



Idaho Statutes

Idaho Statutes are updated to the web July 1 following the legislative session.

TITLE 40
HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES
CHAPTER 2
GENERAL PROVISIONS

40-203. ABANDONMENT AND VACATION OF COUNTY AND HIGHWAY DISTRICT SYSTEM HIGHWAYS OR PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY. (1) A board of county or highway district commissioners, whichever shall have jurisdiction of the highway system, shall use the following procedure to abandon and vacate any highway or public right-of-way in the county or highway district system including those which furnish public access to state and federal public lands and waters:

(a) The commissioners may by resolution declare their intention to abandon and vacate any highway or public right-of-way or to reclassify a public highway as a public right-of-way, where doing so is in the public interest.

(b) Any resident, or property holder, within a county or highway district system including the state of Idaho, any of its subdivisions, or any agency of the federal government may petition the respective commissioners for abandonment and vacation of any highway or public right-of-way within their highway system. The petitioner shall pay a reasonable fee as determined by the commissioners to cover the cost of the proceedings.

(c) The commissioners shall establish a hearing date or dates on the proposed abandonment and vacation.

(d) The commissioners shall prepare a public notice stating their intention to hold a public hearing to consider the proposed abandonment and vacation of a highway or public right-of-way, which shall be made available to the public not later than thirty (30) days prior to any hearing and mailed to any person requesting a copy not more than three (3) working days after any such request.

(e) At least thirty (30) days prior to any hearing scheduled by the commissioners to consider abandonment and vacation of any highway or public right-of-way, the commissioners shall mail notice by United States mail to known owners and operators of an underground facility, as defined in section 55-2202, Idaho Code, that lies within the highway or public right-of-way.

(f) At least thirty (30) days prior to any hearing scheduled by the commissioners to consider abandonment and vacation of any highway or public right-of-way, the commissioners shall mail notice to owners of record of land abutting the portion of the highway or public right-of-way proposed to be abandoned and vacated at their addresses as shown on the county assessor's tax rolls and shall publish notice of the hearing at least two (2) times if in a weekly newspaper or three (3) times if in a daily newspaper, the last notice to be published at least five (5) days and not more than twenty-one (21) days before the hearing.

(g) At the hearing, the commissioners shall accept all information relating to the proceedings. Any person, including the state of Idaho or any of its subdivisions, or any agency of the federal government, may appear and give testimony for or against abandonment.

(h) After completion of the proceedings and consideration of all related information, the commissioners shall decide whether the abandonment and vacation of the highway or public right-of-way is in the public interest of the highway jurisdiction affected by the abandonment or vacation. The decision whether or not to abandon and vacate the highway or public right-of-way shall be written and shall be supported by findings of fact and conclusions of law.

(i) If the commissioners determine that a highway or public right-of-way parcel to be abandoned and vacated in accordance with the provisions of this section has a fair market value of two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) or more, a charge may be imposed upon the acquiring entity, not in excess of the fair market value of the parcel, as a condition of the abandonment and vacation; provided, however, no such charge shall be imposed on the landowner who originally dedicated such parcel to the public for use as a highway or public right-of-way; and provided further, that if the highway or public right-of-way was originally a federal land right-of-way, said highway or public right-of-way shall revert to a federal land right-of-way.

(j) The commissioners shall cause any order or resolution to be recorded in the county records and the official map of the highway system to be amended as affected by the abandonment and vacation.

(k) From any such decision, a resident or property holder within the county or highway district system, including the state of Idaho or any of its subdivisions, or any agency of the federal government, may appeal to the district court of the county in which the highway or public right-of-way is located pursuant to section 40-208, Idaho Code.

(2) No highway or public right-of-way or parts thereof shall be abandoned and vacated so as to leave any real property adjoining the highway or public right-of-way without access to an established highway or public right-of-way. The burden of proof shall be on the impacted property owner to establish this fact.

(3) In the event of abandonment and vacation, rights-of-way or easements shall be reserved for the continued use of existing sewer, gas, water, or similar pipelines and appurtenances, or other underground facilities as defined in section 55-2202, Idaho Code, for ditches or canals and appurtenances, and for electric, telephone and similar lines and appurtenances.

(4) (a) When a county or highway district is to consider the abandonment or vacation of any highway, public street or public right-of-way that was accepted as part of a recorded platted subdivision, such abandonment shall be accomplished pursuant to the provisions of this section.

(b) When a county or highway district is to consider the abandonment or vacation of any highway, public street, or public right-of-way that was accepted as part of a platted subdivision that has never been improved or developed, such vacation or abandonment may be approved through the dedication of a new highway, public street, or public

right-of-way without compensation as set forth in subsection (1)(i) of this section.

(c) When a county is to consider the abandonment or vacation of any private right-of-way that was accepted as part of a recorded platted subdivision, said abandonment or vacation shall be accomplished pursuant to the provisions of chapter 13, title 50, Idaho Code.

(5) In any proceeding under this section or section 40-203A, Idaho Code, or in any judicial proceeding determining the public status or width of a highway or public right-of-way, a highway or public right-of-way shall be deemed abandoned if the evidence shows:

(a) That said highway or public right-of-way was created solely by a particular type of common law dedication, such as a dedication based upon a plat or other document that was not recorded in the official records of an Idaho county;

(b) That said highway or public right-of-way is not located on land owned by the United States or the state of Idaho nor on land entirely surrounded by land owned by the United States or the state of Idaho nor does it provide the only means of access to such public lands; and

(c)(i) That said highway or public right-of-way has not been used by the public and has not been maintained at the expense of the public in at least three (3) years during the previous fifteen (15) years; or

(ii) Said highway or right-of-way was never constructed and at least twenty (20) years have elapsed since the common law dedication.

(6) All other highways or public rights-of-way may be abandoned and vacated only upon a formal determination by the commissioners pursuant to this section that retaining the highway or public right-of-way for use by the public is not in the public interest, and such other highways or public rights-of-way may be validated or judicially determined at any time notwithstanding any other provision of law. Provided that any abandonment under this section shall be subject to and limited by the provisions of subsections (2) and (3) of this section.

History:

[40-203, added 1985, ch. 253, sec. 2, p. 594; am. 1986, ch. 206, sec. 3, p. 513; am. 1986, ch. 328, sec. 4, p. 804; am. 1992, ch. 323, sec. 1, p. 959; am. 1993, ch. 412, sec. 4, p. 1507; am. 1995, ch. 121, sec. 2, p. 523; am. 2000, ch. 251, sec. 2, p. 711; am. 2013, ch. 239, sec. 4, p. 562; am. 2014, ch. 137, sec. 1, p. 372; am. 2021, ch. 179, sec. 1, p. 494.]

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