US Highway 93 • Somers to Whitefish West

FINAL
Environmental Impact Statement
and FINAL
Section 4(f) Statement

VOLUME I

US Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

FHWA-MT-EIS-94-01-F

US 93 (Somers to Whitefish West)
Milepost 104.3 to 133.0
Flathead County, Montana

Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Section 4(f) Statement

Submitted Pursuant to 42 USC 4332(2)(c);
49 USC 303; MEPA 2-3-104 and 75-1-101;
and Executive Order 11990

US Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Cooperating Agencies:
US Army Corps of Engineers
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Soil Conservation Service
Flathead County
Montana Department of Transportation
Montana Department of Health and Environmental Science
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

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Abstract: The proposed project would improve 46.18 kilometers (28.7 miles) of US 93 from Somers to west of Whitefish, Montana. The primary purpose and need for improvements to US 93 is to reduce congestion on the existing facility, provide for planned growth and development, improve safety, provide for improved intermodal facility connections and provide for enhanced scenic values. Three build alternatives, in addition to the no-build alternative, were analyzed for the rural segments of the corridor. In addition, a bypass of the Kalispell area and six alternate downtown routes in Whitefish were evaluated. Adverse impacts include impacts to **five** historic properties, displacement of **eight** residences, **six businesses and two outbuildings**, wetland impact of **2.4** hectares (**5.95** acres), noise, visual, and land use impacts. The majority of these impacts would be effectively mitigated by proposed measures, but certain unavoidable adverse impacts would remain.

US 93 (Somers to West of Whitefish)

Flathead County, Montana

Final

Environmental Impact Statement

Volume I

Prepared by:
Carter & Burgess, Inc.

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Federal Highway Administration

Summary

Description of Proposed Action

This action would widen and reconstruct 46.18 kilometers (28.7 miles) of US Highway 93 between Somers, Montana to west of Whitefish, Montana in Flathead County. Milepost limits are 104.3 to 133. Included in the action is a four-lane bypass on new location around the western edge of Kalispell, Montana and improvements to Spokane Street, Second Street and Baker Avenue in Whitefish. Improvements to the existing road include widening from two to four or five lanes, adding 2.44 to 3.05 meter (eight- to ten-foot) shoulders, and intersection improvements. The action also includes enhancements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities and to the visual character of the area.

Major Actions Proposed by Other Agencies

- Big Mountain Expansion is a project planned by Winter Sports, Inc. to expand both the winter and summer activities and facilities available at Big Mountain Resort, located north of Whitefish. A Draft EIS was prepared in April 1993 by the US Forest Service. These expansion plans will result in increased use of US 93 to access Big Mountain. The 2015 traffic projections which are used as the basis for all analysis (such as traffic operations, air quality or noise) in this Final EIS assume the worst case or highest traffic volumes (for Alternatives C and D) used in the Draft EIS for the Big Mountain Expansion of Summer and Winter Activities, April 1993.

- Improvements to Big Mountain Road have been planned and developed and are documented in an Environmental Assessment.

- Replacement of the Burlington Northern Overpass in Whitefish. This proposed project will include the construction of a new bridge and corresponding approaches to the existing roadway. The proposed project will improve the existing roadway and overpass to provide for a 30 mph design speed. **This project is under construction.**

- The Cooperative Planning Coalition **just completed a project to update** the Flathead County Master Plan. This effort will define desired future land use for Flathead County. The different location and design alternatives for US 93 will be more or less compatible with these future land use goals. **The Master Plan has not yet been adopted by the Flathead County Commissioners.**

- A Preliminary Draft EIS has been prepared defining the impacts of various improvements to US 93 between Polson and Evaro. These improvements will **serve projected** traffic on US 93 in the Somers to Whitefish area, even though a distance of 69.19 kilometers (43 miles) separates the two projects. The Year 2015 traffic projections being used in the Final EIS for the Somers to Whitefish section are high enough to include any increased traffic resulting from the Evaro to Polson improvements.

Summary of Alternatives Considered

Alternatives considered for this action vary by segment. For most of the rural parts of the corridor, including Somers to Kalispell, Kalispell to Whitefish and west of Whitefish, three alternatives are under consideration.

All three alternatives basically follow the existing US 93 corridor. They differ in their lane designs: Alternative A(MEDIAN) is a four-lane facility with a median, Alternative A(TURN-LANE) is a five-lane facility that includes a center turning lane and Alternative A(COMBO) includes some features of each of the other two, depending on the location.

Alternative A(COMBO) is the preferred alternative.

Within the Kalispell metropolitan area, a bypass alternative is being considered, also with two basic lane designs called Alternative B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE). In Kalispell, the bypass would be implemented along with improvements to US 93 through town.

Alternative B has been recommended as the preferred alternative. This includes a four-lane without a median south of US 2 and right-of-way for a depressed median north of US 2.

In the Whitefish area, six alternatives are being considered. Alternative A(FOUR-LANE) includes an increase in capacity in the same location as existing US 93. There are four alternatives which split traffic onto a one-way pair system on Second/Spokane and Second/Baker. These are called Alternative C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3) and C(COUPLET-4). The sixth alternative, C(OFF-SET), also splits traffic between Baker and Spokane, but two-directional traffic is allowed.

Alternative C(COUPLET-3) has been recommended as the preferred alternative.

The no-build alternative would retain the highway in its current location with no increase in capacity.

Major Environmental Impacts

The major environmental impacts discussed in this document are:

- Traffic operations and safety will improve with the build alternatives.
- **Five** residences, **three** businesses **and an outbuilding** will be displaced **along US 93 and three residences, three businesses and a barn will be displaced along the Kalispell bypass**.
- Land will be required from one Section 4(f) property **(the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail)**.
- **Approximately 2.4** hectares (**5.95** acres) of wetlands will be filled.
- Noise increases will occur.
- PM_{10} emissions in the Kalispell and Whitefish non-attainment areas will decrease with **the preferred alternative in Kalispell and will increase in Whitefish, but these impacts will be mitigated.**
- Portions of floodplains along 12 streams will be filled.
- Adverse effects to **five** historic properties will occur **(the West Second Street properties in Whitefish, Kalispell-Somers Railroad Spur, Kalispell Courthouse District, McCormack Farm and the Altenburg Farm).**

Areas of Controversy

The US 93 project is the subject of public controversy. Areas of controversy include:

- The compatibility of highway improvements with future land use and visual quality goals.
- Delay in implementation of an improved highway due to increased cost or additional right-of-way acquisition or design.
- Responsiveness of enhanced highway improvements to fiscal constraints.

Major Unresolved Issues

There are no major unresolved issues.

Other Federal Actions Required

Other required federal actions include the following:

- Section 404 (of the Clean Water Act) permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers for filling in wetlands or streams.
- Compliance with Executive Orders 11988 (floodplain management) and 11990 (wetland protection) to be included in the Final EIS **(this has been done)**.
- Section 106 Findings of No Effect or Determinations of No Adverse Effect concurred in by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation or an executed Memorandum of Agreement for any adversely impacted historic or archaeological properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places **(this has been done)**.
- Approval for floodplain encroachments from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- Transportation conformity for air quality **(this has been done)**.

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Chapter One

Purpose of and Need for Action

Chapter 1.0: Purpose of and Need for Action

Changes in text between this document and the Draft EIS are in bold and underlined.

1.1 Background and Authority

US 93 is a north-south principal arterial that extends along the western portion of the State of Montana. It is on the **proposed National Highway System**. The segment of US 93 that is covered by this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a 46.18-kilometer (28.7-mile) segment from Somers to west of Whitefish (Figure 1-1). Milepost limits are 104.3 to 133 (exclusive of transition areas). The urban areas that lie within these project limits are the City of Kalispell and the City of Whitefish. US 93 serves as a major traffic corridor between the City of Missoula, the region's largest city and the Kalispell, Whitefish and Columbia Falls triangle. In addition, this segment of the highway heavily serves tourist traffic that is destined for Glacier National Park and the Flathead Lake area in addition to the various cities, resulting in a higher than average percentage of recreational vehicles. Other heavy users of the highway include the logging industry with vehicles that exceed a 18.3-meter (60-foot) wheelbase, smaller trucks serving local commerce and agriculture needs (including farm machinery) and typical local commuters.

The portion of US 93 between the junction of MT 82 and the Kalispell city limits was built at various times (Figure 1-2). The southerly 8.85 kilometers (5.5 miles) was built in 1961 with an overlay in 1983. The remaining 3.22 kilometers (2.0 miles) (north to Kalispell) were constructed in 1928 with improvements in 1949, 1961 and 1973. The rural section north of Kalispell was also constructed in two projects. The first 9.17 kilometers (5.7 miles) was built in 1957 with improvements in 1960. The other 2.57 kilometers (1.6 miles) was built in 1960 and improved in 1981. The Stillwater Bridge located in the northerly rural section was constructed in 1933 with modifications in 1957. (The remainder of the 46.18 kilometers (28.7 miles) includes sections within Kalispell, within Whitefish and west of Whitefish.) Improvements were made to improve safety concerns and **improve designs that did not meet current standards**. The frequency of access points and no provision for speed change lanes at a majority of intersections and driveways contribute to the higher than average state accident rates for similar two-lane highways in Montana for intersection and intersection-related accidents.

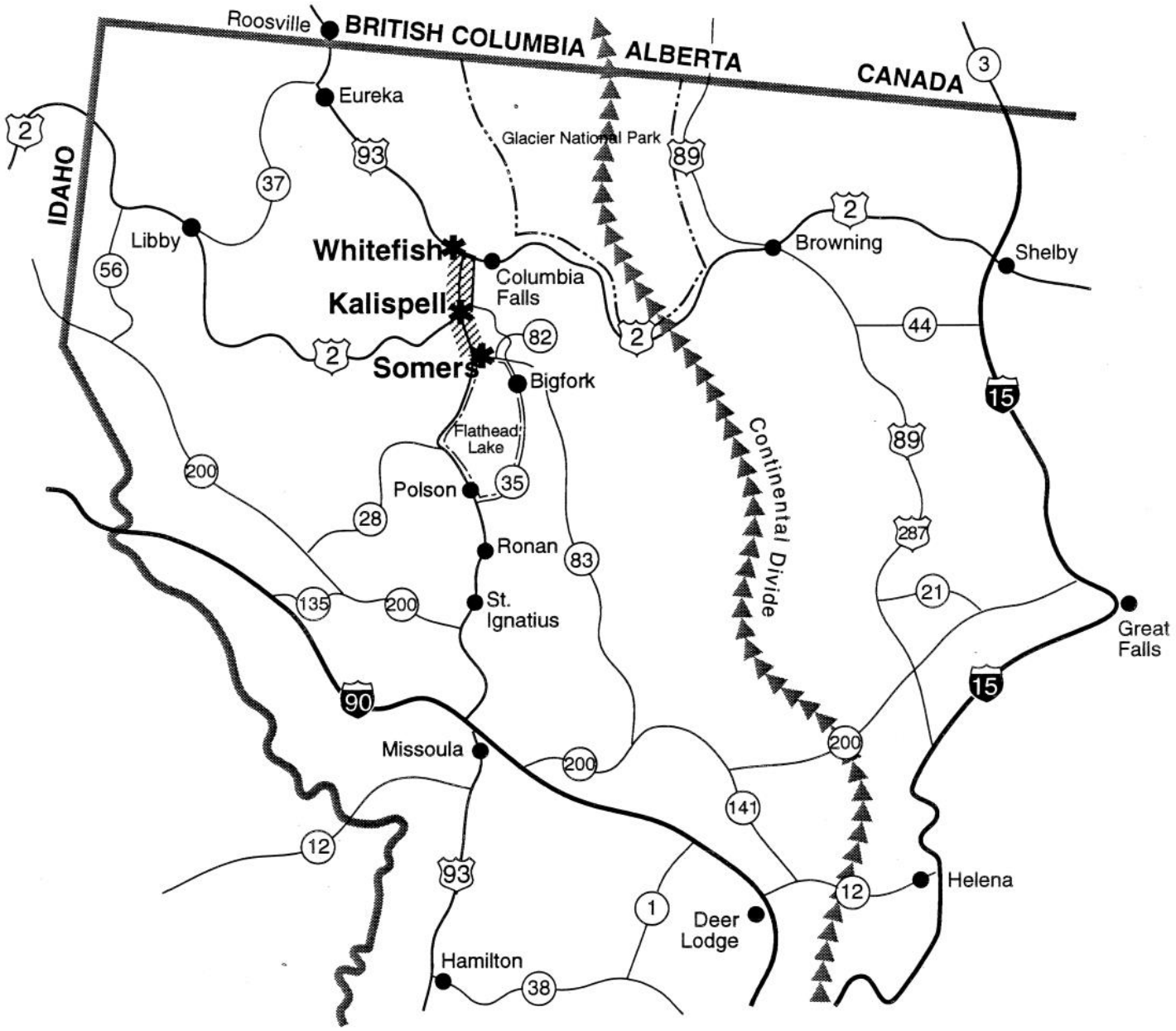
In addition to the construction of the highway during different years, the existing cross-sections differ (and in many locations, are **not consistent with current standards**). More detail about the existing facility and its deficiencies is found in Section 1.10.

Two Environmental Assessments (EAs)/Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were prepared for a portion of the above US 93 project: US 93 Somers to Kalispell (October 1991) and US 93 Kalispell to Whitefish (February 1988). Design plans were prepared, acquisition of rights-of-way and utility relocation activities had been initiated for the Kalispell to Whitefish project.

During 1989 through 1992, a substantial amount of public controversy was generated about these two projects. The basis for the controversy was:

- One element of the population was supportive of the MDT proposal of a five-lane cross-section, which provided full movement access to side properties.

- A second element of the population felt that a five-lane non-controlled access highway will encourage strip development and degrade visual quality and will not be as safe as a divided highway. There were also concerns that the EA did not adequately document social, economic and environmental impacts.



North

Somers to Whitefish
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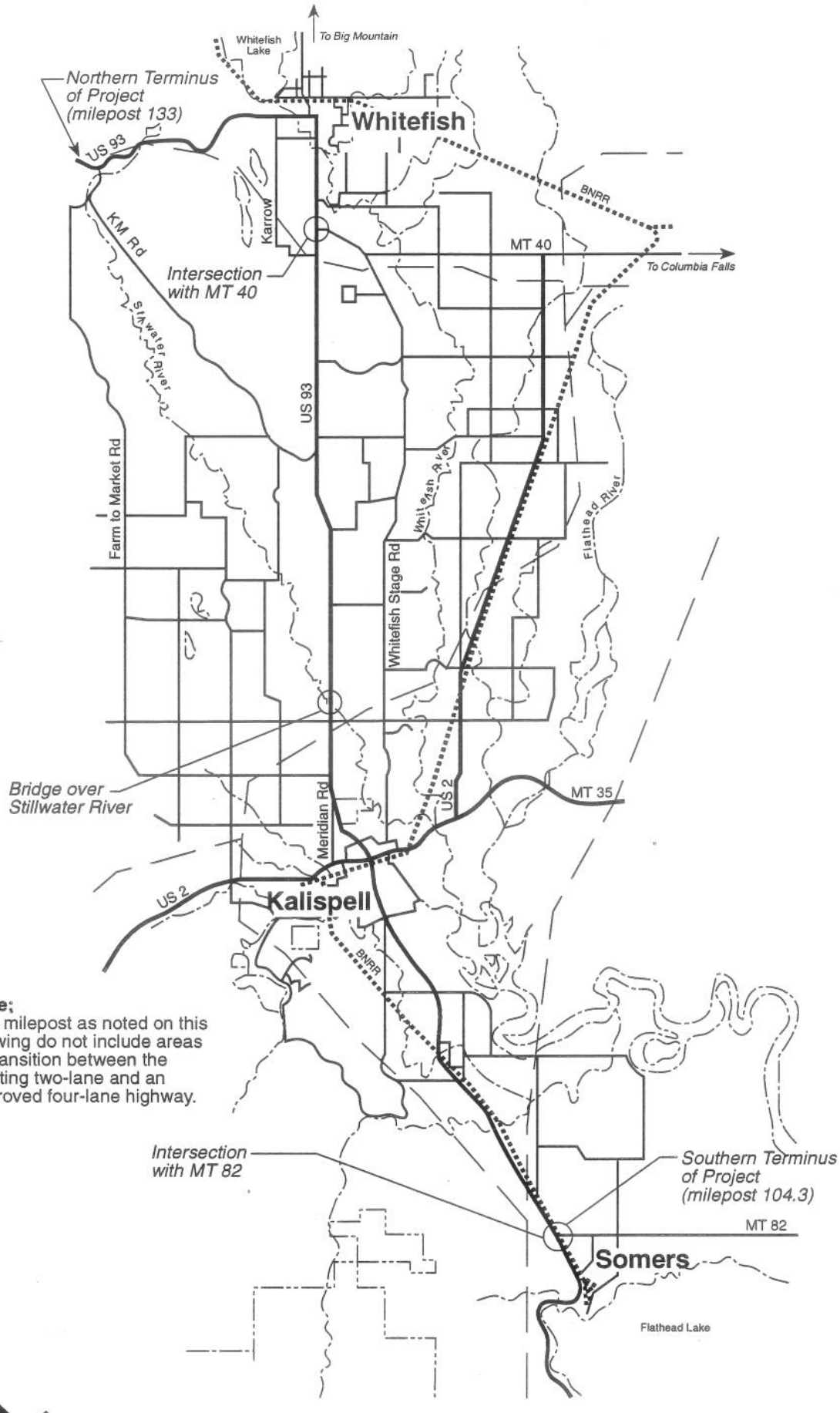
Figure 1-1
Regional Map



Note;
The milepost as noted on this drawing do not include areas of transition between the existing two-lane and an improved four-lane highway.

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Figure 1-2
US 93 Corridor Study Area

In July of 1992, in response to this public concern, Section 352 of **the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1993,** Public Law 102-388 was passed which dictated that a feasibility study of design alternatives on US 93 from Somers to Whitefish be undertaken. The feasibility study is to address the cost, safety, aesthetics and land use planning impacts of each design alternative.

As a result of public controversy about these projects, and to respond to the provisions of Public Law 102-388, a decision was made by the Montana Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration to combine the previous two projects into one project and to prepare an EIS for a combined Somers to Whitefish project. The basis for this decision is the need to more comprehensively address the social, economic and environmental impacts associated with the various alternatives for improving US 93.

Included in the overall project are bypasses of Kalispell and Whitefish and improvements to US 93 in the section west of Whitefish to Milepost 133.

1.2 Overview of Purpose and Need

The primary purpose and need for improvements to US 93 is to reduce congestion on the existing facility, provide for planned growth and development, improve safety, provide for improved intermodal facility connections and provide for enhanced scenic values.

US 93 currently operates at a level of service (LOS) of D or E in many locations. This occurs during peak time periods during the summer tourist season. As shown on Figure 1-3, LOS D is characterized by restricted movements, queues and delays. LOS E involves delay to all motorists. Much of the 46.18 kilometers (28.7 miles) of US 93 is also designated as a no-passing zone and the **high** percentage of large trucks in some parts of the area tends to exacerbate the no-passing conditions. LOS conditions are projected to worsen noticeably by the year 2015, with LOS of E and F anticipated, resulting in significant delays to the traveling public. In addition to delays along US 93, vehicles entering the highway will find it nearly impossible to make a left turn movement unless the intersection is signalized.

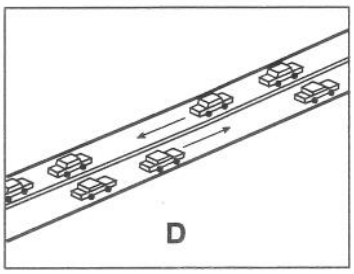
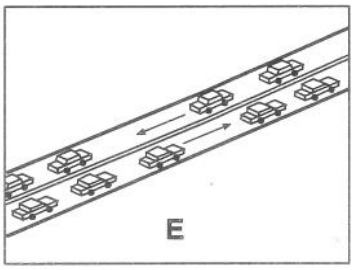
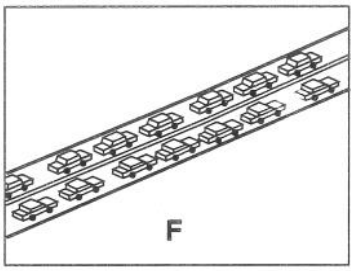
The accident rate on US 93 (between Somers and west of Whitefish) is higher than the average State of Montana accident rate for similar-type highways in 26 locations. Accidents are significantly higher in the urban areas and in the areas where there are multiple access points.

Thus, the primary purpose and need for the proposed project is to:

- More efficiently move people and goods by reducing congestion and improving mobility.
- Improve overall safety conditions on US 93.

Secondary benefits which are anticipated to occur as a result of improvements to US 93 are:

- Provide support to Flathead County economic development.
- Enhance and support the Flathead Valley visual quality. This is particularly important because of the function of the Valley as a gateway to Glacier National Park.
- Accommodate travel demands associated with Flathead County population and employment growth.

LOS	Roadway Segments	Two Lanes
A	Free flow, low traffic density	
B	Minimum delay, stable traffic flow.	
C	Stable condition, movements somewhat restricted due to higher volumes, but not objectionable for motorists.	Existing LOS (south of MT 82 and west of Whitefish)
D	Movements more restricted, queues and delays may occur during short peaks, but lower demands occur often enough to permit clearing, preventing excessive backups	
E	Actual capacity of the roadway involves delay to all motorists due to congestion.	Existing LOS (north of MT 82 to Whitefish) Likely LOS in Year 2015 no build (Somers to south of Ball's Crossing)
F	Forced flow with demand volumes greater than capacity resulting in complete congestion	
		Likely LOS in Year 2015 no-build (north of Reserve to Whitefish)

Note: All LOS analyses assume summer daily traffic volumes

Figure 1-3
Level of Service Definition

- Provide support to modal interrelationships (including pedestrian and bicycle circulation).
- Correct existing US 93 deficiencies.

These are defined in more detail in the following pages.

1.3 Capacity of US 93

The inadequacy of US 93 to carry existing traffic volumes at an acceptable level of service was re-stated as a problem numerous times during the scoping process for the project. Factors that contribute to this inadequacy are:

- Existing and **forecasted** traffic volumes.
- Inability of drivers to pass more slowly moving vehicles (no passing zones occur along more than 50 percent of the corridor).
- High percentage of **commercial motor vehicles** and recreational vehicles.
- Diverse mix of drivers.
- Large number of driveway access points.
- Inability to access the highway because of a constant stream of traffic.
- Weather conditions.

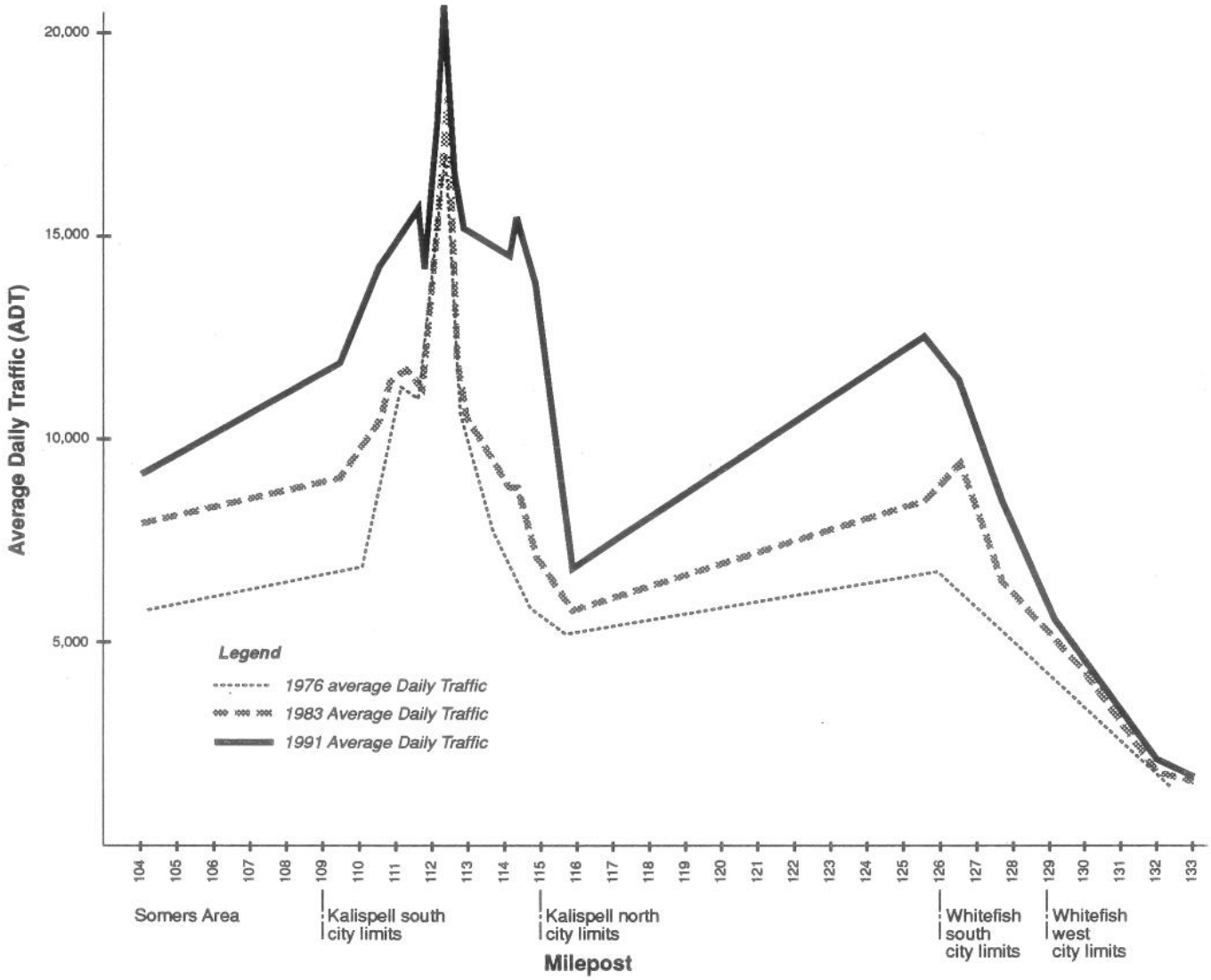
1.3.1 Existing and Projected Traffic Volumes

Figure 1-4 shows historical and existing traffic volumes at various locations in the study area. Generally, volumes in the southern part of the study area have grown between 15 and 30 percent over the last eight years (1983 to 1991). Volumes in the northern part of the study area have grown at a faster rate (30 to 90 percent). **For comparison purposes, volumes from 1976 were also noted on this graph. Traffic growth since 1976 has been even more dramatic.**

Traffic in the study area increases dramatically during the summer tourist season (**generally** June through August). During these periods, traffic increases by approximately twenty percent over a typical off-peak day.

Patterns of travel in the study area were surveyed at two different times in 1993 (off-peak and summer tourist season). Some of the findings of these surveys were:

- The peak period along US 93 begins approximately between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m. along the corridor, ranging about four to five percent of the average daily traffic. During the summer months traffic continues to steadily grow to about six to seven percent of the average daily traffic and remains steady until 5:00 p.m. Between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. traffic peaks to nine to ten percent of the annual average daily traffic and substantially decreases at 7:00 p.m. to one to two percent of the annual average daily traffic.
- Large **commercial motor vehicle** percentages range from 8 to 13 percent **within the study corridor**.



Note: Traffic volumes shown are for total ADT. Summer ADT is higher than those shown on this figure.

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Figure 1-4
Historical and Existing Traffic Volumes by Location

- Summer daily traffic volumes range from 2,800 vpd (west of Whitefish) to 13,600 vpd (south of Kalispell) for the rural segments. Within the urban limits, summer daily traffic volumes range between 20,000 vpd and 45,000 vpd.

Year 2015 traffic volumes for the US 93 corridor were **forecasted** using the Quick Response System (QRS) II traffic model. QRS II was used because it is the standard transportation modeling program used in the state of Montana. This model takes information about current travel patterns and existing and future socioeconomic data (population levels and distribution, numbers of housing units, household size and household income and employee types, levels and distribution) to predict trip generation based on land use. Model results are tested for current day conditions against known traffic count data. The model then **forecasted** future travel for the Year 2015 and distributes traffic on the existing study area roads.

Projected Year 2015 traffic volumes (assuming no improvements are made to US 93) are shown on Figure 1-5.

Analysis of existing and future volumes has been done to determine the level of congestion that exists now and what will likely be the level of congestion in the future, assuming no improvements are made to US 93. The analysis indicates:

Location	Existing Level of Service (LOS)	Future Year 2015 LOS
Somers to Kalispell	E (summer months) D (yearly average)	F
Kalispell to Whitefish	E (summer months) D (yearly average)	F
Whitefish to west of Whitefish	D (summer months) C (yearly average)	C (overall segment) D (selected intersections)

Figure 1-3 provides a diagrammatic description of different levels of service.

For this project, the **Year 2015 LOS which is used as a guide for design of the project is**:

- LOS C: rural areas.
- LOS D: urban areas.

1.3.2 Passing Opportunities

Existing US 93 is designated no-passing for 55 percent of its length between Somers and Kalispell and 45 percent of its length between Kalispell and Whitefish. This designated no-passing area, when compounded by the high traffic volumes (especially during peak periods and in the tourist season), weather and road conditions, and the slow moving truck, elderly driver, or recreational vehicles results in a virtual 100 percent no-passing zone, for all 46.18 kilometers (28.7) miles of the study area.

1.3.3 Trucks and Other Large Vehicles

The relatively high percentage of large trucks (such as logging trucks or other commercial haulers) and recreational vehicles contribute to the overall capacity problems on US 93. Surveys in the study area in 1993 indicate that the mix of large **commercial motor vehicles** varies between 8 and 13 percent.

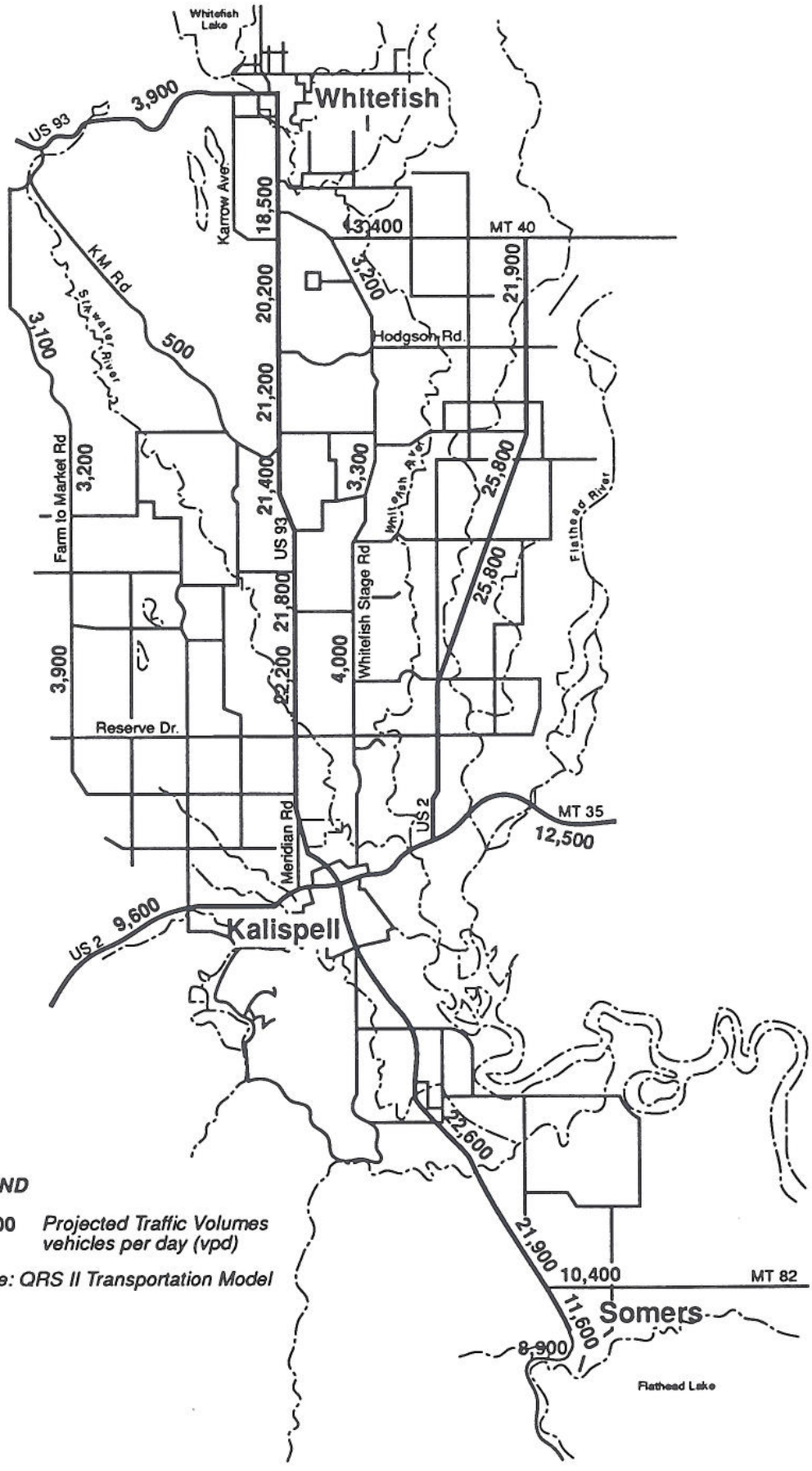

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Figure 1-5
2015 No Build (Existing & Committed Network)
Summer Daily Traffic Volumes

Commercial motor vehicle percentages are highest in the segment of US 93 west of Whitefish. In this area, large commercial motor vehicles (single unit and larger) account for 13 percent of the vehicle mix, compared to approximately eight to nine percent in other locations.

These large vehicles:

- Have difficulty negotiating turns along US 93, thus slowing traffic.
- Have difficulty accelerating quickly, thus slowing traffic.

Analysis was done of the commercial motor vehicle routes and truck trends in the study area. Due to their large size and slow speeds, many highway drivers consider commercial motor vehicle to be traffic hazards and impediments. A typical loaded commercial motor vehicle requires more lane space (length and width), stopping distance [at least 91.4 meters (100 yards) at average highway speeds], acceleration time, and turning room than most other vehicles. Trucking activity in the Flathead Valley is expected to increase, along with population and overall traffic volumes, over the next decade.

Specific findings of this analysis are:

- Log trucks typically travel within the study area for about eight months of the year. The most heavily used routes are shown on Figure 1-6. Areawide timber harvesting is expected to decline noticeably over the next decade.
- Chip and lumber truck use is steady year-round. Chip trucks generally travel between lumber mills in Kalispell and Columbia Falls and pulp and plywood mills in Missoula or British Columbia.

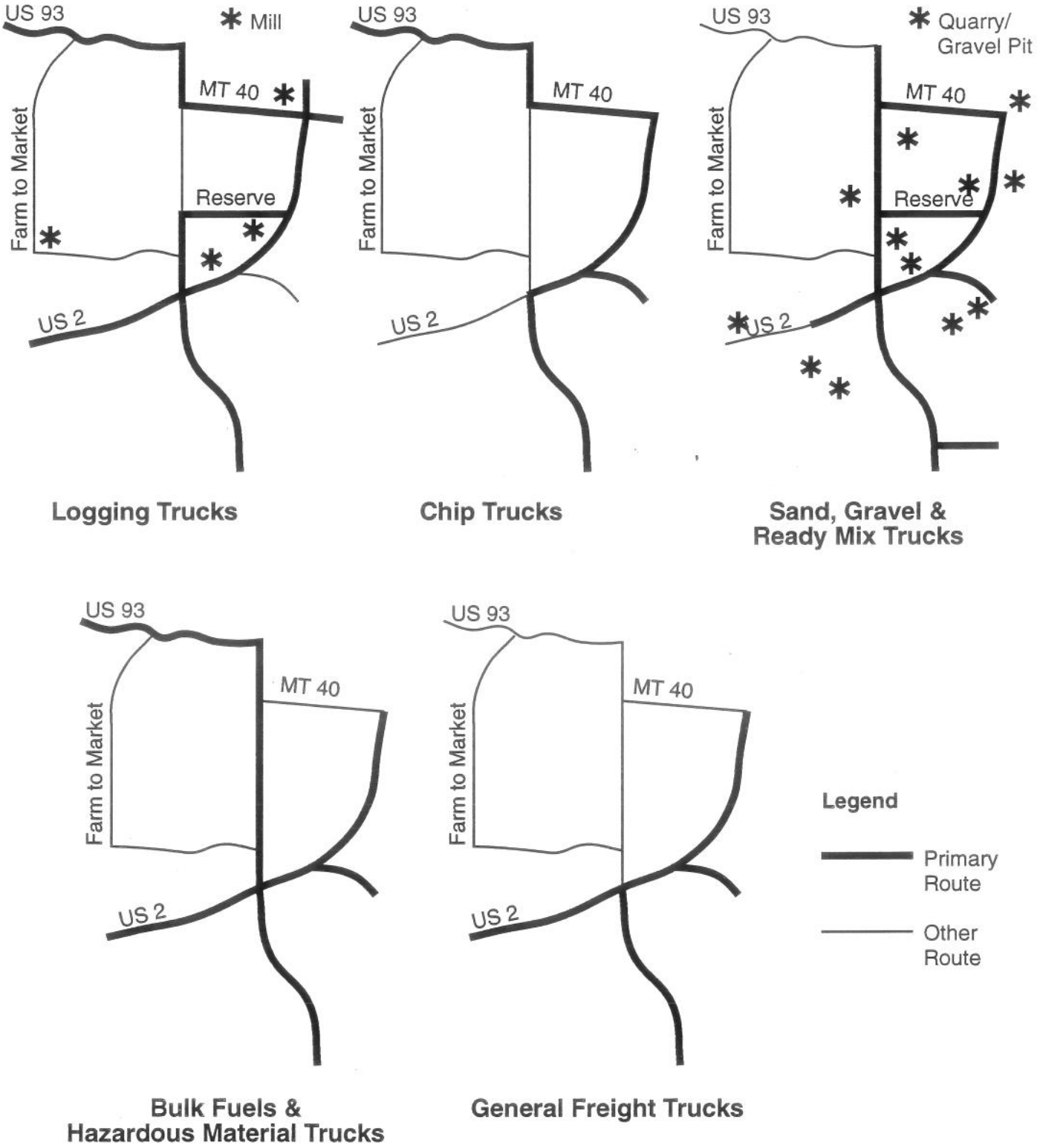

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Figure 1-6
Study Area Truck Routes

- Sand, gravel and ready mix trucks are associated with the construction activity in the area, which is projected to continue as in-migration continues. These trucks travel from gravel pits to construction sites.

- Bulk fuel and hazardous material trucks are hauled into and through the Flathead Valley from Canada, and other states and cities in eastern Montana and Missoula. Anhydrous ammonia is being shipped into the Valley from Canada in increasing quantities. During the Spring and Fall, trucks hauling this extremely noxious liquid travel daily along US 93 through Whitefish and Kalispell to farm suppliers in the communities, and private farms in outlying areas.

  An anhydrous ammonia or other chemical spill in Kalispell or Whitefish could have disastrous implications on the surrounding populace. The likelihood of such a spill increases as more hazardous materials are trucked into the valley while local traffic volumes continue to increase.

- General freight trucks include any material that cannot be categorized as one of the commodities described previously. As the population grows in the Flathead Valley and other areas of Western Montana, local freight hauling operations should also increase.

Increasing the capacity of US 93, in itself, will not mitigate the increased problems caused by large **commercial motor vehicle** mixing with automobile, bicycle and pedestrian traffic. The great majority of trucking industry contacts indicate a preference for at least one bypass of Kalispell, and a bypass of Whitefish to route **commercial motor vehicles** and other through traffic around these communities.

1.3.4 Driver Mix

The diverse mix of drivers using US 93 makes it difficult for the highway to carry traffic at a high level of service because a relatively high percentage of drivers are unfamiliar with driving conditions in the study area. This mix includes:

- International drivers who may not be familiar with United States driving practices.
- Every-day commuters (characteristically impatient).
- Newcomers to the Valley (new tourists) -- some of them driving recreational vehicles or towing trailers.
- Second-home type visitors (here in the summer only).
- Generally aging population (tend to drive more slowly).
- Commercial haulers **(described in Section 1.3.3)**.
- School buses.
- Newcomers to the Valley who may be unfamiliar with winter driving conditions.

1.3.5 Driveway Access Points

The large number of intersection and driveway access points along US 93 also degrades overall traffic service. Existing access points are summarized in Figure 1-7. Generally, the density of accesses increases closer to the urbanized areas.

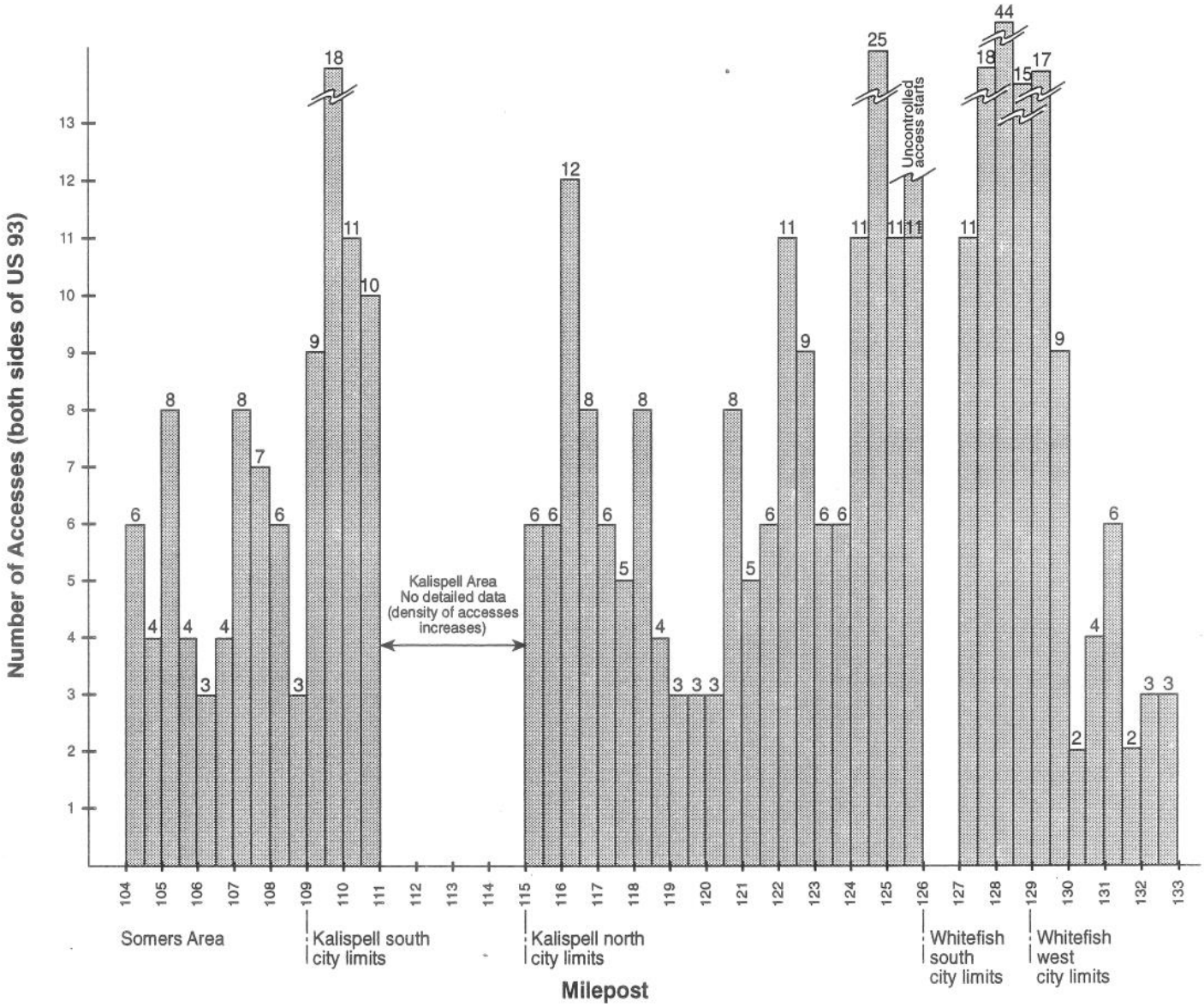

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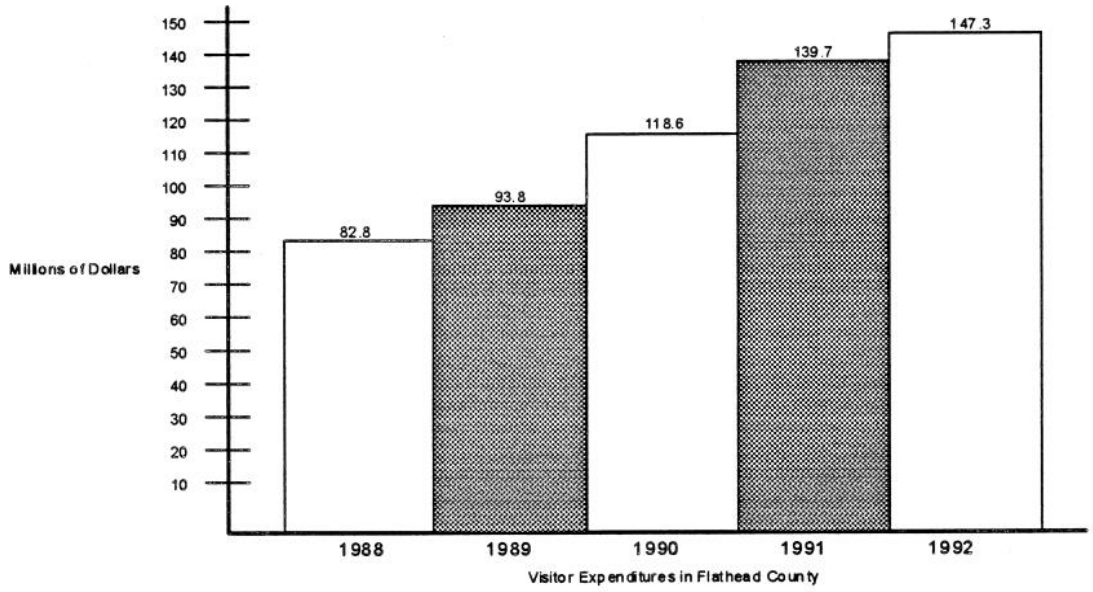
Figure 1-7
Access Points per Half Mile

1.4 Economic Development

Tourism is an important and growing industry for the Flathead County. It is estimated that approximately 2.7 million visitors came to Flathead County in 1991. Flathead County is estimated to account for 11 percent of statewide expenditures for non-resident travelers (Montana Institute for Tourism Research 1992). Non-resident travelers are estimated to have spent about $150 million in Flathead County in 1992. This has increased dramatically over the last several years (an increase of 78 percent since 1988). Visitation at Glacier National Park alone increased from 1.9 to 2 million visitors from 1990 to 1991, an increase of five percent in one year only. Tourism along the US 93 corridor tends to be seasonal, with over 75 percent of non-resident visits occurring in the summer. Visits by Montana residents also contribute to the Flathead economy.



According to the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, Montana's tourism industry has been insulated from recessionary impacts due to its regional nature. The state's principal markets are California, the Pacific Northwest and the Upper Midwest. In addition, there was tourism growth generated from Canada and overseas travel.

There are three US 93 related issues which are important to the ongoing support of Flathead County tourism:

- US 93's growing reputation for being a difficult and dangerous driving experience may deter some people from visiting the Flathead (Flathead Convention and Visitors Association, 1993).

- Increasing congestion has been found to negatively impact business in Flathead County (as indicated in a business survey in Kalispell in 1993).

- Maintaining and enhancing existing Flathead County visual quality is an integral element of a sustained and growing industry based on tourism. The visual quality in Flathead County has been variously described as "scenic," with "spectacular vistas" or "beautiful western vistas." The rural and open nature of the Flathead is one of the critical reasons that the area is becoming a second home to wealthy celebrities and others who wish to escape the more crowded, congested areas in other states. This visual character is declining due to the increase in strip commercial development, along US 93 and other highways throughout the County.

1.5 Visual Quality

The relationship of transportation improvements to maintaining and enhancing the visual quality of the Flathead Valley was a major issue discussed in scoping meetings. There is a concern that the form of the highway now (with no access control) and the possible future form the highway improvements might take could degrade visual quality in the Valley such that quality of life of the Valley residents and future economic development would be negatively impacted. The importance of visual quality has been further reinforced during the Flathead County Master Plan update process **which has just been completed, although not yet adopted**.

This scenic corridor is important on a national basis because it serves as the western entrance to the Glacier National Park. The Park is north and east of the valley bottom but tourist traffic must travel the length of the corridor to reach this scenic resource.

Generally the character of this Valley can be described as low lying agricultural and residential development surrounded by mountain ranges and forest land. Driving the existing US 93 corridor offers the motorist a range of views which either enhance the character of the Valley bottom or tend to distract from the panoramic scenic quality that exists today.

Historically, the Valley bottom has enjoyed undisturbed views of the surrounding mountains but this has changed in some locations during recent years. Billboard advertising and industrial development at the roadside block some of the background views previously possible. These major changes in the foreground along some portions of US 93 change the visual character of the Valley.

1.6 Population and Employment Growth

1.6.1 Population Trends

Flathead County is one of Montana's fastest growing areas. The county's population grew from 39,460 in 1970 to an estimated 64,000 in 1993. The county is expected to continue to experience rapid growth. Projections are for the county's population to exceed 71,000 in 2000, and to exceed 86,000 by 2015. Over 80 percent of the county's recent population growth (since 1970) has occurred outside its three cities (Kalispell, Whitefish and Columbia Falls). This trend is expected to continue, and will contribute importantly to increases in travel along travel corridors connecting exurban areas with the county's cities.

The Flathead Valley is also experiencing substantial increases in its seasonal residents. In 1993, Flathead County's summertime population will approach 70,000 (6,000 additional people exclusive of tourists). Most of the county's seasonal residents (second-home residents) reside in rural areas of the county. The Flathead's seasonal residents are also expected to increase dramatically. Seasonal residents further add to summertime traffic on travel corridors connecting exurban areas with cities.

1.6.2 Economic Trends

The Flathead economy is shifting from a natural resource, manufacturing and railroad-based economy to a service-based economy. From 1970 to 1990, county-wide employment more than doubled, from 15,000 to over 31,000. Most of this job growth occurred in the service and retail sectors. Employment in the county's major resource extraction, manufacturing and railroad industries experienced little or no growth.

Flathead County employment is projected to exceed 50,000 jobs in 2015. Again, most of this job growth is expected to occur in service and retail-oriented businesses. These sectors will particularly benefit from growth in the region's tourism industry, growth in the area's retirement population, and the economic effects of general population growth. This fact places greater importance on the need to enhance and maintain the qualities in the Flathead Valley which contribute to the growing tourism industry. Many of the Flathead Valley's new and growing businesses will seek major traveler corridors as locations for their business expansions.

1.7 Social Needs

The current condition of US 93 adversely affects the neighborhood and social fabric of residents and visitors to the Flathead Valley. Specific problems are:

- High traffic (and truck volumes) which turn US 93 into a barrier to pedestrian, bicycle and cross-traffic circulation. This is particularly a problem in the urban areas of Whitefish and Kalispell.
- Increasing congestion which **increases carbon monoxide emissions and** decreases energy efficiency.
- Increasing difficulties experienced by school buses, which currently need to stop on US 93 to load and unload school children.

- Increasing strip commercial development, which is not discouraged by the unlimited access currently provided by US 93. This type of development is in conflict with the Flathead County Master Plan. In the 1993 Flathead County survey conducted as a part of the Flathead County Master Plan update, 55 percent of respondents identified strip commercial development **a type of development which is not desirable**.

1.8 Safety

1.8.1 Automobile Accidents

Inadequate access control for US 93 is responsible for many of the accidents occurring on **US 93**. Driver frustration created by delay entering the highway and frustration by the limited opportunities for vehicles to pass slower moving vehicles along the US 93 **increases the overall accident rate**. In addition, inadequate gaps in traffic exist for side road and driveway traffic to safely ingress into the vehicle stream and for safe pedestrian crossing in high pedestrian activity areas. This segment of highway has a high differential in speeds attributed to the aging population in the area, recreational tourists and the commuter driver.

The average automobile accident rate is exceeded for approximately 67 percent of the mileage in the study area. This is broken down by area and accident type as shown on Figure 1-8. As shown in Figure 1-8, accident rates are as much as ten times higher than statewide averages in the rural segments. The average automobile severity rate is exceeded for approximately 75 percent of the study area.

