV

**For inclusion in the official project documentation, letters or comments must be postmarked no later than midnight on September 6, 2006.** Please begin such testimony by making reference to the ARIA BOULEVARD and I-80 INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT project.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals needing special accommodations (including auxiliary communicative aids and services) during this meeting should notify the City of Wendover, 100 South 9<sup>th</sup> Street, (435) 665-7030, at least five working days prior to the meeting.



LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

DATE August 7, 2006

**VIA UPS OVERNIGHT**

TO: Public Lands Policy Coordination Office  
5110 State Office Building  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

ATTENTION: Ms. Carolyn Wright

Enclosed please find the following item(s):

#/Copies	Description
1	<i>Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Aria Boulevard and Interstate 80 Interchange Improvement Project (August 2006)</i>

REMARKS: Please find attached a copy of the above-referenced environmental assessment. Please ensure that this document is made available for public review in accordance with the enclosed Notice of Public Hearing and Availability. Please call me at (307) 742-3843 if you have any questions. Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Signed: 

Scott W. Kamber

Title: Senior Project Manager

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### 1.1.1 Introduction

The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) and the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) (collectively referred to as the Agencies), propose to authorize the privately funded construction of two sets of on- and off-ramps and associated improvements at Aria Boulevard and Interstate 80 (I-80) on the Utah/Nevada border in northwest Utah and northeast Nevada (refer to Figure 2.1). No public funds would be used to pay for the design or construction of the proposed project. One set of ramps would provide access to and from west-bound lanes of I-80, and the other set of ramps would provide access to and from east-bound lanes of I-80.

Currently, there are two interchanges on I-80 in the immediate area of Wendover, Utah, and West Wendover, Nevada (the Florence Way interchange and the Wendover Boulevard interchange) (refer to Figure 1.1). The first and most western interchange is located at Florence Way at the north edge of West Wendover, Nevada. Numerous business developments such as hotels, casinos, restaurants, service stations, and convenience stores are located within 0.5 mi of the Florence Way interchange. The second interchange, referred to as the Wendover Boulevard interchange, is located approximately 2.3 mi east of the Florence Way interchange and approximately 1.0 mi east of the community of Wendover, Utah (refer to Figure 1.1). There are no businesses or services within 1.0 mi of the Wendover Boulevard interchange, and the community of Wendover, Utah, is obscured from view near the interchange by topography. Therefore, because Wendover, Utah, is not visible to I-80 west-bound traffic, there is limited interest or motivation for most travelers to exit at this interchange, and it provides limited benefit to travelers on I-80 and the community of Wendover, Utah. The Wendover Boulevard interchange was constructed at its current location because the west-bound lanes of I-80 were not completed at the time this interchange was constructed, and it was designed to provide a

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transition from the four lanes of I-80 to a two-lane highway that passed through the communities of Wendover, Utah, and West Wendover, Nevada. For the convenience of the traveling public and for business development, the Wendover Boulevard interchange does not meet the needs of west-bound travelers on I-80.

There are no commercial developments at the Wendover Boulevard interchange, probably because of its remoteness from the community of Wendover, the unconventional layout of the interchange that makes it difficult and inconvenient for travelers to exit and re-enter I-80 (including the lack of a west-bound on-ramp), and the lack of legalized gambling in Utah. The lack of use of this interchange is documented by Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) data. These data indicate that the Florence Way exit handles approximately 4 times the daily traffic volume compared to the Wendover Boulevard exit. Specifically, the Wendover Boulevard exit received only approximately 24% the total traffic volume during weekdays using both the Florence Way exit and the Wendover Boulevard exit (2,000 vehicles daily compared to 8,400 vehicles daily) (Washington Group International 2004). This number remains at approximately 24% on weekend days (2,530 vehicles daily compared to 10,630 vehicles daily) (Washington Group International 2004).

There is an overpass on I-80 at Aria Boulevard located approximately 0.8 mi east of the Florence Way interchange and 1.5 mi west of the Wendover Boulevard interchange. However, when I-80 was constructed in this area, the I-80 road surface was constructed on top of the topography perpendicular to an existing dirt road that would eventually become Aria Boulevard. Because of the limited space, storm water drainage and vehicle and pedestrian traffic were funneled into a single closed-basin depression that was located at the I-80 overpass (refer to Figure 1.2). No provisions were made to eliminate or separate the storm water drainage, either during initial construction of I-80 or during subsequent improvements to Aria Boulevard. As a result, the lack of adequate storm water drainage features at the I-80 overpass on Aria Boulevard has led to serious safety problems in the immediate area.

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Aria Boulevard is the only paved access road into residential portions of Wendover, Utah, and West Wendover, Nevada, located north of I-80, and approximately 1,000 people currently live, work, or go to school in this area (U.S. Census Bureau 2003). A Catholic church and Ann Smith Elementary School with a student population of 232 and full-time staff of 14 are also located in this area. Few people lived in the area prior to the construction of I-80. According to Wendover city officials, Aria Boulevard at the I-80 overpass is typically blocked once or twice per year as a result of storm water runoff from intense precipitation events that flood the underpass and block the movement of vehicles and pedestrians, including the general public and government emergency vehicles. Pedestrians and vehicles are forced to ford the floodwaters or wait for the floodwaters to recede. There have been no reported deaths or injuries as a result of this situation (e.g., police, fire, etc.) (personal communication, April 7, 2005, with Mr. Glenn Wadsworth, Wendover City Administrator, Wendover, Utah).

In order to correct the deficiencies that exist with the current transportation system in the area, to improve public safety for residents that live north of the I-80 overpass, and to enhance future economic development in the project area, Stateline Nugget Hotel and Gambling Hall (Stateline). (a Nevada corporation and a private nongovernmental organization) approached the Agencies with a proposal to fully and privately fund the proposed project. If authorized by the Agencies, the proposed project would be treated like any federal or state highway construction project, and the project components (including any rights-of-way acquired for the project) would eventually be transferred to the appropriate agency.

The Agencies have reviewed the proposed project and have determined that the proposed project has identified several transportation issues that are important to the local governments of Wendover, Utah, and West Wendover, Nevada, to residents of these two communities, and to local business interests. Despite the fact that Tooele County, Utah, and Elko County, Nevada, have some of the fastest growing populations (on a percentage basis) in their respective states, their populations remain relatively small, as do most of their transportation needs. As a result, the proposed project does not favorably compete with other transportation needs in either Utah or Nevada (UDOT 2004; NDOT 2002). Therefore, the Agencies (including the community of Wendover, Utah) have indicated that they do not currently have the financial resources now or in

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