There are some noticeable "spot" problems, where the accident rate is significantly higher than in other locations. Analysis by location shows that accidents significantly increase in the urban areas. This figure also shows that in 26 locations, the accident rate is higher than the average State of Montana accident rate for the roadway type. These are shown on Figure 1-9.

The road conditions are a factor in the existing accident rates. Approximately two to ten percent of overall accidents occur when **road conditions are less than ideal due to weather such as snow**. The percentages are highest (eight to ten percent) in the segments between Kalispell and Whitefish and in Whitefish.

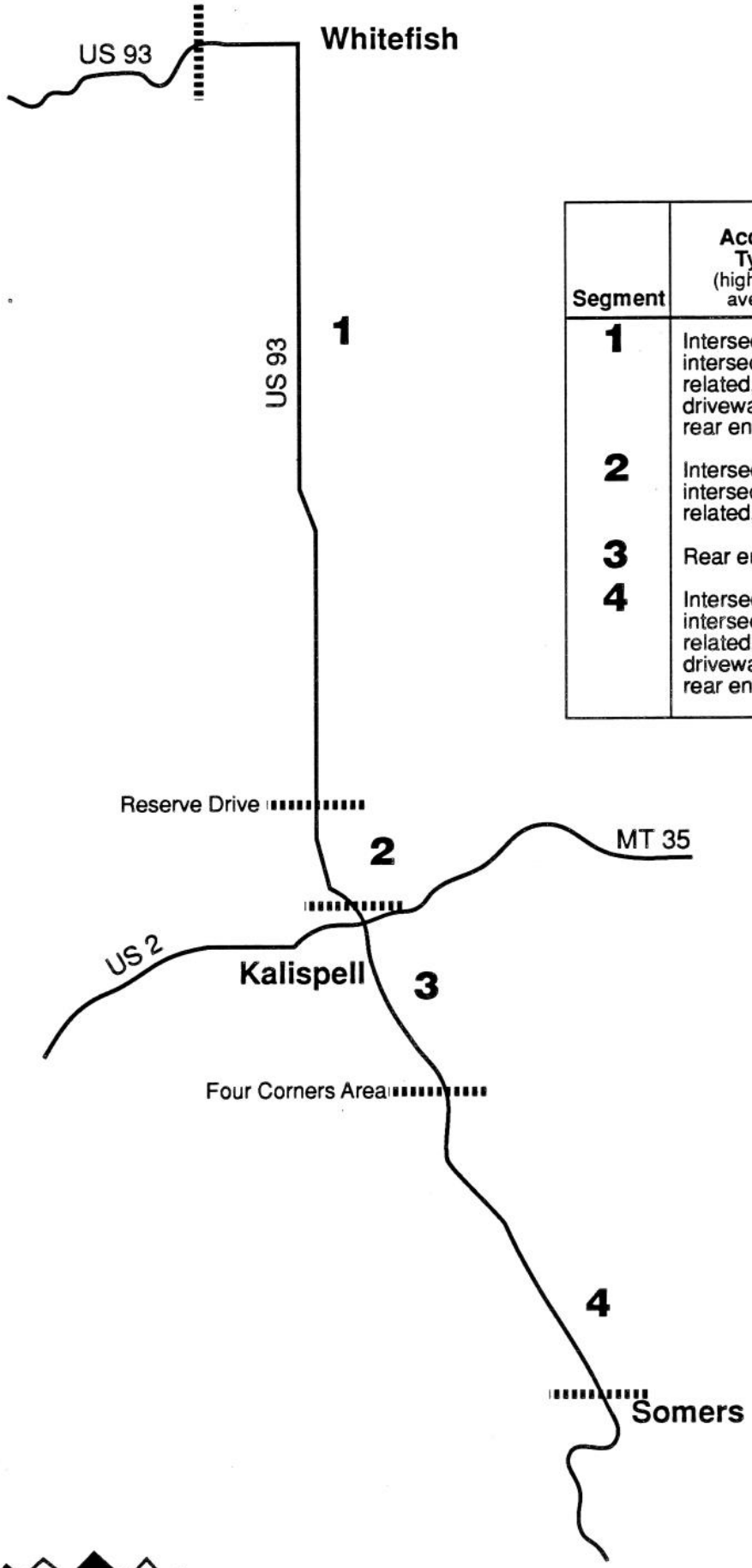
1.8.2 Commercial Motor Vehicle Accidents

An analysis of **commercial motor vehicle** accident data shows that the average accident rate for trucks is below the statewide average. The severity rate, however, is higher than the average in the northern 60 percent segment of the study area (from Reserve Drive north).

1.9 Modal Interrelationships

US 93 currently provides access to rail and air transportation as well as being used for bus, pedestrian and bicycle transportation. It serves an important function to connect these other modes. The ability of US 93 to adequately serve and complement other travel modes (such as AMTRAK, bicycle, Glacier Park International Airport and existing bus service) is increasingly hampered by the increase in congestion.

AMTRAK provides daily service into the station in Whitefish. The station is one block north of Second Street, which is on the US 93 system. Total yearly ridership has increased from 44,995 in 1989 to 54,532 in 1991, an increase of slightly over 20 percent in the two-year timeframe.



Segment	Accident Types (higher than average)	Comparison to Statewide Averages
1	Intersection, intersection-related, driveway access, rear end, angle	3x to 10x
2	Intersection, intersection-related, rear end	1.1x to 1.5x
3	Rear end	1.5x
4	Intersection, intersection-related, driveway access, rear end	5x to 10x

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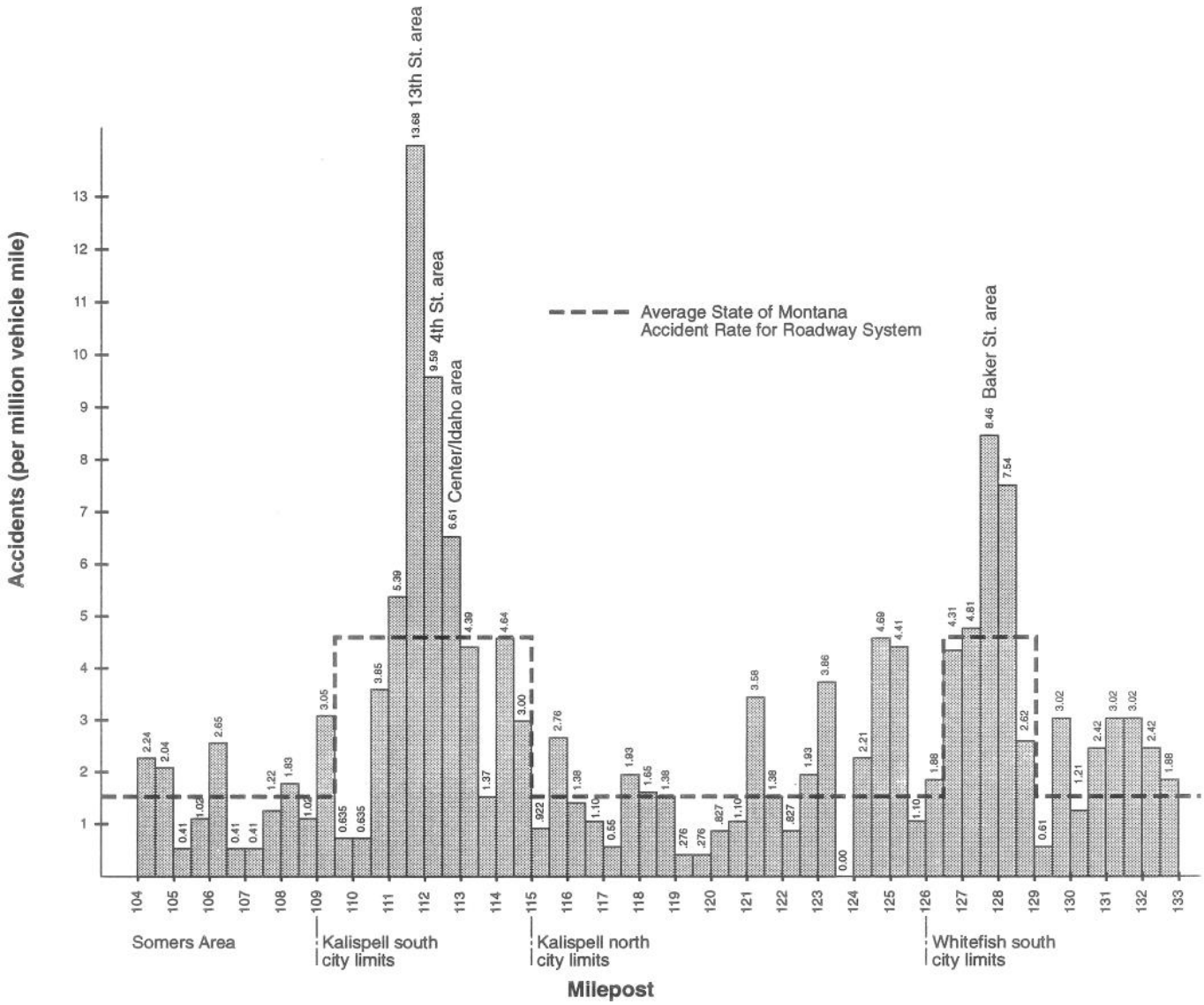
Figure 1-8
Accident Types by Segment



Notes:

1. Average accident rates are 1.47 accidents/million vehicle miles on the primary system in rural areas and 4.90 accidents/million vehicle miles on the urban system for similar roadway facilities within the state of Montana.
2. Roadway systems vary depending on whether they are in the urban or rural segments.
3. The calculated accident rates are for 1/2 mile segments.

Figure 1-9
Accident Rates (by milepost)

A consistent problem that was expressed during the scoping phase of the project was the inadequate provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities to serve the commuter and recreational needs. Interest in improved bicycle facilities in the Flathead has been expressed by the Flathead Valley Bicycle Club, Rails to Trails and AAA of Montana.

Glacier Park International Airport is served by two commercial airline carriers. June through September is the peak season for air travel. Passenger activity has steadily increased over the last several years (nine percent increase overall over the last ten years) with substantially greater increases (20 to 25 percent) occurring in July and August.

Bus service problems are:

- Decreasing reliability as congestion increases.
- Increasing travel times in more stop-and-go traffic which increases maintenance and operating costs.

Improvements to US 93 will substantially facilitate these interrelationships with other modes of travel.

1.10 Road Deficiencies

There are a number of deficiencies with existing US 93 that this project is intended to address. These are determined to be deficiencies when compared to MDT state standards and national **guidance** as defined in *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, AASHTO, 1990. These are:

- Existing substandard vertical geometry just north of Stillwater Bridge and at five **locations** west of Whitefish.
- Substandard lane or shoulder widths in the following locations:
  a. Shoulder widths of only 2.44 meters (eight feet) (Milepost 104 to 109.6).
  b. Shoulder widths of only 1.83 meters (six feet) at the Ashley Creek crossing.
  c. Shoulder widths of 2.44 meters (eight feet) and short segments of 3.35-meter (11-foot) lanes (Milepost 109.6 to 114.96).
  d. Shoulder widths of only 1.83 meters (six feet) (Milepost 114.96 to 125.44).
  e. Shoulder width of only 0.61 meter (two feet) (Milepost 125.44 to 126.44).
  f. Shoulder width of 0.305 to 0.61 meter (one to two feet) (Milepost 126.44 to 127.7, and 128.9 to 133).
- Substandard clear zone limits.
- Existing substandard horizontal geometry at the Kalispell Courthouse and at several curves west of Whitefish.
- Short or non-existent acceleration/deceleration lanes (at most intersections).

- Inadequate signage (need for larger street name signs, advance-intersection signage, sign posts that are not break-away type, improved reflectivity and replacement of older signs).

- Lane striping that is difficult to see during the winter months.

- **Geometrics of the existing intersections that do not meet the demands of present traffic.**

- Access concentrations are shown on Figure 1-7. Specific locations where the access concentrations result in congestion or safety problems are:

  a. The 1.61-kilometer (one-mile) segment just south of MT 40 (with 36 driveway connections per mile).

  b. Within the Kalispell and Whitefish city limits (with 18 to 25 access points per mile).

  The majority of the access points are poorly designed such that there is no opportunity for the driver accessing US 93 to accelerate to the higher speed on US 93.

Chapter Two

Alternatives

Chapter 2.0: Alternatives

Changes in text between this document and the Draft EIS are in bold and underlined.

2.1 Alternatives Development Process

The National Environmental Policy Act requires that "reasonable" alternatives be presented and evaluated in detail in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Reasonable alternatives are defined by the Council on Environmental Quality as those that are practical or feasible from a technical or economic standpoint. Reasonable alternatives have been defined for this project as those that are technically, economically, and environmentally practical and feasible and satisfy the project purpose and need as described in Chapter One. This chapter describes the process used to identify reasonable alternatives, and the reasonable alternatives that were selected for further study.

Section 2.4 describes the reasonable alternatives that are fully evaluated in this document. By segment, these alternatives are:

Segment	Alternatives Being Considered
1. Somers to Kalispell	No-Build, A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)
2. Kalispell Area	No-Build, A*, A plus B(MEDIAN), A plus B(TURN-LANE)
3. Kalispell to Whitefish	No-Build, A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)
4. Whitefish Area	No-Build, A(FOUR-LANE), C(OFF-SET), C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), C(COUPLET-4)
5. Baker to Karrow and West of Whitefish	No-Build, A*
6. Karrow Avenue to MP 129	No-Build, A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE)

**The Alternative A concepts in Kalispell and west of Whitefish differ from the rest of the corridor and are described in Section 2.4.2.5.*

Section 2.3 describes the alternatives which were considered but not advanced. These include seven corridors which are parallel to US 93, seven bypasses of Kalispell, five bypasses of Whitefish, and a number of different lane configurations of US 93, transit options and transportation demand management (TDM) options.

Section 2.7 discusses the selection of the preferred alternative, including the process used and primary reasons for the selection of the preferred alternative.

2.1.1 Public Involvement

An extensive public involvement program has been conducted on this project. This was initiated by a Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS, published in the *Federal Register* on January 27, 1993. Other elements of the public involvement program included:

- Formation of an Advisory Committee, which met **eleven** times prior to publication of the Final EIS. The Advisory Committee was extensively involved with the development of goals and objectives, development of initial concepts, screening of concepts, development of alternatives to be advanced, location of design features, such as truck turn-arounds and frontage roads **and recommendation for a preferred alternative**.

- Ten public meetings held in April 1993, June 1993, September 1993 and November 1993.

- Over **200** meetings with Flathead County groups and individuals.

- Setting up a project "hotline" for citizens to call with questions or comments.

- Setting up and staffing a project office (open for six months between April and October 1993).

- Development of a project newsletter, which was issued **seven** times prior to publication of the Final EIS.

- **Draft EIS Public Hearings (three) held in April 1994.**

This public involvement program is described in more detail in Chapter Six of this Final EIS.

The primary public concerns that have been expressed regarding the development of alternatives are:

1. Consider parallel corridors, such as Farm-to-Market Road, US 2, Whitefish Stage, KM Ranch Road.

2. Consider Kalispell bypass alternatives.

3. Consider Whitefish bypass alternatives.

4. Consider US 93 design alternatives, such as five-lane, four-lane with median, four-lane with median and frontage roads, and four-lane with median and a split alignment (in locations).

5. Consider US 93 operating alternatives Transportation System Management (TSM) improvements, such as:
   - Additional traffic signals.
   - Two lane with passing and turning lanes.
   - Signage, lighting.
   - Decreased speed limits.

6. Consider special areas of concern, such as:
   - Bridge over Stillwater River.
   - Gateway treatments for cities.
   - Rest stops/interpretive areas/tourist information areas.
   - Fog lights, snow fences, snow storage requirements.
   - Mail box turn-outs.
   - School bus pull-outs.
   - Stock and equipment underpasses.
   - Limiting or eliminating billboards.
   - Landscaped, maintainable median -- meeting sight distance requirements.
   - Wildlife crossings (Ashley Creek).
   - Noise/visual buffers in residential areas.

7. Consider alternative modes, such as:
   - Bike/pedestrian paths on separate alignment.
   - Increased/improved bus service.
   - Pedestrian overpasses/underpasses at FVCC, Happy Valley.
   - Equestrian trails.
   - Park-n-rides.
   - Train between Whitefish, Kalispell, Somers and Columbia Falls.
   - Van/carpooling incentives, lanes?
   - Emphasizing alternate routes for bicyclists/pedestrians.

8. Consider different funding options, such as:
   - Toll road.
   - Enhancement funds.
   - Preservation of future right-of-way.
   - Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds.

2.1.2 Agency Coordination

In addition to extensive public involvement, there has been a substantial amount of agency coordination on this project. Cooperating agencies are the US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Environmental Protection Agency, US Soil Conservation Service, Flathead County, Montana Department of Transportation, Montana Department of Health and Environmental Science and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. A project Interdisciplinary (ID) Team was established consisting of official representation from the following agencies: Montana Department of Transportation; Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); Soil Conservation Service (SCS); US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); US EPA; US Army Corps of Engineers (USCOE); Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO); Montana Water Quality **Bureau** (MWQB); Montana Air Quality **Bureau (now Air Quality Division)** (**MAQD**); Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MDFWP); and Flathead County. The FHWA is the lead agency. The purpose of the ID Team is to provide technical and resource information for inclusion in the EIS and guide the environmental analysis. The ID Team was involved in the development of the project objectives described in Section 2.1.3.

Formal ID Team meetings occurred on the following dates:

- April 22, 1993
- June 10, 1993
- September 30, 1993
- **March 24, 1994**

In addition, an air quality inter-agency consultation team was formed specifically to provide guidance to the EIS team for the air quality analysis. This team consisted of MDHES (**MAQD**), EPA, FHWA and MDT. This team met several times.

Other agency meetings and contacts occurred on a regular basis to address issues of concern to the specific agency.

2.1.3 Project Goals and Objectives

Project goals and objectives for the Somers to Whitefish EIS project were developed for two primary purposes: to assist with the development of alternatives, and assist with the screening of alternatives. The goals and objectives were developed together with the Advisory Committee and in response to input derived during the scoping process.

These project goals and objectives are intended to supplement project purpose and need as defined in Chapter One.

Input was derived from the following sources: from public scoping process; regulatory agencies (such as USCOE, USFWS, MDFWP, MDHES, USEPA); and results of data collection.

A. Transportation

1. Improve corridor mobility
   - Decrease traffic congestion.
   - Provide for future traffic growth.
   - Improve conditions for emergency vehicle and school bus access and circulation.
   - Develop corridor for large through trucks -- that is compatible with adjacent land use.

2. Improve corridor safety
   - Decrease existing accident rate.
   - Decrease potential for future accidents, for motor vehicles as well as pedestrians and bicyclists.
   - Decrease potential for accidents associated with hazardous materials routing.

3. Provide for existing access needs.

4. Provide for alternate modes of travel
   - Maximize opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
   - Improve public transportation options

5. Maximize compatibility with transportation plans.

B. Community/Economic Impact

1. Support community quality
   - Maximize compatibility with future land use goals (community centered growth).
   - Minimize displacement of households or businesses.
   - Enhance visual quality.
   - Reduce barriers to pedestrian circulation.
   - Reduce barriers associated with truck traffic in cities.
   - Maximize compatibility with future bicycle or greenway plans.

2. Enhance economic development
   - Minimize economic impact to existing businesses, including impacts of construction delays.
   - Minimize right-of-way impact (tax base removed).
   - Enhance tourism.

3. Provide affordable improvements
   - Minimize capital cost.
   - Minimize maintenance costs (longer-term costs).
   - Maximize opportunity to obtain funding.

C. Environmental

The goals within this category generally follow the sequencing requirements as set out by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ): to avoid an impact first; secondly to minimize an impact and finally to mitigate an impact.

1. Provide an environmentally sensitive transportation system.
   - Avoid first, then minimize impact to historic and archaeological sites.
   - Avoid first, then minimize impact to wetlands.
   - Avoid first, then minimize impact to floodplains.
   - Avoid first, then minimize impact to endangered species.
   - Avoid first, then minimize impact to prime farmland.
   - Avoid first, then minimize impact to wildlife.
   - Avoid first, then minimize noise increases.
   - Improve air quality.
   - Avoid first, then minimize water quality problems.
   - Avoid first, then minimize involvement with hazardous waste sites.
   - Avoid first, then minimize impact to parks.

D. Construction

1. Minimize construction impacts
   - Minimize traffic delays during construction.
   - Minimize potential for problems to be encountered during construction.

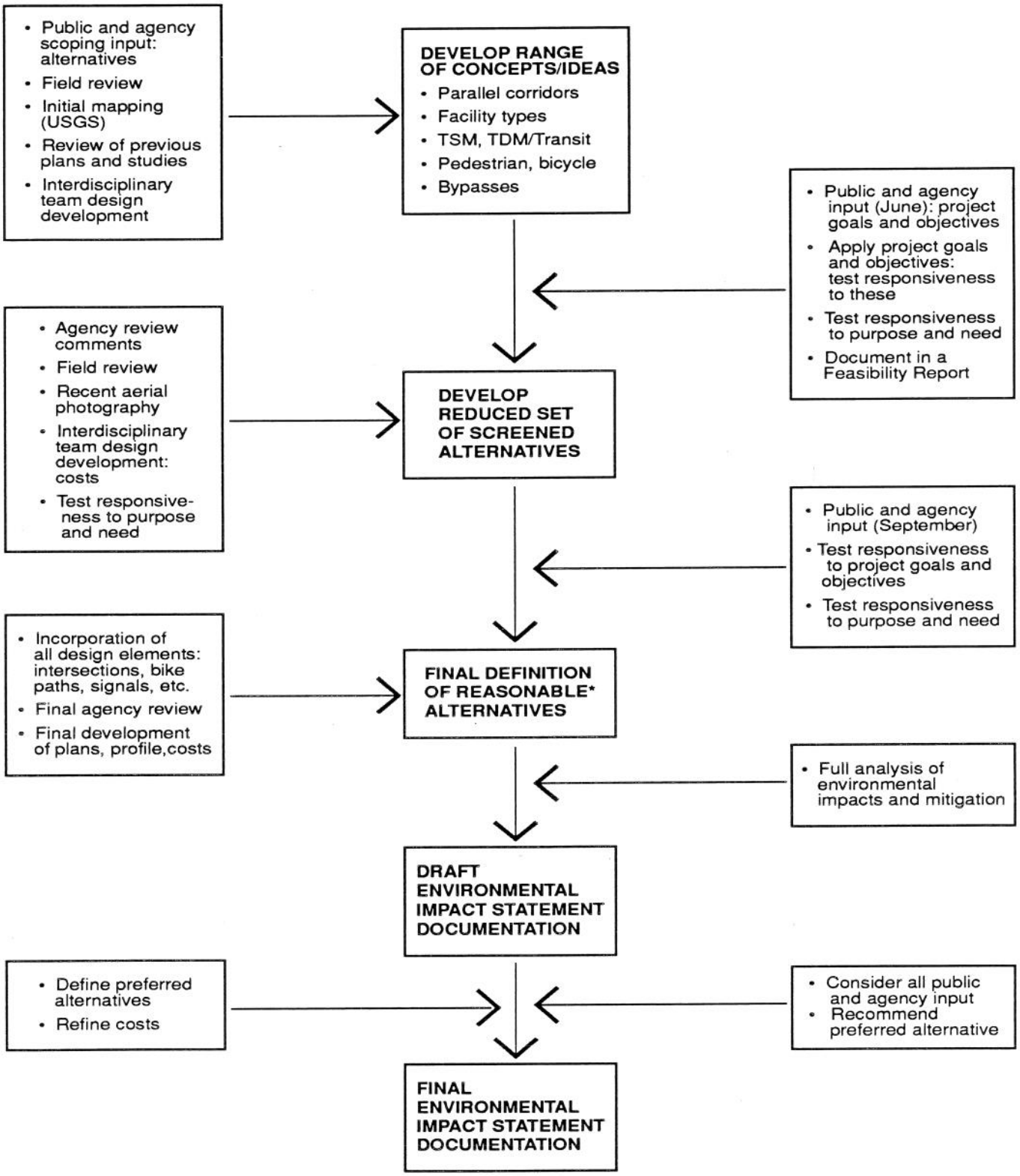
2.1.4 Description of Alternatives Development Process

The alternatives development and evaluation process is described generally in Figure 2-1 and consists of the following major steps:

1. Analysis of scoping input, review of past studies, preliminary development of project purpose and need and analysis of opportunities and constraints. This process included analysis of each segment of US 93, as shown in Figures 2-2 and 2-3.

2. Development of range of concepts. These were discussed in the third Advisory Committee meeting, the second group of public workshops and the second ID Team meeting.

3. Analysis of range of concepts based on public and agency input, response to goals and objectives, refined statement of purpose and need and field review of environmental resources.



* Alternatives that are economically, environmentally, and technically feasible and meet project purpose and need

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 2-1
Alternatives Development Process

Opportunities & Constraints

- Residential character
- Transition from urban to rural
- Community college and hospital
- No on-street parking
- Pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- Higher operating speeds
- Development setback
- Signalized intersections
- Power line crossing
- Views of whole valley to north
- Rolling topography
- Controlled access to major intersections

Possible Design Solutions

- Pedestrian trails and roadway crossings
- Parkway configuration with landscaping
- Independent alignment possible
- Frontage roads not needed
- Kalispell gateway treatments possible
- Signal progression

Opportunities & Constraints

- Residential/downtown character
- Buildings close to roadway
- Limited right-of-way
- High pedestrian activity
- Lower operating speeds
- Signalized intersections
- Views focused on adjacent property
- Locally significant buildings, courthouse, depot, downtown
- On-street parking
- Many cross-street access drives
- Historic properties
- Area is non-attainment for PM10

Possible Design Solutions

- Urban streetscape treatments
- Downtown signage and lighting
- Tourist information center
- Pedestrian crosswalk signal phase
- Off-street parking
- Parallel commercial routes
- Divided median in residential neighborhoods
- Signal progression

Opportunities & Constraints

- Transition character, rural to urban
- Rolling terrain
- Views of mountain ranges possible
- Development setback
- Higher operating speeds
- Intersections spaced farther apart
- Industrial/commercial development
- More access points to individual properties

Possible Design Solutions

- Frontage roads to consolidate access drives
- Parkway configuration
- Added access points
- Kalispell entry treatments possible
- Location for possible tourist information center
- Signal progression

Opportunities & Constraints

- Rural character
- Some commercial/industrial development
- Farm access points
- Rolling terrain
- View of mountain ranges to east and north
- Wetlands and wildlife concerns
- Historic properties (railroad and farms)
- Generally higher operating speeds
- Open topography
- Less developed land adjacent to highway
- Fewer access drives
- Adjacent abandoned rail corridor
- Power line crossing
- Relocate intersection

Possible Design Solutions

- Interpretive signage or rest area potential
- Divided median possible
- Use rail ROW for highway and bike trail
- Wide shoulders/frontage road for rural traffic
- Minimal roadside landscaping on east side of highway to allow views east
- Span wetlands and allow wildlife crossings
- Parkway configuration

Opportunities & Constraints

- Mountain/forest character
- Rock cuts
- Scenic views to north and south
- Gateway to north and south valley
- Steep grades
- Constricted topography-horizontal & vertical
- Sight distance restrictions
- Residential access drives
- Commercial access at MT 82 intersection

Possible Design Solutions

- Retaining walls
- Split alignment
- Median barriers
- Access consolidation or removal
- Rest area/scenic pull out

North

Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 2-2

Analysis of Opportunities and Constraints
Somers to Kalispell Section

Opportunities & Constraints

- Mountain/forest character
- Scattered residential lots and access drives
- Winding roadway in rolling topography
- Wetland, vegetation and wildlife concerns
- Steep slopes
- Constricted sight lines, distances, and ROW
- Lake front views
- Low pedestrian and bike traffic (safety problem)
- Limited access points
- Golf course and resort development

Possible Design Solutions

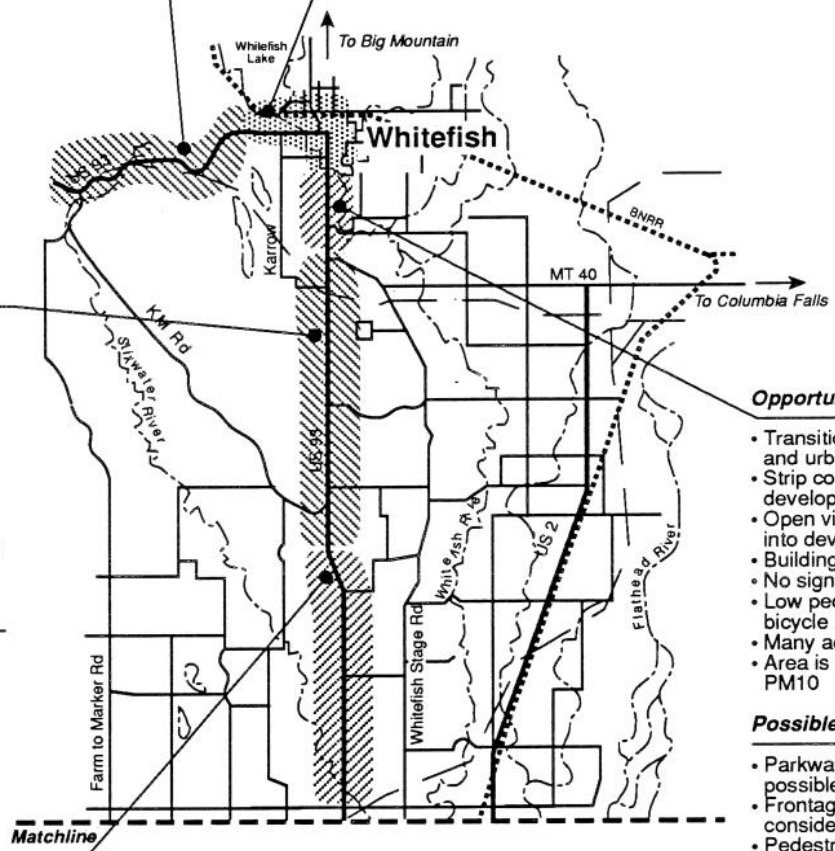
- Parkway design consideration
- Independent alignment possible but limited
- ROW may limit locations
- Cut and fill slope retaining walls possible solution

Opportunities & Constraints

- Downtown character with residential
- Parks and creek visible
- Bridge at town entrance
- On-street parking
- Pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- Buildings close to the roadway
- Signals
- Sidewalks, landscaped streets
- Important local buildings
- Some random setbacks west of town
- Flat topography
- Lake shore character west of town
- Lower operating speeds

Possible Design Solutions

- Uniform pedestrian, walk, and signage to promote downtown image



Opportunities & Constraints

- Forest character with some residential
- Some commercial
- Steeper topography
- Cut and fill slopes on side of roadway
- Limited access
- No signals
- No on-street parking
- Little pedestrian and bicycle traffic (safety problem)
- Background views limited but where possible to north

Possible Design Solutions

- Parkway configuration possible
- Retaining walls to reduce cut/fill slopes
- Increased roadside landscaping
- Barriers to protect existing landscaping
- Pedestrian accommodations needed

Opportunities & Constraints

- Transition between forest and urban character
- Strip commercial development
- Open views to north and into development
- Building setbacks
- No signals
- Low pedestrian and some bicycle usage
- Many access points
- Area is non-attainment for PM10

Possible Design Solutions

- Parkway concept is possible
- Frontage roads might be considered
- Pedestrian and bike trails important to increase shopping traffic
- Possible town entry signage as part of roadway
- Landscaped entry statement

Opportunities & Constraints

- Open rural/residential character
- Scattered commercial
- Views of all mountain ranges possible
- River crossing
- Rolling to steep topography
- Higher operating speeds
- Little pedestrian or bicycle traffic (safety problem)
- No on-street parking
- Scattered limited access
- Wetland concerns
- View of agricultural lands

Possible Design Solutions

- Parkway configuration possible
- Protect vista points with roadway design
- Controlled access to direct roadside development
- Retain rural character with minimal roadside landscaping
- Pedestrian crossings needed

North

Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 2-3

Analysis of Oppportunities and Constraints
Kalispell to Whitefish Section

4. Development of refined set of feasible alternatives. These were developed together with the Advisory Committee at the fourth Advisory Committee meeting. These were documented in a separate report titled, *Feasibility Study of Design Alternatives*, Carter & Burgess, August 1993. These were developed in accordance with design criteria identified by the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO).

5. Further analysis based on public and agency input and final statement of purpose and need.

6. Screening of feasible alternatives to define the reasonable alternatives to be fully assessed in the Draft EIS. Reasonable alternatives are those that meet purpose and need and are technically, environmentally and economically feasible. These were discussed in the fifth Advisory Committee meeting, the third group of public workshops and the third ID Team meeting.

7. Full analysis of reasonable alternatives (in the Draft EIS).

8. Selection of preferred alternative (prior to publication of a Final EIS). This was done together with the Advisory Committee and **included extensive** input from the general public, the ID Team and other agencies such as the inter-agency air quality consultation team. **Special meetings were held with over 100 US 93 property owners during this process**.

2.2 Range of Alternatives Considered

A range of alternatives were considered throughout the planning process for this project. The alternatives were initially grouped by similarities in function and/or location. The groups of alternatives that were considered include:

- Improving a parallel corridor to US 93.
- Providing bypasses of Whitefish and Kalispell.
- Improving the capacity of US 93.
- Making minor improvements to existing US 93.
- Improving mass transit opportunities.
- Implementing measures to reduce demand for traffic to drive on US 93.
- Making no improvements to US 93 (No-Build alternative).

These alternatives were developed in detail and analyzed based on their responsiveness to the project goals and objectives. The Advisory Committee assisted in the evaluation of their responsiveness to project goals and objectives. The alternatives (and their evaluation) are documented in detail in a Technical Report: *Development and Analysis of Alternatives*, on file with the Federal Highway Administration in Helena, Montana.

A summary of the range of alternatives considered indicating which were advanced and which were not is included in Table 2-1:

Table 2-1
Overview of Alternatives Considered

Grouping	Name of Alternative Advanced	Name of Alternative Not Advanced
Parallel Corridor to US 93		1. Farm-to-Market Road 2. KM Road 3. Whitefish Stage Road 4. Powerline Corridor 5. Corridor on new location 6. US 2 7. Eastshore/MT 35
Kalispell Bypasses	1. Alternative B: Stillwater	1. Kalispell Alternative A: Springcreek Road. 2. Kalispell Alternative Modified B: Meridian Road. 3. Kalispell Alternative C1: Along Willow Glen Drive. 4. Kalispell Alternative C2: Just east of Willow Glen Drive. 5. Kalispell Alternative D: Far eastern bypass. 6. Kalispell Alternative F: Similar to Alternative B but includes powerline route. 7. Kalispell Alternative B extended.
Whitefish Bypasses	1. Alternative G: Baker/Spokane One-Way Pair	1. Whitefish Alternative A: South of Skyles Lake. 2. Whitefish Alternative B: Through Blanchard Lake. 3. Whitefish Alternative C: Along powerline. 4. Whitefish Alternative D: Along Karrow Road. 5. Whitefish Alternative E: Whitefish Stage Extension.
US 93 Improvement Concepts	1. Alternative A(MEDIAN): Maximum Capacity Concept. 2. Alternative A(TURN-LANE): Maximum Accessibility Concept. 3. Alternative A(COMBO): Combination Concept.	1. Two- to three-lane alternative. 2. Four- to five-lane alternative west of Whitefish.
Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities	1. Separate ten-foot pedestrian and bicycle path. 2. Use of shoulder area as pedestrian/bike lane. 3. Special treatments for pedestrian crossing areas.	1. No pedestrians or bicycle facilities.
Transportation System Management (TSM) Concepts	1. Improved intersections. 2. Intelligent vehicle highway system (IVHS). 3. Access management. 4. Improved signals, signage, lighting. 5. Removal of on-street parking. 6. Glacier National Park signage. 7. Reduced speeds in residential areas. 8. Improved access approaches.	

Table 2-1
(continued)

Grouping	Name of Alternative Advanced	Name of Alternative Not Advanced
Transit Options	1. Park-n-ride facilities. 2. Future transit right-of-way (where possible). 3. Improved amenities for bus patrons.	1. Fixed guideway alternative. 2. Bus system improvement. 3. High occupancy vehicle lanes.
Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Options	1. Enhanced pedestrian or bicycle facilities (such as grade separations).	1. Increased telecommuting. 2. Variable work hours. 3. Employer-based carpool/vanpool programs.
No-Build	No-Build Alternative	

2.3 Alternatives Considered But Not Advanced

The following alternatives were considered but not advanced. A general description of each of the alternatives is provided, with reasons given for its dismissal. Primary criteria used to determine whether or not an alternative should be advanced were:

- Does it meet purpose and need for which the alternatives were derived.
- Is it responsive to the goals identified in Section 2.1.3.
- Does it result in adverse environmental impacts.
- Is it economically feasible.

2.3.1 Group of Parallel Corridor Alternatives

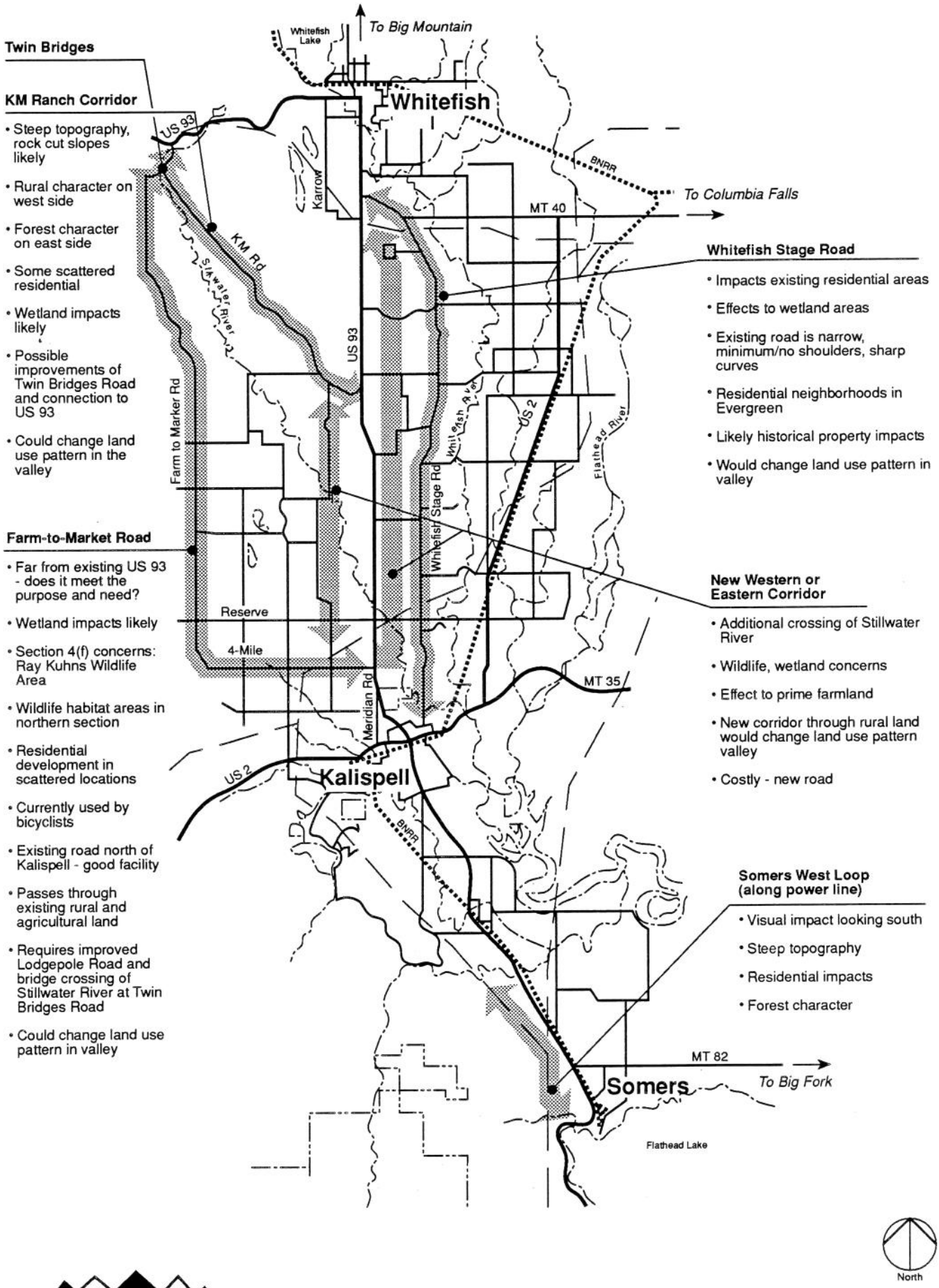
Possible locations have been identified for development of an improved transportation corridor that is parallel to US 93 (Figure 2-4). The idea of improving other parallel corridors was derived during the scoping process. These concepts assume that improvements to these parallel corridors would eliminate the need to substantially improve US 93. Thus, in order to meet project purpose and need, enough traffic would need to divert from US 93 so that major improvements to US 93 would no longer be needed.

Most of these alternatives are between Kalispell and Whitefish and would thus be implemented together with improvements to US 93 between Kalispell and Somers. The powerline alternative would be included together with improvement of US 93 north of the corridor, through Kalispell and to Whitefish.

A discussion of specific alternatives within this group follows.

2.3.1.1 Farm-to-Market Road

The Farm-to-Market Road is generally a 6.1- to 6.71-meter (20- to 22-foot) cross-section [right-of-way varies between 18.3 and 24.4 meters (60 and 80 feet)] with substandard vertical and horizontal sight distance for certain segments of the roadway. It is located along the western edge of the Flathead Valley, as shown in Figure 2-4. The road is currently posted at 55 mph. The facility is paved south of Lodgepole Road and pavement conditions are good. North of Lodgepole Road, the road is gravel.



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 2-4
Parallel Corridors

The following improvements to this facility were assumed:

- Providing a more direct access to US 93 either by utilizing the existing Twin Bridges Road or providing a new access directly north or improving Lodgepole Road.
- Improving horizontal and vertical geometry to meet the design standard for a two-lane rural road (including widening and overlaying).

This alternative was not considered reasonable since not enough traffic will be diverted off of US 93 to avoid the need for improvements to be made on US 93. If upgraded, it could, however, serve for diverting some truck traffic from Whitefish. In addition, there were concerns about future land use impacts if this road was developed into a third major transportation corridor in the valley. Other environmental impacts of concern include impacts to wetlands and a wildlife refuge.

2.3.1.2 KM Road

The KM Road is generally a 6.71- to 10.37-meter (22- to 34-foot) cross-section with a 18.3-meter (60-foot) right-of-way (see Figure 2-4). Certain sections have steep embankments on the west side. The road is gravel for the north 8.05 kilometers (five miles) and paved for the southerly 3.22 kilometers (two miles).

The following improvements to this facility have been assumed:

- Improvements to the horizontal and vertical geometry to meet minimum design standards for a two-lane road.
- Improvements on Twin Bridges Road from KM to US 93.
- Paving the entire section of KM Road.

This alternative is not considered reasonable since not enough traffic will be diverted off of US 93 to avoid the need for improvements to be made on US 93. In addition, there were concerns about future land use impacts if this road was developed into a third major transportation corridor in the valley.

2.3.1.3 Whitefish Stage Road

Whitefish Stage Road is a narrow two-lane facility with no shoulders and steep ditch sections. It is located approximately 1.61 kilometers (one mile) east of US 93 between Kalispell and Whitefish. The cross-section is a 6.71- to 7.32-meter (22- to 24-foot) paved roadway with a 18.3-meter (60-foot) right-of-way. Current posted speed varies between 35 mph [the north 1.29 kilometers (0.8 miles)] and 45 mph.

The following improvements to this facility have been assumed:

- Improving horizontal and vertical geometry to meet two-lane road standards.
- Improving the intersection of Whitefish Stage Road to MT 40.
- Improving the pavement section between MT 40 and Reserve Drive.

This alternative is not considered reasonable since not enough traffic will be diverted off of US 93 to avoid the need for improvements to be made on US 93. In addition, there were concerns about future land use impacts if this road was developed into a third major transportation corridor in the valley. Other environmental impacts of concern include historic property impacts and wetland impacts.

2.3.1.4 Somers West Loop

There is a cleared area west of the town of Somers which is jointly used for a powerline. There is no road in this cleared area.

The following improvements to this facility have been assumed:

- Intersection improvements for both the northern and southern intersections to existing US 93.
- Full development of paved sections and clear zone area.

A plan and profile was developed along this alignment and the minimum grades required were greater than 10%. Deep cuts or a tunnel would be required to develop a roadway on this alignment. For this reason, a cost estimate was not developed. Other environmental impacts of concern include effects to an existing residential area, major adverse visual impacts and ongoing erosion problems. This alternative is so costly and technically difficult that it is not considered a reasonable alternative to assess in the Draft EIS.

2.3.1.5 New Western or Eastern Corridors

These concepts assume that a completely new corridor would be developed either east or west of US 93. The corridor would be developed to full design standards. Approximately 14.18 to 24.3 hectares (35 to 60 acres) of additional right-of-way would be required.

This alternative is not considered reasonable since not enough traffic will be diverted off of US 93 to avoid the need for improvements to be made on US 93. In addition, this alternative is not consistent with Flathead County future land use goals; there were concerns about future land use impacts if this road was developed into a third major transportation corridor in the valley. Other environmental impacts of concern include an increased potential of encountering cultural material of significance and wetland and floodplain impacts.

2.3.1.6 Other Corridors Considered

Three other parallel corridors were considered:

- Improvements to US 2 (from Kalispell to Columbia Falls), which were not advanced because a project which widens US 2 to four lanes has already been approved by MDT and is scheduled to be under construction. In addition, improvements to US 2 would not provide for traffic currently using US 93 because of an origin or destination along US 93 and would thus not meet the purpose and need for the project.

- Improvements to East Shore/MT 35, which was not advanced because this alternative would only relieve traffic solely destined to Glacier National park, thus not providing for purpose and need. This could also change land use patterns in the Valley.

- Development of a new corridor using the Somers west loop, then following along the western edge of the Flathead Valley to ultimately connect to Farm-to-Market Road. This alternative would not divert enough traffic off US 93 to avoid the need for improvements to be made to US 93. In addition, it was found to create significant environmental impacts to Section 4(f) (Lone Pine State Park) and archaeological resources, would not be responsive to future land use goals and would be expensive.

2.3.2 Group of Kalispell Bypass Alternatives

Possible locations for a bypass of the City of Kalispell were previously identified as part of the *Kalispell Area Transportation Plan and Bypass Feasibility Study*, CRSS, August 1993 (Figure 2-5). These alternatives assume that development of the bypasses would reduce through traffic (automobile and truck) in the downtown areas and supplement the city's transportation network such that operations on existing US 93 would be improved.

A discussion of specific alternatives within this group follows:

2.3.2.1 Kalispell Alternative A

- Begins at US 93 South and BN railroad south of Kalispell.

- Follows the BN Railroad, a distance of about 1.61 kilometers (one mile), crossing Airport Road.

- Continues along BN Railroad alignment to Foy's Lake Road, approximately 3.22 kilometers (two miles).

- Follows Foy's Lake Road to Whalebone Road and Whalebone Road to W. Springcreek Road, approximately 3.22 kilometers (two miles).

- Follows W. Spring Creek Road north to Reserve Drive, approximately 5.63 kilometers (3.5 miles), crossing US 2, Three Mile Drive, and Four Mile Drive.

- Follows Reserve Drive east to US 93, approximately 3.22 kilometers (two miles).

This alternative is not considered reasonable, since not enough traffic would use this bypass to relieve traffic on US 93.

2.3.2.2 Kalispell Modified Alternative B

- Is identical to Alternative B south of US 2. Alternative B is described in Section 2.4.2.4.

- Follows US 2 east to North Meridian Road.

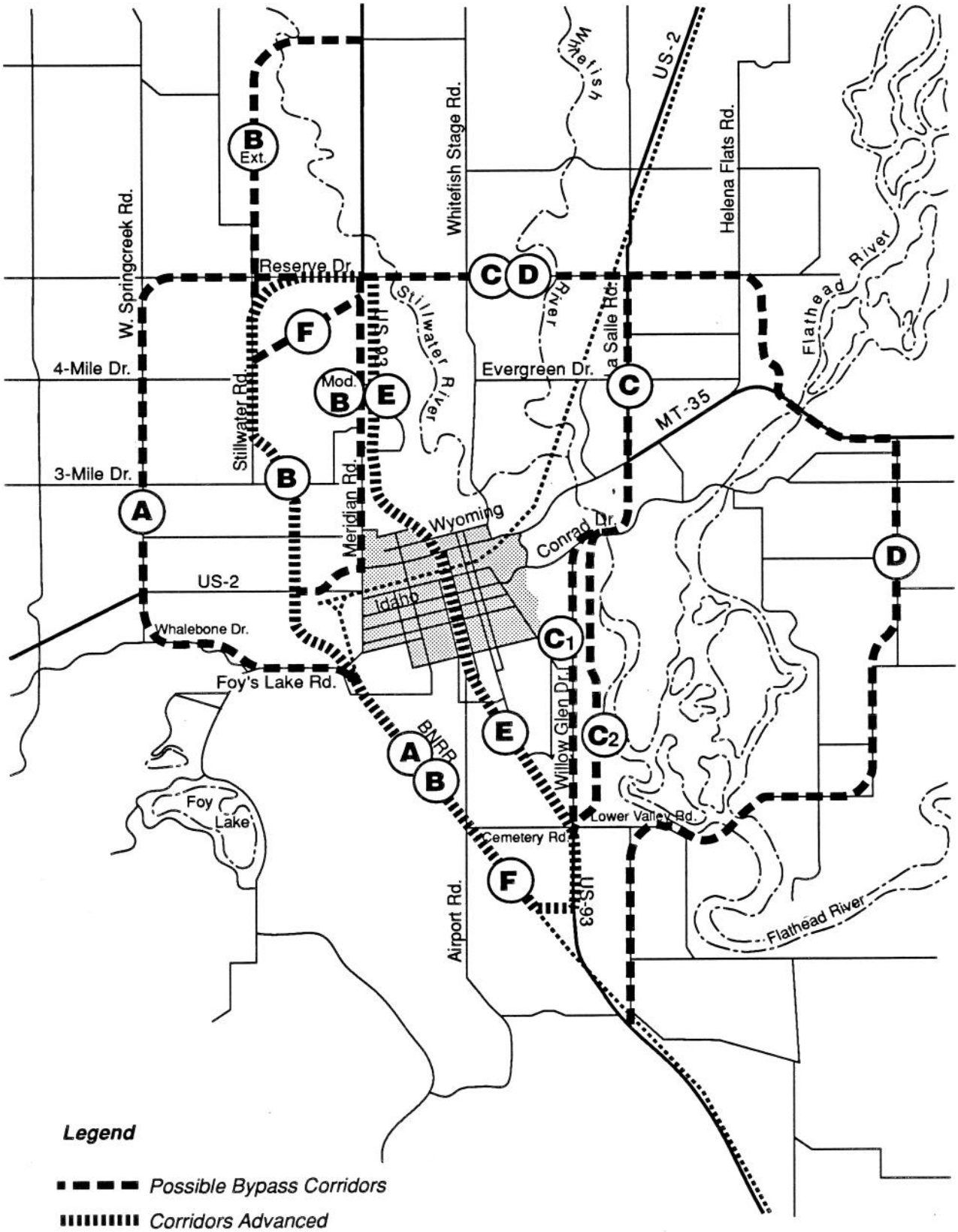


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Figure 2-5

Possible Bypass Corridors for Kalispell Area

- Follows North Meridian Road from US 2 to US 93 north.
- Follows existing US 93 north of Meridian.

This alternative is not considered reasonable because it is inconsistent with the approved master plan, it provides very little relief of traffic on US 93 north of Kalispell to Reserve and it has negative social and Section 4(f) impacts.

2.3.2.3 Kalispell Alternative C1

- Begins at US 93 South and Lower Valley Road (Four Corners intersection).
- Follows Willow Glen Drive north crossing Woodland Avenue, to Conrad Drive, approximately 4.03 kilometers (2.5 miles).
- Follows Conrad Drive east approximately 0.8 kilometer (0.5 mile).
- Extends north of Conrad on a new road alignment to the intersection of US 2/LaSalle Road/MT 35, approximately 1.13 kilometers (0.7 mile).
- Crosses US 2/MT 35 and extends along existing LaSalle Road to Reserve Drive, approximately 2.57 kilometers (1.6 miles), crossing Evergreen Drive.
- Follows Reserve Drive west to US 93, approximately 4.03 kilometers (2.5 miles), crossing the BN Railroad tracks, the Whitefish River, Whitefish Stage Road and the Stillwater River.

This alternative is not considered reasonable because **of its substantial** socioeconomic and wetland impacts.

2.3.2.4 Kalispell Alternative C2

- Begins at US 93 South and Lower Valley Road (Four Corners intersection).
- Extends north on a new road alignment along the west side of the Flathead River [about 183 meters (600 feet) east of Willow Glen Drive] to Conrad Drive.
- Is identical to Alternative C1 for the remaining corridor.

This alternative is not considered reasonable because **of its substantial** socioeconomic, wetland, floodplain and Section 4(f) impacts.

2.3.2.5 Kalispell Alternative D

- Begins at US 93 south and Demersville Road.
- Follows Demersville Road north approximately 3.22 kilometers (two miles) to Lower Valley Road.

- Follows Lower Valley Road east, crossing the Flathead River north of Foy's Bend, then east, curving to the north and extending north generally along Fairmont Road to MT 35, approximately 7.24 kilometers (4.5 miles).

- Extends west along MT 35 approximately 1.61 kilometers (one mile), crossing the Flathead River, then turning north about .322 kilometers (0.2 miles) east of Helena Flats Road, extending north approximately 1.61 kilometers (one mile) to Reserve Drive.

- Follows Reserve Drive west to US 93, approximately 5.95 kilometers (3.7 miles), crossing Helena Flats Road, US 2, the BN Railroad tracks, the Whitefish River, Whitefish Stage Road and the Stillwater River.

This alternative is not considered reasonable because it does not meet purpose and need and would have greater environmental impacts on wetlands, floodplain and endangered species.

2.3.2.6 Kalispell Alternative F

- Identical to Alternative B except the alignment follows the powerline corridor to intersect at approximately Reserve and US 93. Alternative B is described in Section 2.4.2.4.

This alternative is not considered reasonable because **of its substantial** potential Section 106 impacts and difficulty in using the State Land Board property.

2.3.2.7 Kalispell Alternative B Extended

An alternative was developed to extend Alternative B farther north before turning east to meet US 93.

This alternative is not considered reasonable for the following reasons:

- The greater amount of rolling terrain would increase cut and fill costs.

- There was public opposition to this alternative when it was considered as a part of the *Kalispell Bypass Study*.

- It would require a second crossing of the Stillwater River with associated wetland, riparian and wildlife habitat impacts.

2.3.3 Group of Whitefish Bypass Alternatives

The purpose of a bypass around the downtown area of Whitefish was to provide an alternate route for that traffic (especially trucks) that is not destined for somewhere in Whitefish. As in Kalispell, the intent of the bypasses is to reduce through traffic in Whitefish such that operations on US 93 would be improved. Bypasses of Whitefish have been studied previously (by the City of Whitefish) but not found to be feasible. Bypasses and other improvements to traffic operations in and around Whitefish are being studied as a part of the *Whitefish Traffic Operations Study*, being conducted by Carter & Burgess. Recommendations from this study are anticipated in **the fall of** 1994.

Through the public scoping process, five bypass alternatives were developed for the Whitefish area (Figure 2-6). In addition, two alternatives (shown on Figure 2-6 as Alternative F and G) were developed to improve overall traffic operations on US 93 through the downtown area of Whitefish.

A discussion of specific alternatives within this group follows:

2.3.3.1 Whitefish Alternative A

This alternative begins approximately 2.73 kilometers (1.7 miles) south of the MT 40 intersection with US 93 and proceeds in a northwesterly direction. This alternate:

- Follows an east-west existing dirt road for the first 2.73 kilometers (1.7 miles).
- Proceeds north through natural drainage swales.
- Cross-section: two-lane with shoulders.

This alternative is not considered reasonable, since not enough traffic diversion off of US 93 would occur. This alternative was found based on the traffic modeling to divert less than one percent of US 93 traffic. There was substantial public opposition to this alternative.

2.3.3.2 Whitefish Alternative B

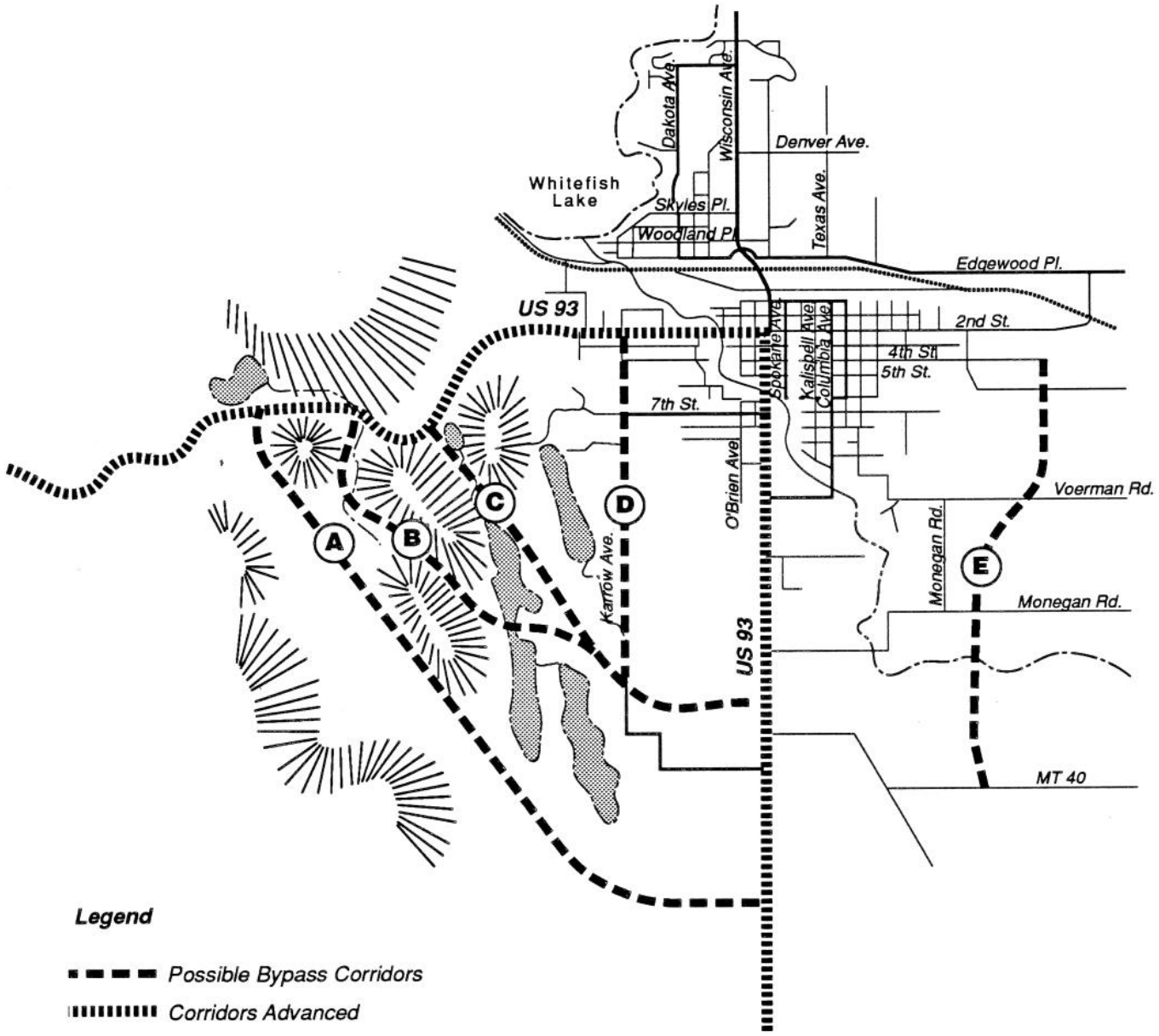
This alternative was studied earlier by the City of Whitefish. It crosses the middle of Blanchard Lake and generally passes between two ridges where steep side slopes may be present. Cut and fill slopes could be extensive, especially west of Blanchard Lake. This alternate:

- Begins at the MT 40/US 93 intersection.
- Proceeds west to a crossing of Blanchard Lake, where a bridge of 305 meters (1,000 feet) is required.
- Terminates at US 93 in the vicinity of a 6 degree curve and 6 percent vertical grade (undesirable conditions).
- Cross-section: two-lane with shoulders.

This alternative is not considered reasonable, since not enough traffic diversion (two to three percent) off of US 93 would occur according to the traffic modeling that was done. In addition, its **substantial** wetland and floodplain impacts are of concern. There was substantial public opposition to this alternative.

2.3.3.3 Whitefish Alternative C

This alternative follows the powerline easement and intersects with US 93 north of Blanchard Lake. It passes through rolling terrain south of Blanchard Lake, basically following an existing gravel access road which is adjacent to numerous residences and provides access to the boat launching area at Blanchard Lake. This alternative:



Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 2-6

Possible Bypass Corridors for Whitefish Area

- Begins at the US 93/MT 40 intersection.
- Proceeds along the same alignment as Alternative B for the first 2.41 kilometers (1.5 miles).
- Follows the eastern side of Blanchard Lake, along the Hungry Horse to Triega Power Line [within a 30.5-meter (100-foot) right-of-way].
- Terminates at US 93.
- Cross-section: two-lane with shoulders.

This alternative is not considered reasonable, since not enough traffic diversion (two to three percent) off of US 93 would occur, according to the traffic modeling that was done. There was also substantial public opposition to this alternative.

2.3.3.4 Whitefish Alternative D

This alternative begins at the MT 40/US 93 intersection, proceeds near the powerline easement and then follows along Karrow Avenue north to US 93.

The existing cross-section of Karrow Avenue is a 6.1- to 6.7-meter (20- to 22-foot) paved roadway. This alternate:

- Begins at the US 93/MT 40 intersection.
- Proceeds along the same alignment as Alternative B for the first 2.25 kilometers (1.4 miles).
- Then proceeds northerly along Karrow Avenue.
- Terminates at an intersection east of the golf course and west of Whitefish River.

This alternative is not considered reasonable, since it does not divert enough traffic off of US 93 to improve traffic operations. This alternative has negative socioeconomic impacts **(increased noise, decreased property value, increased accident potential for pedestrians and bicyclists)** and there was substantial public opposition to this alternative.

2.3.3.5 Whitefish Alternative E

This alternative consists of an extension of Whitefish Stage Road north to connect to Second Street east of downtown Whitefish. It bypasses only a portion of the City of Whitefish. It would require a new crossing of the Whitefish River. This alternative:

- Extends from the south from the MT 40/Whitefish Stage Road intersection.
- Crosses the Whitefish River on a 61-meter (200-foot) long structure.
- Proceeds north along a section line until it intersects with Second Street.

- Second Street provides access back to US 93.
- Cross-section: two-lane with shoulders.

This alternative is not considered reasonable, since it does not divert enough traffic off both Spokane and Second to improve operations on these streets. There was some public opposition to this alternative.

2.3.3.6 Whitefish Alternatives F and G

These alternatives were advanced for further study and are described in Section 2.4.2.

2.3.4 Other Highway Construction Alternatives

A number of different highway construction alternatives in the vicinity of US 93 were considered but not advanced. These included:

- Construction of a four- or five-lane segment west of the intersection of Second and Baker Streets in Whitefish. This alternative was not advanced because future traffic projections in this area indicated that a two- or three-lane cross-section was sufficient to meet projected traffic demands.
- Construction of a two-or three-lane section for the majority of the corridor. This alternative was not advanced because it would not meet purpose and need. Future level of service analyses indicate the level of service (LOS) E or F would be experienced for much of the corridor, if additional capacity is not added.
- Construction of a frontage road south of Kalispell from Four Corners to 13th Street. This concept was not advanced because of unacceptable property impacts to numerous existing businesses.
- Construction of split alignments north of Kalispell that impacted wetland areas. These were modified to avoid wetland impact as much as possible.
- Construction of a two-lane section for Kalispell Alternative B north of Two Mile. This was insufficient to meet Year 2015 travel demands and would thus not meet project purpose and need.
- Construction of a portion of Kalispell Alternative B north of Foy's Lake Road which was located parallel to Ashley Creek. This portion of Alternative B was not advanced because of greater wetland and floodplain impact and greater impact to an existing residential area.
- **Inclusion of a left-turn lane between Airport and Ninth in Kalispell. This was not included because it would result in impact to the trees south of the courthouse. Provision for access from northbound US 93 to northbound First Avenue West may be accommodated at the traffic signal at 18th.**
- **Conversion of First Avenues East and West in Kalispell to a one-way couplet. This alternative was not advanced because there was no noticeable increase in capacity provided, so the bypass would still be needed.**

- **Inclusion of a single southbound lane on Spokane, along with the C-3 alternative. This alternative was not advanced because it would have many of the impacts of the four-lane alternative (no provision of left-turns, no provision for parking or bike lanes and some impacts to the trees). There would also be some safety concerns similar to the C(OFF-SET) alternative.**

- **Inclusion of split alignments (as shown in the Draft EIS on Figures 2-26 and 2-27). These were not recommended because of a greater impact to prime farmland and increased right-of-way needed.**

2.3.5 Group of Mass Transit Options

Several options for mass transit were considered but not advanced, including:

- Fixed guideway.
- Bus system improvements.
- High occupancy vehicle lanes.

Fixed guideway options which were evaluated include:

- Light rail transit.
- Commuter rail transit.
- Dedicated busway.
- Elevated rapid transit (such as monorail or personal rapid transit).

In rural areas, the share of trips that would likely be carried by a fixed guideway system is less than one percent. If a fixed guideway system were implemented without additional capacity improvements to US 93, the future travel demands along US 93 would not be met. Traffic would operate at unacceptable congestion levels and safety conditions would not be improved. In addition, the large operating costs ($4 to $25 million annually) for a fixed guideway system would exceed the financial capacity of any public agency currently in the Flathead Valley. For these reasons, fixed guideway options were not advanced.

Numerous options were considered to improve the bus system. These included:

- Expanded Eagle Transit service (more coverage, more frequent service; focused on commuters, shopping, school, tourist destinations).

- Development of a transit center in downtown Kalispell, which could serve as a focal point for intercity buses, taxis and Eagle Transit.

- Expanded Flathead Area Shuttle Transport (FAST) service.

- Development of paratransit services (shared taxi, van transit, employer operated shuttles and vans, dial-a-ride).

- Expanded Rocky Mountain Transportation bus services (which primarily serve tourist trips).

- Regularly scheduled tourist buses, from hotels to RV Parks to Glacier National Park, lakes and resorts.

These alternatives were not advanced for the following reasons:

- They would not solve future travel demand on US 93. Traffic congestion would continue to increase and safety conditions would not be implemented.
- The operating costs of an expanded tri-city bus system could not be covered without a public subsidy.

High-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes or lanes designated as HOV use during peak periods were considered. This alternative was not advanced for the following reasons:

- It would exacerbate existing traffic congestion in the general purpose lanes.
- It would likely only result in a decrease in travel of five to ten percent, which is insufficient to meet future travel demand on US 93.

2.3.6 Group of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Options

TDM type options which were evaluated include:

- Increased telecommuting.
- Variable work hours (which reduces traffic during peak travel times).
- Employer-based carpool and vanpool programs.
- Parking management (increases in parking pricing, reducing parking supply, priority in parking given to carpools or vanpools).

These strategies were not advanced for the following reasons:

- These strategies are primarily directed at commuter travel or travel that occurs on a regular basis. These strategies can reduce single-occupant travel by two to five percent, but if the commuter trips in the summer peak months only represent approximately ten to 15 percent of total trips, then less than one percent of overall travel would likely be reduced.
- There are only a few large employers along US 93 who could implement a carpool or vanpool program.
- The long-term effectiveness of TDM measures is questionable and could only be improved by a strong commitment from major employers.
- For all of these reasons, TDM strategies (by themselves) were determined to not meet the future travel demand on US 93. They should continue to be encouraged, however, for implementation by major Flathead County employers.

2.4 Alternatives Advanced

The following section provides information about those reasonable alternatives which are analyzed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5 of this Draft EIS. Information provided in this section represents the best information available from corridor studies completed at a conceptual design level of detail. Details about the alternatives will be completed during the final design process.

2.4.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative for US 93 consists of the existing US 93 cross-section with some already committed highway improvements and minor, short-term maintenance or safety enhancements. These projects are defined in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. They include improvements to US 2, Main Street (Kalispell), MT 35, MT 82, Meridian Road (Kalispell), Baker Avenue (Whitefish) and the Whitefish Viaduct over the Burlington Northern Railroad.

This alternative could also include Transportation System Management (TSM) measures, such as are listed in Section 2.4.4.5.

2.4.2 Build Alternatives

One location alternative (Alternative A) is being analyzed for the entire corridor. Alternative A is located along the existing US 93 corridor. In the Whitefish and Kalispell areas, two additional location alternatives (B and C) are under evaluation in this document (see Figure 2-7). Appendix A of this document includes more detailed drawings of these alternatives.

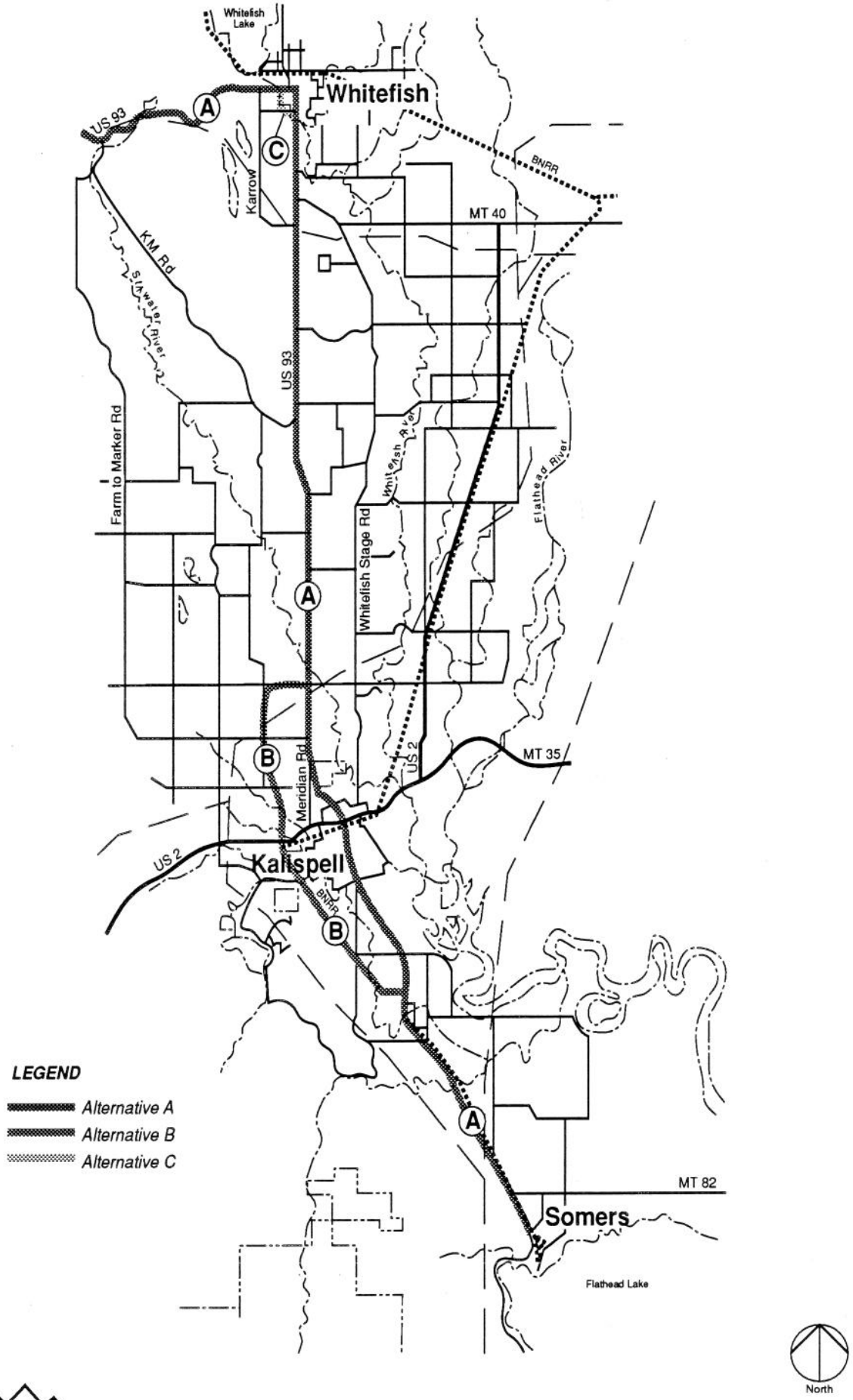
In different segments of the corridor, different lane configurations for the different location alternatives (A, B and C) are under consideration. The alternatives have been named using the following system:

- A capital letter (A, B or C) based on the location of the alternative, as shown on Figure 2-7.
- Additional descriptive information is provided in parentheses. This information designates a particular design concept. The design concepts are primarily related to different lane configurations.

By segment, these alternatives are:

Segment	Alternatives Being Considered
1. Somers to Kalispell	No-Build, A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)
2. Kalispell Area	No-Build, A*, A plus B(MEDIAN), A plus B(TURN-LANE)
3. Kalispell to Whitefish	No-Build, A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)
4. Whitefish Area	No-Build, A(FOUR-LANE), C(OFF-SET), C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), C(COUPLET-4)
5. Baker to Karrow and West of Whitefish	No-Build, A*
6. Karrow Avenue to MP 129	No-Build, A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE)

**The Alternative A concepts in Kalispell and west of Whitefish differ from the rest of the corridor and are described in Section 2.4.2.5.*



Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 2-7
Reasonable Location Alternatives

The design volume used for each of the alternatives is summer average daily traffic.

Descriptions of each of these alternatives follow.

2.4.2.1 Alternative A(MEDIAN)

This alternative would reconstruct US 93 in basically the same corridor as it currently exists. The roadway would be widened to meet capacity requirements of two travel lanes in each direction with provisions for left turns.

Alternative A(MEDIAN) was developed with the intent to focus primarily on through trips, while reducing congestion and enhancing safety. During the public involvement process, this alternative was called the Maximum Capacity Concept. These trips primarily serve the longer distance commuter, the regional recreational driver, and the local commuter. The base design is a four-lane facility with either a raised or depressed median (Figure 2-8). Median types were chosen based on the urban versus rural nature of the adjacent land use (Figure 2-9).

Alternative A(MEDIAN) has a different typical section in the segment west of Whitefish between Karrow Avenue and **west of Lion Mountain Road** approximately Milepost 129. In this segment, the section includes two through lanes plus a 2.44-meter (eight-foot) shoulder separated by a raised median, as shown on Figure 2-8 **(Section L)**.

The median type is a function of the design speed, right-of-way available, and the character of the **adjacent land use** (rural or suburban). Median designs could include depressed with low maintenance landscaping, raised with hardscape such as patterned concrete, or landscaping, or flush with patterned concrete, or some other kind of texture. These concepts provide for a design speed of 70 mph desirable in the rural areas **(with a depressed median)** and 50 mph desirable in the urban areas **(with a raised median)**. Speed limits will be set based on an engineering analysis of the roadway, **including** road user characteristics and safety. **All raised medians will be lighted for safety reasons.**

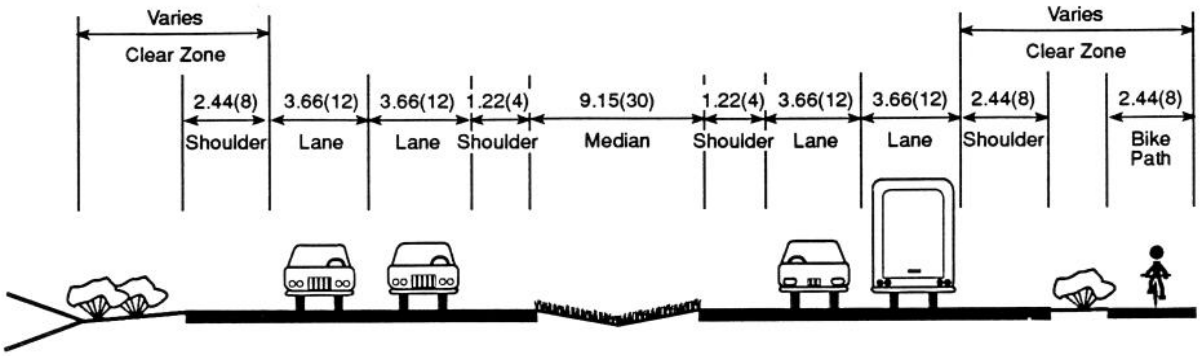
This alternative also assumes frontage roads and access consolidation as described in more detail in Section 2.4.2.3.

2.4.2.2 Alternative A(TURN-LANE)

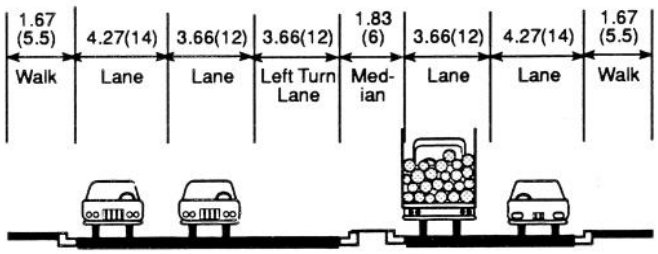
This alternative would also reconstruct US 93 in basically the same corridor as it currently exists.

Alternative A(TURN-LANE) is intended to serve local residential and commercial trips, as well as to reduce congestion and enhance safety. During the public involvement process, this alternative was called the Maximum Accessibility Concept. The geometric design is four through lanes with a fifth lane provided for a two-way **center** left-turn lane with 70 mph desirable in rural areas and 50 mph desirable in urban areas. Speed limits will be set based on an engineering analysis of the roadway, **including** road user characteristics and safety. The design for the left-turn lane is a continuous two-way left-turn lane which removes the deceleration of the left turning vehicle from the through traffic (Figures 2-10 and 2-11).

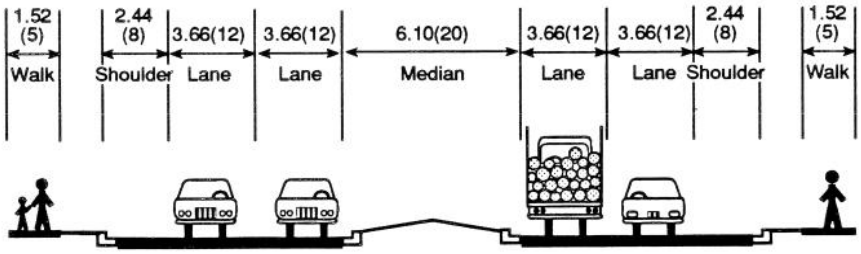
Alternative A(TURN-LANE) has a different typical section west of Whitefish between Karrow Avenue and approximately Milepost 129. In this area, it consists of two through lanes (one each direction) with shoulders and a third center turn lane.



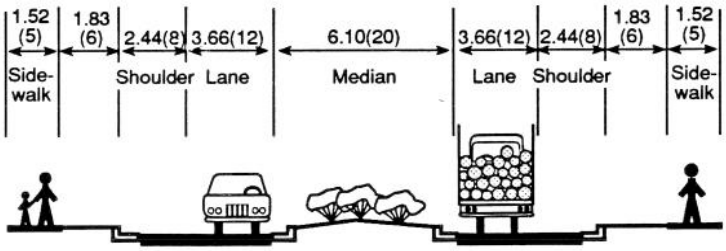
A Depressed Median



E Raised Median/Left-turn Lane • Urban Section



F Raised Median • Urban Section



L Raised Median • Two-Lane Section

Notes:

1. For Sections A & F, all measurements are in meters (feet) to edge of pavement.
2. For Sections E & L, all measurements are in meters (feet) to face of curb.

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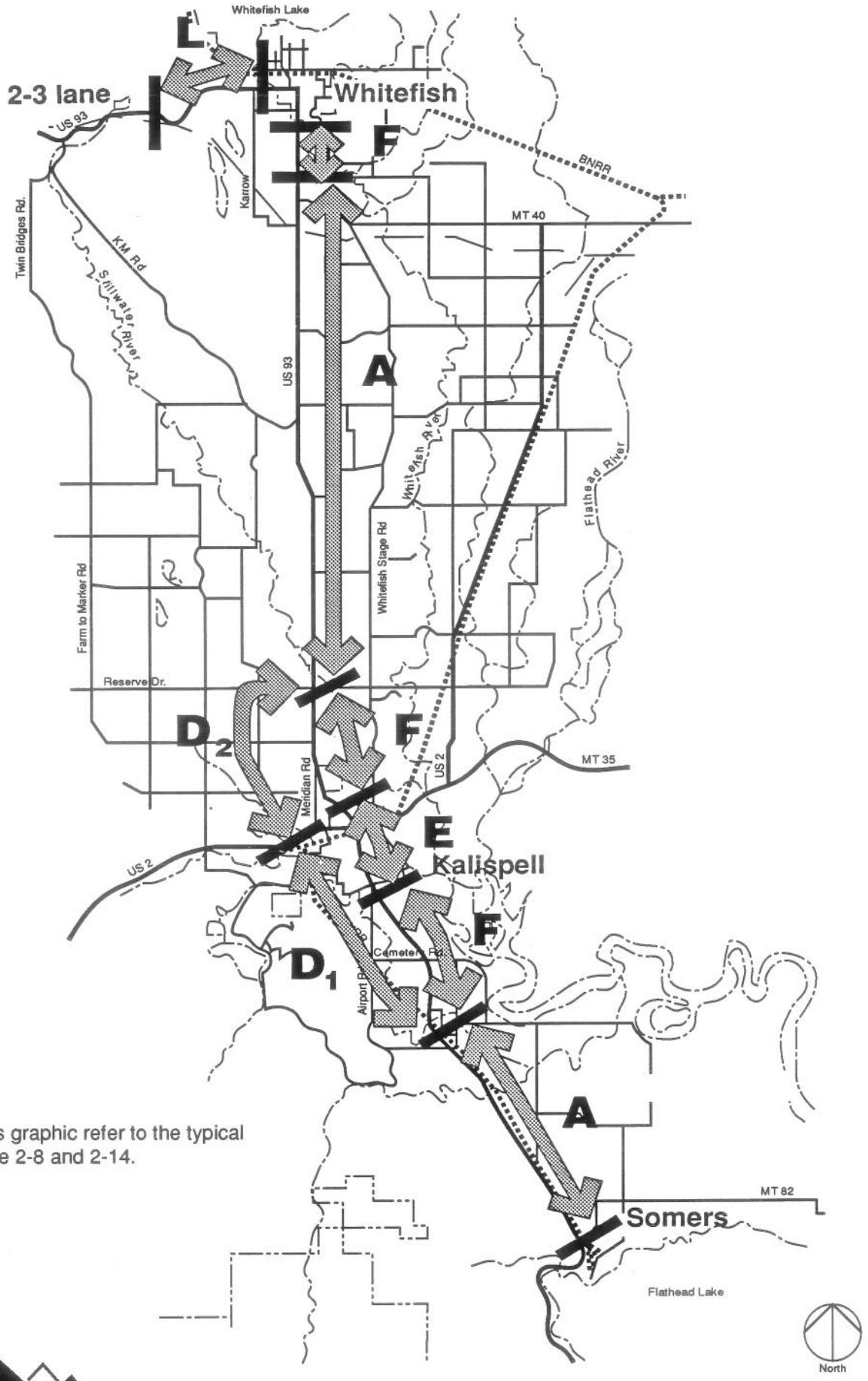
Figure 2-8

Typical Sections • Alternative A (MEDIAN)



Note:
The letters on this graphic refer to the typical sections on Figure 2-8 and 2-14.

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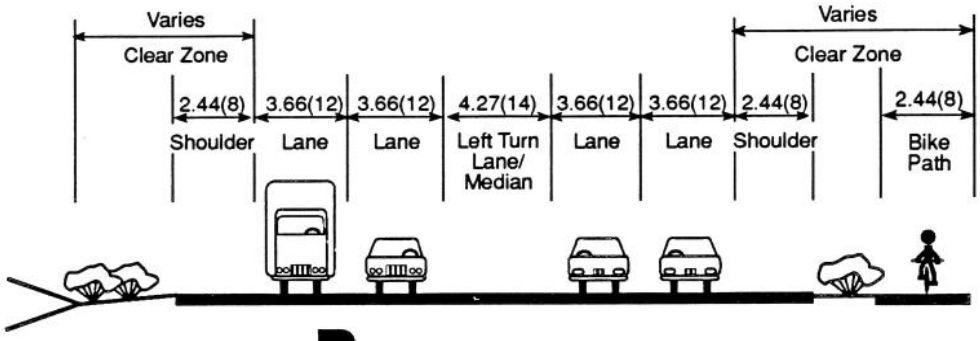
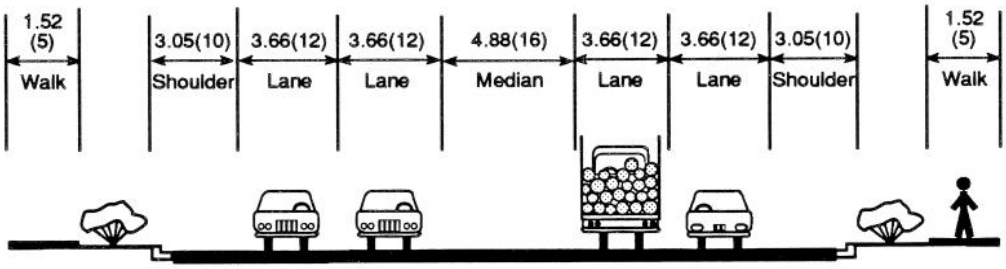
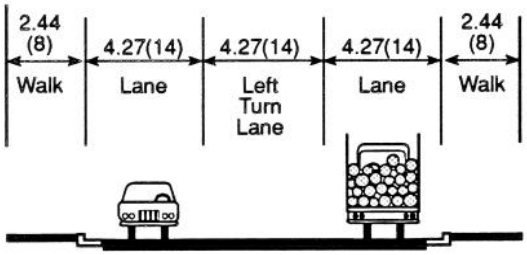
Figure 2-9
Alternative A (MEDIAN)



B 5-Lane • Rural Section



C 5-Lane • Urban Section



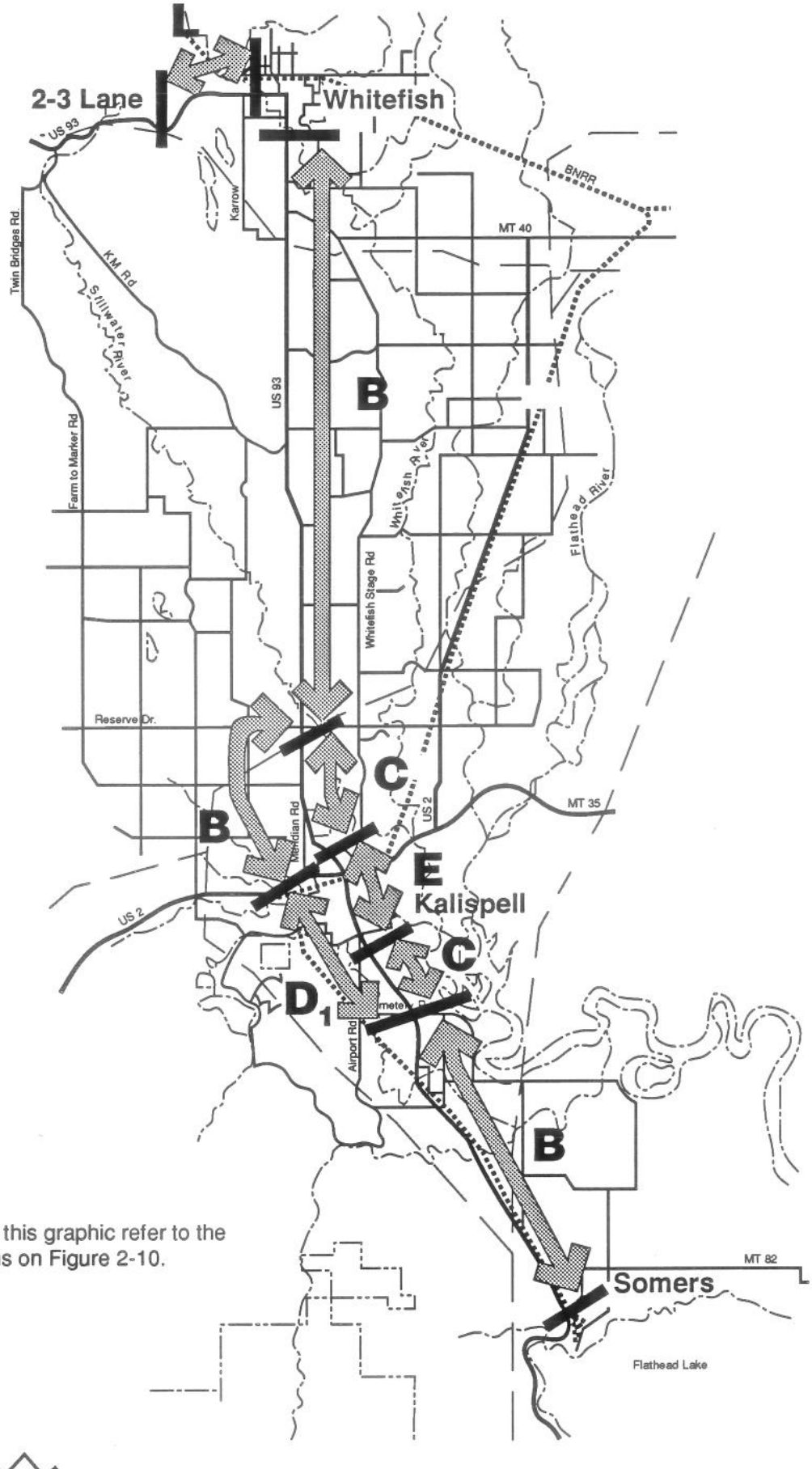
K 3-Lane • Urban Section

Notes:

1. For Section B, all measurements are in meters (feet) to edge of pavement.
2. For Sections C & K, all measurements are in meters (feet) to face of curb.

Figure 2-10

Typical Sections • Alternative A (TURN-LANE)



Note:
The letters on this graphic refer to the typical sections on Figure 2-10.

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Figure 2-11
Alternative A (TURN-LANE)

No truck U-turns or frontage roads are needed. Transition areas are also included to ensure a safe transition from different cross-sections.

2.4.2.3 Alternative A(COMBO)

Alternative A(COMBO) combines cross-sections and features from both Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(TURN-LANE). This alternative **(shown on Figure 2-12)** was developed to respond to the characteristics of a particular segment along US 93. Divided four-lane sections are used where right-of-way or environmental resources are not a major constraint or where existing access requirements are not a major factor. Undivided four- or five-lane sections are recommended where right-of-way is a constraint or where there is a need to provide for numerous existing accesses.

The Alternative A(COMBO) which is illustrated on Figure 2-12 is slightly different from the A(COMBO) which was assessed in the Draft EIS.

This alternative has been selected as the preferred alternative, as described in Section 2.6.

Frontage roads (such as on Figure 2-13) **have been included** to provide adequate side access adjacent to the divided highway locations **and to accommodate for truck U-turns**. Frontage road locations which have been assumed are:

a. Provide new frontage road along west side of US 93 from Forest Hill Road to Fir Terrace. **This has been shortened based on input received during the public hearing process.**

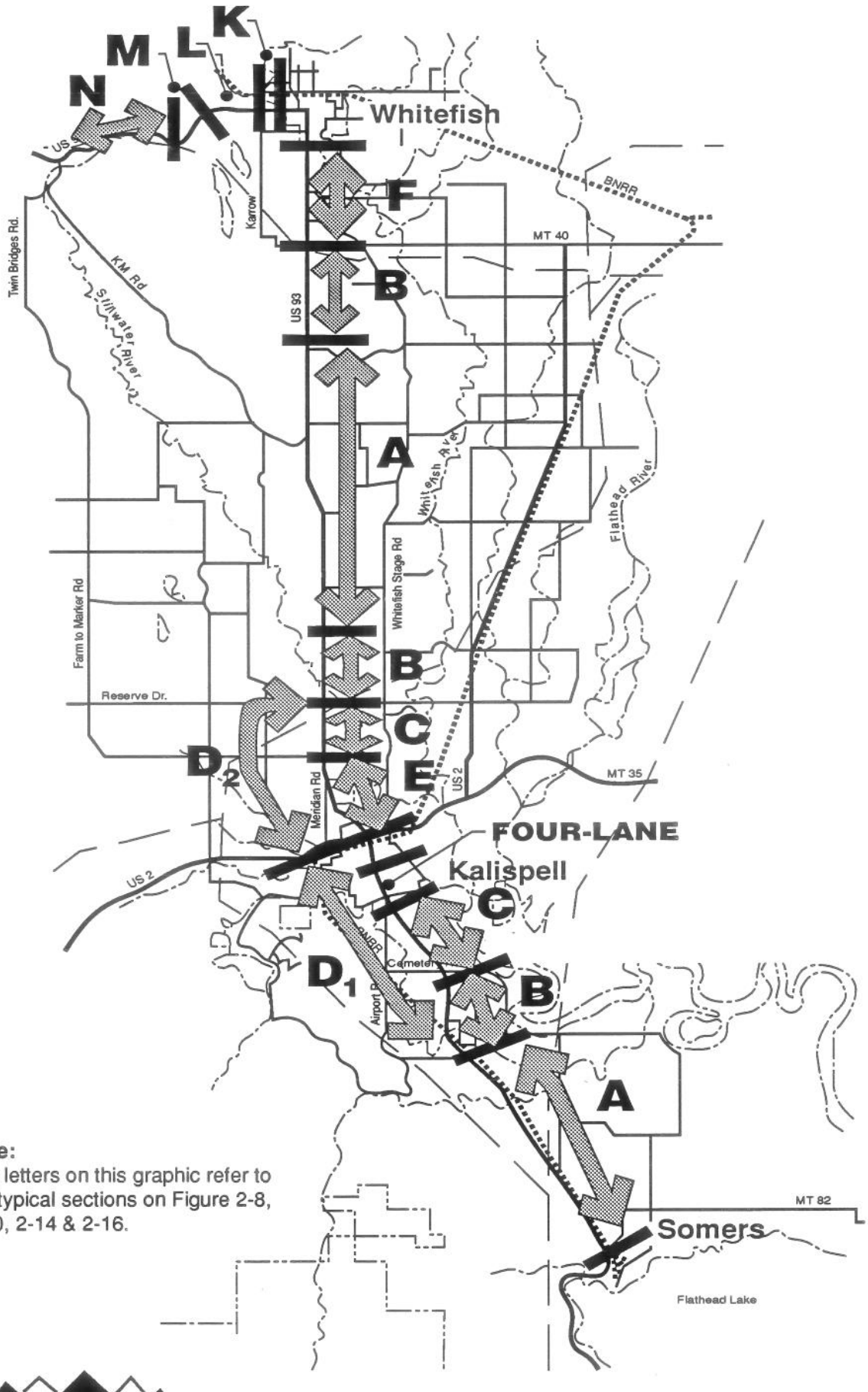
b. Use of **Antelope Trail Road** in Happy Valley from **Bowdish** Road to **Timber Lane. Antelope Trail Road would be extended south to Bowdish Road to allow access to the frontage route from that intersection**.

c. Provide new frontage road on the east side of US 93 just north of Scenic Ridge Road.

Transition areas are also included to ensure a safe transition from different cross-sections.

Consolidation of access that has been assumed is:

- Between Ball's Crossing and Airport Road, consolidate driveways and close multiple drives.
- From Idaho to Wyoming Street, reconstruct a raised median to develop left-turn lanes. Parking will be eliminated.
- From **Grandview** to Reserve, **consolidate driveways where possible**.
- From Reserve to north of Stillwater River, consolidate driveways on the east side.
- From KM Road to JP Road, close and consolidate driveways where possible.
- North of Blanchard Lake Road, consolidate access on the west side.
- From JP Road to Columbia Avenue, consolidate driveways where possible.



Note:
The letters on this graphic refer to the typical sections on Figure 2-8, 2-10, 2-14 & 2-16.

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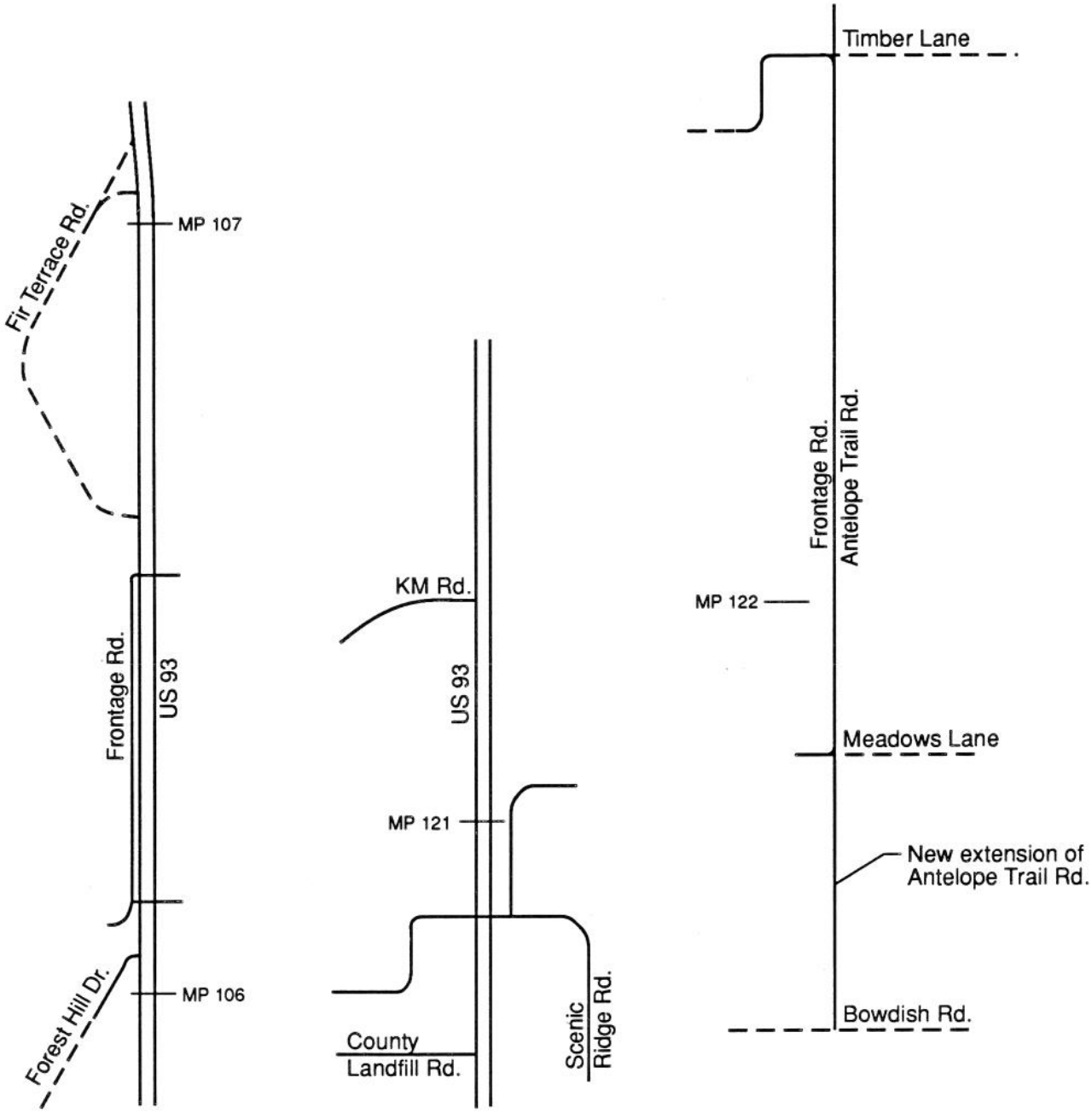
Figure 2-12
Alternative A (COMBO)



West side of US 93 Forest Hill Rd. to Fir Terrace Dr.

East side of US 93 just north of Scenic Ridge Rd.

Antelope Trail Rd. in Happy Valley Bowdish to Timber Lane

North

Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 2-13

Frontage Road Locations

The following assumptions have been made throughout the corridor about the general location of the new centerline compared to the existing centerline. Off-set locations are approximately 6.1 to 9.15 meters (20 to 30 feet) away from the existing centerline. These assumptions are based on a conceptual level analysis of aerial photography:

- Segment 1 (**MT 82 to Rocky Cliff Road**) east offset.
- Segment 2 (**Rocky Cliff Road** to North of Stillwater River) centered location.
- Segment 3 (North of Stillwater River to **Schrade** Road) west offset.
- Segment 4 (Schrade Road to KM Road) east offset.
- Segment 5 (KM Road to MP **122.7**) west offset.
- Segment 6 (MP **122.7** through and west of Whitefish) centered location.

This alternative also includes the following assumptions:

- **Right-of-way in urban sections which is wide enough to accommodate a future raised median.**
- **Accommodations for future raised median specifically for pedestrians in the Happy Valley area, if such pedestrian volumes warrant this treatment in the future.**
- **From MT 40 to the Whitefish River, the raised median is assumed to be constructed when traffic volumes warrant the raised median. If construction occurs prior to this time, a five-lane alternative is assumed.**

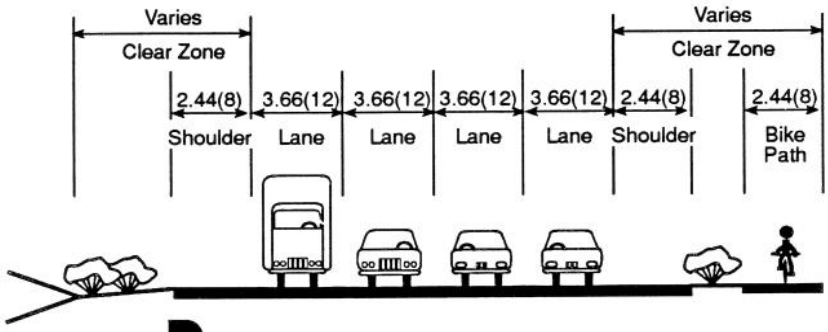
2.4.2.4 Kalispell Area Alternatives

The following cross-sections are assumed for the general Kalispell area, both within town (along Main Street) and along the bypass:

2.4.2.4.1 Kalispell Main Street

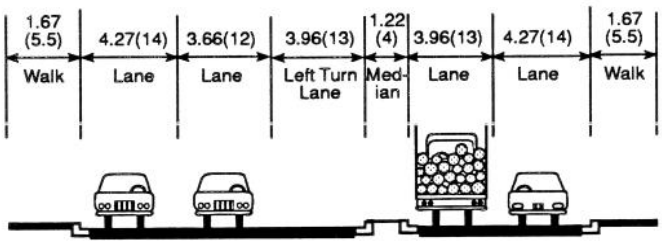
Figure 2-14 illustrates the recommended cross-sections along Main Street through Kalispell. They include:

- From Airport Road to Ninth Street, four **3.66-meter (12-foot)** through lanes are proposed with **curb and gutter** and sidewalks.
- From **Idaho** to Wyoming, four lanes with a narrow raised median **and turn lanes at intersections**.
- On-street parking would be removed for approximately three blocks south of Ninth Street, north of Idaho and Center to Idaho.
- **Urban five-lane section with curb and gutter between Grandview and Reserve; rural five-lane section with shoulders between Grandview and MP 117.**



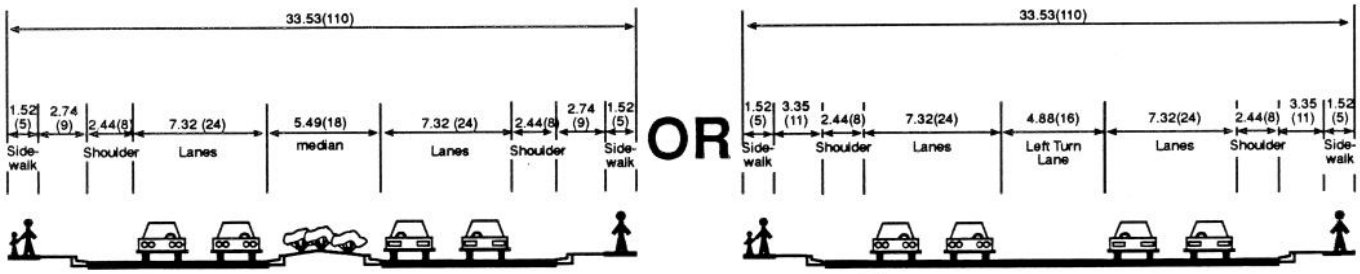
D_1 BYPASS
4-Lane • Rural Section (south of US 2)

Note: All measurements are in meters (feet) to edge of pavement.



E Raised Median/Left-turn Lane (Idaho to Wyoming)

Note: All measurements are in meters (feet) to face of curb



D_2 B (MEDIAN) (Bypass)

(Alternative section north of US 2)

D_3 B (TURN-LANE) (Bypass)

Note:
Right-of-way for Alternative D_2 will be reserved; however the actual design built could be D_2 or D_3.

Figure 2-14
Cross Sections for Kalispell Area

2.4.2.4.2 Kalispell Bypass

The general description of the location of the Kalispell bypass is:

- **Begins generally at US 93 South and BN Railroad. The south connection was modified through the public involvement process to reduce wetland and private property impacts. It connects to US 93, as shown in Appendix A.**
- Follows the BN Railroad right-of-way, a distance of about 1.61 kilometers (one mile), crossing Airport Road.
- Continues along BN Railroad alignment to Foy's Lake Road, approximately 3.22 kilometers (two miles).
- Crosses Foy's Lake Road curving west then north to cross US 2 west of the Appleway intersection, approximately 1.61 kilometers (one mile).
- Extends north of US 2 on new road alignment through Two Mile Drive area, crossing Two Mile and Three Mile Drives, approximately 1.61 kilometers (one mile).
- **Just south of Two Mile Drive, a realignment (from that shown in the Draft EIS) is assumed. The purpose of this realignment is to avoid impacts to the recently approved Greenbriar Subdivision. The realignment is approximately 0.80 kilometer (one-half mile) to the west from south of Two Mile to Three Mile Drive (see Appendix A).**
- Extends north and west to Stillwater Road then north to Reserve Drive, approximately 3.22 kilometers (two miles), crossing Four Mile Drive.
- Follows Reserve Drive east to US 93, approximately 1.61 kilometers (one mile).

Other elements of the design are:

- **South of US 2, the typical section is four 3.66-meter (12-foot) lanes with left-turn lanes as needed at critical intersections.**
- **Right-of-way to be acquired is sufficient to allow for future implementation of a depressed median.**

Raised?

- Four intersections will require major cross-street realignment:
  - Airport Road
  - Sunnyside Drive
  - US 2
  - Reserve Drive and Stillwater Road
- Route signing indicating the new roadway as "Alternate Route US 93".
- **Virtually all future access rights would be purchased.**

Alternative B would be implemented in Kalispell in addition to improvements to **Main Street, as described in Section 2.4.2.4.1**.

Due to limited funding, Alternative B will likely be built as staged construction. The right-of-way is planned to be acquired for the full design, but only two lanes are likely to be built at first, with the rest being built at a later date.

2.4.2.5 Whitefish Area Alternatives

Six build alternatives were considered in Whitefish. These are summarized here:

2.4.2.5.1 Alternative A(FOUR-LANE)

A unique alternative in Whitefish is being considered. This alternative is located on existing US 93 (Spokane and Second). This alternative is one of six being considered in Whitefish proper. Alternative A(FOUR-LANE) consists of:

- Four 3.33-meter (11-foot) lanes on Spokane and Second Street; prohibit left turns at peak periods.
- Intersection improvements (widen radii on southwest corner to accommodate westbound to southbound dual right turns) at Spokane/Second; displace small business at southwest corner.
- Remove parking on Spokane and Second Street between Spokane and Baker.

2.4.2.5.2 Alternative C(OFF-SET)

Alternative C(OFF-SET) consists of splitting traffic between Baker and Spokane, including:

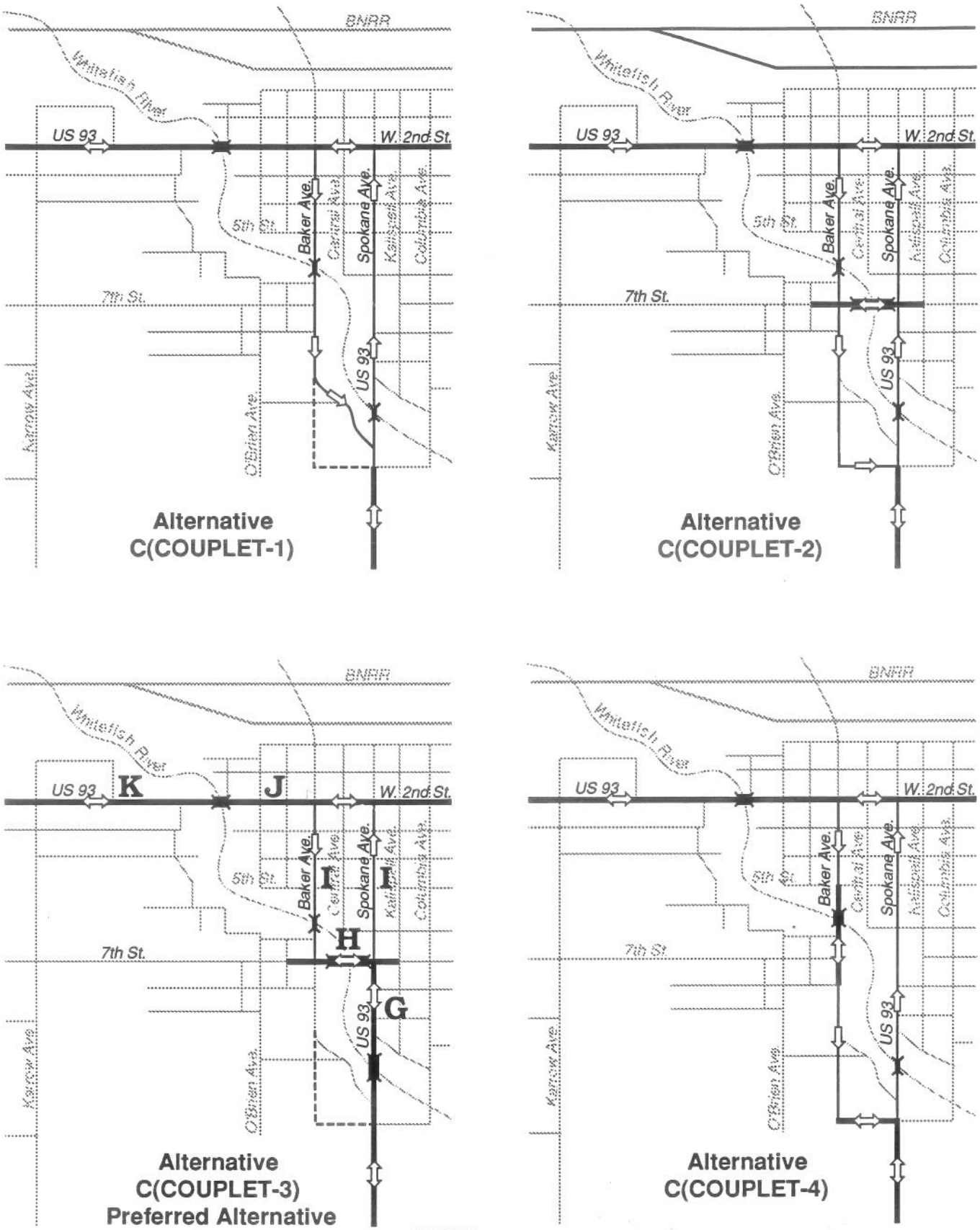
- Remove parking on Spokane Avenue and Second Street between Spokane and Baker.
- Add bike lane on Spokane.
- Add third lane for two lanes northbound; one lane southbound (Spokane).
- Add third lane for two lanes westbound; one lane eastbound (Second between Spokane and Baker).
- Improve geometry on Baker; sign as alternate US 93 route; add bike lane.
- Add third lane for two lanes southbound; one lane northbound (Baker).

2.4.2.5.3 Alternative C(COUPLET-1)

This alternative consists of developing a one-way couplet, with Spokane Avenue providing for the northbound traffic movement and Baker Avenue providing for the southbound traffic movement. During the public involvement process, this alternative was called Alternative G.

As shown on Figure 2-15, this alternative consists of:

- Existing US 93 pavement width will remain as it exists today, but will be striped to provide two 3.66-meter (12-foot) northbound lanes, plus a 3.05-meter (ten-foot) on-street bike lane and either a 3.05-meter (ten-foot) parking lane or 3.05-meter (ten-foot) shoulder. The southbound lanes will be provided along Baker with an improved cross-section two 3.66-meter (12-foot) lanes, 2.44-meter (eight-foot) shoulders, curb and gutter and 1.53-meter (five-foot) sidewalks. Baker Avenue would also need to be extended an additional 0.32 kilometers (0.2 mile), intersecting US 93 to create a four-legged intersection with an existing east approach of Columbia Street. This extension has been



Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 2-15

Sub-alternatives for Location Alternative C in Whitefish

identified by the City of Whitefish as Phase 1 improvements to Baker Avenue. The Baker Avenue extension is not assumed to be constructed as a part of the US 93 project.

- Revising traffic control of selected intersecting streets.
- Upgrading the pavement sections on Baker Street.
- Improving intersections to existing US 93.

2.4.2.5.4 Alternative C(COUPLET-2)

This alternative consists of developing a one-way couplet, with Spokane Avenue providing for the northbound traffic movement and Baker Avenue providing for the southbound traffic movement.

This alternative consists of:

- Same as C(COUPLET-1) except 7th Street is extended across the Whitefish River between Baker on the west to Kalispell Avenue on the east. This provides better circulation for traffic between the one-way streets.
- Requires a new long bridge over the river and adjacent wetland.
- Requires additional commercial right-of-way between Spokane Avenue and Kalispell Avenue.
- The diagonal section of Baker along the west side of the river has not been provided in this alternative. The south end of Alternative C(COUPLET-2) begins at Columbia Avenue.

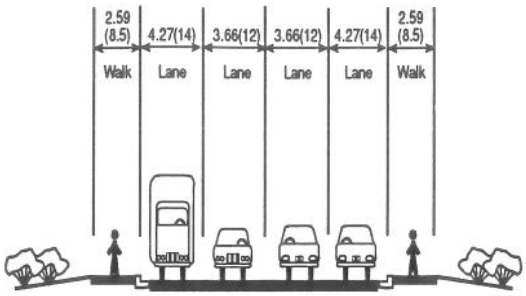
2.4.2.5.5 Alternative C(COUPLET-3)

This alternative consists of developing a one-way couplet, with Spokane Avenue providing for the northbound traffic movement and Baker Avenue providing for the southbound traffic movement.

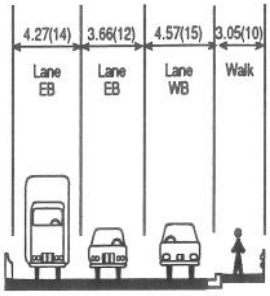
This alternative consists of:

- Alternative C(COUPLET-3) continues US 93 on Spokane north to 7th Avenue. It then splits into a one-way couplet on Spokane (northbound) and Baker (southbound) between 7th Avenue and 2nd Avenue.
- This requires the construction of a new bridge on 7th Avenue across the Whitefish River and adjacent wetland between Baker and Spokane. **A cross-section for this is shown on Figure 2-16a. The abutment for this bridge will be set so as to accommodate a new trail along the Whitefish River, below the bridge.**
- To improve circulation, the link of 7th Avenue between Spokane Avenue and Kalispell Avenue should also be constructed. This requires additional right-of-way.

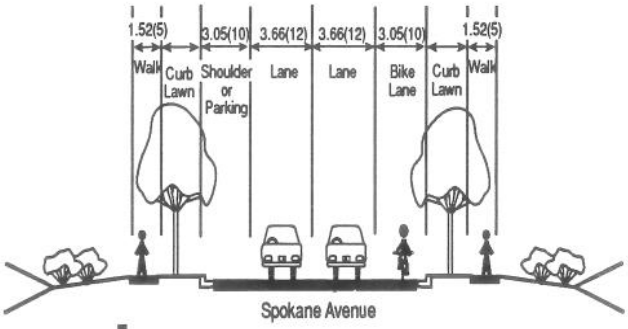
This alternative has been selected as the preferred alternative, as described in Section 2.6.



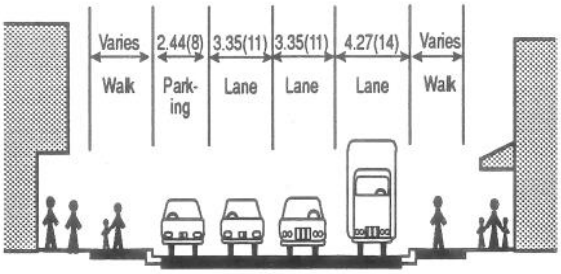
G Section on Spokane from Whitefish River (south) to Seventh Street



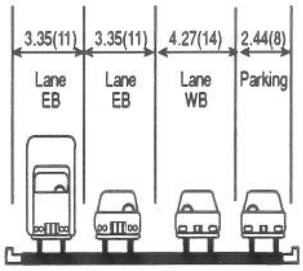
H Section on Seventh Street Bridge



I Section on Spokane Avenue or Baker Avenue (from Seventh Street to Second Street)



J1 Section from Second Street Spokane Avenue to Baker Avenue



J2 Section on Second Street from Baker to Whitefish River (west)

Notes:

1. For Section J, all measurements are in meters (feet) to edge of pavement.
2. For Sections G, H, & I, all measurements are in meters (feet) to face of curb.

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Figure 2-16(a)

Cross Sections for Whitefish Area

2.4.2.5.6 Alternative C(COUPLET-4)

This alternative consists of developing a one-way couplet, with Spokane Avenue providing for the northbound traffic movement and Baker Avenue providing for the southbound traffic movement. This alternative is one of six being considered in Whitefish.

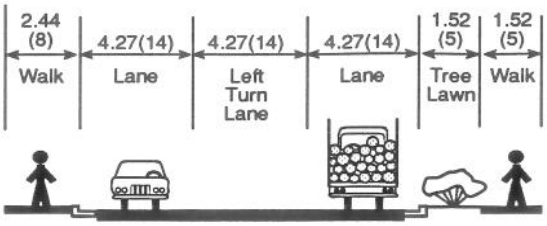
This alternative consists of:

- Alternative C(COUPLET-4) is similar to C(COUPLET-1) with the one-way couplet on Spokane and Baker beginning at Columbia Avenue on the south. However, to provide for circulation from the area of Whitefish west of Baker and south of the river into downtown, the section of Baker Street from 8th Street to 5th Street is made two-way.
- Alternative C(COUPLET-4) assumes widening of the Baker Street bridge over the Whitefish River.

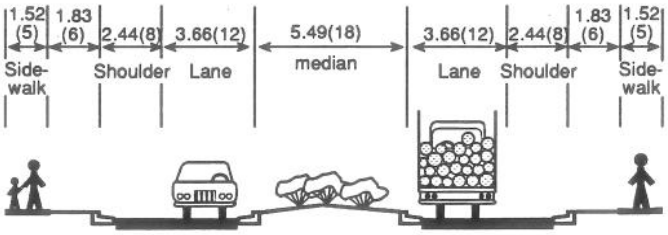
2.4.2.5.7 West of Whitefish

As shown on Figure 2-16b, the following cross-sections have been assumed for Whitefish and west of Whitefish:

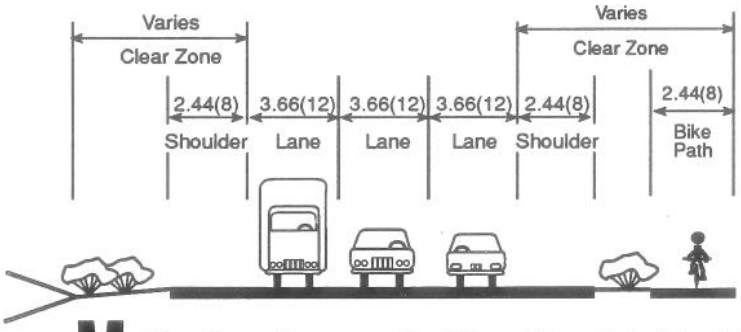
- **From Spokane to the Whitefish River:**
  - **Spokane to Baker: two lanes westbound, one lane eastbound, on-street parking on south side of 2nd where appropriate.**
  - **Baker to Whitefish River (west): one lane eastbound, one lane westbound, center turn lane, on-street parking on north side of 2nd where appropriate.**
- **From the Whitefish River to Karrow Avenue:**
  - **Widening of the Second Street bridge over the Whitefish River**
  - **Three 4.27-meter (14-foot) lanes.**
  - **Curb and gutter.**
  - **Attached sidewalk (within existing right-of-way) on north side; detached sidewalk on south side.**
  - **Roadside landscaping where possible.**
  - **No additional right-of-way required.**
- **From Karrow Avenue to West of Lion Mountain Road:**
  - **Two 3.66-meter (12-foot) lanes.**
  - **Raised landscaped median.**
  - **Detached sidewalk.**
  - **Left-turn pockets to accommodate turning traffic.**
- **West of Lion Mountain Road to Milepost 130.6:**
  - **Two 3.66-meter (12-foot) lanes.**
  - **Separated bikepath where possible.**
  - **Truck climbing lane.**
- **Milepost 130.6 to Milepost 133:**
  - **Two 3.66-meter (12-foot) lanes.**
  - **Sight distance improvements and turn lanes at Twin Bridges intersection.**



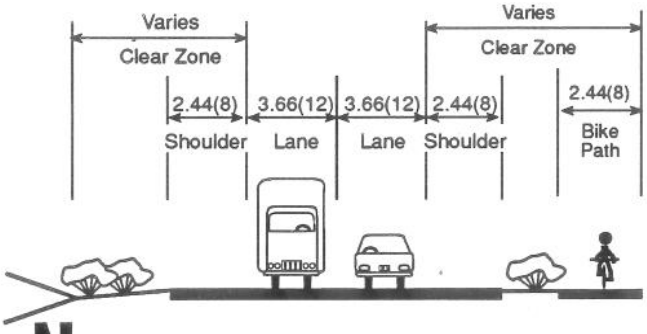
K **Section on Second from Whitefish River (west) to Karrow Avenue**



L **Section from Karrow Avenue to west of Lion Mountain Road**



M **Sections from west of Lion Mountain Road to Milepost 130.6**



N **Section from Milepost 130.6 to Milepost 133**

Notes:

1. For Sections K & L, all measurements are in meters (feet) to face of curb.
2. For Sections M & N, all measurements are in meters (feet) to edge of pavement.

Figure 2-16(b)

Cross Sections for Whitefish Area

- **Shoulder and clear zone variations near Spencer Lake. At this location, improvements will be made mostly in the hillside direction, to avoid impact to the Spencer Lake area. Cuts will need to be made in the hillside and approximately 61 meters (200 feet) of Antler Ridge Road will be realigned. A guardrail will likely be utilized to minimize clear zone clearing requirements. Special revegetation and slope stabilization techniques will be considered in this location.**

2.4.3 Access Control

Three access control alternatives have been developed for the US 93 project.

Limited access control allows access to the highway only at designated public roads or streets and at private driveways as specified in legal agreements or deeds. This level of access control is intended to give consideration to the movement of through traffic while also recognizing access needs to adjacent land use. The established public road and street system is given first priority in access to the highway. Direct private access is given secondary consideration. Limited access control includes design features which minimize conflict between traffic using at-grade accesses and the running speed of through traffic on the highway, such as auxiliary lanes and traffic controls.

Limited access control would be negotiated with and purchased from adjacent landowners at the time right-of-way purchase occurs for the proposed highway improvements. Since abutting property owners have no legal rights of access to highways constructed in new locations, such as for segments of Kalispell alternatives B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN-LANE), no compensation would be paid for imposing access control. Appropriate compensation would be paid for land and improvements acquired and for other legally compensable damages.

Existing access approaches would be eliminated or consolidated wherever practical and future approaches would be prohibited except by approval of the Montana Highway Commission after a review by the Montana Department of Transportation considering safety, effect on highway capacity, legality and physical feasibility of constructing the requested access approach. Wherever practical, private access would be provided to other existing public roads and streets rather than directly to the highway. Compatibility with access control strategies proposed for other US 93 corridor improvement projects should also be considered in developing the proposed plan for the Somers to Whitefish segment.

Alternative access control guidelines have been outlined for restrictive access control and situational access control that could apply to either the A(MEDIAN), B(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), B(TURN-LANE) or A(COMBO) alternatives, or for portions thereof. These are defined in detail in Table 2-2. However, the restrictive access control guidelines would be most applicable for implementation with the A and B(MEDIAN) alternatives. The restrictive access control strategies would be more difficult to implement under the A and B(TURN-LANE) alternatives, requiring signage, driveway approach design and strict enforcement rather than a consistent center raised median to limit unrestricted driveway and minor street turning movements. A third access control alternative, no access control, is considered for comparative purposes, although a minimum level of access control (similar to the situational alternative described in Table 2-2) is inherent in all MDT design, per the guidelines of the MDT Access Management Plan, April, 1992 and in Flathead Regional Development Office and local planning boards land use planning reviews and **approvals** to provide safe and efficient site circulation.

The no access control alternative would not be applicable to the A or B(MEDIAN) alternatives since unrestricted, frequent left-turn access would result in no raised median. Flexibility in application of these guidelines needs to consider topographic constraints, existing intersection spacing, type of proposed adjacent

development, and the supplementary city street or county road network, particularly where right-turn-only access would create an unsafe level of U-turning traffic at downstream intersections.

Table 2-2
Access Control Guidelines

Restrictive Access Control	Situational Access Control
• Major arterial street intersections – no turn restrictions.	• Arterial street intersection – no turn restrictions.
• Minor collector/local street intersections – limit to right-turn-only.	• Collector/local street intersections – no turn restrictions.
• Driveways serving major traffic generators – no turn restrictions (major shopping centers, major employers, special events centers or similar generators – does not include single businesses or small shopping centers)	• Primary driveways serving major and minor traffic generators – no turn restrictions.
• Driveways near arterial intersections (less than 152.5 meters (500 feet)) - close driveway and provide connection to arterial cross street/drive where practical.	• Driveways near arterial intersections (less than 152.5 meters (500 feet)) - close driveway and provide connection to major cross street/drive where practical.
• Closely spaced driveways (less than 152.5 meters (500 feet)) - consolidate driveways to one of the existing drives or common lot line where practical.	• Closely spaced driveways (less than 152.5 meters (500 feet)) - consolidate driveways to one of the existing drives or common lot line where practical.
• Where structures are well set-back from US 93 and successive driveways exist, consider frontage road.	• Consider frontage drive as means of consolidating very closely spaced driveways (less than 61 meters (200 feet)).
• Driveways to properties that have frontage on another road, provide right-turn-only access and develop auxiliary access to the other road where practical.	• Although encouraged for construction by property owner, auxiliary access would not be developed as part of this project.
• In undeveloped areas, access may be allowed at approximately one-half-mile intervals with no turn restrictions. Access spacing should be coordinated with opposing properties to develop a four-legged intersection. Intermediate access should be limited to right-turn-only and to no less than 500-foot spacing. A maximum of one driveway with no turn restrictions should be provided per individual property.	• In undeveloped areas, intermediate full-turn access would be allowed in addition to the unrestricted .80-kilometer (0.5-mile) spaced access points. Access spacing should be coordinated with opposing properties to develop a four-legged intersection.
• Where collector/local streets and driveways are limited to right-turn-only in areas of potential large truck activity, provide U-turn opportunities at approximately 1.61-kilometer (one-mile) intervals.	

Restrictive access control (with flexibility) has been selected as the preferred alternative. In the five-lane sections where access control has already been purchased, the preferred alternative is to retain the already purchased access rights.

2.4.4 Common Design Elements

There are a number of design elements that are common to the location alternatives and design concepts. These common design elements include:

2.4.4.1 Intersection Improvements

Intersection improvements (including additional turn lanes, improved signage, signals where appropriate and lighting) which will be provided are:

- MT 82*
- Forest Hill Drive
- **South bypass***
- North of Ball's Crossing
- Cemetery Road (Four Corners)*
- 18th Street (in Kalispell)
- 13th Street/Airport Road (in Kalispell)*
- Idaho Street (US 2) (in Kalispell)
- Meridian
- Reserve Drive
- Church Road
- Schrade Road
- County Landfill Road
- KM Road
- Happy Valley Road
- MT 40*
- 2nd Street (in Whitefish)
- Karrow Avenue (in Whitefish)
- Lion Mountain Loop Road
- Twin Bridges Road

Intersections where **new traffic** signals **may be warranted in future years** are denoted with an asterisk. Additional signals are identified in Section 4.1.5.2.

Detailed layouts of ten of the major intersections were prepared. These layouts are included in Appendix A.

2.4.4.2 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities will be provided. These will include:

- Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations on the shoulder or along a separate pedestrian and bicycle lane. **A clear preference was expressed during the public review process for a separated bikepath, so this will be included as much as is feasible. Likely locations for a separate bikepath are:**

  East side: Somers to Ball's Crossing
  Either side: Ball's Crossing through Kalispell to Reserve
  East side: Reserve Drive to MT 40
  Either side: Remainder of project

- Specially-treated pedestrian crossing areas in the following locations:

  Kalispell: (Near ball fields, South 93 near hotels/restaurants, Downtown area, north of Idaho - at signals and at FVCC)

  Whitefish: (In Happy Valley area, Whitefish Mall and north to downtown, Whitefish downtown, and west of Whitefish in the Grouse Mountain Lodge area and as far west as the Lion Mountain turn-off)

  At these locations, the following design treatments **are assumed**:

  Kalispell
  - Flashing beacons for pedestrian crosswalk.
  - New signal at 18th (Kalispell).
  - At signals (Downtown Kalispell)
  - At signals (Kalispell: North of Idaho)
  - At signal initially (FVCC): Four Mile/Grandview
  - Future underpass potential (FVCC).

Whitefish
- Pedestrian actuated signal with crosswalks at Happy Valley area **or potential for future raised median (if warranted).**
- Future signal at Mountain Mall and Baker Avenue **(under construction)**.
- Future system warranted signals (Downtown Whitefish).
- Pedestrian accommodations through existing tunnel (Grouse Mountain area).

- Provisions for (future) bicycle and pedestrian underpass crossings at Ashley Creek **and the Baker Street bridge over the Whitefish River**. The bridges will be designed to accommodate a future path **under US 93 along the drainageways.**

- **Pedestrian and bicycle facilities over bridges are assumed to be accommodated on the shoulders.**

2.4.4.3 Special Design Concepts

A number of design concepts to enhance the aesthetic and environmental features along US 93 are also included. These concepts are:

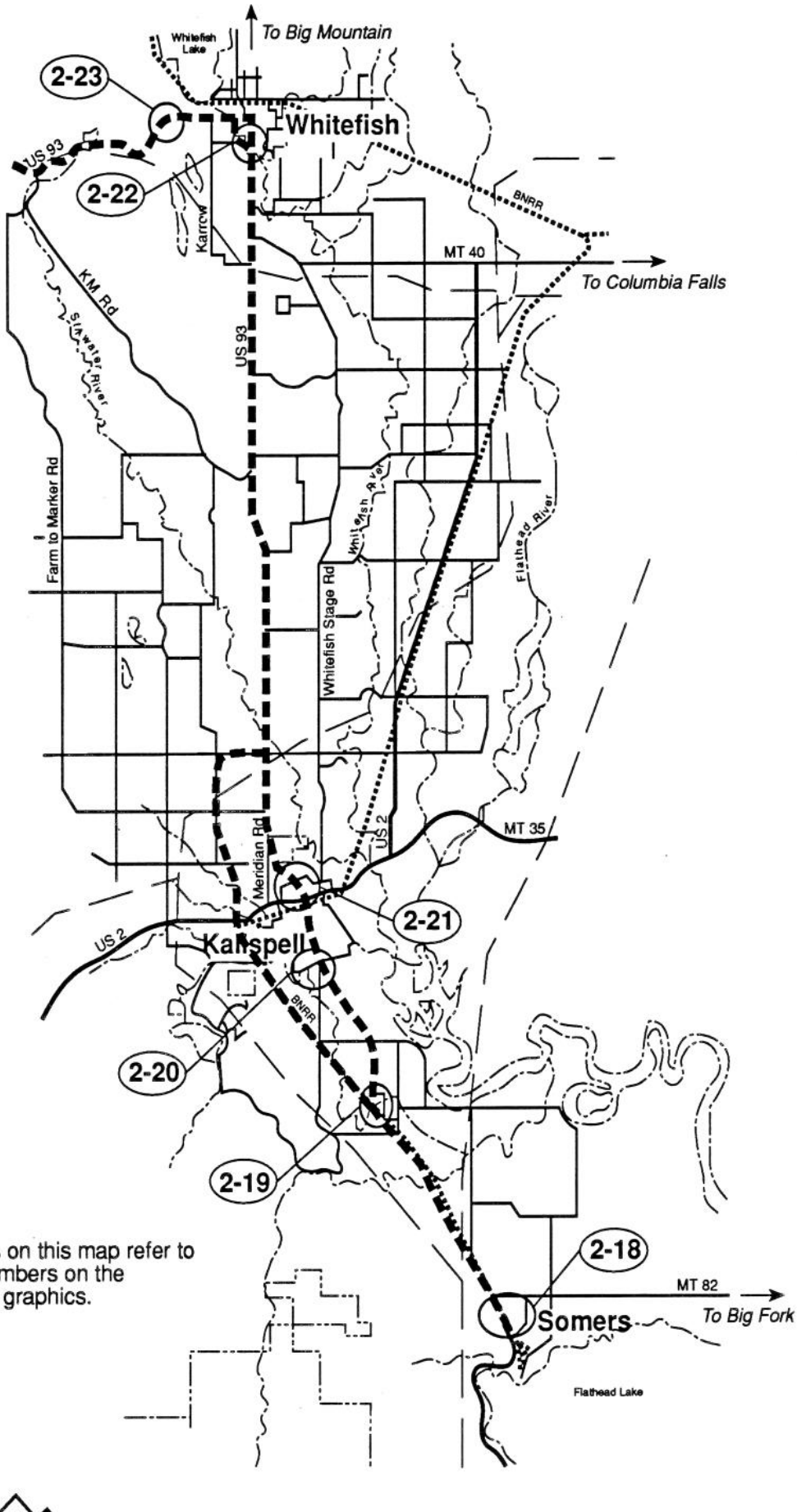
- A view area or scenic overlook just south of the intersection of US 93 with MT 82, north of the rock cut area. It is at this point where dramatic views of the Flathead Valley first become available to the northbound **traveler**. This site **is planned as** a pull-out and viewing area with a very small parking lot and an interpretive sign.

- **A bridge is recommended** at the crossing of Ashley Creek. The purpose of **this is to** minimize wetland, floodplain and wildlife habitat impact, allowing for wildlife to cross under the highway at this location. This would also allow for an underpass of the bicycle/pedestrian path. These areas would also be aesthetically pleasing.

- Special entrances or gateways to Kalispell or Whitefish **are included**. In these more urban areas, landscaping can be added, as well as a large sign which indicates the "entrance" to each of these cities.

Figure 2-17 shows the location of these concepts along the corridor. The following figures illustrate the special design concepts. The other figures illustrate:

Figure 2-18: The view area south of MT 82
Figure 2-19: The Ashley Creek bridges
Figure 2-20: The south entry gateway treatment south of Kalispell
Figure 2-21: The north entry gateway treatment north of Kalispell
Figure 2-22: The gateway treatment south of Whitefish
Figure 2-23: The gateway treatment west of Whitefish



Note:
Numbers on this map refer to figure numbers on the following graphics.

Somers to Whitefish
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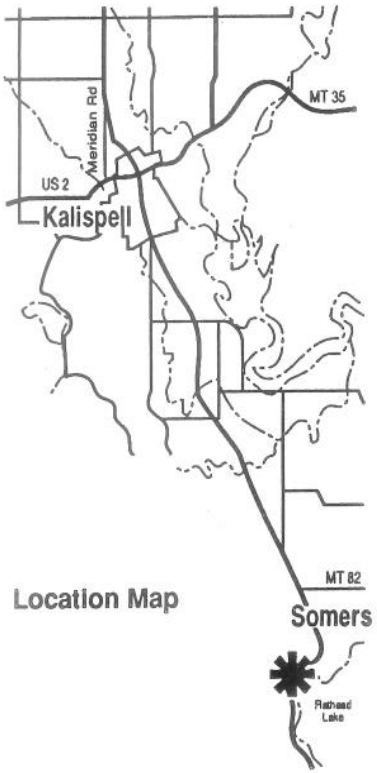
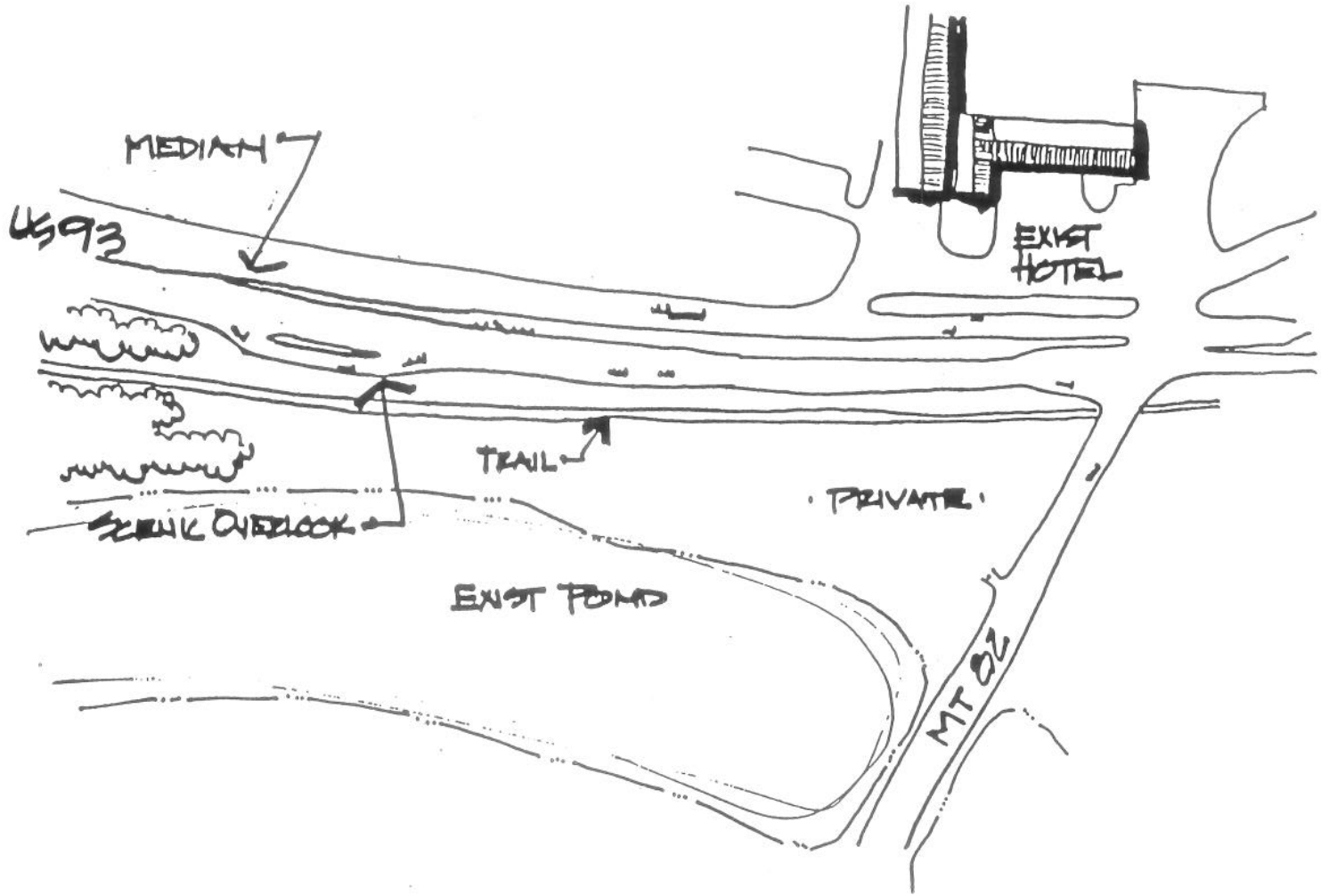
Figure 2-17
Location of Possible Special Design Concepts

Objectives

- Tourist information stop
- Photo opportunity



Location Map



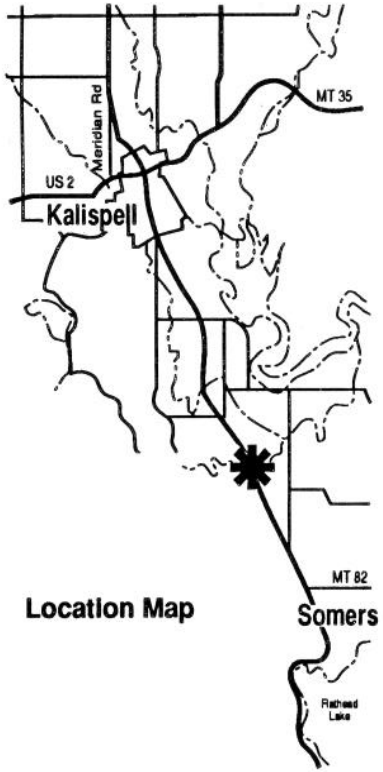
Somers to Whitefish Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 2-18

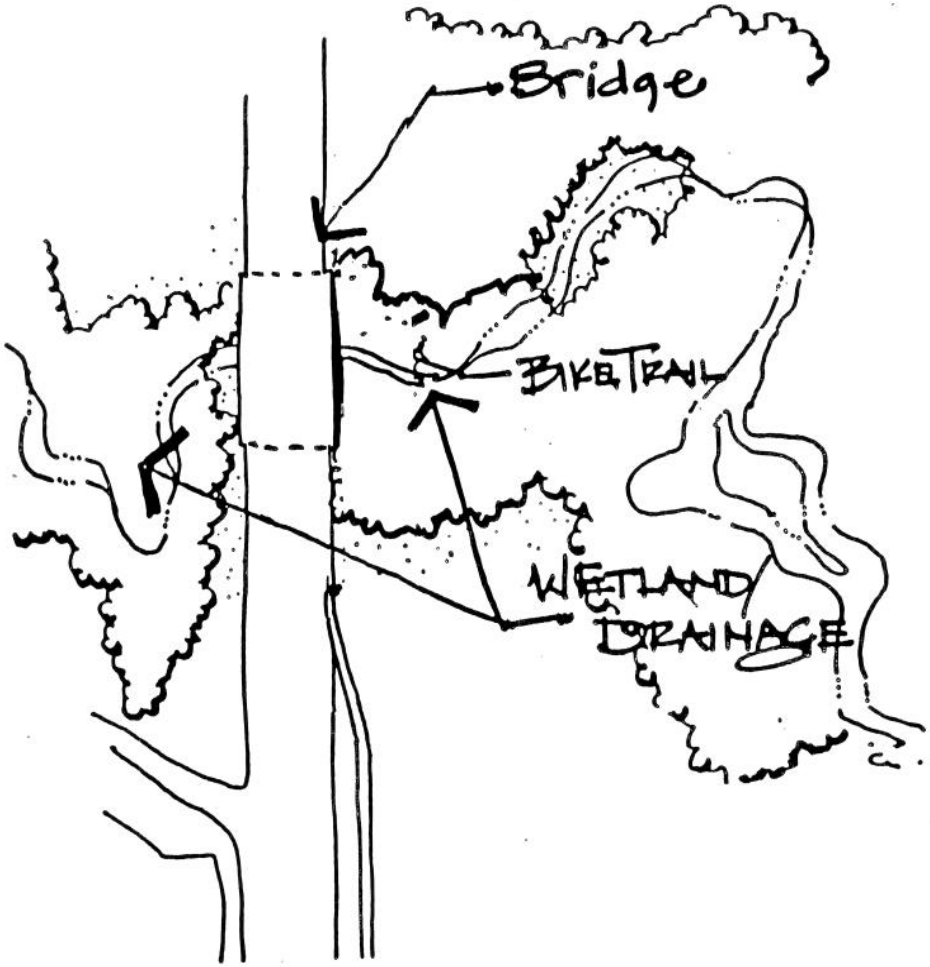
Special Design Concept: View Area

Objectives

- Minimize wetland impacts
- Enhance foreground vegetation



Location Map



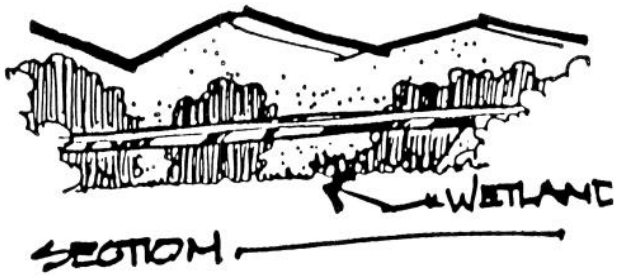


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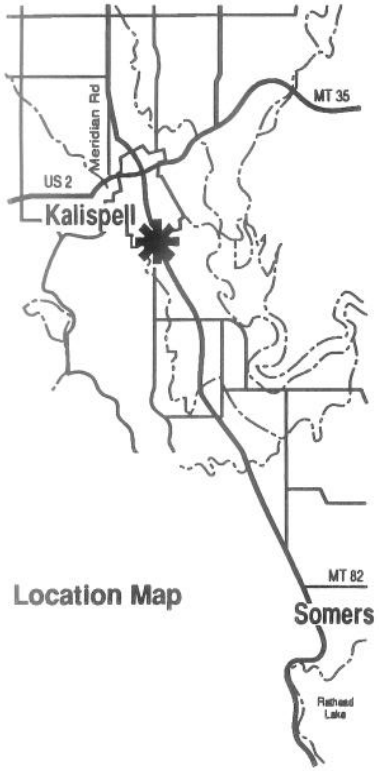
Figure 2-19

Special Design Concept: Ashley Creek Bridge

Objectives

- Identify town entrance as important
- Extend neighborhood character to the south



Location Map

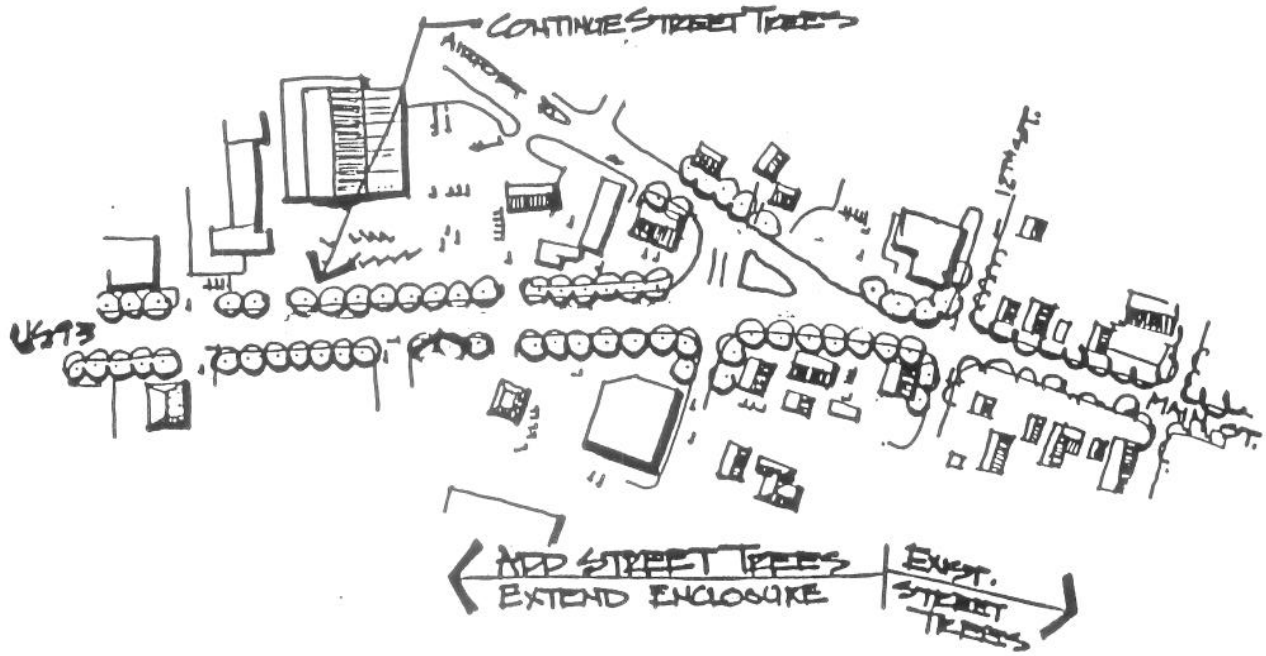


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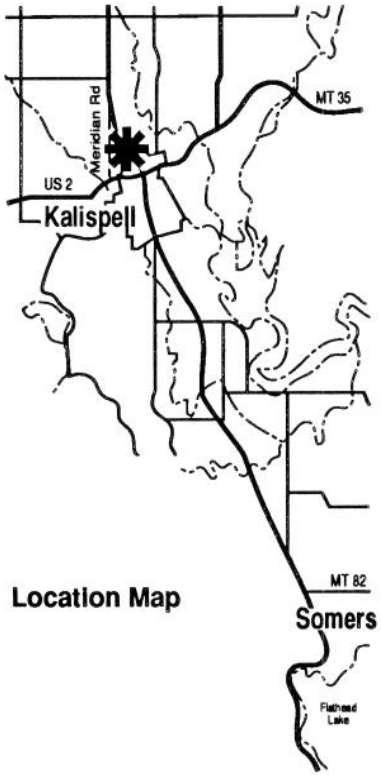
Figure 2-20

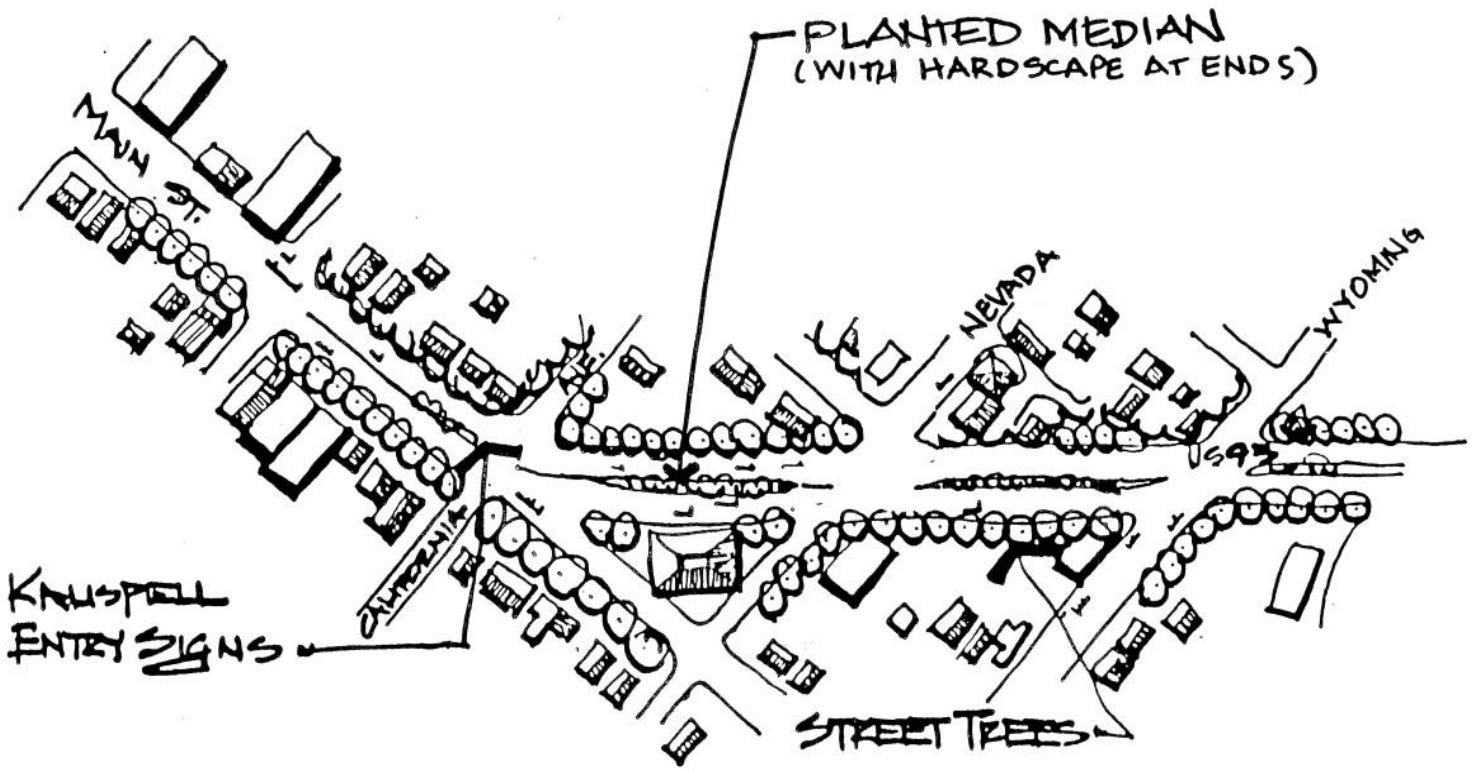
Special Design Concept: South Entry to Kalispell

Objectives

- Identify town entrance as important
- Extend downtown character to north
- Create parkway entrance



Location Map



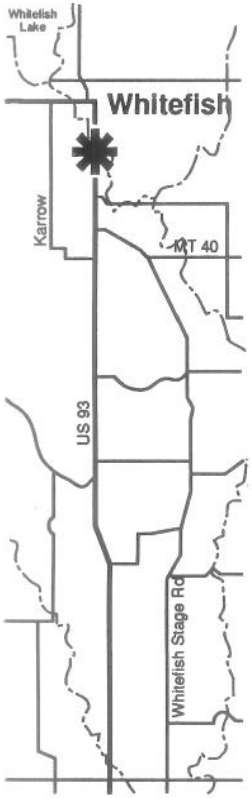
Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 2-21

Special Design Concept: North Entry to Kalispell

Objectives

- Extend town character to south
- Create parkway entrance
- Enhance Whitefish River character



Location Map

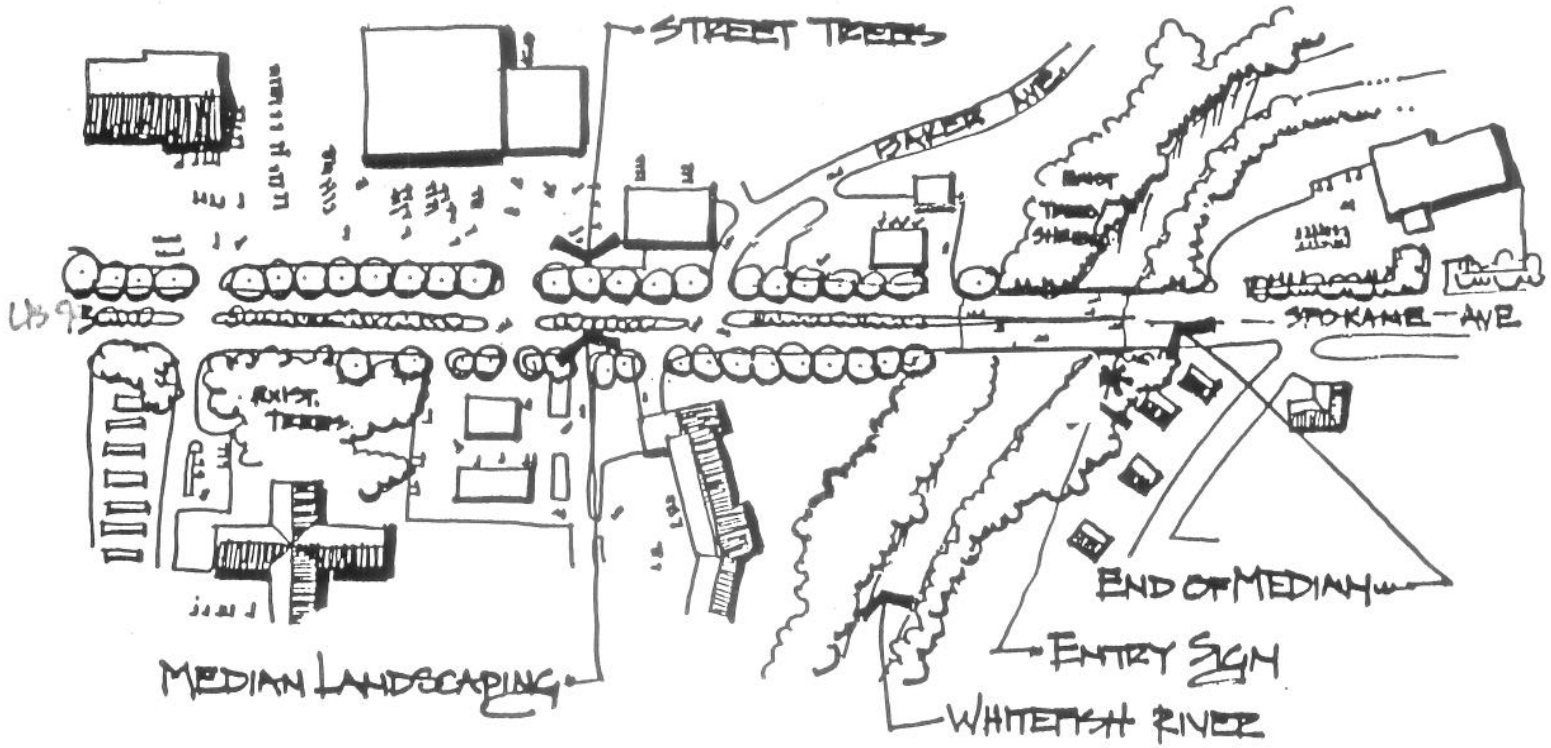
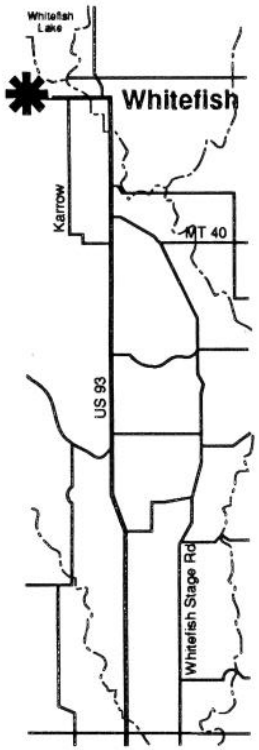


Figure 2-22

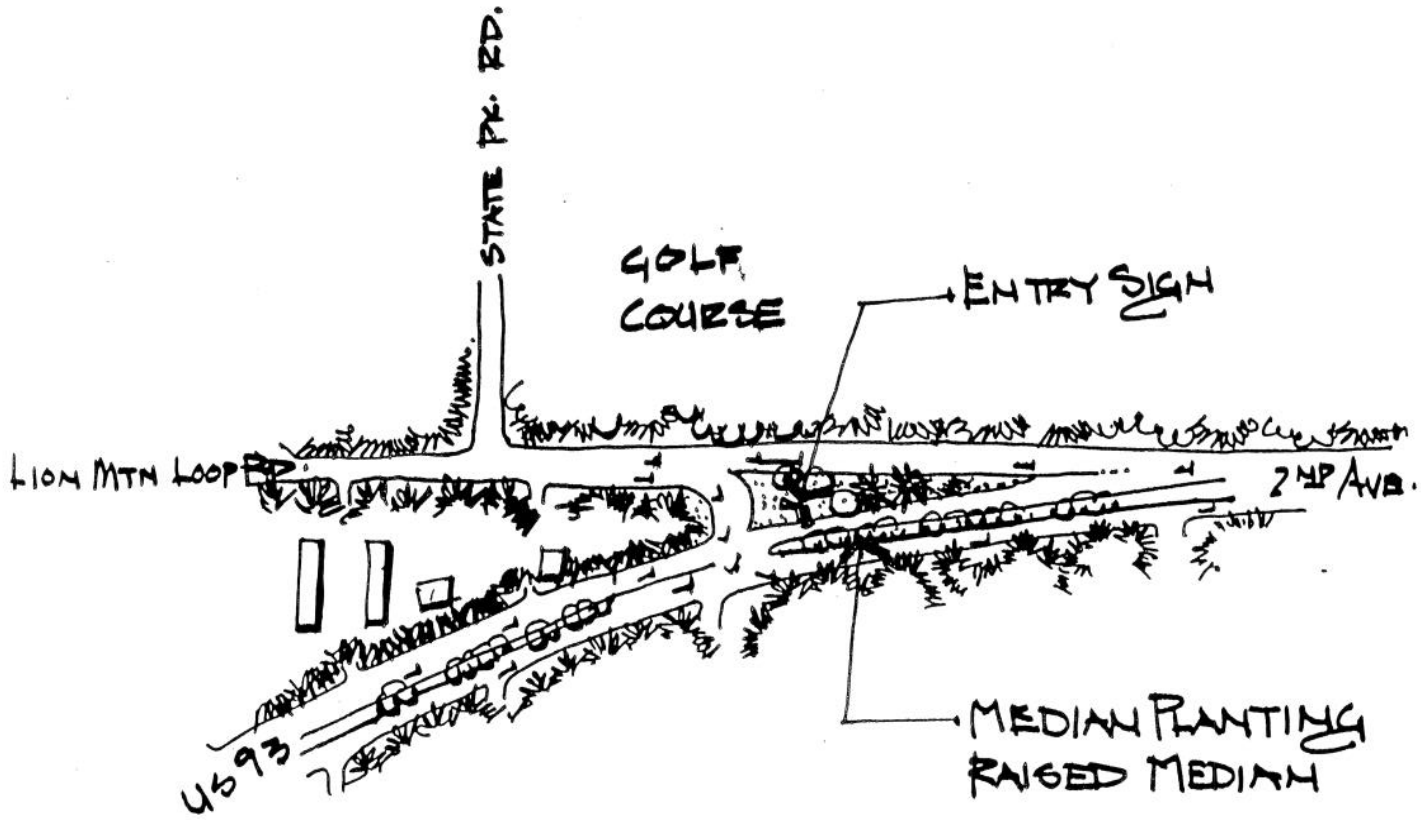
Special Design Concept: South Entry to Whitefish

Objectives

- Identify town entrance as important
- Extend town character to west
- Create parkway entrance



Location Map



North

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 2-23

Special Design Concept: West Entry to Whitefish

2.4.4.4 Intelligent Vehicle Highway Systems

Intelligent vehicle-highway systems (IVHS) are new technologies currently seen to offer **considerable** opportunities in traffic operations and transportation management. IVHS refers to the integration of electronics, communications, computers, and control systems to create "smart vehicles" and "smart highways."

The approach is intended as a tool to help solve existing and emerging problems including congestion, accidents, adverse environmental impacts and traveler **disorientation**.

These new technologies are used to improve the information available to travelers and traffic managers so that better-informed **travel** decisions can be made. "Smart vehicles" include new features to provide accurate and timely information, warnings and advice. In the longer term, IVHS will assist the driver to improve vehicle control, and may even take over some of the driving tasks. "Smart highways" will monitor traffic movements and make automatic adjustments to improve traffic flow.

IVHS consists of:

- Advanced Traffic Management Systems (ATMS). These technologies identify and measure traffic conditions on the highway and take actions to improve traffic flow. They include traffic flow and congestion monitoring; weather monitoring; incident detection and management; advanced traffic signal control; and variable message signs.

- Advanced Traveler Information Systems (ATIS). These technologies provide various means of delivering information to the traveler, including traffic situation information; transit schedules and timekeeping; traffic hazards and incident warnings; construction delays; tourist information; and weather advisories.

- Advanced Public Transportation Systems (APTS). These systems provide for better scheduling and control of public transit operations; improved marketing and customer interface functions, and operational support for transit priority, HOV measures and rideshare promotion.

- Commercial Vehicle Operations (CVO). CVO applies IVHS technologies to the fleet management and control functions of commercial freight and interurban bus transportation, including driver hours monitoring, automatic permitting and dispatch functions, compliance with safety checks and weight limits, etc.

- Advanced Vehicle Control Systems (AVCS). AVCS offers the greatest potential for improving highway safety and efficiency in the long term. Current devices include automatic enforcement systems such as speed enforcement cameras. Future systems will include intelligent cruise controls, responsive to speed limits, road conditions and adjacent vehicle speeds; collision avoidance systems; vision enhancement technologies; default steering systems; and eventually, fully automated vehicle control.

Current generations of IVHS technologies such as congestion and weather monitoring systems and traveler information systems have potential for immediate application along US 93. Longer-term development of automatic vehicle enforcement systems, intelligent driver support and moves toward full highway automation may also offer major benefits within the service life of the US 93 improvement.

The development of IVHS technologies specifically geared toward rural areas is an emerging technology. Possible applications germane to the US 93 area include:

- Collection and transmission of information prior to trip-making, such as weather and traffic conditions or destination attractions.

- Collection and transmission of information to the traveler en-route, such as road and weather conditions ahead, potential alternate routes or recommended safe speed.

- Transmission of emergency information, such as an emergency ahead, "may day" signal for help or hazardous road ahead.

Although IVHS systems are not recommended for immediate implementation on this project, none of the alternatives will preclude possible implementation of IVHS systems in the future.

2.4.4.5 Other TSM Measures

All alternatives include the following other TSM measures:

- Consider new traffic signals where warranted (see Section 4.1.5.2 for list of potential signal locations).

- Better traffic signal progression through Whitefish and Kalispell by means of a traffic signal interconnect system, requiring replacement of inadequate traffic signal hardware.

- Improved signage for major cross-streets along entire corridor. Consideration will also be given to use of international (bilingual) signage where appropriate.

- Lighting at appropriate intersections (potential signal locations noted above).

- Removal of on-street parking along US 93 in Whitefish and in some locations in Kalispell.

- Appropriate speed limit signs to be placed in urban areas with residential uses.

2.4.4.6 Transit Provisions

All alternatives also include the following provisions for transit use along US 93:

- Acquisition of right-of-way and paving for three park-n-ride lots [one in south Whitefish **(in the vicinity of MT 40)**, one in north Kalispell **(in the vicinity of the Flathead Valley Community College)** and one south **of** Kalispell **(in the vicinity of MT 82)**]. **Approximately 0.41-hectare (one-acre) lots are assumed.** This alternative is recommended because carpooling and vanpooling had higher levels of support when compared to other alternate modes in the voter survey that was done in June of 1993.

- Preservation where feasible for a corridor to be used for some future transit use. This would be 6.1 to 9.15 meters (20 to 30 feet) in width and could be located within the clear zone area. Its future use would be determined by a separately funded study specifically analyzing different fixed guideway options.

2.4.4.7 TDM Measures

The only TDM-type measure which is considered reasonable for advancement is the accommodation of future planned pedestrian and bicycle connections to other facilities. This will be done in the Ashley Creek area, to connect with the planned trail along the railroad and in the Whitefish River area, to connect to the planned pedestrian and bikepath system in Whitefish.

2.4.4.8 Landscaping

Landscaping assumed is:

a. Low maintenance grasses and occasional shrubs are planned in rural areas in the median and along the roadsides. This would require occasional mowing but minimal other maintenance. This is assumed to be maintained by MDT.

b. In raised median areas closer to the urban areas, higher intensity landscaping is planned with grasses and groundcovers, shrubs and trees. These areas would be irrigated. In these locations, maintenance agreements would be worked out between MDT and **the local jurisdictions. The City of Whitefish and the City of Kalispell have indicated willingness to sign a maintenance agreement for these areas (see Volume II). Two locations are planned for this type of treatment: (1) between MT 40 and the Whitefish River south of Whitefish, and (2) between Karrow Avenue and just west of the Lion Mountain Road intersection west of Whitefish. Landscaping will be placed to not obstruct intersection sight distances**.

c. Landscaping in the vicinity of the special design concept areas will be a combination of low intensity (in the rural areas) and higher intensity (in urban areas).

d. Roadside landscaping with shrubs and trees is planned in areas without medians adjacent to the cities (south of Kalispell, north of Kalispell and west of Whitefish between the Second Street bridge over the Whitefish River and Karrow Avenue).

2.4.4.9 Drainage

Storm drain facilities will be constructed in the Kalispell area. Elements will include:

- **New storm drainage systems will be needed along US 93 between Airport Road and 9th Street. These systems are required to provide drainage for the urban section which has curb and gutter on both sides.**

- **New storm drainage systems will be needed along US 93 between Ball's Crossing and Airport Road, south of Kalispell. Stormwater runoff is currently carried by roadside ditches. New systems will be required to provide drainage for the new urban section which has curb and gutter on both sides.**

- **New storm drainage systems will be needed along US 93 between Grandview Drive and Reserve Drive. Stormwater runoff is currently carried by roadside ditches. New systems will be required to provide drainage for the new urban section which has curb and gutter on both sides.**

Elements of **the stormwater drainage** plan in Whitefish include:

- New storm drainage systems are needed along the section of US 93 from north of MT 40 to Baker Street. These systems are required to provide drainage for the urban section which has curb and gutters on both sides.

- This project will extend the first segment of a storm drain line from north of MT 40 to south of the Whitefish city limit. It will outfall into the Whitefish River to the east in the vicinity of the Wright's Valley Furniture store (Sta. 698+42).

- A detention pond is planned just west of the outfall at the river (south of the furniture store).

- On US 93 (Spokane Avenue) south of Whitefish from Commerce Street, at the south side of the Mall, to Baker Avenue this project will provide a new storm drain line. It will outfall to the west into an existing MDT gravel pit which is located behind the bowling alley. The new storm drain to the outfall will be located in an easement between the bowling alley and **Jimmy Lee's** Restaurant. The existing US 93 stormwater runoff outlets into the Whitefish River just north of Baker Avenue.

- The new system will improve water quality because the ditches along US 93 will no longer outfall directly into the Whitefish River.

- The existing storm drain system will be used on the sections of US 93 from Spokane and the Whitefish River to 2nd Street and the Whitefish River. On US 93 from Karrow to the Whitefish River a new storm **drain** will be provided.

Stormwater drainage plans will be developed in more detail during the US 93 design process.

2.4.4.10 Other Elements

All alternatives will also include as appropriate and feasible, provisions for wildlife fencing and special crossings (such as underpasses) for livestock and farm equipment. **The need for these crossings will be negotiated during the right-of-way process.**

2.5 Costs

Preliminary layouts for the preferred alternative, based on the typical sections shown in Section 2.4.2 and on 1"=200' scale aerial photography supplemented by cross-sections, were prepared and used to develop preliminary opinions of probable construction cost.

The following table summarizes all initial construction, right-of-way and utility relocation costs for the preferred alternative.

Cost assumptions that have been made are:

- Concrete pavement (with curb, gutter and sidewalk) is assumed **from Cemetery Road to Ninth Street and North of Grandview to the Stillwater River in** Kalispell and **the south crossing of the Whitefish River to Lion Mountain Loop Road, west of Whitefish**.
- Costs are 1994 dollars.
- Bike accommodations are **detached where possible.**
- **All raised medians will be lighted.**
- **Truck turn-arounds and frontage roads are as illustrated in Appendix A.**
- **70 mph desirable design speed in rural areas.**
- **50 mph desirable design speed in urban areas.**

Table 2-3
Estimated Construction Costs for Preferred Alternative

Location	Construction	Right-of-Way	Utilities	Contingency	Total
South of MT 82 to Rocky Cliff Road	$$5,083,150	$128,656	$115,500	$1,065,461	$6,392,767
Rocky Cliff Road to Cemetery Road	$2,372,660	$1,505,131	$100,00	$795,558	$4,773,349
Cemetery Road to Airport Road	$3,817,930	$595,706	$90,000	$900,727	$5,404,363
Kalispell Bypass	$10,165,966	$3,200,143	$204,800	$2,714,182	$16,285,091
Airport Road to Ninth Street	$777,769	$661	$000	$155,686	$934,116
Idaho to Grandview	$513,825	$000	$000	$102,765	$616,590
Grandview to Milepost 117	$3,581,629	$000	$58,500	$728,026	$4,368,155
Milepost 117 to 121	$5,413,444	$306,591	$105,600	$1,165,127	$6,990,762
Milepost 121 to 122.6	$3,326,087	$615,399	$79,200	$804,137	$4,824,823
Milepost 122.6 to MT 40	$3,302,220	$17,000	$37,000	$671,244	$4,027,464
MT 40 to Whitefish River	$3,555,710	$000	$87,000	$728,542	$4,371,252
Whitefish River Crossing	$200,000				$200,000
Whitefish River to Seventh Street	$728,620	$000	$26,000	$150,924	$905,544
Seventh Street Bridge	$1,725,750	$49,587	$000	$355,067	$2,130,404
Baker & Spokane, 7th to 2nd	$1,799,760	$000	$84,000	$376,752	$2,260,512
Second Street, Spokane to Baker	$427,290	$000	$36,000	$92,658	$555,948
Baker to Karrow	$746,640	$000	$44,000	$158,128	$948,768
Karrow to West of Lion Mt. Road	$971,150	$000	$80,000	$210,230	$1,261,380
West of Lion Mtn. Road to Milepost 130.6	$981,838	$29,091	$42,000	$210,586	$1,263,515
Milepost 130.6 to 133	$818,740	$91,636	$60,000	$194,075	$1,164,451
TOTAL	$50,310,178	$6,539,601	$1,249,600	$11,579,876	$69,679,255

Cost for various elements of the project are broken out here:

- **Basic highway construction: $54,040,446**
- **Right-of-way: purchase - $3,789,601; relocations - $2,750,000**
- **Frontage roads: $220,400**
- **Special design features: $6,027,400**
- **Pedestrian and bicycle facilities: $1,601,807**

2.6 Construction Phasing

Attached are three figures **(Figure 2-24, 2-25 and 2-26)** which generally describe likely construction phasing. One of the main goals of the construction phasing plan will be to minimize delays to traffic during the construction period.

The same basic construction plan will be followed for the three design alternatives located in the US 93 corridor. This plan consists of the following two phases:

1. A portion of the new road will be built while traffic continues on existing US 93.

2. Traffic will be moved over to the new road section while the old road is brought up to standards.

There are several situations in the corridor where this basic construction plan will need to be modified. These are:

- Within the more urbanized areas of Kalispell and Whitefish, where the entire existing US 93 will need to be torn up and replaced.

- In transition areas, where there will be more disruption to existing US 93.

- At bridges, where detours will be necessary.

Construction phasing will be planned such that access will be maintained at all times to residences and businesses. It is likely that some diversion of traffic to other routes may occur.

It is possible to provide incentives or disincentives to encourage contractors to meet a particular construction schedule. A time period can be specified, with penalties included for every day which exceeds the specified time period.

2.7 Selection of a Preferred Alternative

2.7.1 Process

The process used for selection of a preferred alternative consisted of the following major steps:

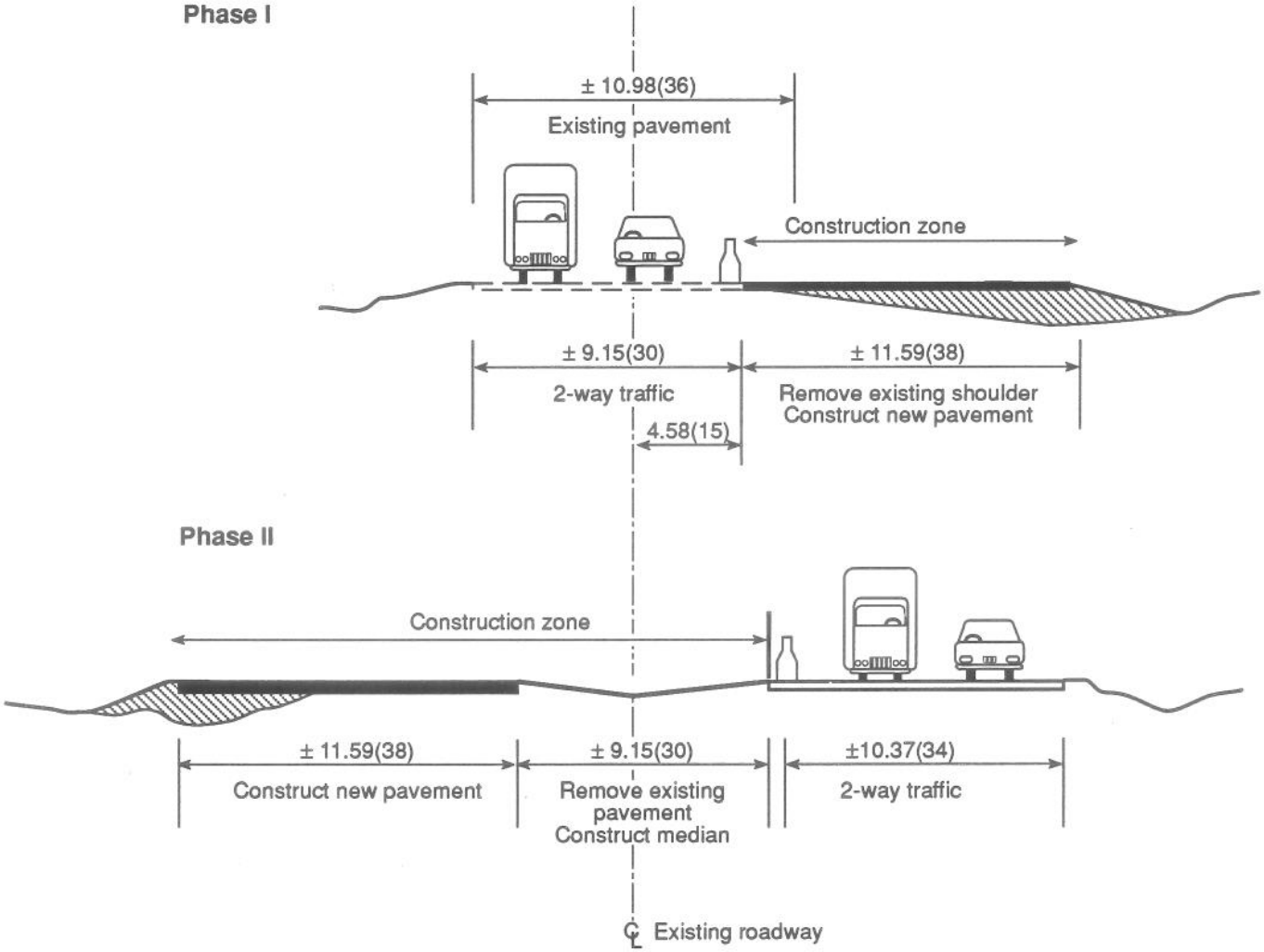
1. **Public hearings (three) and meetings with over 200 groups and individual property owners.**

2. **Receipt of input from telephone calls and letters (see Chapter Six and Volume II for more detail).**

3. **Five meetings with the Project Advisory Committee (in addition to the meetings held prior to issuance of the Draft EIS).**

4. **Development of more detailed conceptual design plans to show intersection layouts on access plans.**

5. **Refinement of right-of-way and cost estimates.**



Note: 1. Dimensions are in meters (feet).
2. An example of where this would occur is between MT 40 and the Whitefish River.

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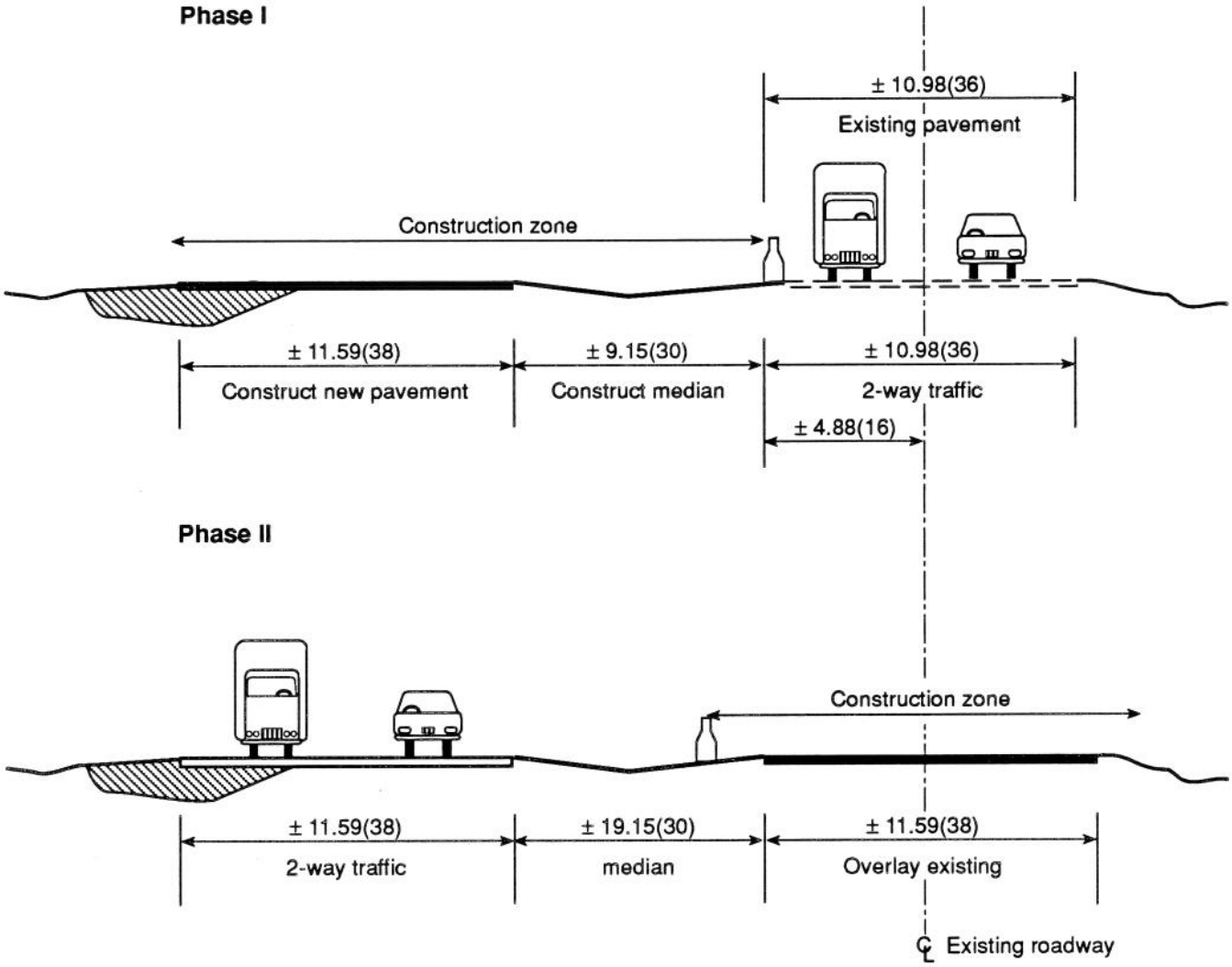
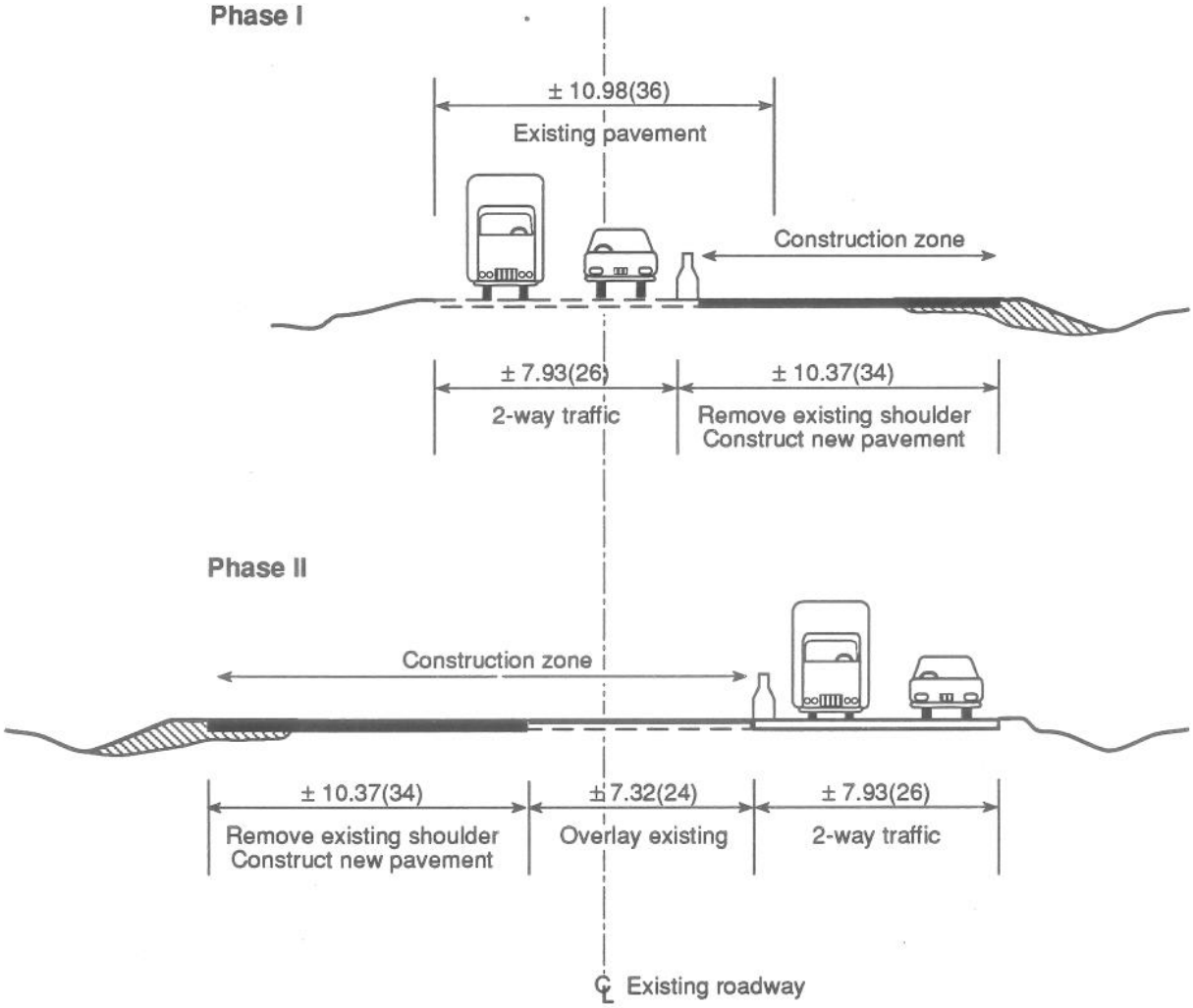
Figure 2-24
Construction Phasing - Alternative A (MEDIAN) (centered location)



Note: 1. Dimensions are in meters (feet).
2. An example of where this would occur is between Somers and Rocky Cliff Road.

Figure 2-25

Construction Phasing - Alternative A (MEDIAN)(offset location)



Note: 1. Dimensions are in meters (feet).
2. An example of where this would occur is between Grandview and Milepost 117.

Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 2-26
Construction Phasing - Alternative A (TURN-LANE)

6. Presentation to and adoption by the Highway Commission.

2.7.2 Elements of Preferred Alternative with Reasons for its Selection

2.7.2.1 Alternative A(COMBO)

The highway alternative selected for the major portions of the corridor is a combination of the two basic cross-sections evaluated. It consists of:

- A(TURN-LANE) for 14.32 kilometers (8.9 miles):
  a. Rocky Cliff Road to Airport Road: 5.63 kilometers (3.5 miles)
  b. Grandview to Milepost 117: 3.38 kilometers (2.1 miles)
  c. Milepost 122.7 to MT 40: 4.83 kilometers (3 miles)
  d. Whitefish River (West) to Karrow Avenue: 0.48 kilometer (0.3 mile)

- A(MEDIAN) for 18.99 kilometers (11.8 miles):
  a. MT 82 to Rocky Cliff Road: 6.44 kilometers (four miles)
  b. Milepost 117 to 122.7: 9.33 kilometers (5.8 miles)
  c. MT 40 to Whitefish River: 2.09 kilometers (1.3 miles) (assuming traffic volumes warrant the raised median)
  d. Karrow Avenue to West of Lion Mountain Road: 1.13 kilometers (0.7 mile)

Reasons for selection of this alternative in particular segments are:

- From MT 82 to Rocky Cliff Road: the A(MEDIAN) alternative can basically fit within existing right-of-way with minimal out-of-direction travel impacts to adjacent properties. The A(MEDIAN) alternative is safer than the A(TURN-LANE) alternative in this segment.

- From Rocky Cliff Road to Airport Road: the A(TURN-LANE) alternative is needed to accommodate the industrial nature of the corridor, the high percentage of businesses serviced by large trucks, the industrial zoning, and the high density of existing accesses.

- From Airport Road to Ninth Street: a four-lane section is recommended to avoid impact to the trees in the historic district.

- From Grandview to Milepost 117: the A(TURN-LANE) alternative is recommended to serve the high density of existing accesses, the industrial nature of portions of the corridor and the high percentage of businesses serviced by large trucks.

- From Milepost 117 to 122.7: the A(MEDIAN) alternative can serve existing access points with minimal out-of-direction travel impacts. It is a safer alternative for portions of this corridor. Most of the properties are residential.

- From Milepost 122.7 to MT 40: the A(TURN-LANE) alternative is recommended to serve the higher density of existing accesses, minimize relocations of properties and minimize out-of-direction travel.

- **From MT 40 to the Whitefish River: the A(MEDIAN) alternative is recommended because of the high traffic volumes in this area and the alternate access provided by the Baker Street extension project. This alternative represents the "gateway" to Whitefish. The City of Whitefish has committed to maintaining the median area. Most of the right-of-way is in place. This alternative is recommended to be installed when traffic volumes warrant its installation (assumed to be 30,000 summer ADT, which is the design volume used for this project).**

- **From the Whitefish River (west) to Karrow Avenue: a three-lane section is recommended to serve the high volume of turning traffic.**

- **From Karrow Avenue to west of Lion Mountain Road: the A(MEDIAN) alternative is recommended to serve as a west gateway to Whitefish. It can serve existing accesses in this area.**

2.7.2.2 Kalispell Bypass B

The west bypass of the central area of Kalispell was selected as the preferred alternative for the following reasons:

- **It will provide critical relief for congested areas in Kalispell. The bypass will reduce future Year 2015 traffic in Kalispell by 9,000 vehicles per day.**

- **It will provide a much needed alternate route for trucks and other vehicles not needing to stop in Kalispell.**

- **It will enhance the economic stability of downtown Kalispell.**

- **It will enhance residential property values in the central area of Kalispell.**

- **It will reduce CO and PM10 emissions.**

- **It is consistent with City and County plans.**

- **It is supported by the Kalispell City Council and the Flathead County Commissioners.**

The bypass was selected as the preferred alternative even though there will be negative direct impacts and the potential to accelerate loss of wetlands, wildlife habitat and farmland as well as potentially contributing to degradation of water quality which will occur as a result of implementation of the bypass.

The specific design that was selected consists of:

- **Right-of-way sufficient for four-lane with median.**

- **Access rights purchased, consistent with the restrictive access control alternative.**

- **Likely phased construction (two lanes initially, four lanes when needed).**

- Ultimate section south of US 2 will be four lanes with no median and widening for turn-lanes at major intersections.

2.7.2.3 Whitefish Couplet-3

The Whitefish alternative Couplet-3 was selected as the preferred alternative in Whitefish for the following reasons:

- It will provide enhanced traffic operations and level of service when compared to alternatives which are located all on existing US 93 (Spokane and Second).
- It will result in less out-of-direction travel when compared to the other couplet alternatives.
- It will protect residential character along Baker south of Seventh. Although concern has been expressed about increased traffic on Baker because of the conversion to a one-way couplet, traffic projections show an additional 1,000 to 2,000 vehicles per day when compared to the No-Build alternative. This is not considered a substantial increase in volumes.
- It will enhance circulation to Whitefish schools.
- It will relieve traffic on Second Street.
- It will be supportive of the City's goals to develop in the southwest area of Whitefish.
- It is supported by the Whitefish City Council.
- It reduces PM10 emissions when compared to the couplet alternative without the Seventh Street bridge, because there is less out-of-direction travel (less VMT).

To respond to concerns about its higher construction costs, the width of the Seventh Street bridge has been reduced, which saves approximately $952,000 in construction costs.

2.7.2.4 Separated Bikepath

The separated bikepath (as much as feasible) was selected as the preferred alternative, primarily in response to public and agency support. It is assumed as indicated here:

- Somers to Rocky Cliff Road (separated).
- Rocky Cliff Road to Airport Road (separated).
- Along Kalispell bypass (separated).

- Grandview to Spokane crossing of Whitefish River (separated).
- Karrow Avenue to Milepost 133 (separated as much as possible).

In locations where a separated bikepath is not possible, it will either be attached or on the shoulder of US 93.

2.7.2.5 Restrictive Access Control With Flexibility

The restrictive access control policy (with flexibility) was selected as the preferred alternative for the following reasons:

- It provides the most opportunity to protect future traffic operations of US 93 over time (less degradation of service will occur).
- It provides the safest traffic operations over time.
- It includes a provision for flexibility to assist in responding to the needs of specific property owners.
- Along the Kalispell bypass, it is assumed that virtually all access rights would be purchased to protect the future traffic operations.

In the five-lane sections where access control has already been purchased, the preferred alternative is to retain the already purchased access rights.

2.7.2.6 Special Design Concepts

Six of the special design concepts evaluated in the Draft EIS have been selected as a part of he preferred alternative. The special design concepts which were not included are listed here, with reasons provided for their elimination:

- The Four Corners visitor center has been removed, since it is a duplication of the site already at Lions Park.
- The split alignments have been omitted because of right-of-way, prime farmland and cost impacts.
- The bridge over the Whitefish River has not been included because of cost considerations.

Chapter Three

Affected Environment

Chapter 3.0 Affected Environment

Changes in text between this document and the Draft EIS are in bold and underlined.

This chapter provides a description of the existing conditions in the study area. It is to be used as the basis for which environmental impacts are evaluated.

3.1 Land Use

Information regarding existing land uses, land use plans, development controls, and anticipated land use changes was compiled for purposes of identifying and assessing the land use impacts of US 93 alternatives. The land use analysis focuses on the central Flathead Valley, from Somers to Whitefish.

3.1.1 Land Ownership

The majority (82%) of land in Flathead County is held in public or corporate timber company ownership. Federal government holdings account for 70 percent of the county land area, and include sizable portions of Glacier National Park and the Flathead National Forest (including three wilderness areas). The US Bureau of Land Management, the US Bureau of Reclamation, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service also hold land within the county. State of Montana lands account for 4% of county land area, and include the Stillwater State Forest and scattered state school sections. Private forest products companies hold about 17 percent of county land. These lands were originally granted to railroads by the federal government. A small portion of the Flathead Indian Reservation also is located in southern Flathead County.

The prevalence of public, corporate forest, and reservation property serves to limit land available for development in Flathead County. Most privately owned land is located in the Flathead Valley. It is this area which supports most of the county's population, commerce, and agriculture.

MDT already owns portions of the right-of-way of the US 93 corridor. A generalized description of MDT ownership by segment is:

- Somers to Ball's Crossing. MDT owns a strip that was acquired from the railroad which is approximately 21.35 meters (70 feet) wide and 6.76 kilometers (4.2 miles) long.
- Ball's Crossing to Kalispell - 36.6 meters (120 feet) average width.
- Kalispell to KM Road -- 67.1 meters (220 feet) average width.
- KM Road to JP Road - 61 meters (200 feet) average width.
- JP Road to Baker Street - 48.8 meters (160 feet) average width.

3.1.2 Existing Land Uses

An inventory of existing land uses has been prepared for highway modeling purposes. The inventory tabulates the location, the mix, density, and type of land uses which exist in Flathead County. Detailed land use information was developed for 107 distinct Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs) within the central Flathead Valley

(from Somers to Whitefish). Summary land use information also was developed for 26 external areas (areas peripheral to the central valley which contribute traffic to central valley roads).

Information was developed for the following land use types:

Residential	Services
High Volume Retail Trade	Medical
Medium Volume Retail Trade	Industrial
Low Volume Retail Trade	Primary and Secondary Schools
Federal and State Government	College
Local Government	Lodging
General Office	Agriculture

3.1.3 General Land Use Trends

The Flathead Valley is experiencing substantial population and economic growth. Residential and commercial development patterns are resulting in important changes in area land uses.

3.1.3.1 Residential

In recent decades, new residential development has been characterized by a dispersed development pattern, with most new dwellings being located outside of cities and major unincorporated communities. **Recent** land use trends have caused the Flathead Valley's population to become much less centralized. The cities of Kalispell, Whitefish, and Columbia Falls and the unincorporated community of Evergreen continue to be population centers, but account for decreasing shares of the area's total population.

Rural residential development has displaced substantial amounts of productive agricultural land and wildlife habitat, and in some areas has contributed to degradation of water quality. The prevalence of rural residential development also contributes to increased use of rural sections of area highways by persons commuting from exurban home sites to jobs and other trip destinations within the area's larger communities.

3.1.3.2 Commercial

Most of the economic growth occurring in the Flathead Valley is occurring in retail and service type businesses. The primary location for the new commercial development has been along highway corridors inside existing communities. US Highways 93 and 2, have been the location of two new shopping malls in Kalispell and one in Whitefish. Kalispell has also experienced significant commercial strip-type development east and west of its Central Business District (CBD) on US 2, and south of the CBD on US 93. Commercial strip development also is occurring south of the Whitefish CBD on US 93. Destination golf resorts, and related hotel-condominium facilities have been developed near US 93 west of Whitefish. The Big Mountain Ski Resort is located to the north of Whitefish.

Some highway-oriented commercial development is occurring in rural areas between Flathead communities. This dispersed-type commercial development is most prominent on US 2 en route to Glacier National Park. These types of commercial land uses are also occurring on US 93 north and south of Kalispell, and on US 93 south of Whitefish.

Commercial strip development along US 93 and US 2 has contributed to growth of the volume of traffic and to the complexity of traffic movements within Kalispell and Whitefish. Low-density commercial development in rural areas add vehicle trips and induce turning movements which interfere with the free flow of through traffic in rural areas.

3.1.3.3 Industrial

The Flathead Valley's major industrial employers were historically located along railroad corridors. The Columbia Falls Aluminum Plant and Plum Creek and other major wood products manufacturers continue to be located on rail corridors. The wood product manufacturers are a predominant destination for semi-truck traffic. As the county's industrial economy has shifted away from heavy manufacturing, much of the growth in industrial-type land use development has occurred along or near highway corridors.

3.1.3.4 Agricultural

Flathead County agriculture occurs mainly in the Flathead Valley. The Flathead Valley contains between 48,600 and 56,700 hectares (120,000 and 140,000 acres) of prime agricultural lands (FRDO, 1987). Most of this land is located in central and eastern portions of the Flathead Valley. Residential development in rural areas is resulting in the conversion of substantial amounts of agricultural land to non-agricultural land uses. There also is a trend for conversion of large farming units into multiple mini-farms. The smaller farm units are purchased for hobby farms, tax shelters, and/or for land speculation purposes.

3.1.4 Land Use Planning

Master plans have been adopted by the cities of Kalispell (in 1986), Whitefish (in 1987). These plans identify land use designations for areas included within city limits and a 7.24-kilometer (4.5-mile) extraterritorial planning jurisdiction.

Kalispell land use designations encourage commercial and industrial development in existing business and industrial districts, and discourage such developments elsewhere. The Kalispell plan discourages the expansion of commercial strip development northward on US 93. The Kalispell plan was recently amended to permit industrial development along US 93 south of the city. The Kalispell plan allows for more intensive residential development within the city and in unincorporated areas served by community water and sewer services. The Kalispell plan designates adjacent areas to the south and west of the city as residential growth areas. The plan restricts residential development in outlying rural areas to very low densities, in order to preserve agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, and environmental resources (water quality in particular) and allow for efficient provision of public services.

The Whitefish plan allows for commercial development along the US 93 corridor south to Montana Highway 40. The plan generally encourages higher density residential near the city Central Business District and along the US 93 corridor. The plan encourages medium and lower density residential development elsewhere in the city. A goal of the Whitefish plan is to preserve agriculture and environmental resources in rural areas by sanctioning residential development only at very low densities. This plan is currently being revised.

Areas outside of city planning jurisdictions are covered by the Flathead County Comprehensive Plan which was adopted in 1987. The objectives of this plan include the preservation of agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, and environment quality. The county plan encourages the concentration of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses within cities, unincorporated communities, and other already developed areas. Zoning is not adopted for many areas outside of the Flathead Valley and considerable commercial and residential development has occurred which is discordant with the land use objectives of the county master plan (see Figure 3-1). Unplanned rural residential development has also been allowed to occur because of Montana subdivision laws, which allowed land parcels to be systematically converted to residential land uses without public review. The 1993 Montana Legislature amended the state subdivision law.

In 1993 and 1994, the Flathead Cooperative Planning Coalition is sponsoring a "Flathead County Master Plan Update." It is the intent of Cooperative Planning Coalition to develop a plan and implementation program which achieves the preservation of agricultural lands and environmental resources, and the efficient provision of public services through the "management of future growth." **A draft of the plan was complete as of March 1994.**

3.1.5 Future Land Use Projections

Two land use advisory subcommittees were convened for this project to analyze existing trends and forecast future land use patterns in the Flathead Valley. The committees consisted of local professionals familiar with local land development and planning activities. The committees included representatives from city and county governments, local government planning agencies, public health agencies, federal agriculture agencies, local utilities, the US Postal Service, and private planning consultants.

The land use subcommittees focused on the central Flathead Valley. The group predicted that, based on past growth trends, substantial new residential development is likely to occur in nearby existing urban areas. Substantial growth was predicted to the north and west of the City of Kalispell, and in the old fairgrounds area **along Meridian Road**. Substantial growth was also predicted for northern and western sections of the City of Whitefish. The land use subcommittees also predicted continuing suburbanization of rural areas of the central Flathead Valley; particularly between Kalispell and Whitefish. The latter development was cited as displacing important agricultural lands.

The greatest concentrations of new commercial development were predicted to occur along major highways inside city boundaries. Kalispell was predicted to attract most of the commercial development. In particular, the US 2 corridor in vicinity of the US 93 intersection was predicted to attract substantial new commercial development. The committee also predicted continuing commercial development along US 93 south of Kalispell and Whitefish and limited new commercial development along rural highway corridors.

Considerable new industrial development was predicted to occur south of Kalispell along US 93 and along the US 2 corridor between Kalispell and Columbia Falls.

In addition to land use projections developed in conjunction with the land use advisory committees, the Flathead Cooperative Planning Coalition (CPC) requested that a managed growth land use scenario be developed. This scenario emphasized the preservation of agricultural uses and natural environmental qualities in rural areas of the county. In this scenario, most new residential, commercial and industrial development is predicted to occur inside or immediately adjacent to existing communities. The managed growth scenario was reviewed by CPC and Design Workshop, Inc., the consulting firm which prepared the update of the county comprehensive plan.

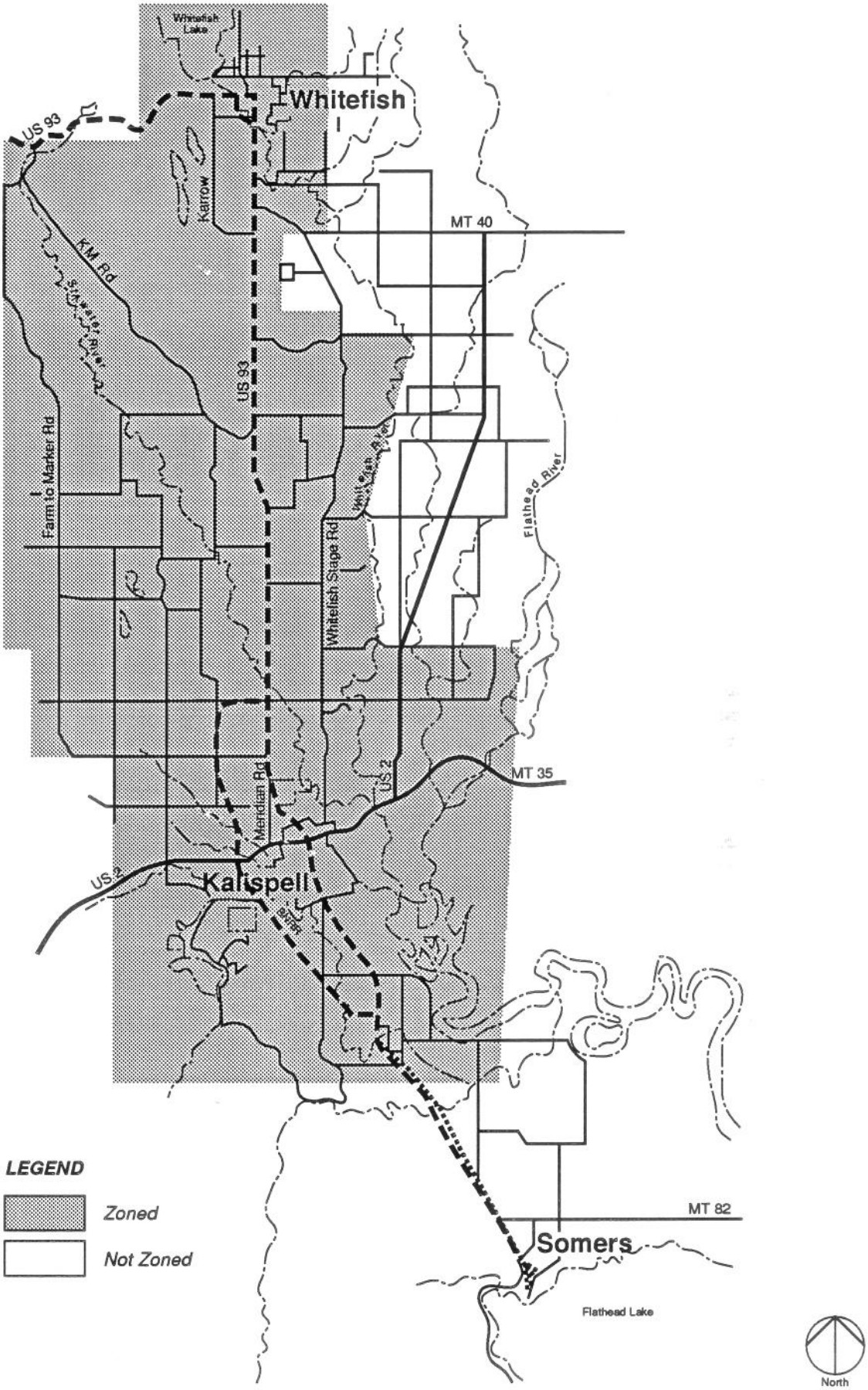

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Figure 3-1
Locations of Existing Zoned Areas

3.2 Farmland

Prime and unique farmland is protected by the Farmland Protection Act. Coordination is required with the USDA, Soil Conservation Service.

Montana is ranked **second to Texas** nationally in farm and ranch acreage with over 24.3 million hectares (60 million) acres in use. Harvested area including both irrigated and non-irrigated for the year 1991 was 183,436 hectares (452,930 acres). Within Montana, Flathead County is considered above average for agricultural production due to its very fertile soils. Its primary crop **is** barley and **its** primary husbandry activity is cattle and dairy.

The following Table 3-1 is a synopsis of agricultural activities within the Flathead Valley for the year 1991.

Table 3-1
Flathead Valley Agricultural Activities

Crop	Harvested Acres/Head	Yield Per Acre (Bushels)	State Ranking
Wheat	11,000	59.6	28
Barley	31,500	75	11
Oats	700	59	43
Potatoes	1040	300/Cwt.	-----
Hay	37,000	2.58 tons	25
Cattle	19,600	-----	45
Hogs & Pigs	5,800	-----	14

This table was compiled from county agricultural statistics for Flathead County so it does not necessarily apply to the specific Somers to Whitefish study area. However, the agricultural areas in Flathead County reasonably correspond to the study area, so these county statistics are applicable.

3.2.1 Agricultural Geography

The specific agricultural geography of the Flathead Valley and thus the Somers to Whitefish study area is described in Figure 3-2. The arable land correlates to the valley topography and extends to each of the distinct valley edges where there is abrupt change in relief. These specific grade changes between the vertical mountains and the plains of the valley mark the outer edges of agriculture. Lands between these edges are farmable in varying degrees with the exception of large portions of the Flathead River floodplain and smaller portions of the other tributary floodplains which are overly saturated and not suitable for cropping.

The balance of the land within the county and/or study area is forested mountain woodland and or meadow land too small to be farmed efficiently. These upland forests and pastures are used for grazing and other livestock activities.

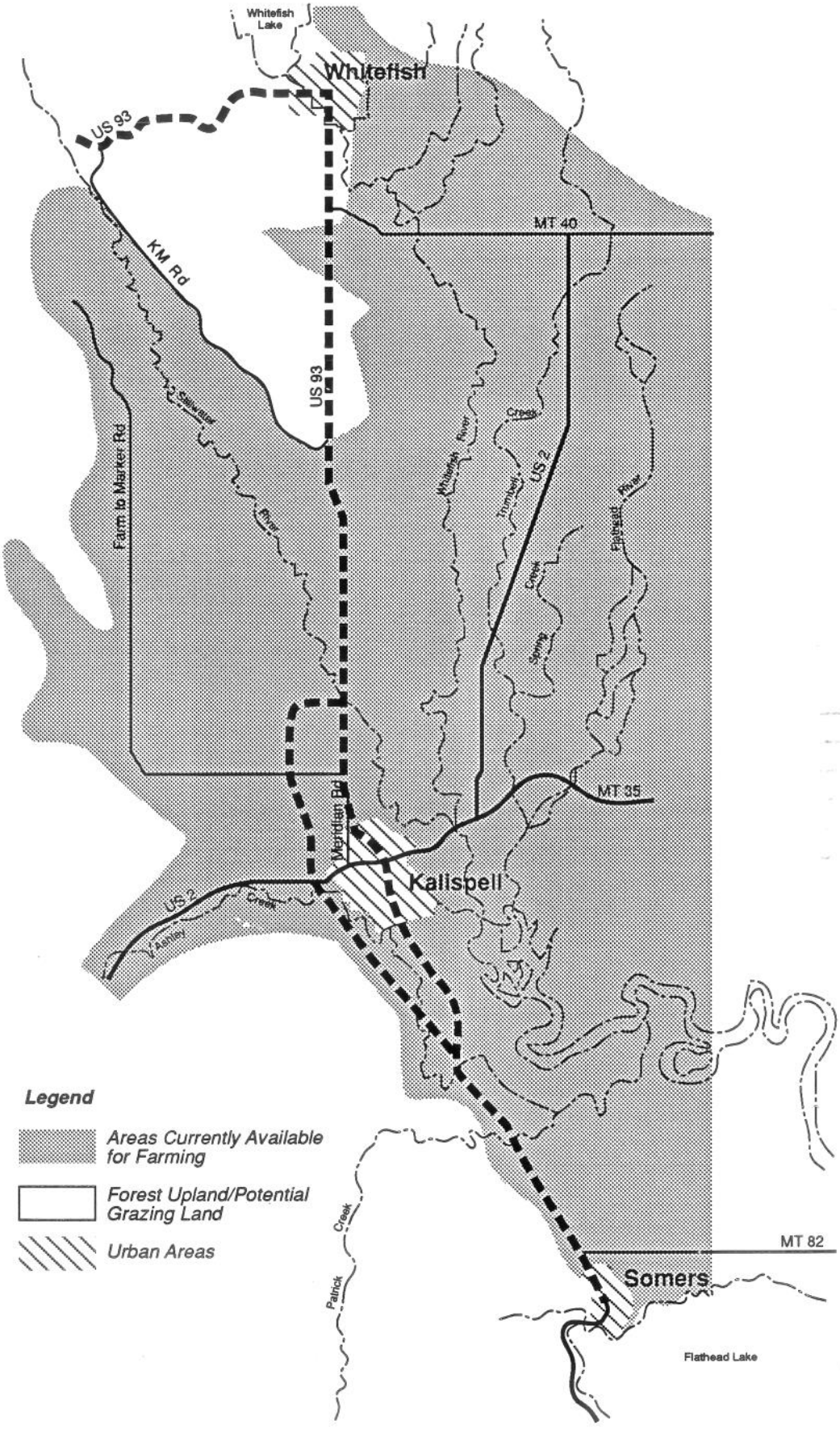

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Figure 3-2
Arable Lands

3.2.2 Prime and Unique Farmland

Figure 3-3 is a map showing Prime Farmland, Prime Farmland if Irrigated and Farmland of Statewide Importance. There are obvious concentrations of these categories within the larger valley. These concentrations relate to specific soil association although not on a one to one basis. There is a large area of Prime Farmland and Prime if Irrigated Farmland located mid valley just to the northwest of the City of Kalispell. On the eastern edge of the valley, east of the Flathead River is another large area of Prime farmland known as the Creston Bench. Along US 93, there are blocks of Prime Farmland located between Somers and Kalispell and just north of Kalispell. There are also blocks of Prime Farmland located along Kalispell Alternative B.

Two distinct areas of farmland that are of statewide importance are located in the valley. One is east of the Four Corners junction on both banks of the Flathead River, corresponding approximately to the 500 year floodplain in this area. The other is located along KM Road in the Stillwater drainage.

There are no Unique Farmlands mapped within the Somers to Whitefish study area.

3.3 Social

3.3.1 Population Trends

Flathead County is one of Montana's fastest growing counties. The 1994 population of Flathead County is estimated to be 64,000.

The county's population is centered in the Flathead Valley, with the vast majority of county residents living within 10 miles of US 93. Population growth and the tendency for new settlement to occur in rural areas has contributed importantly to increasing traffic on US 93 and other area highways and major roads.

Table 3-2 displays historic trends in Flathead County's year-round population. The county has experienced growth in each decade since the 1930s.

Table 3-2
Flathead County Population Trends - 1930-1993

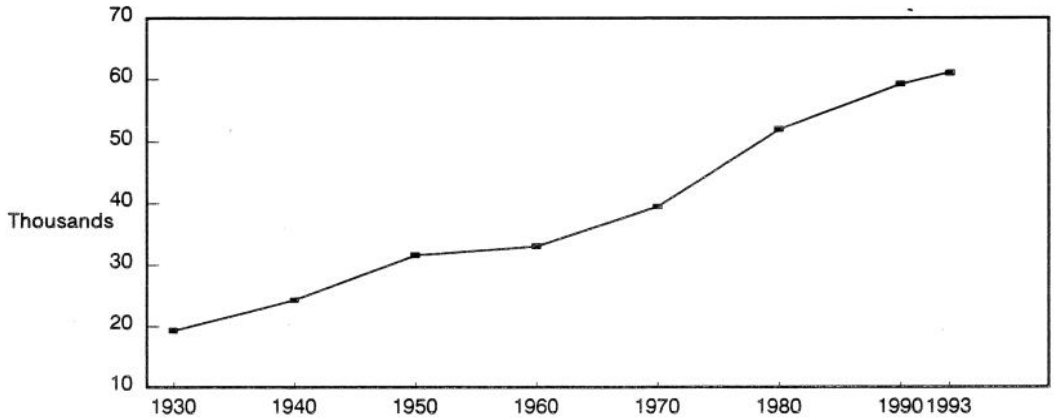

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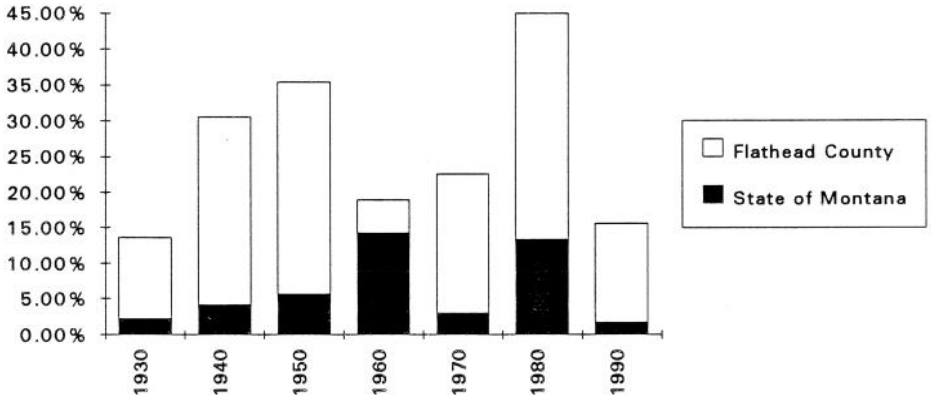
Figure 3-3
Prime Farmland

Flathead County population is growing much faster than the state as a whole. Table 3-3 compares historic population trends for Flathead County and the State of Montana.

Table 3-3
Comparison of Population Growth Trends
Flathead County and State of Montana (Year Round Population) - 1930 to 1990



Source: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. US Censuses of Population, 1930-1990.

In recent decades the Flathead County's population growth has occurred in spurts. The county's population grew rapidly in the late 1970s and early 1980s, then slowly during the mid- and late 1980s. In the early 1990s, the Flathead is experiencing another period of rapid growth; averaging greater than two percent a year growth since the census (1994 population estimates are based on permit data for new dwelling units developed by Flathead County local governments).

3.3.1.1 Seasonal Population

Flathead County's status as a destination resort area causes it to support a larger population during summer than during the off-season. This population peaks during July and August, and contributes importantly to traffic volumes on US 93. Table 3-4 compares estimates of the county's year-round and seasonal resident populations in 1990. In 1993, the county's mid-summer population was estimated to exceed 74,000. Estimates do not include persons staying at over-night lodging facilities.

Table 3-4
Comparison of Year-Round and Peak Summer-time Populations
Flathead County, Montana, 1990

	Net Increase		
	Year Round	Peak Summer*	In Summer
1990	59,218	69,178	9,960

** Estimates of peak summer population assume housing is 99 percent occupied during mid-summer.*

Flathead County also experiences winter-time population increases due to the presence of the Big Mountain Ski Resort. The influx of ski-season residents is much less than the influx of summertime residents. The winter-time seasonal population is centered in the Whitefish area, although skier accommodations extend as far south as Polson, with skiers commuting daily to Big Mountain. Big Mountain is planning for an expansion. In addition, there is ongoing development adjacent to the ski resort.

3.3.2 Population Distribution Patterns

Population growth is occurring in much of central and southern Flathead County, with the Kalispell, Whitefish, and the Creston-Big Fork census divisions attracting the greatest shares of the county's growth.

Most population growth is occurring outside of the boundaries of the county's three incorporated cities. From 1970 though 1993, 86 percent of Flathead County's population growth occurred outside of Kalispell, Whitefish, and Columbia Falls. During this period, the portion of the county's population living inside cities decreased from 42 to 31 percent. The trend for most new settlement to occur outside of cities is consistent with settlement patterns occurring in other growing areas of western Montana.

The Flathead's seasonal residents tend to reside in areas near Whitefish Lake, Flathead Lake, the Bob Marshall and Great Bear wilderness areas, Glacier National Park, the Big Mountain Ski area, and the area's smaller lakes. Most seasonal residents reside outside of cities. The exception to this pattern is in the City of Whitefish, which encircles much of Whitefish Lake.

3.3.3 Demographics and Social Characteristics

The discussion of Flathead County demographic and social characteristics is based on information from the 1990 Census of Population. Flathead County is more racially homogeneous than the statewide population. In 1990, 98 percent of the county's population was classified as white, compared to 93 percent of the Montana population. The county's largest racial minority is Native American Indians. Indians constituted about 1 1/2 percent of the county's 1990 population. About 1 percent of county residents were of Hispanic origin (US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1991).

Flathead County's population tends to be slightly older than the state norm. The census reported the median age for county residents to be 35.3 compared to 33.8 for the state as a whole. About the same percentage (13.0%) of Flathead County residents were 65 or older as for Montana a whole (13.3%). The county's older median age results from proportionately more county residents being in middle age groups and fewer in younger age groups than is typical in Montana.

Fifty-two percent of county residents were born in Montana compared to 60 percent of state residents. This difference reflects the effects of in-migration of non-Montanans to the Flathead area.

Average incomes for Flathead County residents were higher than the state norms. The county's 1989 median household income was $24,145 compared to $22,998 for Montana. The per capita income for county residents was $11,718 and $11,213. Proportionately fewer Flathead residents had incomes below the poverty level; 14.5 percent of county residents had incomes below the poverty level compared for the 16.1 percent for the state as a whole.

Housing costs are higher in Flathead County than in the state as a whole. The median housing cost reported by the 1990 census was $64,200. The county's median rent was $332 compared to $311 for the state. Flathead area

housing costs have increased substantially since the census. From 1990 to 1993, the median sale price for a Flathead County house has increased from $58,000 to $88,000 (Jim Kelley, 1994). This is particularly true in summers when there are virtually no vacancies in rental housing (Ross Plambeck, 1993) Recent inflation in the cost of housing is reflected in increases in the county's taxable valuation. Taxable valuation of residential property in Flathead County increased by over 20% from 1990 to 1993 (Bradley Simshaw, 1993).

3.3.4 Population Projections

Population projections were developed for 2000 and 2015. The projections were developed using a linear regression technique based population trend data from 1970 through 1993. Flathead County is predicted to continue to experience substantial population increases. Flathead County's year-round population is predicted to grow by over 27,000 persons by 2015, a 46 percent increase. If Flathead County's seasonal population experiences parallel increases, the county's mid-summer 2015 population will exceed 100,000 people.

New settlement is predicted to occur throughout the Flathead Valley, with the Kalispell, Whitefish, and Creston-Big Fork census divisions expected to capture the greatest share of county population growth.

If current trends continue, most of the future increase in population will occur outside of the cities. Only about 16 percent of the area's net increase in population will occur within city boundaries (cities could substantially increase this percentage through aggressive annexation of peripheral residential areas). Increases in the Flathead's seasonal population will continue to occur mainly in rural areas. The exception to this will occur in Whitefish, where Whitefish Lake, skiing, and other resort type amenities are predicted to encourage infilling of undeveloped land inside the city.

3.4 Economic Conditions

3.4.1 Factors Contributing to Traffic Growth

Economic growth has contributed importantly to increasing traffic on US 93. US 93 functions as the "main street" in both Kalispell and Whitefish. As such, it serves as a focus for local area and county-wide commerce. Flathead County agriculture, manufacturing and resource extraction industries use US 93 to transport raw materials and production to and from processing and regional distribution centers. The highway also serves as a major travel corridor for tourists visiting Glacier National Park and other Flathead County attractions. Many Canadians use US 93 to access shopping in Flathead County. The highway also functions as the major north-south corridor connecting local and drive-through commercial truck and other business traffic with destinations elsewhere in Montana, the US, and Canada.

Much of the Flathead's recent economic growth has occurred in businesses catering to tourists, local and regional trade, and drive through travelers. Growth in these retail and service businesses has been concentrated on US 93 and US 2. This business development contributes importantly to the volume and increasing complexity of traffic flows on these highways.

The summertime peak in traffic on US 93 corresponds to the peak in activity for the Flathead County economy. Business sales and employment related to drive-through traffic, local tourism, seasonal residents, and shopping visits by Canadians occur mainly in summers. Likewise, employment in local construction, wood products, and agricultural industries and federal government agencies is greatest during the warm seasons. Local economic activity and traffic on US 93 is notably reduced during the non-summer months.

Increases in labor force participation is another factor contributing growth in traffic on US 93 and other area roads. Increases in the portion of local residents in the work force has directly increased the number of work related trips originating from households within the county.

According to a survey of Kalispell business operators conducted in 1992, 32 percent of respondents operating businesses on US 93 indicated traffic congestion frequently restricted customer access to their businesses during summers. Another 35 percent of the business operators felt summertime congestion occasionally restricted customer access (Kalispell Business Operators Survey, 1992).

3.4.2 Overview of the Flathead County Economy

The Flathead County economy is growing much faster than the economy of Montana as a whole. From 1970 through 1991, the number of persons employed in the county increased by 111 percent and personal income grew by 89 percent. During the same period, statewide employment increased by 47 percent and income grew by 54 percent (income estimates are adjusted for inflation and presented in 1991 dollars) (US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 1993).

Economic growth in Flathead County reflects the effects of an expanding and more diverse economic base. Tourism, regional trade (particularly with Canadians), and the economic effects of the area's general population growth have been important contributors to the area's recent economic growth. Also prominent in the expansion of the economy is sizable growth in investment and transfer payment income accruing to county residents. The area's traditional basic industries (natural resource extraction and processing, manufacturing, transportation, and agriculture); continue to play important roles in the Flathead economy; however, these industries have **little** to do with recent economic expansion.

The economic base of an area is comprised of those economic activities which bring outside income into a local economy. Basic economic activities benefit local economies through the direct creation of jobs and income for area residents. The economic multiplier effect occurs when basic income is spent in a local economy. The expenditure and subsequent circulation of basic income creates additional jobs and income for local residents.

The Flathead economy experiences considerable seasonal fluctuation. The economy crests during the summer season, reflecting the influences of tourism, summertime residents, and seasonal employment in construction, the wood products industry, agriculture and federal government. The off-season economy is characterized by notably reduced employment and earnings by county residents. County unemployment rates often drop below six percent during summer months and exceed 10 percent in winters (Cathy Shenkle, 1993).

The Flathead economy also tends to grow in cycles, experiencing periods of rapid expansion followed by times of little or no growth. In the early 1990s, the county economy is growing rapidly.

3.4.3 Labor Force, Employment, and Income Trends

3.4.3.1 Labor Force and Labor Force Participation

The number of people in the labor force is increasing faster than is the area's population. From 1970 to 1990 the percentage of the age 16 and older population in the labor force increased from 52 to 63 percent. This increase in the labor force participation rate results mainly from rising labor force participation by women. In

1970, 32 percent of women 16 and older were in the labor force compared with 55 percent in 1990 (US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1991).

Since 1970, average annual employment in Flathead County has more than doubled. Average annual employment increased from approximately 15,500 in 1970 to 33,500 in 1992 (US Department of Commerce, 1993) (Montana Department of Labor and Industry, 1993). During the 22-year period, county employment has experienced cycles of brisk expansion followed by intervals of no growth or decline, but the overall trend has been for substantial increases in numbers of employed persons.

From 1970 through 1991, 87 percent of the total growth in county jobs occurred in the service, retail trade, construction, and financial (finance, insurance, and real estate) sectors. The County's traditional basic industries, farming, transportation, and manufacturing, accounted for about seven percent of employment growth (US Department of Commerce, 1993).

The Flathead economy experiences substantial seasonal variation in employment. Employment in the region's manufacturing (the wood products industry), retail, service and construction sectors peaks in summers and bottoms out in winter.

In spite of a growing economy, unemployment rates in Flathead County remain much higher than is typical in Montana. In 1992, the county's average annual unemployment rate was 8.7 percent compared to 6.7 for the state. Unemployment rates typically exceed 10 percent during the winter months (Cathy Shenkle, 1993).

3.4.3.2 Income

From 1970 through 1991, total personal income for Flathead County residents increased by 89 percent and per capita income grew by 35 percent.

In 1991, income derived from earnings accounted for 59 percent and non-earned income accounted for 41 percent of the total personal income of county residents. Earnings income includes the wages, salaries, commissions, and profits of employees and business proprietors. Non-earned income includes income derived from investments (interest, dividends, and rents) and transfer payments (mainly government payments).

From 1970 to 1991, non-earned income's share of Flathead County resident income rose from 24 percent to 41 percent; while the share of income derived from earnings decreased from 74 to 59 percent. Growth in the non-earned income among Flathead County residents reflects the effects of the national economic changes. In-migration of retirees and others with substantial investment and transfer payment income has caused non-earned income to grow more rapidly in Flathead County than in many other areas of Montana. Because most non-earned income is derived from sources outside Flathead County, it contributes to the overall growth in the area's economy.

3.4.3.3 Earnings by Economic Sector

From 1970 to 1991, total earnings (adjusted for inflation) by county residents increased by 65 percent. This net increase in earnings income is primarily a result of more people working. Growth in earnings was much slower than the growth in local employment. As a result, real dollar earnings per job decreased from $22,000 to $19,000 from 1970 through 1991. Many new jobs in the service and retail trade sectors have been part-time or low paying jobs.

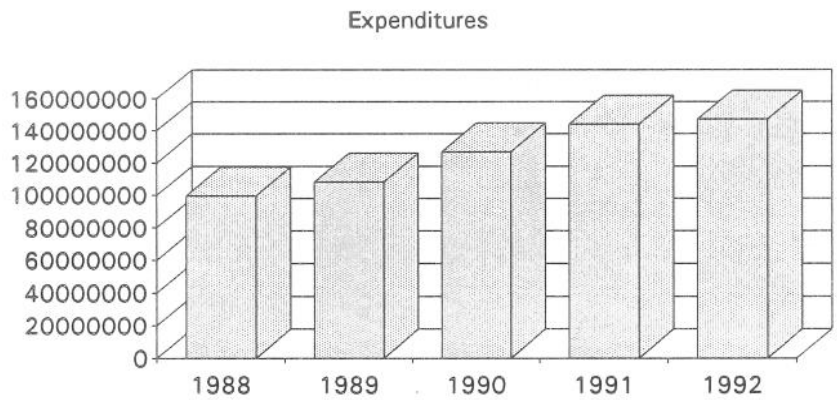
3.4.4 Economic Contribution by Industry

3.4.4.1 Tourism

Tourism is an important and growing industry for Flathead County. Major tourist attractions in the Flathead region include Glacier National Park, Flathead Lake, Whitefish Lake, the Bob Marshall and Great Bear wilderness areas, the Flathead River, the Hungry Horse Reservoir, and the Big Mountain Ski Resort. Local attractions such as state parks, golf courses, smaller lakes, reservoirs, rivers, convention facilities and community attractions (festivals, museums, theaters, galleries) also bring visitors to the region.

Travelers are estimated to have spent about $150 million in Flathead County in 1992 (Bill Martin, Executive Director, Flathead Convention and Visitors Association, 1993). Flathead County is estimated to attract about 11 percent of statewide expenditures by non-resident travelers (Montana Institute for Tourism Research, 1992). Tourism along the US 93 corridor tends to be seasonal, with over 75 percent of non-resident visits occurring in the summer.

Table 3-5
Estimated Visitor Expenditures* in Flathead County - 1988-1992

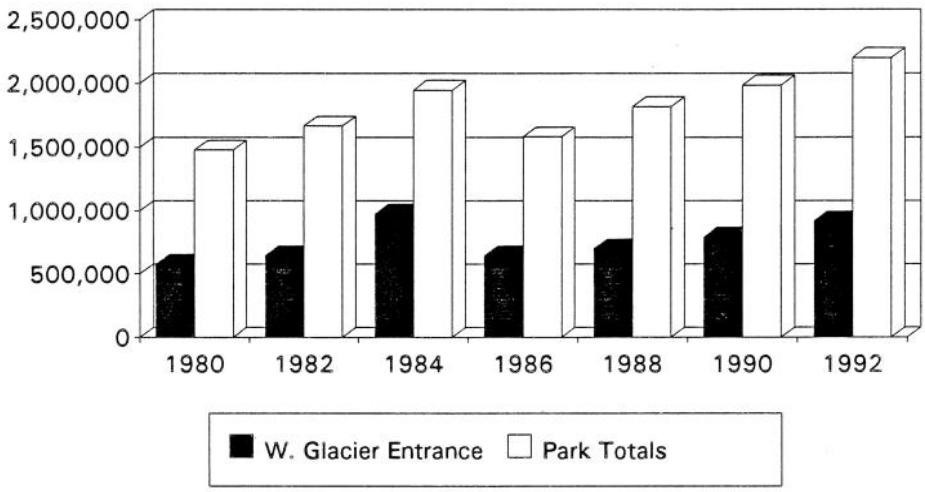


**Expenditure totals are estimates developed by the Flathead Convention and Visitors Association. Totals include expenditures made by out-of-state and in-state residents. 1988-1991 expenditure estimates are adjusted for inflation and presented in 1992 dollars.*
Source: Bill Martin, Director, Flathead Convention and Visitors Association, July 9, 1993, Kalispell, Mt.

Over the past decade visitors to Glacier National Park and the Big Mountain Ski resort have been growing at about four percent a year.

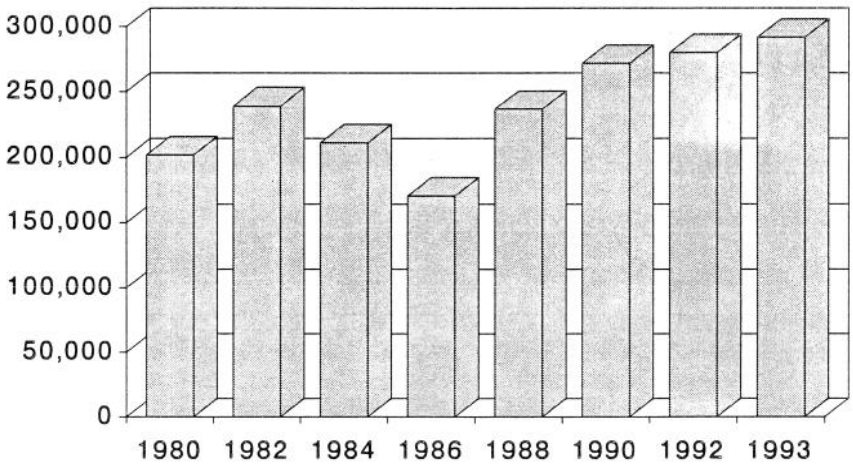
Tables 3-6 through 3-9 illustrate annual growth in visitors to the park and ski resort. In 1993, an abnormally cool and damp summer contributed to a slight decrease in the number of Glacier Park visitors (Vanderbilt, Amy, 1993).

Table 3-6
Annual Visitors to Glacier Park and West Glacier Entrance
For selected years 1980-1992



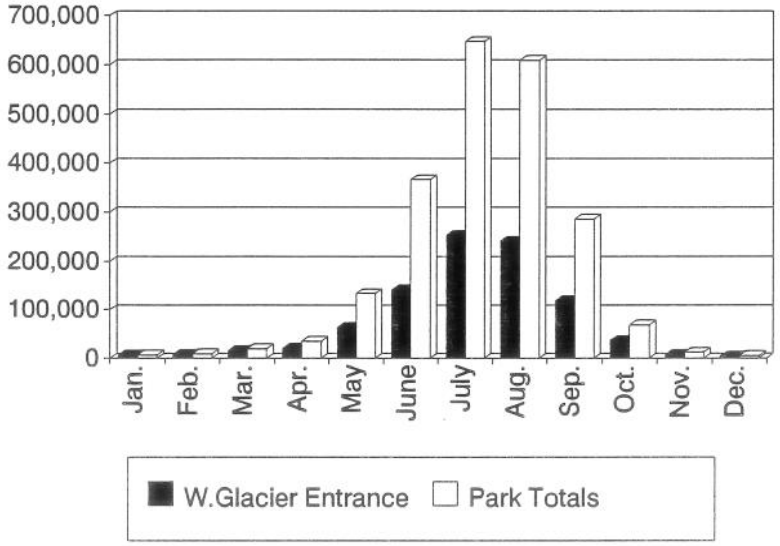
** West Glacier is the main entrance into the park from Flathead County.*
Source: Nelson, Jerry. Information Officer, US Park Service, Glacier National Park, July 7, 1993, West Glacier, Mt.

Table 3-7
Annual Skier Days at the Big Mountain Ski Resort
1980-1992



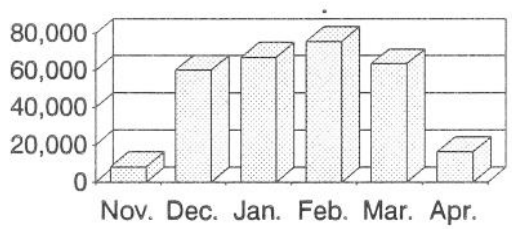
Source: Anne Moran, Marketing Representative, Big Mountain Ski Resort, July 11, 1993, Whitefish, Mt.

Table 3-8
Monthly Visitor Counts Glacier National Park
1992



Source: Nelson, Jerry. Information Officer, Glacier National Park, July 7, 1993, West Glacier, Mt.

Table 3-9
Monthly Skier Days, Big Mountain Ski Resort
1992-1993 Ski Season



** skier days in December 1992 and January 1993 were lower than expected because of extremely cold temperatures occurring during the holiday season. Big Mountain's ski facilities were open for a limited number of days in November and April.*

The economic effects of population in-migration and expansion of the Flathead area tourism industry are major factors contributing to recent employment and income growth in the Flathead Valley. In-migration and growth in tourism have served to off-set sluggish growth and/or declining employment and earnings in the Flathead's historically dominant industries.

In many areas of Montana, reductions in employment and earnings within historically dominant industries have resulted in overall decline in local and regional economies and loss of population. The Flathead area economy has been able to develop new basic economic activities when its traditional basic industries have become less able to support employment and population. Primary metal manufacturing, forest products, transportation, and agriculture continue to make important contributions to the area's economy, but they are less central to its overall performance than in the past. In-migration related economic growth and expansion of the tourism economy has enlarged and created a more diverse economic base for the Flathead area. The Flathead economy has also benefited from growth in small scale manufacturing, regional and international trade, and government employment.

3.4.4.1.1 In-migration:

In recent decades the Flathead area has experienced periods of rapid population growth followed by periods of slow or no growth. The recent period of rapid population growth began in 1991 and has extended into the mid-decade.

The Flathead area is one of several high amenity areas in Montana and elsewhere in the Rocky Mountain region experiencing substantial of in-migration of persons from more populated states. Much of the recent in-migration is motivated by the attractiveness of the Flathead as a place to live, not by the intrinsic opportunities afforded by the Flathead area economy. As with many of the other growing areas in the Rocky Mountain west, in-migrants are attracted to the Flathead by the area's natural beauty, recreation opportunities, and lifestyle.

The housing demand created by population in-migration has motivated considerable growth in employment and earnings in local the real estate, construction, and financial sectors. Also creating long-term growth in employment and earnings are day-to-day personal expenditures by the in-migrants. The effects of in-migrant expenditures are felt throughout the economy, but have greatest impacts on the retail trade and service sectors.

Many of the people moving to the Flathead area bring with them ample financial resources. For some in-migrants, telecommunication technology now provides ability to maintain long-distance linkages with earnings opportunities elsewhere in the US. These in-migrants can live virtually anywhere and have chosen to move to the Flathead Valley because of the quality of life it affords. Other in-migrants to the Flathead bring with them skills and entrepreneurial expertise which serve to fuel and support additional economic growth within the Flathead region.

3.4.4.1.2 Tourism Trends

Growth in tourism also is contributing importantly to the overall expansion of the Flathead Valley economy and the ability of the area to sustain a growing population. Steady growth in tourism and

tourist expenditures is occurring at major tourist attractions throughout the Rock Mountain west. For example, the pattern of increasing visitation at Glacier National Park is similar to what is occurring at Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon, and Zion National Parks. An increasing portion of Rocky Mountain tourists are residents of foreign countries. Because foreign tourists tend to spend more during their vacations than do domestic tourists, the growth in foreign visitation has served to further increase the benefits of tourism on local and regional economies.

Tables 3-6 to 3-9 display trends in visits to selected Flathead area tourist attractions. The steady growth in Flathead area tourism has contributed to expansion of employment and earnings in tourism oriented businesses sectors. The indirect and secondary economic effects of local expenditures by tourist businesses and their employees has further increased local jobs and earnings. Most of the tourism oriented employment and earnings growth is in the retail trade and service businesses. A downside of tourism oriented growth is that many of the new jobs are part-time or seasonal, and most of the jobs are low paying.

3.4.4.1.3 Traditional Basic Industries:

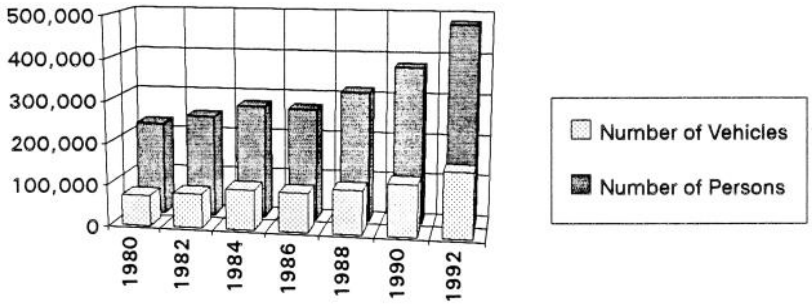
Employment and earnings in Flathead County's traditional basic industries: forest products, primary metal processing, railroad transportation, and agriculture have experienced little or no growth in the last 20 years. The major employers in these sectors have reduced their workforces due to mechanization of previously manual tasks and changes in markets and business operating practices. Depletion of harvestable timber has also contributed to declining employment by forest products businesses. Contributing to the reduced role of agriculture in the Flathead economy has been the conversion of agricultural land into residential subdivisions and the transformation of full-time agricultural operations to hobby farms and ranches.

Substantial employment and earnings growth are occurring in the service, retail trade, construction, financial (finance, insurance and real estate) sectors. Meanwhile, employment and earnings in manufacturing, transportation, and agriculture and forestry have experienced little or no growth. The increases which have occurred in these economic sectors are generally occurring in a growing number of smaller businesses, rather than in the limited number of industry-specific prominent businesses which have historically dominated the Flathead area's economic base.

3.4.4.2 Trade with Canada

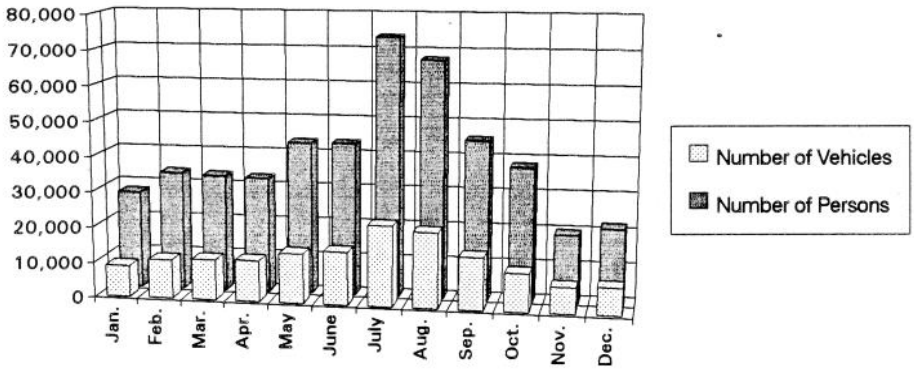
Located on US 93, the Port of Roosville is a major port of entry for Canadians coming in to the United States from Alberta and British Columbia. Favorable US prices for consumer goods encourage Canadians to shop in bordering US communities. The Flathead economy benefits from substantial Canadian trade. Flathead businesses also benefit from expenditures by Canadians traveling US 93 and US 2 enroute to other destinations in the United States. From 1980-1992, the number of border crossings at Roosville grew at about 9 percent per year (Rex Edwards, Port Director, Port of Roosville, 1993). The border crossing is busiest in the middle of the summer. There were fewer border crossings from Canada in 1993 than in 1992.

Table 3-10
Annual Border Crossings into the United States at the Port of Roosville, Mt.
1980-1992



Source: Edwards, Rex. Port Director, Port of Roosville, US Customs Service, July 7, 1993, Roosville, Mt.

Table 3-11
Monthly Border Crossings into the United States at the Port of Roosville, Mt.
1992



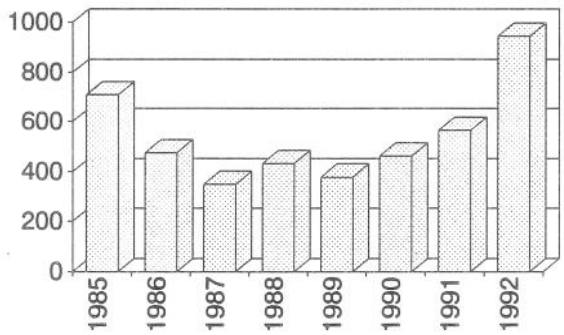
Source: Rex Edwards. Port Director, Port of Roosville, US Customs Service, July 7, 1993, Roosville, Mt.

Customs officials expect border crossings at the Port of Roosville to experience long-term increases, and speculate that the North America Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Canada, and Mexico could serve to further increase travel into the US from Canada (Rex Edwards, Port Director, Port of Roosville, 1993).

3.4.4.3 Construction

In-migration to Flathead County has contributed to a thriving local housing industry. The percent of total employment and earnings in Flathead County's construction sector is much greater than is typical in Montana. In 1991, construction accounted for 6.9 percent of total jobs and 7.2 of total earnings in Flathead County, compared to 4.8 and 5.4 percent of jobs and earnings for Montana (U.S Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 1993). Employment and earnings in Flathead County construction increased considerably in 1992. Because the much of the money used to purchase the new homes comes from outside of Flathead County, it functions as basic income for the local economy. Table 3-12 displays annual permits for new housing in Flathead County from 1985-1992.

Table 3-12
Flathead County Annual New Housing Permits



3.4.4.4 Manufacturing and Transportation

Aluminum smelting, forest products harvesting and manufacturing, and railroad transportation remain important contributors to the Flathead County economic base. These industries support high paying jobs. The industries also make significant purchases of goods and services from other local businesses, creating other jobs and income within the Flathead economy.

None of these primary industries is likely to experience major increases in employment. Employment in forest products is expected to decrease due to depletion of harvestable timber and automation. Future growth in Flathead County's manufacturing and transportation sectors is most likely to occur among emerging smaller businesses.

3.4.4.5 Agriculture

Agriculture remains an important portion of Montana's economy. It is the number one industry in the state running slightly ahead of travel and tourism. In 1992, agricultural cash income including government payments totaled about two billion dollars.

In 1992, Flathead County ranked 18th in crop production ($11.6 million in receipts) and 34th in livestock production ($11.6 million in receipts) among Montana counties. Principal crops grown in Flathead County include barley, wheat, and hay. Seed potatoes and mint are a high value specialty crop grown in parts of the Flathead Valley. Predominant livestock raised in the county are beef cattle, dairy cattle, and sheep. Although the number of farms and persons employed in agriculture in Flathead County has increased, this is largely the result of hobby farms. Rural subdivisions are reducing the number of full-time farms and ranches in the county. Agriculture's importance to the area's overall economy is decreasing.

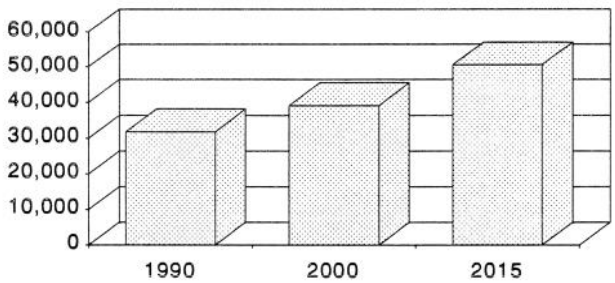
3.4.5 Economic Projections

Employment projections are used to describe the future characteristics of the Flathead County economy. Projections call for continuing economic growth in the study area economy. The majority of this growth is expected to occur in the service and retail sectors. The region's traditional basic industries (manufacturing, transportation, and agriculture will account for only a small share of the overall job growth).

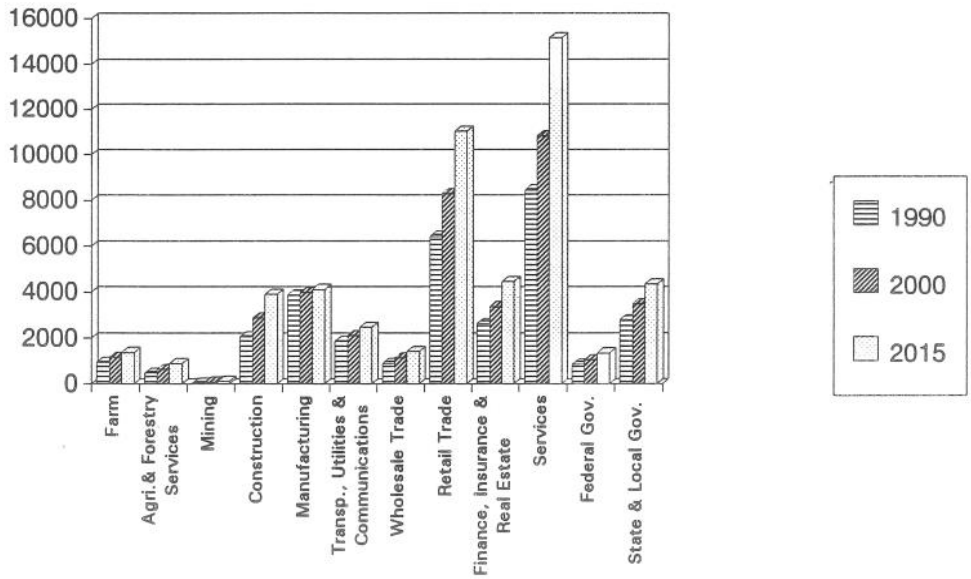
Table 3-13 displays employment projections for Flathead County for the 2000 and 2015 period. Projections were developed using a linear regression technique based on employment data from 1969 through 1992.

Table 3-13
Flathead County Employment Projections
Total Employment and Economic Sector -- 1990-2015

Total Employment Projections:



Employment Projections By Economic Sector



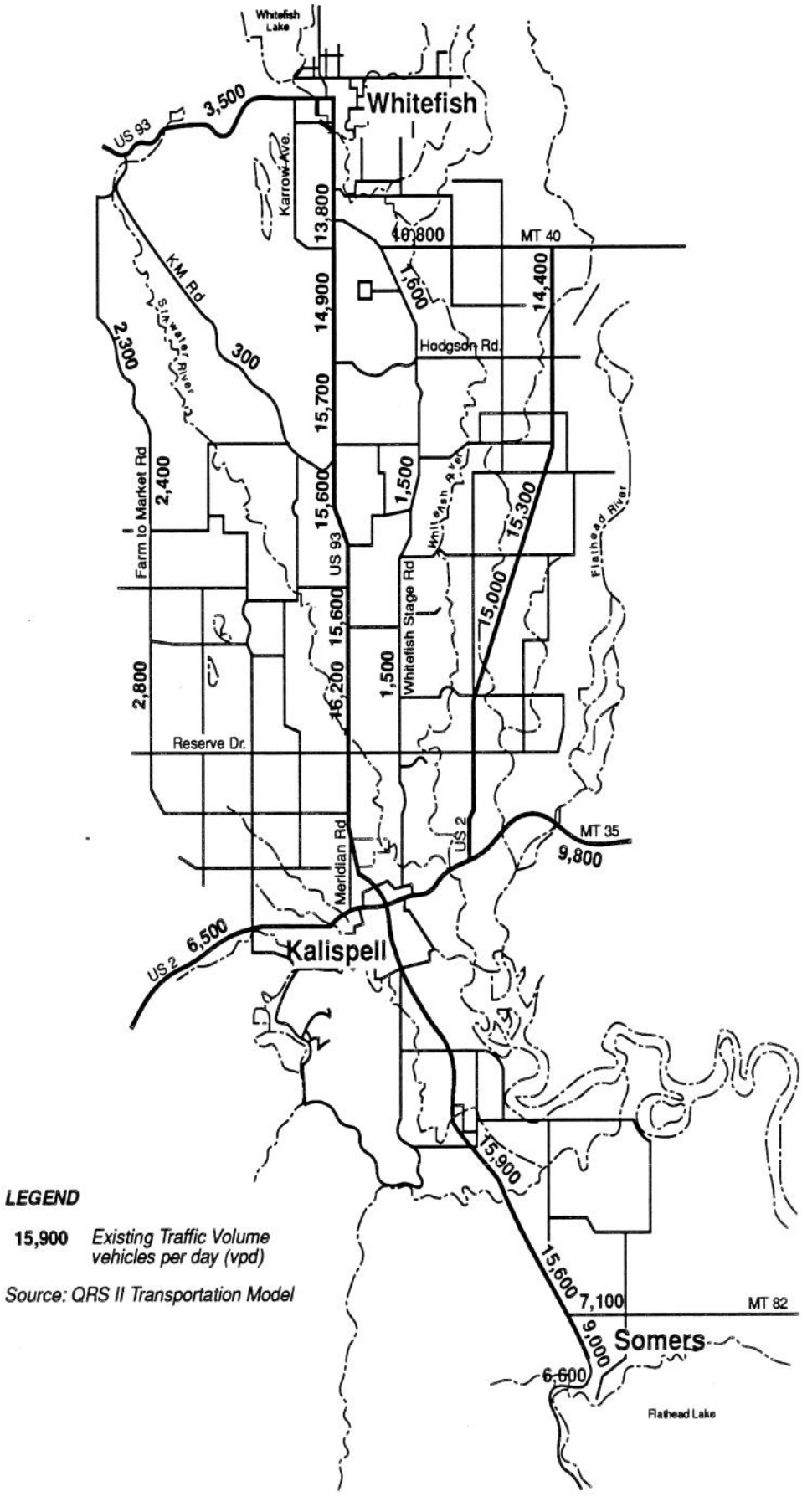
From 1990 through 2015, average annual employment in Flathead County is predicted to increase by 59 percent. Employment growth in the Flathead will be much more rapid than in most of Montana, and will contribute to significant increases in the volume of traffic carried by area roadways. The concentration of economic growth in the commercial oriented economic sectors (retail, service, financial) will contribute to business growth along area highways and other major travel corridors.

3.5 Transportation

This section provides a general overview of transportation in the study area. Much of this information is discussed in greater detail in Chapter One of this document.

US 93 serves as a primary travel corridor for the Flathead Valley. The only other **primary** travel corridor in the Valley is US 2. Major roads in the area with 1993 traffic volumes are shown on Figure 3-4.

A summary of accident rates is provided in Chapter One -- Purpose and Need. The summary indicates several roadway segments that are above the statewide averages. Several accidents are a result of substandard intersection design (no provision for either left turns or right turns from US 93) on a high-speed roadway.



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 3-4

1993 Existing Modeled Summer Daily Traffic Volumes

3.5.1 Historic Traffic Volumes

Historic data was collected from a continual traffic counting program conducted by the Montana Department of Transportation. In addition, peak hour counts were taken during the summer of 1993 to identify current spot operational problems and to validate the traffic model used in the traffic forecasts.

A comparison in Kalispell at Main Street (US 93)/Idaho Street (US 2) during the summer months and the winter months was made. The Main and Idaho intersection experiences the greatest concentration of turning traffic well exceeding its capacity during summer tourist traffic flows and throughout the year.

3.5.2 Existing Level of Service (LOS)

Analyses were completed for the existing two-lane segments of US 93 based on procedures outlined in the 1985 *Highway Capacity Manual*. The qualitative meaning of each letter designation is provided in Chapter One.

The Purpose and Need chapter (Chapter One) indicates that the existing two-lane highway is generally operating at a LOS D or LOS E. These conditions are encountered during peak traffic periods during the summer tourist season. In addition, an analysis was completed for various intersections along the corridor. Generally along the corridor left turns exiting from US 93 operate at either LOS A or B. However, left turns entering the highway operate at LOS E.

3.5.3 Travel Survey

Two travel surveys were completed as part of this study to determine travel trends of drivers along the US 93 corridor and to identify the vehicle mix of traffic. The first travel survey was completed in May of 1993 and recorded information for a 12-hour period (7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.). The survey was conducted just prior to the peak tourist season. The second travel survey was completed in July of 1993 for five hours (11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). The survey was completed to identify characteristics of the summer peak tourist season. July was unseasonably wet in 1993 and therefore the tourist season was slightly lower than expected.

The survey was completed using video cameras to record license plates on the highway. The data was then reduced and each station compared to the other stations. In total, eight stations were set up to collect data. Each station consisted of two video cameras, one camera recording the vehicle license plates in one direction while the other camera recorded license plates in the opposite direction. Six of the stations were set up as external stations to record data and validate the traffic model. The remaining two stations were internal stations to record trips between the City of Kalispell and the Town of Whitefish, and between the Town of Whitefish and US 2. License plates were compared within a database to determine the length of time travel. If travel time exceeded reasonable trip times, it was assumed the vehicle made a stop between stations. Results are summarized in Table 3-14 and 3-15.

Table 3-14
Travel Survey Results
Vehicle Mix

Location	Distribution of Vehicle Type		
	Automobile	Recreational Vehicle	Commercial Motor Vehicle
Based on May Survey:			
External Stations			
US 93 - West of Whitefish	87%	2%	11%
US 2 - Columbia Falls	93%	2%	5%
MT 35 - East of US 2	94%	1%	5%
US 2 - West of Kalispell	89%	4%	7%
US 93 - South of Kalispell	93%	2%	5%
MT 82 - East of US 93	94%	2%	4%
Internal Stations			
US 93 - Between Whitefish and Kalispell	93%	2%	5%
MT 40 - Between Columbia Falls and Whitefish	92%	2%	6%
Based on July Survey:			
External Stations			
US 93 - West of Whitefish	87%	3%	10%
US 2 - Columbia Falls	91%	5%	4%
MT 35 - East of US 2	96%	1%	3%
US 2 - West of Kalispell	88%	4%	8%
US 93 - South of Kalispell	91%	4%	5%
MT 82 - East of US 93	94%	2%	4%
Internal Stations			
US 93 - Between Whitefish and Kalispell	91%	2%	7%
MT 40 - Between Columbia Falls and Whitefish	94%	2%	4%
US 93			

Table 3-15
Travel Survey Results
Vehicle Trips

Location	Direction of Travel	In-County	Out-of-County	Out-of-State
May Study:				
External Stations				
US 93 - West of Whitefish	Eastbound	49%	41%	10%
	Westbound	48%	37%	15%
US 2 - Columbia Falls	Eastbound	52%	23%	25%
	Westbound	70%	20%	10%
MT 35 - East of US 2	Eastbound	66%	25%	9%

Table 3-15
(continued)

Location	Direction of Travel	In-County	Out-of-County	Out-of-State
US 2 - West of Kalispell	Eastbound	42%	45%	13%
	Westbound	41%	40%	19%
US 93 - South of Kalispell	Northbound	56%	36%	8%
	Southbound	48%	32%	20%
MT 82 - East of US 93	Eastbound	39%	45%	16%
	Westbound	31%	56%	13%
Internal Stations:				
US 93 - between Whitefish and Kalispell		30%	56%	14%
MT 40 - between Columbia Falls and Whitefish	Eastbound	73%	22%	5%
	Westbound	61%	26%	13%
July Study				
External Stations				
US 93 - West of Whitefish	Eastbound	34%	33%	33%
	Westbound	34%	35%	31%
US 2 - Columbia Falls	Eastbound	45%	27%	28%
	Westbound	49%	18%	33%
MT 35 - East of US 2	Eastbound	59%	20%	21%
	Westbound	60%	23%	17%
US 2 - West of Kalispell	Eastbound	50%	24%	26%
	Westbound	51%	23%	26%
US 93 - South of Kalispell	Northbound	36%	33%	31%
	Southbound	40%	32%	28%
MT 82 - East of US 93	Eastbound	40%	39%	21%
	Westbound	42%	35%	23%
Internal Stations				
US 93 - between Whitefish and Kalispell	Northbound	54%	21%	25%
	Southbound	51%	24%	25%
MT 40 - between Columbia Falls and Whitefish	Eastbound	56%	19%	25%
	Westbound	51%	23%	26%

Comparison of the May and July travel surveys indicate relatively little differences (± 1%) in vehicle mix in the traffic stream. Additional trips in the summer indicate a substantially higher percentage of out-of-state vehicles. An increase of out-of-state vehicles range from 2 to 23 percent for the general study area, accounting for the influx of tourists and seasonal residents to the region. Traffic on US 93 west of Whitefish and south of Kalispell was equally split between in-county, out-of-county and out-of-state vehicles, but in the off-peak season approximately 50 percent of the vehicles are either out-of-state or out-of-county.

Vehicle occupancy was also recorded during the May travel survey. Results of this survey indicated an average of 1.34 persons per vehicle. This was higher during the summer due to generally higher vehicle occupancy which is typical for tourist vehicles.

In addition to the travel survey for the entire study area, a origin-destination study was completed in 1992 as part of the *Kalispell Bypass Feasibility Study*. This license plate survey determined the number of license plate matches for cars and trucks at pairs of survey locations. Matches were determined for the full four-hour period and for one-hour increments (see Table 3-16).

Table 3-16
Through Trip Percentages of Traffic
Entering/Exiting Kalispell From
1992 License Plate Survey

Survey Location	Through Trip % of Total Traffic
US 93 North of Reserve Drive	10%
US 2 North of Reserve Drive	11%
MT 35 at Flathead River Bridge	12%
US 93 South of Lower Valley Road	10%
US 2 West of West Spring Creek Road	10%

3.5.4 Transit Service

Public transportation in the Kalispell area includes a limited fixed city bus route and special public services for elderly and disabled, other special transportation services, taxi service, charter bus service, and interstate and intrastate bus transportation.

Public transportation is provided by Eagle Transit, a division of Flathead County Area IX Agency On Aging. Eagle Transit offers demand responsive and fixed route services with deviation service to the general public. Eagle Transit also serves as a brokerage for other private transportation providers. Eagle Transit has six transport vehicles. Since there is no depot, there is no covered space to serve as a terminal for passengers or as a secure parking for Eagle Transit vehicles.

The total transit demand for Flathead County is estimated to grow from 311,939 trips in 1991 to over 520,000 trips in 1995. These figures are based on the estimated population and needs of the elderly, **disabled** and community college students.

Other transit providers include Kalispell Taxi which has authority to operate within a 50-mile radius of Kalispell providing demand responsive and route services to include the airport for up to 17 passengers. Rocky Mountain Transportation is primarily a charter bus operator in addition to school buses and has authority to operate interstate and intrastate. Glacier Park contracted with Rocky Mountain Transportation for services within Glacier National Park from spring to fall of 1992.

Intermountain Bus Lines also provides interstate and intrastate transportation services. The bus line from Whitefish to Missoula runs through Kalispell daily on a one-way loop utilizing MT 35 and US 93. Service is centered on AMTRAK service to the Burlington Northern Depot in Whitefish.

Numerous other special transportation services and nursing home transportation services operate in Flathead County. A total of 23 vehicles are being operated in the community separate from Eagle Transit and the taxi services. These services include the Flathead Industries for the Handicapped, churches, senior congregate living, special services and nursing homes.

A new shuttle service, Flathead Area Shuttle Transport (FAST) started service in 1992. Current plans call for use of two 12-passenger vans for shuttle service. Under its current agreement, FAST cannot provide inner city service in Kalispell or Whitefish. Most FAST service will be between Kalispell and Glacier National Park. FAST will also provide service to The Big Mountain Ski Area and to Bigfork (including the Eagle Bend Resort).

WART (Whitefish Area Rapid Transit) provides public bus service from Whitefish to The Big Mountain ski area from the third week of December to the first week of April. During the ski season, WART operates one bus that makes six round trips from 8:15 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. daily. WART usually uses a 39 passenger bus on weekdays and a 47 passenger bus on weekends with a backup bus or van available to handle rider overflow.

3.5.5 Rail Service

Amtrak's "Empire Builder" arrives and departs daily from Whitefish for the West Coast and the East Coast. The train to the east arrives in Whitefish at 6:35 a.m. and departs at 6:45 a.m. and the train to the west arrives at 9:38 p.m. and departs at 9:48 p.m. The average capacity of the train is 396 passengers. **Amtrak loadings and unloadings at Whitefish totaled 54,532 passengers in 1991. This represents by far the largest number of Amtrak passengers using any Montana station. Besides service to the east and west coast, the Empire Builder also provides connections to numerous other Amtrak routes serving other parts of the country.**

Burlington Northern Railroad (BNRR) lists daily train movements in Kalispell crossing Main Street and Meridian Road as 1.6 per day. This figure is equivalent to two movements per day, five days a week, with two days of no train activity along the track through town. Only two trains per week (four train movements) run along the segment of track south of the wye west of the city. This section of track could be abandoned; however, the railroad has stated they will not close any rail line where shippers are active. Use of that line from Balls Crossing through the city could only be initiated following the abandonment process. This process must be implemented by the railroad through the Public Service Commission, Interstate Commerce Commission, or both. In addition, MDT, Transportation Planning Division, requests review for comment for these proceedings.

BNRR clientele in Kalispell includes Swallow Grain, the O'Neill Family (two customers), Flathead Beverage and Lee Distributing (one site), **Carl Weissman and Sons**, and Equity Supply. A significant portion of wood products shipped from Plum Creek are moved out of Evergreen via rail. Other commodities shipped by rail are few. An intermodal container facility in the Kalispell area has been discussed. The nearest intermodal facility is in Shelby.

Present Kalispell economic development efforts include plans to relocate the downtown railroad tracks and industries that are dependent upon rail service to outlying areas of the city. Due to its current customer base, however, BNRR has no immediate plans for relocation of the track through the city center.

3.5.6 Air Service

The Glacier Park International Airport in Kalispell, located along US 2, has undergone three improvement projects recently totaling $1.56 million. The three projects have allowed the airport to handle larger aircraft and more passengers in the terminal as well as providing direct access to jet planes. The two projects at the terminal included adding a Jetway passenger-loading bridge and increasing the size of the terminal by moving the south wall. The third project upgraded the capacity of the airport by increasing the width of the taxiways. This allows the airport to accommodate the largest commercial aircraft flying today. The improvements made to the terminal are expected to be sufficient for eight years and the taxiway paving should last at least 15 years before needing additional work.

The airport has two airline carriers, Horizon (an affiliate of Alaska Airline) and Delta. June through September is the peak season for air travel with Delta having three flights a day and Horizon having 19 flights a day. Both Delta and Horizon drop one flight per day for the other eight months. The higher summer time travel is attributed to Glacier National Park visitors. The winter trips are lower and allow for growth during this period.

In 1993, for the sixth year in a row, Glacier Park set a record for commercial passenger traffic. Passenger traffic increased by 4.2 percent over 1992.

3.5.7 Transportation Plans

3.5.7.1 Kalispell Area

Goals from the *Kalispell Area Transportation Plan* are to develop a comprehensive circulation system which serves the combined needs of the community, planning jurisdiction and region and provide safe, convenient and economic access to all facilities throughout the area.

Objectives tied to this goal are:

- Establishment of a ring arterial street classification system to improve travel through the city and within the city.
- Require off-street parking to meet the needs of new construction.
- Develop a pedestrian-bicycle system to supplement the auto-oriented street system and to meet local recreational and transportation needs.

Recommended Bypass

The recommended bypass alignment is on the near west side of Kalispell. The new four-lane road would begin at Ball's Crossing and generally follow the Burlington Northern Railroad alignment north to Foy's Lake Road, cross through the Forest Products property west of the wye in the railroad tracks, cross US 2 at-grade, then proceed north through the Two Mile and three Mile Drive area to Stillwater Road then north to Reserve and US 93. The route would be a limited access roadway, signed as an Alternate Route to US 93, with speeds ranging from 40 to 55 miles per hour. **The**

bypass will also include parallel detached bicycle and pedestrian paths and inter-connective facilities to other trails near the corridor.

The bypass segments north of US 2 and the segment of Reserve Drive from US 93 to US 2 (LaSalle Drive) could also serve as an alternate route for US 2.

Major Street Network Improvements

Other recommended MSN improvements that will affect future travel patterns/volumes on US 93 include:

- Widening of North Meridian Drive from Idaho Street to US 93 including curb and gutter, turn lanes and pedestrian/bicycle facilities.
- Improvements to Whitefish Stage Road between Oregon Street and Evergreen Drive to include improved geometry at curves, widened shoulders and turn lanes.
- Improvements to existing Willow Glen Drive to include widened shoulders and left-turn lanes for major intersecting streets, as well as sight distance improvements at Woodland Avenue and Conrad Drive.
- An extension of LaSalle Road south of US 2 to Conrad Drive.
- Improvements to Conrad Drive between Willow Glen and Woodland Avenue to include improved shoulders and turn lanes at Woodland Park Drive.
- New rural minor arterials and collectors including extension of Evergreen/Four Mile Drive from Whitefish Stage Road to Stillwater Road.

Also included in the transportation plan are Transportation System Management Improvement Recommendations, including:

- Intersection improvements along US 93 and US 2, including restriping, turn lanes and traffic controls.
- Segment improvements along US 93 and US 2, including median reconstruction, access control plans and restriping.
- General traffic signal system upgrade recommendations.
- Support for traffic demand management, transit and bicycle actions.

3.5.7.2 Whitefish Area

Goals and policies from the transportation component of the *Whitefish City-County Master Plan, Year 2010*, Flathead Regional Development Office, 1987, applicable to the US 93 alternatives through Whitefish are highlighted below:

Goals

- A comprehensive circulation system which serves the combined needs of the community and region while providing safe, convenient, and economical access to all facilities, retail areas and neighborhoods.
- A pedestrian transportation/access system which connects retail areas, public facilities, recreational areas, neighborhoods with a minimum of auto-truck-rail conflict.
- Parking and parking standards that encourage off-street parking and fair and equitable quotas for new areas.
- An awareness that roads and highways provide the window that many people view the community from and therefore signage, landscape and road design and location should be coordinated and tempered to provide the optimum setting for the future of Whitefish.

Policies

- When 7th Street is extended from Kalispell Avenue to Spokane Avenue, it should function as an east-west collector. At that time, excessive bus, truck and auto traffic should be discouraged from using Columbia Avenue (east of Spokane) and Columbia Avenue should revert to a local street and be signed and maintained as a local street.
- As US 93 south continues to develop, limit individual access and establish frontage roads and turn bays to reduce traffic congestion.
- Arterial and collector streets should have sidewalks at least on one side of the street to encourage and provide for pedestrian traffic. All commercial areas and multi-family neighborhoods should incorporate sidewalks.
- In order to maintain a smooth-flowing, yet economical transportation system require all developments to provide their fair share of off-street parking and remove on-street parking from arterials and collectors.

Recommendations form the *Whitefish Traffic Study*, TDH, 1992 are listed below:

Traffic Safety Management Improvements	
City Wide Intersections	Install street signs at all intersections
Baker Avenue and 3rd, 4th and 5th Streets and Central Avenue and 4th Street	Replace yield signs with stop signs.
Spokane Avenue & 3rd, 4th and 5th Streets	Restrict parking on all approaches
Baker Avenue and 2nd Street West	Install left-turn bay
Baker Avenue and US 93 South	Install left-turn bay

	Major improvements
Baker Avenue	Phase I - extend to bowling alley Phase II - extend to 18th Street West Phase II - extend to Chalet Motel Alternative I - connect Baker-Spokane to one-way couplet
Central Avenue	Bulb intersections - modify parking Alternative 1 - convert to one-way
7th Street East	Extend 7th Street East to Spokane Avenue
Baker Avenue and Columbia Avenue	Signalize intersection
Baker Avenue and 18th Street West	Signalize intersection
West of Whitefish	Construct bypass

3.6 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

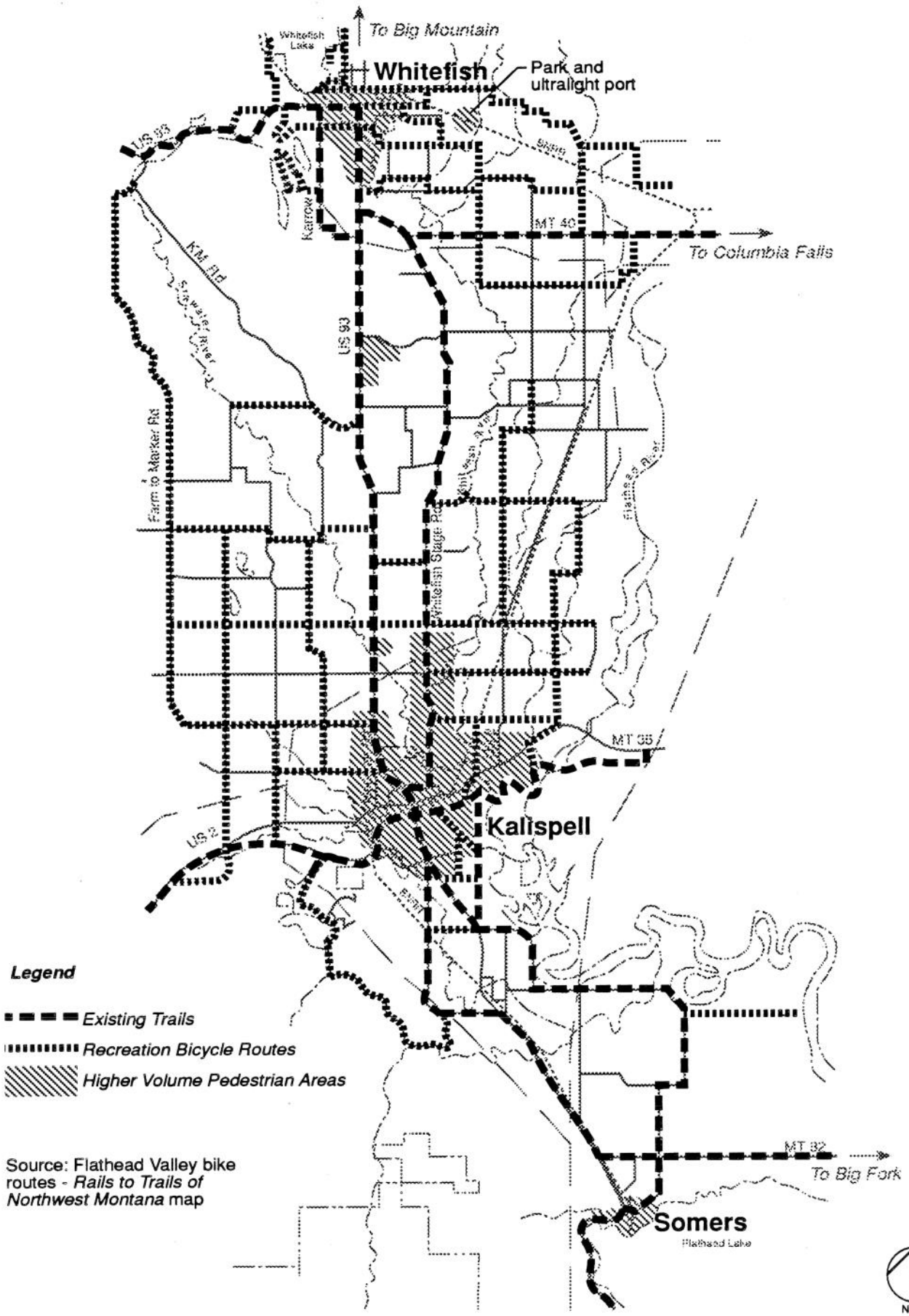
Presently, bicycle traffic is found along existing roads including US 93. Higher volume is found in or near the communities of Kalispell and Whitefish. Pedestrian traffic is also higher within these communities.

Current trails identified in the "Flathead Valley Bike Routes" map prepared for the Rails to Trails of Northwest Montana identifies several trails within the study corridor (Figure 3-5). In Whitefish trails follow numerous city streets including striped bike lanes along US 93 on Spokane Avenue. Kalispell also has numerous designated bike facilities. For the most part US 93 is excluded from this bike way designation but it has been included in the draft Flathead County and Pedestrian Trail Plan. In Somers, US 93 is designated as the principal touring route for bikers.

Recently, there is an effort to convert abandoned rail corridors into recreation trails. One of these corridors, from Somers north to Balls Crossing, has been identified as a potential opportunity for this conversion. North of Balls Crossing the rail line is in use but is being considered for conversion. This segment would connect with the proposed Great Northern Historical Trail which crosses through Kalispell from Woodland Park on the east through downtown to Derns Road on the west.

Bike activity appears highest along Whitefish Stage Road. This roadway is a designated bike corridor without shoulder striping or signage for this use. A hostel, located north of Reserve on Whitefish Stage Road, provides bicycle tour groups a stop-over point within the Valley. Some of these tours cross Montana and others originate in Whitefish. According to the hostel management, approximately 750 to 800 bicyclists pass through their establishment each summer.

Pedestrian activity is greatest within Whitefish and Kalispell. Downtown segments of US 93 typically have crossing walks at intersections. Pedestrian movement within these communities can be considered substantial, especially during tourist seasons. Residential segments of US 93 also have higher than normal pedestrian activity, especially near local schools. North of Kalispell, at US 93 and Reserve, pedestrian activity is greater because of the need for school children to cross US 93 at Reserve to reach their school east of US 93 near Whitefish Stage Road.



Source: Flathead Valley bike routes - *Rails to Trails of Northwest Montana* map

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 3-5
Existing Bike and Pedestrian Facilities

3.7 Air Quality

3.7.1 Regulatory Background

This project is affected by the 1967 Clean Air Act and Amendments (1972, 1977, 1990), (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq). Section 110 requires States to develop State Implementation Plans (SIPs) that identify how the State will attain and maintain National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and other Federal air quality regulations. The SIP is promulgated through the Montana Clean Air Act and implementing regulations. The regulations provide specific guidance on maintenance of air quality, including restrictions on open burning (ARM 16.8.1300). The act created the MDHES Air Quality Bureau (MDHES) and provides it regulatory authority to implement and enforce the codified regulations. Coordination with the MDHES and the EPA is required.

Section 176(c) requires "conformity to an implementation plan's purpose of eliminating or reducing the severity and number of violations of the NAAQS and achieving expeditious attainment of such standards; and that such activities will not (i) cause or contribute to any new violation of any standard in any area; or (ii) delay timely attainment of any standard or any required interim emission reductions or other milestones in any area." Recent EPA regulations have been promulgated which define how a transportation project needs to be in conformity with the SIP emissions.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed NAAQS for criteria pollutants, including ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides, lead, and particulate matter that is less than or equal to ten microns in diameter (PM_{10}). Two NAAQS exist for PM_{10}. The 24-hour standard requires concentrations of PM_{10} not to exceed an average 150 micrograms per cubic meter of air. Annual average concentrations are not to exceed 50 micrograms per cubic meter of air.

3.7.2 PM_{10} Violations

Kalispell and Whitefish have been designated by EPA as nonattainment areas for PM_{10}. A PM_{10} nonattainment area is any area which does not meet the PM_{10} NAAQS. A PM_{10} SIP for Kalispell was submitted to EPA in November 1991. It is awaiting approval by EPA. A PM_{10} SIP for Whitefish will be required to be submitted to EPA in May 1995. The nonattainment area boundaries for Kalispell and Whitefish are shown in Figure 3-6.

Violations of the PM_{10} NAAQS have been monitored in Kalispell and Whitefish. During 1992, eight concentrations in Whitefish were recorded that exceeded the 24-hour standard of 150 micrograms per cubic meter. No violations were recorded in 1992 in Kalispell. No violations have been recorded in 1993 in either Kalispell or Whitefish. Dates and levels of violations during 1992 for Whitefish are shown in Table 3-17.

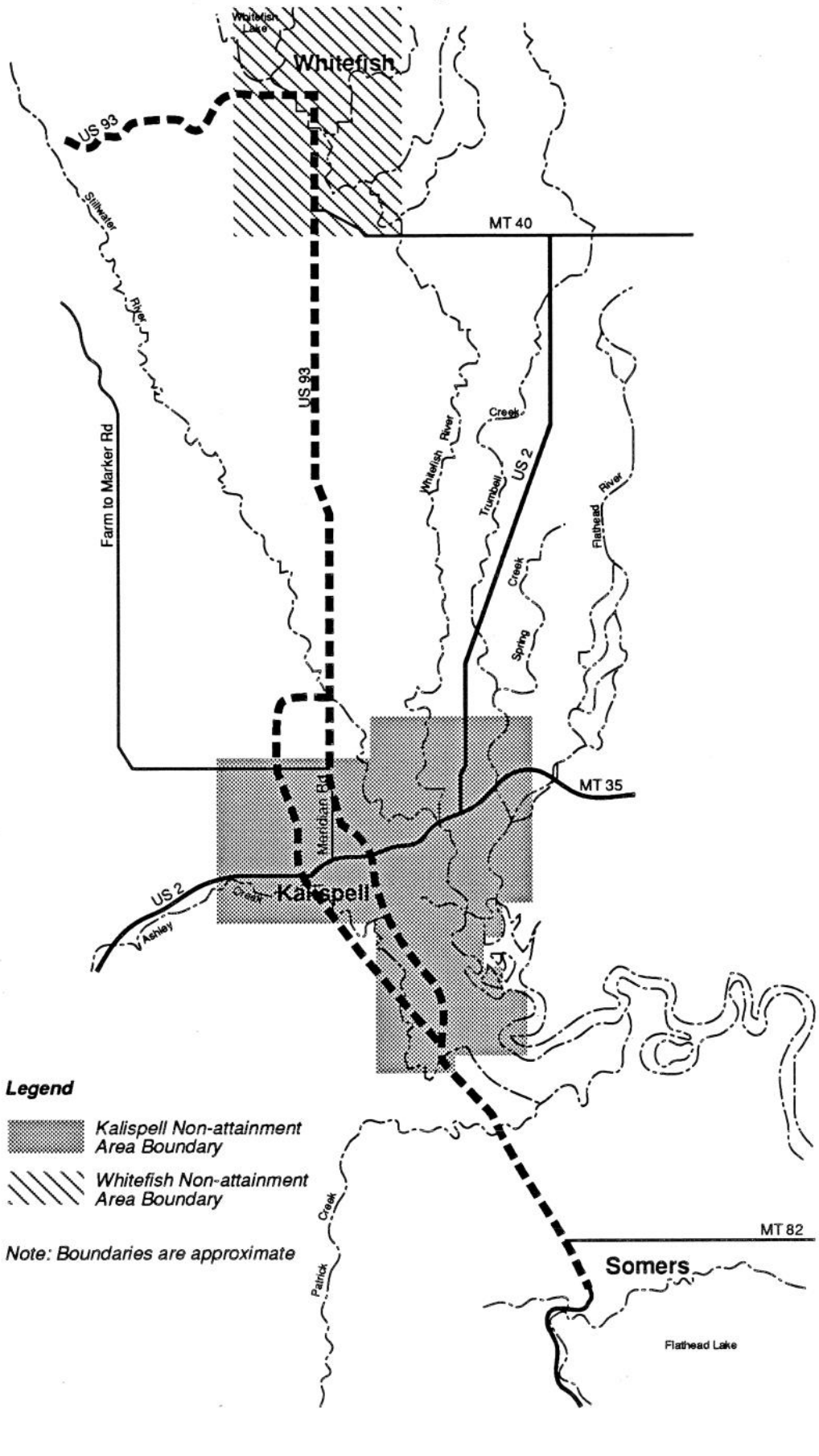


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Figure 3-6

PM_{10} Non-Attainment Areas

Table 3-17
1992 Whitefish Violations of PM_{10} 24-Hour NAAQS

Date	Micrograms per Cubic Meter
February 4, 1992	301
February 6, 1992	333
February 26, 1992	189
March 5, 1992	187
March 7, 1992	163
March 9, 1992	254
March 11, 1992	193
March 13, 1992	220

Source MDHES

Analysis of the history of PM_{10} exceedances at the Kalispell maximum concentration site (Universal Athletics on Main Street) shows:

- Annual average PM_{10} concentrations have continually decreased since 1986.
- This reduction is partly due to the use of **liquid deicer** and washed sanding material by **MDT and** the Kalispell Public Works Department.

3.7.3 PM_{10} Sources

A Chemical Mass Balance study was conducted by MDHES in Kalispell to determine the primary sources of PM_{10}. There were two Chemical Mass Balance sites in Kalispell; the Peterson School site and Universal Athletics. When considering the entire study period (9/86 - 8/87), re-entrained road dust was the predominant PM_{10} emission source during all four seasons at both sites. During the winter season, however, residential wood burning did contribute significantly.

Results of the Chemical Mass Balance study are:

1. Universal Athletics (in Kalispell CBD, adjacent to US 93)
   Study Period (9/86 - 8/87)

   Re-entrained Road Dust - 78.9%
   Residential Wood Burning - 7.8%
   Other/Unexplained 13.3%

2. Peterson School Site (residential area: west side of Kalispell)
   Study Period (9/86 - 8/87)

   Re-entrained road dust - 63.0%
   Residential Wood Burning - 15.3%
   Other/Unexplained - 21.7%

The emission inventory analysis demonstrated that area sources comprise over 90 percent of emissions in the Kalispell area. In the spring, summer and fall, re-entrained road dust is the largest PM_{10} emission source, while in the winter, residential wood burning is the largest source. The emission inventory results confirmed the findings of the CMB.

A similar analysis is being conducted in Whitefish, but is not complete. MDHES believes that re-entrained road dust and smoke produced by residential wood burning are likely the largest contributors to PM_{10} emissions in Whitefish due to similar demonstrations in Kalispell and in other PM_{10} nonattainment areas in Montana (MDHES, June 1993).

3.7.4 SIP Strategies

The Kalispell SIP includes the following control strategies related to re-entrained dust:

1. Prioritized street sweeping and flushing program.
2. Sanding and chip seal material specification.
3. **Mandatory use of liquid de-icer if PM_{10} standard is exceeded after December 31, 1994.**

The MDHES (June 1993) has indicated that the following control strategies are being considered for Whitefish:

1. Prioritized street sweeping and flushing program.
2. Sanding and chip seal material specification.
3. Road surface maintenance and reconstruction.
4. Traffic controls.
5. Road cleaning specifications.
6. Control of sanding materials.
7. **Either mandatory or voluntary control of residential wood burning.**

3.8 Noise

3.8.1 Noise Abatement Criteria

The existing land uses along the existing alignment of US-93 and the proposed alternatives are classified into two separate Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) categories for noise sensitivity. According to FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC -see Table 3-18), the residences, churches, and parks located along the existing alignment of US-93 and the proposed alternatives fall into Activity Category B and should not receive exterior noise levels greater than 67 dBA Leq. Businesses along the existing alignment of US 93 fall into Activity Category C and should not receive exterior noise levels greater than 72 dBA Leq. Refer to Table 3-18 for a complete description of the FHWA NAC.

3.8.2 Existing Monitored Noise Levels

As shown in Figure 3-7 and Table 3-19, existing exterior ambient noise measurements were taken at several locations along each of the proposed alternatives. All locations were chosen to represent sensitive receptors, which are land uses which fall into Activity Categories B and C described above. Each measurement was taken along the facade of the building which faces the road. Noise monitoring was performed during September and October 1993, during peak traffic periods. The field results are reported in Table 3-19.

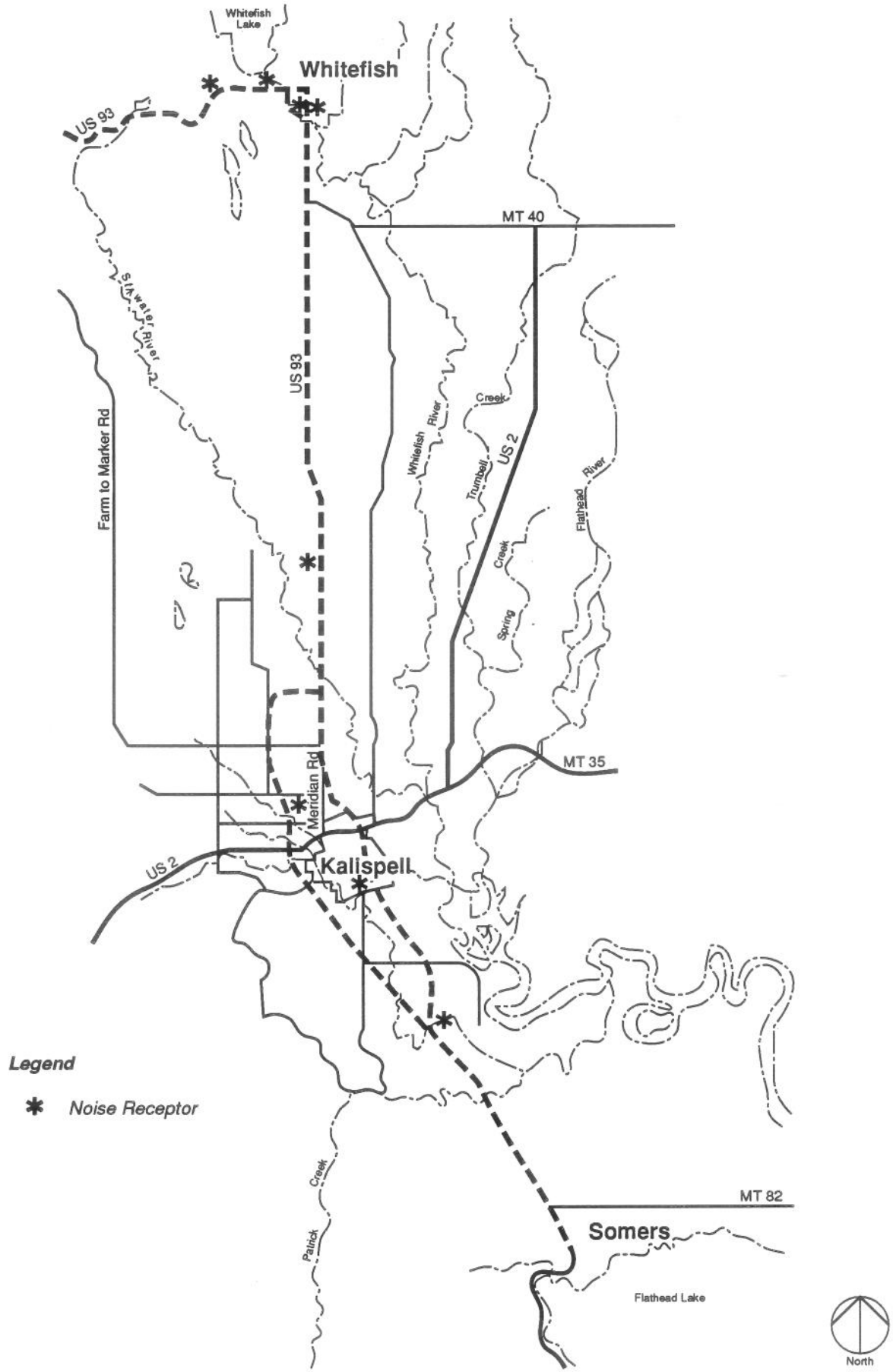

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Figure 3-7
Noise Receptor Locations

Table 3-18
FHWA Design Noise Level/Activity Relationships

Activity Category	Design Noise Levels - dBA[1]		Description of Activity Category
	Leq (1 hr)	L10 (1 hr)	
A[2]	57 (exterior)	60 (exterior)	Tracts of land in which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose. Such areas could include amphitheaters, particular parks or portions of parks, open space, or historic districts which are dedicated or recognized by appropriate local officials for activities requiring special qualities of serenity and quiet.
B[2]	67 (exterior)	70 (exterior)	Picnic area, recreation areas, playgrounds, active sports areas, and parks which are not included in Category A and residences, motels, hotels, public meeting rooms, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals.
C	72 (exterior)	75 (exterior)	Developed lands, properties or activities not included in Categories A or B above.
D	–	–	Undeveloped lands; no standards apply unless development planned, designed, and programmed and likely to be built, then the applicable A, B, C or D regulation applies.
E	52 (interior)	55 (interior)	Residences, motels, hotels, public meeting rooms, schools, churches, libraries, hospitals, and auditoriums.

(1) Either L10 or Leq (but not both) design noise levels may be used on a project.
(2) Parks in Categories A and B include all such lands (public or private) which are actually used as parks as well as those public lands officially set aside or designated by a governmental agency as parks on the date of public knowledge of the proposed highway project.
Source: Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise. Federal-Aid Highway Program Manual Volume 7, Chapter 7, Section 3. Federal Highway Administration.

Table 3-19
Noise Monitoring Locations and Results
September and October 1993
[Distances are in Meters (Feet)]

Measurement Location	Exterior Reading dBA Leq	Noise Meter Distance to Noise Source	FHWA NAC dBA Leq
Residence: 577 Baker Avenue, Whitefish	59	12.2 (40)	67
Residence: 314 2nd Street, Whitefish	68	7.63 (25)	67
Residence: 405 Spokane Avenue, Whitefish	68	9.15 (30)	67
Residence: 2030 US-93 W., Whitefish	70	12.2 (40)	67
Residence: 3430 US-93 N., Kalispell	64	30.5 (100)	67
Residence: 3237 US-93 S., Kalispell	64	30.5 (100)	67
Residence: 1012 S. Main Street, Kalispell	67	10.68 (35)	67
Residence: 524 Two-Mile Drive, Kalispell	52	12.2 (40)	67

The existing monitored ambient noise levels were below the NAC at six locations, and were at or above the NAC at four locations. These locations tend to be residences immediately adjacent to US 93. Existing monitored noise levels represent all exterior noise sources recorded at the site, including natural and mechanical sources and human activities, whereas calculated noise levels represent traffic-generated noise only.

Figure 3-8 illustrates typical noise levels.

Indoor Sound	dBA Scale	Outdoor Sound	Reference Loudness
	140	Aircraft carrier	
		Military operations Jet aircraft	32 times as loud
	130	Large siren at 100' Jet takeoff at 200'	
Rock band	120	Oxygen torch Thunderstorm Elevated train	16 times as loud
Industrial plant	110	Riveting machine Auto horn at 3'	8 times as loud
Circular/chain saw			
Shouting in ear	100	Back compacting trash truck	
Printing room		Heavy truck at 25'	4 times as loud
Power mower Food blender Auto car wash	90	10 hp outboard at 50' Motorcycle at 25' Diesel train at 100'	2 times as loud
Garbage disposal Alarm clock Symphonic music	80	Small trucks at 25'	
		Heavy traffic at 50'	**Reference loudness to dBA**
Vacuum cleaner	70		
Dishwasher			
Electric typewriter		Average traffic at 100'	1/2 as loud
Air conditioner at 20'	60		
Typical office			1/4 as loud
Living room	50	Light traffic at 100'	
Bedroom			1/8 as loud
Library	40	Birdsong	
Broadcasting studio	30		
		Rural area	Just audible
	20		
		Rustling of leaves	
	10		
			Threshold of hearing
	0		

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Figure 3-8
Typical Noise Levels

3.9 Water Resources

3.9.1 Genèral Description

The study area contains the confluence of four major streams and their watersheds. These four watersheds, the Flathead, Whitefish, Stillwater and Ashley Creek, drain the area directly adjacent to the Continental Divide in northwestern Montana. Starting from the east the study area's waters drain the Swan Range, the west half of the Flathead and Livingston Ranges, the Whitefish Range and the Salish Mountains.

The Flathead River system is part of the western slope of the Continental Divide which eventually discharges its waters into the pacific ocean. All of the water collected in the Upper Flathead Basin, except those from the Swan River sub-basin flow through the Somers to Whitefish study area. After collecting from the Upper Flathead Basin, water flows into Flathead lake. From there it flows down the lower Flathead River which joins the Clark Fork River. This water will eventually join the waters of the Columbia River by way of the Pend d'Oreille River.

Although up in their higher reaches the Flathead and its tributaries have steeper gradients, within the study area itself the gradients are low and very flat. As a result of previous glaciation, the rivers flow down from the steep hills, cross their nick points or gradient changes abruptly at the edges of the valleys and flow slowly out on to the broad flat plain of the Flathead Valley. These streams which are at low velocity and have relatively little sediment load then meander back and forth across the valley floor. Ashley Creek, the Stillwater and Whitefish Rivers are typical of low gradient streams with moderate sinuosity. The Flathead Valley is a textbook case of a meander valley and has notable traits such as large scale braiding or multiple channels and many large oxbow lakes or sloughs.

3.9.2 Water Quality

General water quality within the Flathead Lake basin and its tributaries is generally high to very high (Flathead Basin Commission 1991-1992). This is shown on Figure 3-9. One notable exception is Ashley Creek.

A summary of the applicable water-use classifications for the State of Montana:

A-1 Classification Waters classified as A-1 are suitable for drinking, culinary or food processing purposes, after conventional treatment for the removal of naturally present impurities.

B-1 Classification Waters classified as B-1 are suitable for drinking, culinary or food processing purposes, after conventional treatment; bathing, swimming and recreation; growth and propagation of salmonid fishes and associated aquatic life, waterfowl and furbearers, and agricultural and industrial water supply.

B-2 Classification Waters classified as B-2 are suitable for drinking, culinary or food processing purposes, after conventional treatment; bathing, swimming and recreation; growth and marginal propagation of salmonid fishes and associated aquatic life, waterfowl and furbearers, and agricultural and industrial water supply.

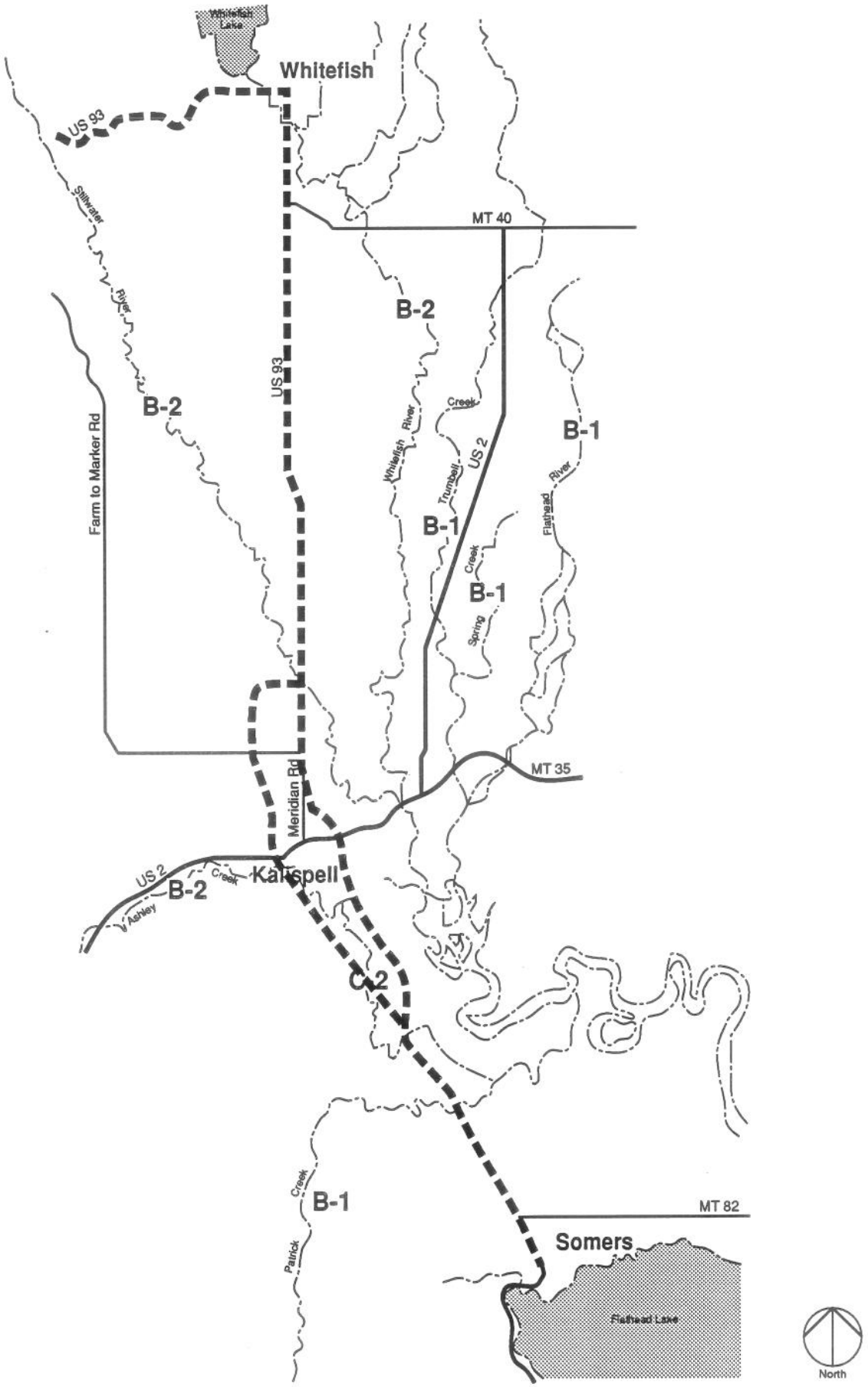

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Figure 3-9
Water Resources and Quality

C-2 Classification Waters classified as C-2 are suitable for bathing, swimming and recreation; growth and marginal propagation of salmonid fishes and associated aquatic life, waterfowl and furbearers; and agricultural and industrial water supply.

3.9.2.1 Patrick Creek

Patrick Creek flows north out of the Flathead National Forest between Wild Horse and Lion Mountains. It is relatively steep with low sinuosity for the first 10.3 kilometers (6.4 miles). As it enters the valley it flattens out abruptly and flows east under US 93 at milepost 106.7 for 7.4 kilometers (4.6 miles) at which point it flows into Ashley Creek. Patrick Creek is rated B-1 for water quality throughout its course.

3.9.2.2 Ashley Creek

Ashley Creek flows at a very shallow gradient, northeast into the study area from the Smith Valley. Its total length inside the study area is 30.57 kilometers (19 miles). It generally follows the US 2 alignment up to the urbanized area of Kalispell, at which point it skirts the southwest edges of the city and flows south parallel with US 93. At Ball's crossing the creek heads east and eventually joins the Flathead River just above Church Slough. Throughout its course below the City of Kalispell, Ashley Creek has a very low gradient and is tortuously meandering. As mentioned above, Ashley Creek continues to be the exception to the study area's high water quality. This is mostly due to the release of public waste water effluent from the City of Kalispell. The creek has had a history of extremely high phosphorous counts and nutrient concentrations. Continuing upgrades at the Kalispell water treatment facilities have made great progress in controlling these factors but Ashley Creek remains as the lowest water quality in the study area (Flathead Basin Commission 1991-1992 Biennial Report). It is reported as a class B-2 stream from Smith Lake to the bridge crossing on Airport Road about 0.61 kilometer (one mile) south of Kalispell. From the bridge crossing to the Flathead River it is classified as C-2.

3.9.2.3 Stillwater River

The Stillwater river flows southeast into the study area from the Stillwater State Forest. Entering the study area at Lodgepole and Twin Bridges Road, it runs at a very low gradient, less than one percent for 33.79 kilometers (21 miles). The river crosses below US 93 at mile point 116, just north of Reserve Dr. It then flows through the northeastern quadrant of Kalispell passing through some aggregate and gravel extraction operations. It flows under US 2 at a point north of Willow Glen Dr. and then joins the braided Flathead River complex due east of the city. The Stillwater River between these points is classified as a B-2 stream.

3.9.2.4 Whitefish River

The Whitefish River flows from Whitefish Lake just north of the town of Whitefish, due south, approximately parallel to US 93, eventually ending in the Flathead River. It is approximately 30.57 kilometers (19 miles) in length within the study area. The river flows at a low gradient through its entire course. It is joined by Haskell Creek and Walker Creek before passing under MT 40 2.9 kilometers (1.8 miles) from the junction of US 93 and MT 40. The Whitefish flows south until it joins the Stillwater just before crossing under US 2. They flow for a

short distance together before entering the Flathead. The Whitefish is rated as B-2 water between Whitefish Lake and the Flathead River.

3.9.2.5 Trumbull and Spring Creeks

Trumbull and Spring Creeks are minor low gradient tributary streams that run north south parallel and between the Whitefish and Flathead Rivers. They join and flow under US 2 at a point east of the Whitefish crossing, after which they flow into the Flathead. These streams are classified as B-1.

3.9.2.6 Flathead River

The Flathead River is the major source waters for Flathead Lake. The river flows south from the town of Columbia Falls, trending south southwest until nearing the City of Kalispell It then meanders to the east then south into Flathead lake between the towns of Somers and Bigfork. The Flathead has an extremely low gradient throughout its valley bottom course. It flows south and crosses under US 2 approximately 5.63 kilometers (3.5 miles) east of the City of Kalispell. The Flathead is classified as an B-1 stream which is congruent with the quality of its fisheries.

3.9.2.7 Flathead Lake

Flathead Lake is located in the extreme southern portion of the study area. Although only a small portion of the lake is included in the study area, it is important because of its downstream location. It receives all of the water passing through the study area. Flathead Lake is approximately 117.73 meters (386 feet) deep at its lowest point and has an average of 222 kilometers (138 miles) of shoreline.

Generally the water quality in Flathead Lake remains high although there are some considerable problems with nutrient loading. The lake is maintaining nutrient levels near the critical threshold, at which water quality may possibly deteriorate suddenly in the form of algal blooms. The nutrient / primary production (growth of algae) problem is a long term problem related to polluted precipitation falling on the lake. It is thought that other contributors to the nutrient enrichment problem in Flathead Lake are non-point sources, such as runoff and groundwater pollution, and point sources. Although it is not immediate, it is clear that in the long term the water quality of Flathead Lake is declining. Flathead Lake is classified as A-1.

3.10 Wetlands

Wetlands are unique communities that possess three essential characteristics: hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils and wetland hydrology. Hydrology is the most important characteristic determining wetland location and longevity (Stednick, 1988).

Wetlands are generally considered important because of their many beneficial functions, including recharging ground water, controlling floods, improving water quality via sediment control and excess nutrient removal, providing wildlife habitat and enhancing aesthetic/scenic values.

Wetlands are protected by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and by Executive Order 11990. Coordination is required with the EPA, USFWS, USCOE and MDFWP.

Field surveys conducted during 1993 located a total of 28 wetlands in the project area. Of this total, 16 wetlands occur along US 93 and 9 occur along the Kalispell Bypass. Three wetlands occur in Whitefish. Figure 3-10 shows the distribution of the 28 wetlands along US 93, Alternative B and Baker Avenue. Figure 3-11 includes photographs of some of the wetlands.

Wetlands in the project area were initially identified from aerial photographs and the US Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps encompassing the project area. All wetlands identified from these photographs and NWI maps were then classified using USFWS's Wetland Classification System (Cowardin et al. 1979). Subsequently (during July 1993) wetlands along each of the US 93 corridor and the Whitefish Alternative route and Kalispell bypass were delineated using the MDT's guidelines for evaluating wetlands (MDT 1991). Wetlands were delineated by the MDT guidelines to provide a basis for comparison of wetlands impacts by alternative. Delineation of wetlands using the 1987 USCOE manual will be done for the Preferred Alternative as part of the requirements for a Section 404 permit.

There are additional wetlands in the general area that are not immediately adjacent to US 93, the bypass corridor or Baker Avenue. These are generally associated with the various rivers or streams in the study area.

The areal extent of the 28 wetlands was determined and each wetland was classified using systems developed by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (Cowardin et al. 1979). Wetlands range in size from less than 0.08 to 13.77 hectares (0.2 acres to 34 acres). Table 3-20 summarizes the areal extent and classifications of all 28 wetlands.

Wetlands present in the project area are typical of those found in western Montana. About two-thirds of the wetlands have permanent water and are characterized by erect, rooted, herbaceous plants specifically adapted to growing in water. These wetlands often adjoin a pond or small lake. The cattail marsh is a primary example of this type of wetland. Wetlands of this type attract a wide variety of wildlife, including waterbirds, small mammals, furbearers, and songbirds.

About one-third of the wetlands in the project area are riverine or have a riverine component to them. These wetlands are in or immediately adjoin rivers or creeks. Thus, they are specifically restricted to stream channels. Common species associated with these wetlands include duckweed, lilies, sedges, and horsetail. Locations for these wetlands within the project area include the Stillwater River, Whitefish River, and Ashley Creek. Riverine wetlands typically have a higher value to fish than the other wetlands present in the area.

Finally, some of the wetlands in the project have a forested or scrub-shrub component associated with them. These wetlands are characterized by the presence of shrubs and trees. Species commonly associated with these wetlands include willows, maples, dogwood, hawthorn, Colorado blue spruce, and aspen. Locations for these wetlands within the project area include the Stillwater River, Whitefish River, and Ashley Creek. These wetlands have a high value to wildlife, especially to birds and large mammals, because of the variety of habitats and escape cover they offer.

In addition to classifying wetlands, the MDT method includes an evaluation of functional values for each wetland as well as an overall ranking. Table 3-20 summarizes the functions and values determined in the field. It also presents the overall ranking value for the 28 wetlands. All 28 wetlands provide potential flood storage, do not receive heavy sediment loads, and provide moderate to high support of the food chain. Also, most of the wetlands provide little habitat for fisheries and experience at least some use by various species of wildlife.

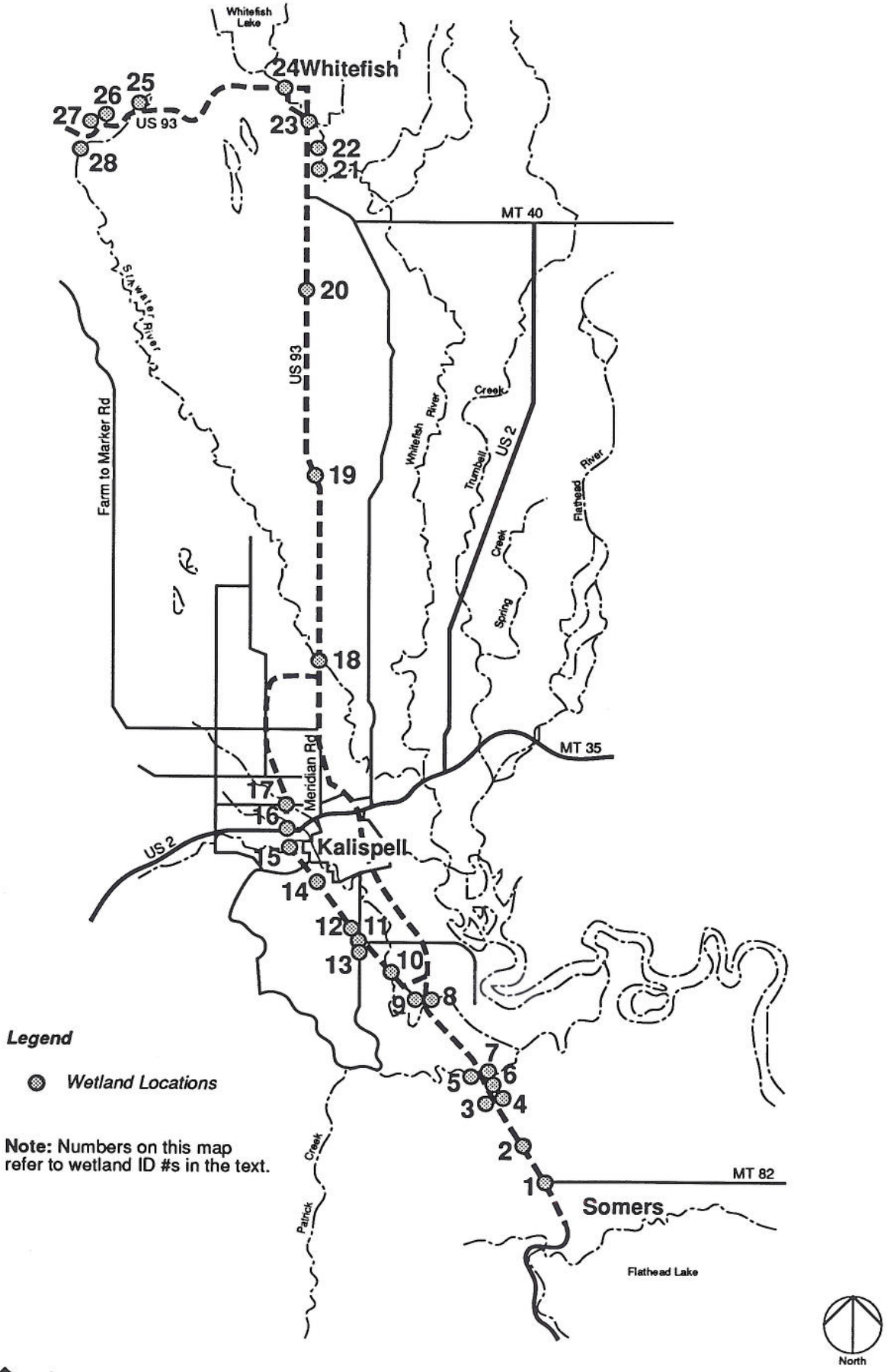

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Figure 3-10
Wetland Locations

Wetland location #4

Wetland location #14

Wetland location #19

Wetland location #21

Note: The photo numbers correspond to Figure 3-10 Wetland Locations

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Figure 3-11
Photographs of Study Area Wetlands

Overall functional values for the 28 wetlands range from 8.5 to 15.5. The mean overall functional value was 12.5. The overall functional values place most of the wetlands in the moderate category for wetland values.

Table 3-20
Summary of Wetlands Present Along US 93, the Kalispell Bypass Corridor, or Baker Avenue

Wet-land ID	Total Area Hectares (acres)	Area Within Corridor-Hectares (acres)	Portion of Wetland in Corridor (%)	MDT Classification 2,3	NWI Classification 2,3
1.	0.06(0.16)	0.04(0.11)	70	I D	PABF
2.	0.12(0.29)	0.09(0.22)	77	I D	PABFx
3.	2.36(5.83)	0.15(0.37)	6	I D/C 75/25	PEMF, PEMC, PABF
4.	1.77(4.36)	0.2(0.5)	12	I D	PEMF
5.	9.72(24.01)	0.97(2.42)	10	I D	FEMC
6.	0.14(0.35)	0.14(0.35)	100	I D	PEMC
7.	5.81(14.34)	0.32(0.80)	6	I D	PEMC, PFOA, PSSA
8.	5.73(14.14)	0.77(1.91)	14	I D/B/C 85/10/5	R4SBF, PABF
9.	6.97(17.2)	0.82(2.02)	12	III A/B/C 40/40/20	R4SBF
10.	8.84(21.83)	0.96(2.37)	11	II A/B 70/30	R4SBF
11.	0.82(2.02)	0.82(2.02)	100	I D	PEMCx
12.	1.3(3.2)	0.05(0.12)	4	I D	PEMCx
13.	13.69(33.8)	0.82(2.02)	6	II A	PEMC, PUSA, PUSC
14.	2.5(6.17)	1.39(3.44)	56	II A	PEMC
15.	6.34(15.66)	0.34(0.83)	5	II A/B/C 40/40/20	R4SBF, PEMC
16.	1.34(3.32)	0.07(0.18)	5	I D, III A/B/C 40/30/30	PEMC
17.	2.16(5.34)	0.03(0.08)	1	III A/B/C 60/20/20	PEMC
18.	3.24(8.0)	0.47(1.17)	15	III A/B/C 60/20/20	R3UBH
19.	6.08(15.0)	0.27(0.67)	4	II A/B 80/20	PEMC, PSSC
20.	0.88(2.17)	0.33(0.81)	37	I D, II A/B 70/30	PEMC
21.	3.10(7.65)	0.47(1.16)	15	III A/B/C 20/75/5	R3UBH
22.	4.82(11.9)	0.55(1.36)	11	I D, III A/B/C 20/30/50	PSSA, R3USC, R3UBH
23.	5.38(13.28)	0.40(0.99)	7	I B/D 10/90, III A/B/C 20/70/10	R3UBH
24	3.3(8.15)	0.37(0.91)	11	III A, B, C	R3UBH
25.	30.45(75.19)	0.40(0.99)	1	I D, II A, B	PEMC
26.	0.06(0.16)	0.06(0.15)	91	II A, B	PEMC
27.	0.86(2.12)	0.36(0.88)	42	II A, B	PEMC, PSSC
28.	31.02(76.59)	1.49(3.67)	5	I B, D, II A, B, C	PEMC, PEMF, LIUBH

1. *The corridor's width was 30.5 meters (100 ft.) on either side of roadway. The corridor is an arbitrary boundary for wetland delineation purposes, it does not correspond to right-of-way width.*

2. *Keys to the MDT and US Fish and Wildlife Service classification systems are included in Appendix B.*

3. *Species of plants identified in the wetlands are listed in Appendix B.*

Table 3-21
Summary of Functional Values and Overall Ranking for Wetlands Present Along US 93, the Kalispell Bypass, and Baker Avenue

Wetland ID	Flood Storage	Sedi-ment Control	Nutrient Reten-tion	Food Chain	Wildlife Habitat (Highest)(1)	Wildlife Habitat (Lowest)(1)	Fisheries Habitat (Highest)(1)	Fisheries Habitat (Lowest)(1)	Overall Ranking (out of 24)(2)
1	3	1	2.5	2	1	0	0	0	9.5
2	3	1	3	3	2	0	0	0	12
3	3	2	3	3	3	0	1	0	15
4	2	2	3	3	3	0	0	0	13
5	2	2	2	3	3	0	0	0	12
6	2	2	2.5	2	0	0	0	0	8.5
7	2	2	3	3	3	0	0	0	13
8	3	2	1	2	2	0	2	0	12
9	3	2	2.5	3	2	0	2	0	14.5
10	3	1	2.5	3	2	0	0	0	11.5
11	3	2	2.5	3	2	0	0	0	12.5
12	3	2	2.5	3	2	0	0	0	12.5
13	3	1	1	3	2	0	0	0	10
14	3	1	2.5	3	2	0	0	0	11.5
15	3	2	1	2	2	0	2	0	12
16	3	2	2.5	3	2	0	0	0	12.5
17	3	1	2.5	3	2	0	1	0	12.5
18	3	2	2.5	3	2	0	2	0	14.5
19	3	1	2.5	3	1	0	0	0	10.5
20	3	2	2	3	2	0	0	0	12
21	2	1	3	3	2	0	3	0	14
22	3	2	3	3	2	0	2	0	15
23	3	2	2.5	3	2	0	3	0	15.5
24	3	2	3	3	2	1	2	1	17
25	3	2	3	3	2	1	2	0	16
26	2	2	3	3	2	1	1	0	14
27	2	2	3	3	2	1	1	0	14
28	3	2	3	3	3	1	2	0	17

(1) The evaluation considers several groups of wildlife and fisheries independently (e.g., raptors, large ungulates, trout, other salmonids, and threatened or endangered species). Values reported in these columns are for the group with the highest value and the group with the lowest value.

(2) A summary of the wetland functional assessment parameters is included in Appendix B.

3.11 Fisheries and Wildlife

3.11.1 Wildlife

The wildlife resource present in and along the US 93 corridor reflects the intermountain valley type of life zone. However, much of the area has been disturbed by human development. Habitats vary from urban areas to small riparian wetlands and large expanses of agricultural lands.

The wildlife resource occurring in the US 93 corridor is predominantly upland in character. However, all the major wildlife groups are represented (Table 3-22). Although semi-aquatic wildlife species are generally uncommon, they may be locally abundant where suitable habitat occurs.

Regionally, several groups of wildlife are of primary concern to the public and resource management agencies. They are game animals; raptors; and threatened, endangered and sensitive species. Specific species include white-tailed deer, elk, moose, osprey, upland game birds, and waterfowl. Threatened, endangered and other sensitive species are addressed in Section 3.14 - Threatened and Endangered Species.

In addition to groups of wildlife, specific issues related to the proposed project are of concern to both the public and resource management agencies. These are reducing wildlife hazards along the highway, minimizing the effects of the project on nearby wildlife refuges, and minimizing the disruption of big game migrational patterns.

White-tailed deer is the most common big game species present in and along the US 93 corridor. The corridor crosses both summer and winter range. Although fawning is thought to occur near the corridor, no specific sites have been designated by MDFWP.

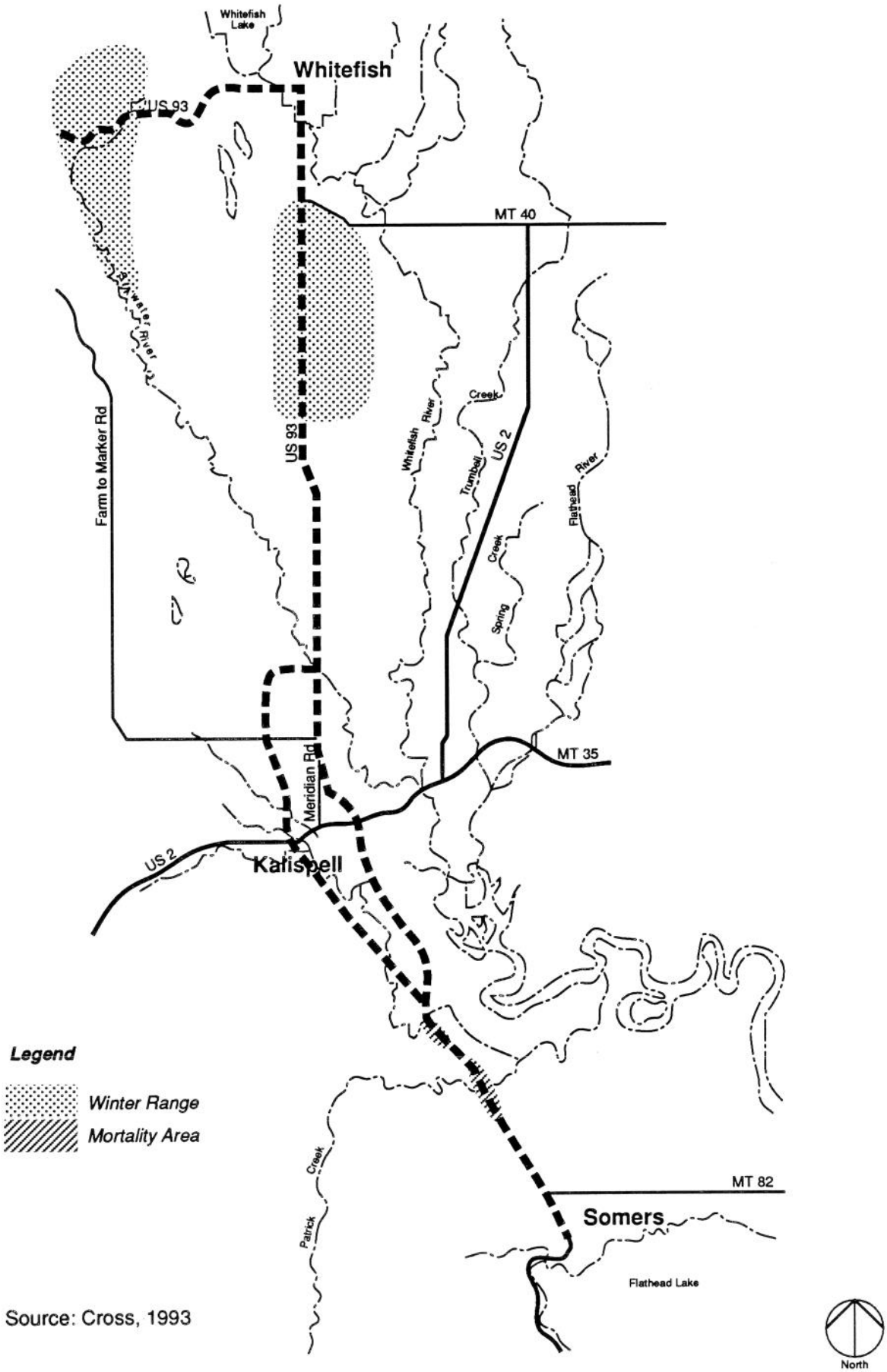
Some portions of the area are utilized for seasonal movements. However, no specific routes have been documented (Cross 1993). Although, there are several areas of common occurrence along the existing US 93 corridor. These occur from approximately 3.2 kilometers (two miles) north of Somers to 1.61 kilometer (one mile) south of Kalispell. In addition, the area near the landfill between Somers and Kalispell receives increased deer activity during the winter months (Figure 3-12).

In addition to white-tailed deer, observations of elk, mule deer, and moose within the corridor have been recorded. The observations indicate the occurrence of these species in or along the corridor is occasional in nature. The highly developed condition of the corridor probably limits use of the corridor for these species.

Several species of upland game birds have been documented as occurring in or along the US 93 corridor in areas of suitable habitat. They include turkeys, Hungarian partridges, and ring-necked pheasants.

Table 3-22
Summary of Wildlife Resource Characteristics

Wildlife Group	Common Representative	Common Vegetation Associations	Comments
Large Mammals	White-tailed deer Elk Moose	Coniferous Forest Deciduous Woodland Riparian Agricultural	Species densities and composition varies seasonally
Small Mammals	Deer Mouse Skunk Raccoon Weasel	Deciduous Woodland Coniferous Forest Riparian Urban Agricultural	Species composition diverse and all vegetation types occupied
Furbearers	Coyote Beaver Muskrat	Deciduous Woodland Coniferous Forest Riparian Urban Agricultural	Except for muskrat and beaver, members of this group tend to posses large home ranges
Waterfowl	Canada Goose Redheads Wood duck Shoveler Bufflehead	Riparian Wetland Aquatic	Most representatives of this group occur as migrants within the study area.
Upland Game birds	Turkeys Ring-necked Pheasant Hungarian Partridge	Agricultural Riparian Coniferous Forest	Typically year-round residents possessing some economic significance
Raptors	Osprey Red-tailed Hawk American Kestrel Swainson's Hawk	Riparian Deciduous Woodland Agricultural	Members of this group tend to hunt large territories



Source: Cross, 1993

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Figure 3-12
White-tailed Deer Winter Range & Mortality Areas

Table 3-22
(continued)

Wildlife Group	Common Representative	Common Vegetation Associations	Comments
Songbirds/passerine	Yellow Warbler Vesper Sparrow Meadowlark Eastern Kingbird Black-billed Magpie	Riparian Deciduous Woodland Coniferous Forest Agricultural Urban Wetland	Species composition diverse, all vegetation types occupied, and species mixture changes seasonally
Reptiles and Amphibians	Common Garter Snake Bull Snake Painted Turtle Leopard Frog	Agricultural Riparian Wetland Urban Deciduous Woodland	Locally abundant in suitable habitats

Sources: Cross 1993, Skaar et al. 1985, and Stebbins 1966

Raptors inhabiting or potentially inhabiting the US 93 corridor include the red-tailed hawk, great-horned owl, American kestrel, rough-legged hawk, Swainson's hawk, osprey, bald eagle, and peregrine falcon. These species may occur in areas of suitable habitat within or along the corridor. Potentially suitable nesting habitat, occurs in or near portions of the corridor, particularly along the Flathead River. However, no raptor nests are known to occur in the study area **[which is defined as generally within 152.5 meters (500 feet) either side of US 93]. The occurrence of raptor nests in the study area was determined through interviews with state and federal wildlife officials and a literature search.** Both the bald eagle and peregrine falcon are classified as Endangered species, and are discussed in Section 3.14 - Threatened and Endangered Species (Harms 1993).

3.11.2 Fisheries

A coldwater fishery exists within the general US 93 corridor. However, the area only receives a minor amount of fishing pressure (Hanzel 1993). The most extensive aquatic habitat within the area is the Flathead River. The Flathead is the major migratory route upstream from Flathead Lake. The most common fish species within the river are lake trout, northern pike, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and rainbow trout.

In addition to the Flathead River, the corridor crosses the Stillwater and Whitefish rivers. Both rivers are generally low gradient streams occurring within glacial till. In addition, both rivers have their headwaters in lakes so they do not exhibit the annual high-flows typically associated with mountain streams. Also, due to the amount of development in the area the banks are some what degraded (Hanzel 1993).

Use of the Stillwater and Whitefish rivers by fish is limited. The high amount of sediment present in both rivers restricts the occurrence of fish in the rivers. The primary use of both rivers by fish is as migration corridors (Hanzel 1993).

3.11.3 Wildlife Habitat

3.11.3.1 Agricultural Areas

The most extensive habitat type within or along the US 93 corridor is agricultural. Agricultural areas typically include those areas used for both cash crops and as pasture land. Wheat makes up the majority of the cash crop grown along the corridor. Other crops include barley, oats, rye, and hay. Plant species associated with pasture

land are Dutch clover, alsike clover, timothy, fescue, Kentucky and Canadian bluegrass, and quackgrass (Nunns 1960). Typically, wildlife species utilize these areas for hunting and foraging. Species that may be found in agricultural areas include red-tailed hawk, various small mammals, white-tailed deer, coyote, and northern harrier.

3.11.3.2 Riparian Areas

Riparian areas within or along the US 93 corridor are typically restricted to habitats adjacent to wetlands particularly along the Flathead River, Stillwater River, Ashley Creek, and the Whitefish River. Species of plants typically present in these areas are cottonwoods, willows, alders, and dogwood. The understory is generally composed of numerous forbs and grasses. Riparian areas are important as security areas and travel corridors for wildlife. Wildlife species commonly associated with these areas are ring-necked pheasants, various songbirds, and small mammals, osprey, raccoons, and white-tailed deer.

3.11.3.3 Deciduous Woodlands

Deciduous woodlands occur in both upland and riparian type habitats. Species associated with the riparian deciduous habitats are similar to the previously described riparian habitat. Upland areas support species such as aspen, larch, and occasionally cottonwood. The understory is comprised of numerous forbs and grasses, as well as shrubs. These woodlands support wildlife species such as songbirds, great-horned owl, coyotes, ring-necked pheasant, wild turkey, white-tailed deer, and raccoons. This habitat type is not common within or along the corridor. However, it is important to the local wildlife resource.

3.11.3.4 Coniferous Forest

Coniferous forest habitats are scattered throughout the general US 93 corridor. Species commonly associated with these areas are white-spruce, Douglas-fir, and lodgepole pine. Associated species in these areas include an understory of grasses and forbs, in addition to a shrub layer on various sites. Coniferous forest is important for the local wildlife. Species such as elk, white-tailed deer, various songbirds, small mammals, and turkeys utilize these areas. This habitat type is not common within or along the corridor.

3.11.3.5 Urban Areas

The majority of urban habitat occurs within the cities of Somers, Kalispell, and Whitefish. These areas are predominantly private businesses and residential property.

Vegetation within these areas is typically limited to weedy species and planted exotic species. Wildlife associated with these areas is limited to species adapted to high amounts of human disturbance. Species would typically include deer mice, skunks, various other small mammals, numerous songbirds, and raccoons.

3.12 Floodplains

Floodplains are protected by Executive Order 11988.

The mapping of 100-year floodplains has been derived from sections of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). **During the preliminary and final design process, floodplains for minor drainages that have not been delineated by FEMA will be addressed**. Figure 3-13 shows the extent of flooding that would occur in the case of such an event.

Floodplains for the smaller tributaries are restricted closely to the permanent stream channel. Most of these restricted floodplains extend less than 500 feet on either side of the flow centerline.

The Flathead River floodplain is significantly more complex. Due to the extremely low gradient, the 100 year floodplain extends from the stream centerline or centerlines out to the edges of the meander loops and sloughs. At its widest, it is approximately 8.05 kilometers (five miles) wide. This type of expansive floodplain relative to channel surface area is common among highly sinuous streams such as the Flathead River.

Table 3-23 summarizes areas where US 93 crosses or abuts the 100 year floodplain.

Table 3-23
Floodplain Locations Adjacent to US 93

Reference Number	Water Feature	Location	Width At Crossing
1	Not Named	US 93 at MT 82	Adjacent to BNR
2	Not Named	US 93 0.4 kilometer (0.25 mile) S. of Somers Stage Rd.	Adjacent to BNR
3	Not Named	US 93 0.8 kilometer (0.5 mile) S. of Forest Hill Rd.	61m (200')
4	Patrick Creek	US 93 at Fir Terrace Rd.	274.5m (900') into culvert
5	Ashley Creek	US 93 at Ball's Crossing	45.8m (150')
6	Ashley Creek (S)	BNRR at Ashley Creek	30.5m (100') into culvert
7	Ashley Creek (N)	South of US 2 at Meridian	18.3m (60')
8	Stillwater River	U. S. 93 and Reserve Dr.	61m (200')
9	Whitefish River	US 93 and Riverside Dr.	45.8m (150') into culverts
10	Whitefish River	Baker Ave.	36.6m (120')
11	Whitefish River	US 93 at Miles Ave.	45.8m (150')
12	Spencer Lake	Spencer Lake	Adjacent

There are no locations along the existing US 93 alignment that are subject to road surface flooding during a 100 year event.

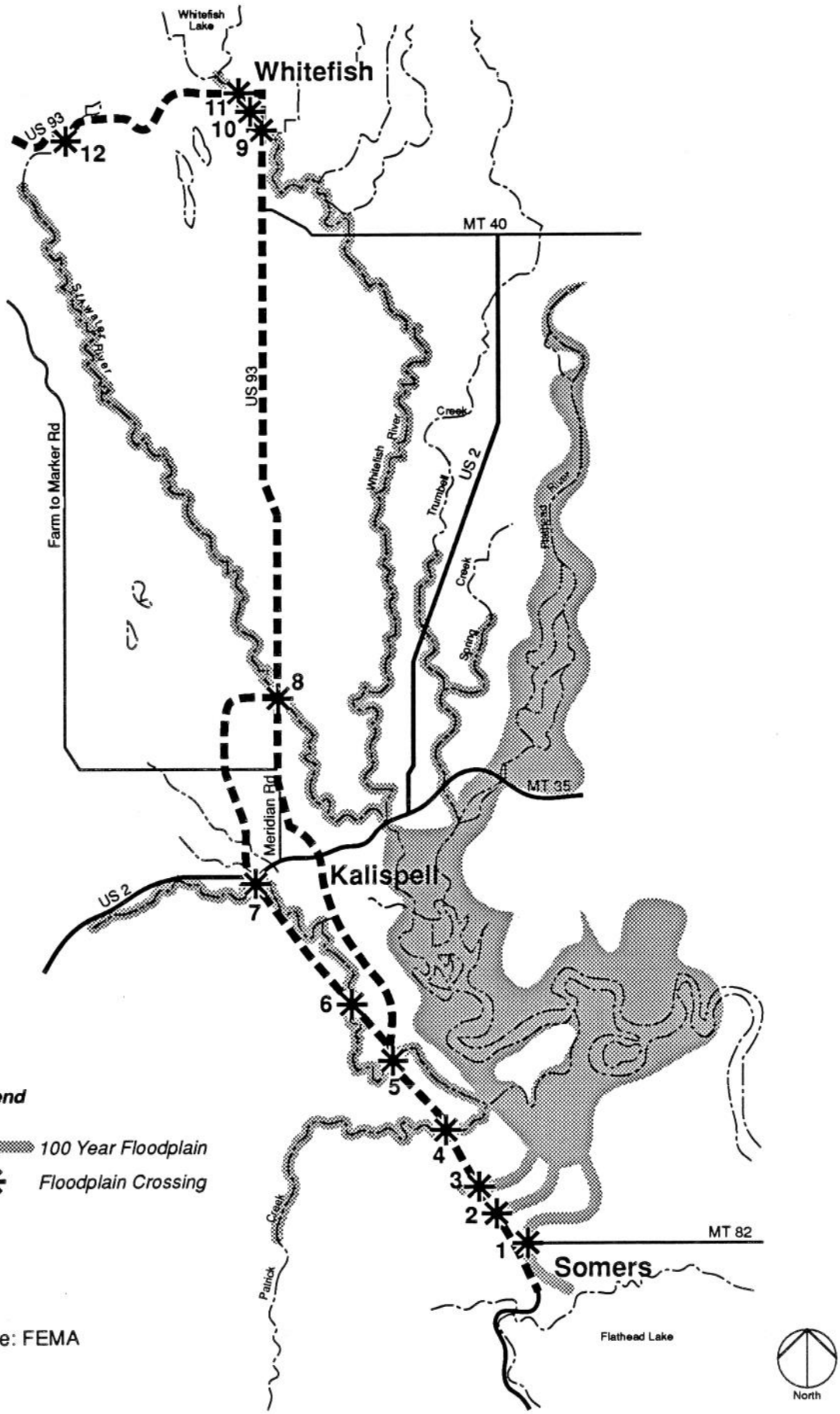
3.13 Wild and Scenic Rivers

There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers designated within the Somers to Whitefish study area.

3.14 Threatened and Endangered Species

Threatened and endangered species are protected by the Endangered Species Act. Coordination with the USFWS is required.

Through consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service it was determined that two federally-listed species potentially occur in the project area. They are the bald eagle and the peregrine falcon. A copy of the USFWS letter identifying these species (June 7, 1993) is included in **the Draft EIS**. In addition, nine sensitive species



Source: FEMA

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Figure 3-13
Floodplains

may occur in the project area. This section presents the abundance, distribution, and ecology of the species considered in this evaluation. The descriptions focus on aspects of these parameters that the proposed project could influence. Information presented here is primarily based on a review of literature conducted specifically for the project.

3.14.1 Bald Eagle

3.14.1.1 Habitat

Bald eagles occur throughout the western United States and Canada. Within their overall range, specific features influence their distribution and occurrence. These features include populations of prey, and sites for nests, perches, and roosts [Mountain Bald Eagle Working Group (MBEWG) 1986].

Eagles feed on a variety of items. Primary prey consists of waterfowl, salmonids, suckers, and whitefish. However, they will feed on carrion and small mammals including jackrabbits, under certain conditions (MBEWG 1986).

Nests are an important aspect of bald eagle distribution. Nests are generally located in forest stands larger than 1.21 hectares (three acres) with a moderately open canopy. Nest trees are usually the tallest ones within the stand and are predominantly live ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, or cottonwood. However, snags of these species also may be used (Magaddino 1989). Nests are generally located in line of sight, and within one mile of bodies of water that are at least 32.4 hectares (80 acres) in size. Territories and nests are usually used repeatedly and some reportedly have been used for over eighty years (Magaddino 1989).

Nesting dates in Montana vary with location, however they follow a general pattern. Nest building, courtship, and egg-laying begins in early February and lasts until mid-May. Incubation occurs from the first of March through the end of April. It is during egg-laying and incubation that the nest are most vulnerable to disturbance. Human disturbances during this time may result in birds leaving the nest and allowing eggs to cool, or deserting the nest entirely. After the eggs have hatched, adult eagles show more affinity to the nests and are less likely to abandon the area. Hatching and rearing of the young occurs from the first of May to mid-August. Fledgling generally runs from mid-June through mid-August. After this time, human activity near the nest is less critical (MBEWG 1986).

Winter habitat in Montana, while not as critical as nesting, is a concern. Wintering habitat consists of perching and roosting sites. These sites are generally located near open water or in areas where carrion is available (i.e.; big game winter range). These areas are not as sensitive to human disturbance as nest sites however, removal of perching or roosting sites or continual disturbance in these areas may result in abandonment.

Like nests, roost and perch sites may be used over many years. They usually consist of large trees that have horizontal branches. Perches provide good views or are near feeding areas. Perch sites may be occupied by individuals or by several eagles. Roosts generally provide thermal protection and are close to feeding areas. Roosts may contain from one to several hundred eagles.

3.14.1.2 Distribution and Use of the Project Area

In order to delist the bald eagle, management objectives throughout Montana are to provide secure nesting habitat for bald eagles and to increase population levels in specific geographical areas. For wintering eagles, the plan calls for providing optimal conditions to maintain numbers of eagles over the winter (MBEWG 1986).

The majority of bald eagle usage in the project area is limited to Flathead Lake and the Flathead River. Three nests are located on the Flathead River within the project area. However, none of the river population nests are located along the existing US 93 corridor. The closest river nest is located approximately 2.4 kilometers (1.5 miles) from the existing US 93 corridor. This nest is nearest the existing US 93 corridor within the project area.

The northern-most nest on the Flathead River within the project area has been active since 1985 and has produced 1.5 young per year. The western most nest on the river within the project area has been active since 1990 and has produced two young per year. A third nest within the project area and along the river is located approximately 9.65 kilometers (six miles) east of the existing US 93 corridor. The foraging areas for both nests are generally restricted to the mainstem of the Flathead River.

There are 11 bald eagle pairs known to nest on Flathead Lake (McMaster 1993). However, only two of these nests are in close proximity to the project area. These nests are located in Kalispell Bay (Cross 1993). The closest of the lake nests is located approximately 4.02 kilometers (2.5 miles) from the existing US 93 corridor within the project area. This nest is the second closest to the existing US 93 corridor within the project area.

A nest not associated with the Flathead population is located on Whitefish Lake. This nest is in the northwest corner of Whitefish Lake. This nest site is located approximately 9.65 kilometers (six miles) from the present US 93 corridor (McMaster 1993).

Wintering bald eagles also occur in the area. During the winter of 1985-86 approximately 400 eagles utilized the river during the salmon migration. However, since the salmon have stopped migrating the numbers of eagles has decreased. In addition, no perch or roosting areas have been designated within the existing US 93 corridor (Shelley 1993).

The Flathead River and Lake are considered year-round bald eagle habitat. The entire area may be used for either nesting, or as foraging and roosting habitat for migrants and non-breeders (Shelley 1993).

3.14.2 Peregrine Falcon

3.14.2.1 Habitat

Peregrines occupy a wide variety of habitats. They are typically associated with open country near rivers, marshes, and coasts. Cliffs are the preferred nesting substrate, however, tall man-made structures (i.e.: high rise buildings and towers) may be used (Spahr et al 1991).

Breeding begins in March when males establish territories. Three to four eggs are laid in mid-April. Incubation lasts from 33 to 34 days. The young hatch in mid-May. Young generally fledged in 6 weeks and remain dependent on the adults for several weeks (Spahr et al 1991).

Peregrines typically prey on birds such as waterfowl, shorebirds, grouse, and pigeons. Prey is taken by striking from above after a high speed dive. Foraging occurs within 16.1 kilometers (ten miles) of the nest, however, 80% occurs within a 1.61-kilometer (one-mile) radius of the nest (Spahr et al 1991).

Peregrine falcons usually migrate to Mexico or Central America in the fall. However, some birds may stay on their breeding grounds year-round if food supplies are available (Spahr et al 1991).

3.14.2.2 Distribution and Use of the Project Area

All known peregrine nesting sites occur south of the project area. However, some foraging may occur in the general project area, although this is limited to seasonal migrants (Shelley 1993).

3.14.3 Sensitive Species

Sensitive species have been identified by the Montana Natural Heritage Program. Sensitive species are ranked based on their rarity or vulnerability to extinction.

Nine sensitive plant species have been documented **(through interviews with federal and state wildlife officials, literature search and data base search)** to occur in the general project area. These species are the Columbia water-meal, Guadalupe water-nymph, small yellow lady's slipper, spurred gentian, water bulrush, watershield, pygmy water-lily, ivory sedge, and western witchgrass (Craig 1993). Only **one (western witchgrass) occurs** within the proposed corridor**, west of Whitefish near Spencer Lake.**

Also, one sensitive bird species occurs in the general project area. A great blue heron rookery occurs approximately 4.83 kilometers (three miles) by air southeast of Kalispell (Craig 1993). However, it is more than 1.61 kilometers (one mile) from the existing US 93 corridor and therefore would not be affected by any of the proposed alternatives.

Although the same species occur in these rivers as in the Flathead River, the primary species of concern in the Stillwater and Whitefish rivers are the bull and westslope cutthroat trout. These species typically spawn in the tributaries of the Stillwater and Whitefish Rivers. Their occurrence in the rivers is limited to the migratory periods when they are moving between tributaries of the Stillwater and Whitefish rivers and Flathead Lake.

In addition, a natural area, and a conservation easement have been identified in the project area. These are the Owen Sowerwine State Natural Area, and the Whitefish Spruce Swamp Conservation Easement (Craig 1993). Neither of these occur within any of the proposed alignments. The Lone Pine State Preserve also occurs in the project area. However, it is not currently managed for any sensitive species (Cross 1993).

3.15 Historic and Cultural Resources

Historic and cultural resources are protected by the National Historic Preservation Act. Coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) is required.

3.15.1 Historic Context

3.15.1.1 Early History

The Flathead and Whitefish River Valleys and the surrounding intermountain area, including what is now northern and central Idaho, was long occupied by the Bitterroot Salish or "Flathead", the Lower Pend d'Oreille and the Kootenai. The Kootenai primarily occupied lands in the Kootenai River Valley but also hunted and fished along the Whitefish River and the lakes from Flathead Lake north. The area was also influenced by other tribal groups such as the Blackfeet who either raided or traveled through the area.

The first historic mention of the Flathead Lake area was in a letter written by Peter Fidler, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, on July 10, 1802. Non-native incursions into the Flathead Lake area are first documented in 1807 when Northwest Fur Company explorer, geographer, cartographer and trader David Thompson established Kootenae House at the foot of Lake Windermere.

The first official American presence in the Flathead Valley occurred in 1854 when John Mullan first traveled to the area. Mullan eventually laid out what became known as the Mullen Road, which ran between Fort Benton and Walla Walla, Washington. Although it did not go through the Flathead area, this road provided a jumping off point for incursions into the Flathead Lake area, thus changing the area permanently.

Following the many gold strikes of the 1850s and 1860s, prospectors flooded into the mountain West seeking their fortune in the rich strikes at Grasshopper Creek and the gulches named Alder, Last Chance and Confederate. By 1864, the population shift caused by these strikes caused the northern half of the infant Territory of Idaho to break away and form the new Territory of Montana.

While no gold was found in the Flathead Lake area, a small placer strike occurred in 1864 in the Kootenai region across the international border at Wild Horse Creek near Canada's Fort Steele. Miners and their supplies streamed up the Flathead valley roughly following a route traveled by John Mullen in 1854. The strike, while rich, was short lived. It proved important to the Flathead Valley by establishing transportation routes from the Clarks Fork River through the Flathead Lake valley to the Kootenai region. White population in the Flathead Valley began to climb after the Northern Pacific Railroad reached Missoula in 1883 and commercial navigation of Flathead Lake began in 1884. Steamboats carried freight and passengers from Foot of the Lake (now Polson) to the head of navigation at Demersville on the Flathead River. Rails finally came to the area in 1891, when the Great Northern arrived at the new town of Kalispell. The railroad opened the area to markets of local goods, primarily timber. Farmers found rich soil under the valley grasslands and sawmills sprang up to cut the great timber resource (GCM 1992; Gray 1990; Johnson 1950; Spritzer 1979).

3.15.1.2 Somers

Somers was a mill town established in the early 1900's to supply Hill's Great Northern Railroad with railroad ties. John O'Brien built the townsite of Somers on 141.8 hectares (350 acres) of that land he purchased from Tom McGovern, who had homesteaded the property at the head of the lake in the 1880's. The company at one time owned 122 dwellings in the town and the general store. Somers was a boom town in the early 1900's and attracted workers of a variety of ethnic backgrounds to the area.

The mill was supplied logs by means of winter (and some summer) logging along the Whitefish, Stillwater, Swan and Flathead Rivers, and spring log drives down these rivers to booms on Flathead Lake. From these booms the logs were pulled across the lake to the Somers Mill. The logs were then milled into ties, lumber for the

manufacture of sashes, doors, and boxes, and lumber for marketing in newly established areas, including towns in the Flathead Valley and other parts of the State. These products were then loaded on railroad cars and transported first by way of the spur line and then by other lines to their points of use. For example, the Somers Lumber Company purchased lumber-yards in Mohall, North Dakota, and Havre, Montana, as outlets in these newly developing regions. According to Elwood, "These yards which served as branches during the rush of settlers to the west were later sold to private operators."

The mill had a capacity of producing about 68,625 meters (225,000 feet) of lumber per day. In 1904, it used 9,150,000 meters (30 million feet) of timber to produce 900,000 ties for the Great Northern Railway and also sawed an additional 9,150,000 meters (30 million feet) of lumber, including ceiling lumber, flooring, molding and siding.

In 1906, the Great Northern Railway purchased the mill and the company's name subsequently changed to the Somers Lumber Company. The mill reached peak operation in 1937 when 375 men annually processed "60 million feet of timber." In 1941, the name of the company was changed to Glacier Park Company, Somer's Lumber Division. The mill shut down in 1948 and the planer in 1949. The mill was then dismantled. For the nearly 50 years of its operation the mill was the largest sawmill operation in the Flathead Valley and had the largest single payroll.

3.15.1.3 Kalispell

The major impetus behind settlement in the project area was the coming of the Great Northern Railroad to Kalispell in 1891. There had been an influx of settlers to Demersville in the spring of 1891, and hope persisted there that the town would remain the center for area emigration either by the Northern Pacific being constructed from Missoula to Polson (or even up the west shore of the lake) or by the Great Northern being constructed through Demersville. However, with the arrival of the Great Northern in Kalispell, buildings were moved from Demersville to Kalispell, and the town of Demersville quickly faded as a viable community.

The town was formally founded March 17, 1891 and named Kalispell by James J. Hill. The name, taken from the language of the Pend d'Oreille, means "prairie above the lake".

An October 20, 1891 meeting of the County Commissioners established the Kalispell Townsite and appointed justices and constables for the town. The town was incorporated in 1892, with Benton D. Hatcher as its first mayor. A volunteer fire department was established and Chester B. Davis was selected to construct the city's water system. The latter measure was taken only after a fire had consumed an entire city block in May 1892. Drought and bad crops, the depression of 1893, and a railroad strike in 1894 all contributed to a slowdown. However, business revived in 1895 and building once again picked up.

The Kalispell-area economy continued to grow after 1900, even though the Great Northern had moved the division point northward to Whitefish. The general area growth was caused by the growth of agriculture near Kalispell and by the development of the lumber industry, especially north of Kalispell.

The other major impetus behind the development of the area was the lumber industry, itself the result of the construction of the Great Northern Railroad, which required timber for ties, trestles, etc. There were at least two sawmills in the upper Flathead area by the middle of the 1880s, one at Foy's Lake and the other at nearby Ashley.

Kalispell's first mill was the Butte and Montana Mill, a Boston organization, which cut timbers for the Great Northern Railroad and the Butte mines. It later became known as the Coram Lumber Company.

3.15.1.4 Whitefish

The early white men in what became the Whitefish area were trappers and explorers of the British Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, and missionaries who worked out of the Flathead Indian Reservation. The first known white man to settle in the Whitefish area was John Morton, who, in 1883 built a cabin at the mouth of the Whitefish River. In the winter a group of trappers camped at the upper end of Flathead Lake. By the late 1880s several lumbermen were living in the area cutting and then floating logs to the new mills in Kalispell. Lumber camps were established and later lumber mills were constructed.

The earliest area settlers came from nearby towns such as Columbia Falls, Demersville, or Kalispell, or from the midwest states, following railroad promotion. They came by way of boat to Demersville and then 25 miles by trail to the Whitefish Lake area. W. O. Hutchinson, who arrived in the area in 1890, noted that the location of the present town of Whitefish was a marsh area that travelers circled on their way from Kalispell or Columbia Falls to Whitefish.

The earliest cabins on the lake were those of Morton and Charles Ramsey. The latter built a rooming house near his cabin to house tourists attracted to the area by its plentiful fish and game. In the 15 years after 1890, a small settlement grew up around these cabins.

The Whitefish area experienced little growth from the mid-1890s to the coming of the Great Northern in 1903. During that time, those living in the area worked mostly at odd jobs. The Great Northern reached Kalispell in 1892. During the construction of the railroad, several construction camps sprang up in the area.

The construction of the railroad to Whitefish changed the appearance of the Whitefish Lake community. Hotels and rooming houses were built on the hill near the lake and along "Engineer's Row" in the Ramsey Addition to Whitefish. Most of those arriving in the Whitefish area between 1894 and 1905 were transients and itinerant workers, but after 1905 a "sturdier" stock remained. The railroad company required its engineers, firemen, and other permanent employees to live in Whitefish rather than in Columbia Falls or Kalispell.

In the early 1900's, the townsite shifted from Ramsey's to a site near the railroad in a marsh, wooded swamp at the south end of the lake. Articles of Incorporation for the Whitefish Townsite Company were filed on July 13th. The town was incorporated in April, 1905 and the first regular meeting of the Town Council was held in July, 1905. By that time, 950 people were living in the town.

The Great Northern Railroad was the major employer in Whitefish. The railroad's monthly payroll by 1907 was $150,000. One of the early associated activities was providing ties to the railroad.

The second most important industry in the Whitefish area was lumbering. By 1906 there were eight lumber camps in the area. The logs on the lake in the spring were floated down the Whitefish River to the Stillwater River and the Flathead River to mills on the north end of Flathead Lake.

As these sources of economic growth developed, the town of Whitefish matured and replaced the first crude structures built to accommodate the loggers and railroad construction hands. The Business Men's Association of Whitefish and the Whitefish Townsite Company provided the government of Whitefish before the town incorporated in 1905.

The early town structures were frame or built of hewn tamarack logs or heavy sawed timber. The earliest brick structures were built in 1909. After 1910, the town matured in its physical appearance and the development of

its political and social institutions. The new brick city hall was completed in 1917, and in the 1920s cement sidewalks replaced the wooden and cinder walks, street grading and paving began, and curbs and storm sewers were established city-wide.

Transportation to other towns was provided by the railroad to the east and west coasts, and the spur line provided links to Kalispell and Columbia Falls. But road transportation to Columbia Falls and Kalispell was unreliable, and there were no usable routes to the Stillwater region or to areas south of Kalispell. In 1904 the roads to Kalispell and to Columbia Falls were improved. Some of the area settlers lived along these roads. In the early 1910s there was no road around the lake and boats were used to carry supplies to such places as Joe Belmore's cabin on the east side of the lake.

3.15.2 Summary of Results of Previous Cultural Inventories

There are **historic** properties previously **determined** eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or deemed to be of primary significance to NRHP eligible historic districts (see Figure 3-14). These properties were recorded during five projects:

- *Cultural Resource Inventory Kalispell - Somers Flathead County, Montana [F 5-3(27)104]* (Heritage Research Center 1986);
- *Cultural Resource Inventory Kalispell - Whitefish Flathead County, Montana [F 5-3(28)115]* (Heritage Research Center 1986);
- *Historical Resource Survey of Kalispell* (Taylor, Thon, Thompson and Peterson 1981);
- *Kalispell Historical Survey* (Kathy McKay, draft 1993); and
- *Cultural Resource Inventory Kalispell-Whitefish, 1.6 mile Extension [F 5-3(28)115] Flathead County, Montana* (Heritage Research Center 1988).

Eligible properties found during these surveys were:

- Altenburg Farm (24FH276)

- McCormack Farm (24FH277)

- Kalispell - Somers Railroad Spur line (24FH350).

- Zeretzke House (24FH305), in the southern part of Kalispell.

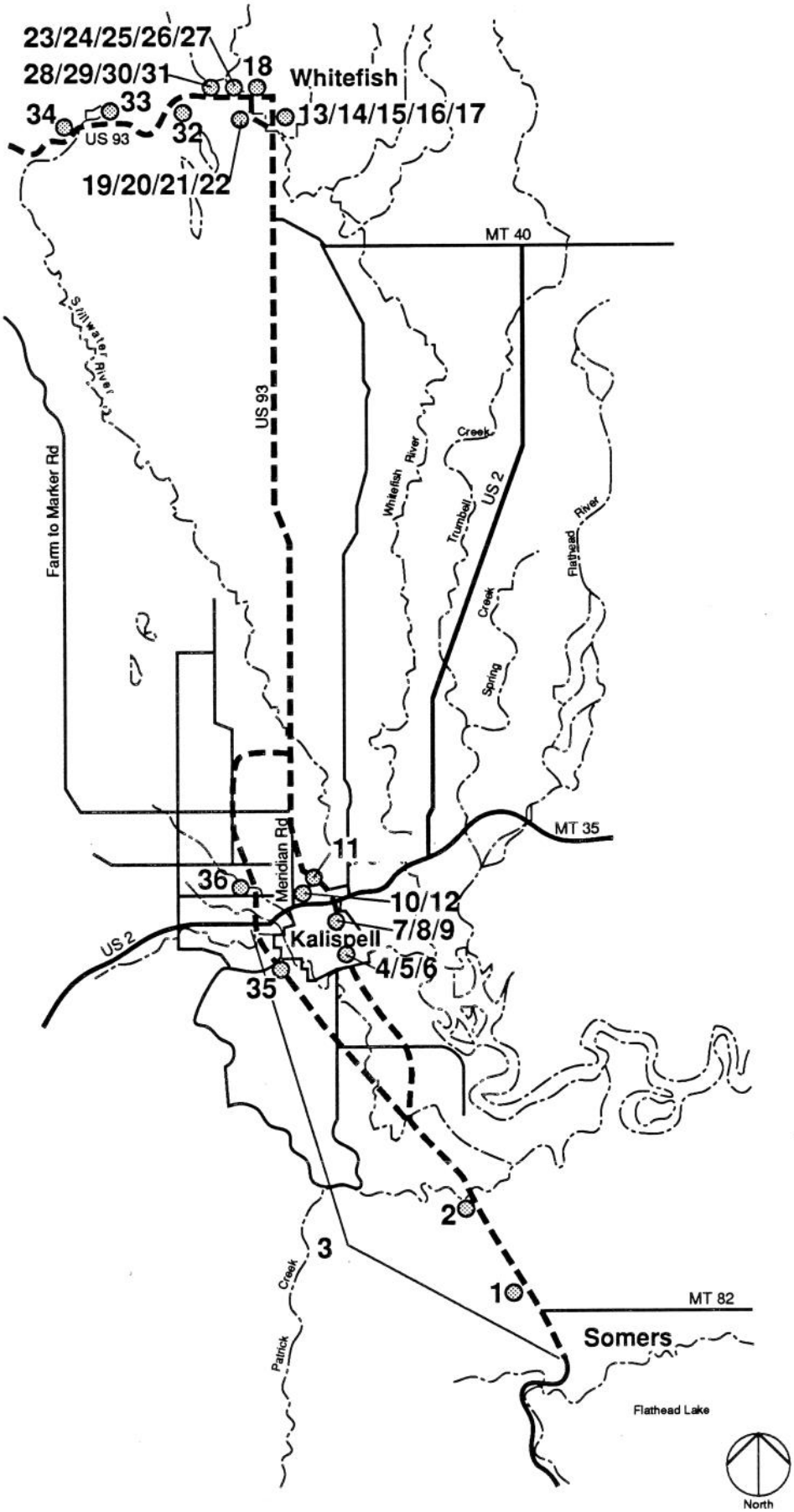
- The Kalispell Courthouse Historic District. The district, which runs along Main Street between the 500 and 800 blocks, contains 26 extant structures. Properties of primary significance include: the First Presbyterian Church (524 Main Street), Waggener & Campbell Funeral Home (525 Main Street), Bethlehem Lutheran Church (603 Main Street), Bethlehem Lutheran Parsonage (621 Main Street), Hodgkin-Wright Clinic (704 Main Street), McConnell House (705 Main Street), Sykes House (720 Main Street), Flathead County Courthouse (800 S. Main Street), Flathead County Jail (800 S. Main Street).

- The Kalispell Main Street Commercial District which has been determined eligible for the NRHP encompasses two and one half blocks of downtown Kalispell commercial properties. The district encompasses 41 extant structures. Structures of primary significance include: McIntosh Opera House (48 Main Street), Kalispell Hotel (102 Main Street), Brust Block (115 Main Street), First National Bank (139 Main Street), Pastime Bar (140 Main Street), Adams Block (217 Main Street),

Legend

- Historic Site or District eligible for the National Register of Historic Places

1. Altenburg Farm
2. McCormack Farm
3. Railroad Spur Line
4. Zeretzke House
5. Courthouse Historic District (Kalispell)
6. O'Neil Lumber Co. Office
7. Souser-Mercord Building
8. Main Street Commercial District
9. Anderson Style Shop
10. French House
11. Haberdash Shop
12. Miller House
13. Whitefish Historic Residential District
14. Methodist Church
15. Whitefish City Hospital
16. Garden Wall Inn
17. Willoughby House
18. Whitefish Historic Business District
19. Dr. William Taylor House
20. Hansen Cottage
21. Hennessey House
22. Ray E. Taylor House
23. Central High School
24. Glacier Garage
25. Masonic Temple
26. Duncan Sampson Block
27. J.A. Sampson Residence
28. Harlow House
29. Hennessy Log Bungalow
30. Midby Bungalow
31. Whitefish Country Club
32. Patten Mattress Factory
33. Westermark Place
34. Woodsman Cottage
35. McDonnell Place
36. Byrne Farm



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 3-14
Historic Sites and Districts

Knight and Twining Block (237 Main Street), Masonic Temple (241 Main Street), Whipps Block (301/309 Main Street), Gas Co-op Service Station (343 Main Street), Liberty Theater (116 1st Ave East) and the Montana Hotel (142 1st Avenue East). The Anderson Style Shop (222 Main Street) was previously recorded and **determined** eligible for the NRHP.

- The Sauser-Mercord Building (338-340 Main Street) and the O'Neal Lumber Company Office (424 Main Street) in Kalispell.
- The "Castle" Ray E. Taylor House (24FH449) at 200 Eighth Street in Whitefish.

3.15.3 Sites Recorded for the US 93 Somers-Whitefish EIS

One hundred and sixty historic properties were recorded along the proposed alignments but no prehistoric sites were located or reported. Tables 3-24 through 3-29 list the sites and present their eligibility status.

3.15.3.1 Somers to Whitefish on Existing Alignment

Although the route was resurveyed, no new sites were recorded along US 93 between the south end of the project near Somers and the Kalispell city limits.

A summary of significant sites along the existing alignment corridor from Somers to Whitefish is presented in Table 3-24.

Table 3-24
Significant Historic Sites, Somers-Whitefish
US 93 Existing Alignment (Along Alternative A)

Name	Address	City	Status/ Smithsonian #
Altenburg Farm		Somers	24FH276
McCormack Farm		Somers	24FH277
Railroad Spur Line	Somers to Kalispell		24FH350
Zeretzke House	947 Main Street	Kalispell	24FH305
Courthouse Historic District		Kalispell	P
O'Neil Lumber Co. Office	424 Main Street	Kalispell	P
Souser-Mercord Building	338 Main Street	Kalispell	P
Main Street Commercial District		Kalispell	P
Anderson Style Shop	222 Main Street	Kalispell	P
French House	**115 West Wyoming**	**Kalispell**	**H/24FH658**
Haberdash Shop	**666 Sunset Boulevard**	**Kalispell**	**H/24FH660**
Miller House	**685 2nd Avenue WN**	**Kalispell**	**H/24FH661**
Whitefish Historic Residential District		Whitefish	H
Methodist Church	345 Spokane Avenue	Whitefish	H/**24FH499**
Whitefish City Hospital	406 Spokane Avenue	Whitefish	H/**24FH519**
Garden Wall Inn	504 Spokane Avenue	Whitefish	H/CR/**24FH520**

Table 3-24
(continued)

Name	Address	City	Status/ Smithsonian #
Willoughby House	**647 Riverside Drive**	**Whitefish**	**H/24FH525**
Whitefish Historic Business District		Whitefish	H
Dr. William Taylor House	**550 Central Avenue**	**Whitefish**	**H/CR/24FH563**
Hansen Cottage	**580 Baker Avenue**	**Whitefish**	**H**
Hennessey House	**844 Baker Avenue**	**Whitefish**	**H/24FH567**
Ray E. Taylor House	**200 Eighth Street**	**Whitefish**	**H/24FH449**
Central High School	Spokane and 2nd Street East	Whitefish	H/**24FH546**
Glacier Garage	**540 2nd Street East**	**Whitefish**	**H/24FH547**
Masonic Temple	Lupfer and 2nd Street East	Whitefish	H/**24FH558**
Duncan Sampson Block	301 2nd Street East	Whitefish	H/CB/**24FH559**
J.A. Sampson Residence	223 2nd Street East	Whitefish	H/CR/**24FH560**
Harlow House	415 2nd Street West	Whitefish	H/CR
Hennesy Log Bungalow	**118 2nd Street West**	**Whitefish**	**H/CR/24FH569**
Midby Bungalow	**427 2nd Street West**	**Whitefish**	**H/24FH571**
Whitefish Country Club	**2nd Street West**	**Whitefish**	**H/24FH573**
Patten Mattress Factory	2055 Highway 93 West	Whitefish	24FH497
Westermark Place	**2626 Highway 93 West**	**Whitefish**	**H/24FH579**
Woodsman Cottage	**2860 Highway 93 West**	**Whitefish**	**H/24FH580**

P = Previously determined eligible to the NRHP.
H = Eligible to the NRHP.
CB = Contributing to the Whitefish Historic Business District.
CR = Contributing to the Whitefish Historic Residential District.
N = Not eligible for the NRHP and not contributing to a historic district.

3.15.3.2 Kalispell - Existing Alignment

This segment of highway is in an urban environment and has been the subject of three previous surveys. A walking tour of main street verified that all historic structures along US 93 / Main Street have been previously recorded.

3.15.3.3 North Kalispell - Existing Alignment

From the point where Main Street intersects California Avenue and becomes Sunset Boulevard to the intersection of US 93 and Reserve Street **13** historic structures were recorded. **Three** of these structures meet the criteria of significance for the NRHP and are therefore eligible for the Register. **These are the French House (24FH658), Haberdash Shop (24FH660) and Miller House (24FH661).**

From US 93 north of Reserve Street to the intersection of Montana Highway 40 two historical sites were recorded. Neither of these structures meet the criteria of significance for the NRHP and are therefore not eligible for the Register. One of the previously recorded non-eligible sites (24FH312) along the route has been destroyed through the construction of a mini-storage facility.

From US 93 north of the Montana Highway 40 intersection to the Whitefish city limits two historic sites were recorded. Neither of these sites meet the criteria of significance for the NRHP and are therefore not eligible for the Register. One of the previously recorded non-eligible sites (Oasis Cabin 24FH371) along the route has been destroyed by fire.

3.15.3.4 Kalispell - Alternative B

Alternative B follows the previously discussed Kalispell -Somers Railroad Spur line (24FH350) from where it leaves the existing right of way approximately 4.83 kilometers (three miles) south of Kalispell to a point where it crosses Valley View Dr. At the points where it intersects Valley View Drive, three historic sites were recorded: 105 Valley View Drive, 335 Valley View Drive and 405 Valley View Drive. The McDonnell Farm (24FH496) at 335 Valley View Drive **is eligible for the NRHP**.

To the north where the route crosses US 2, a single two part site was recorded: 1433 US 2 with its barn at 1429 US 2. This site is not eligible for the NRHP, and is located well away from the current route behind modern structures. Several other older and more significant structures further to the west on US 2 were also noted, but not recorded.

Where Alternative B crosses Two Mile Drive, six sites were recorded: 505 2 Mile Drive, 510 Two Mile Drive, 524 Two Mile Drive, 577 Two Mile Drive, 611 Two Mile Drive and 720 Two Mile Drive. Because of the flexibility of the route at this point, a broad corridor was inventoried. The **Byrne** Farm (24FH493) at 611 Two Mile Road is eligible for the NRHP.

Where the route crosses Three Mile Drive, three sites were recorded: 212 3 Mile Drive, 236 Three Mile Drive, and 327 Three Mile Drive. Two of these houses, the McGlenn Place at 212 Three Mile Drive and the Nonemacher Place at 236 Three Mile Drive, are historical and quite impressive. Further research is needed before a recommendation can be made on their NRHP eligibility. Both sites are well away from the route. The Don Schultz Farm (24FH494) at 327 Three Mile Drive is eligible for the NRHP and is adjacent to the route.

The route follows Stillwater Road from a point to the north of Three Mile Drive to the intersection of Stillwater and Reserve Street. On this portion of the route two historic sites were recorded: 605 Stillwater Road and 245 Stillwater Road. While both of these sites were historic dairies, their loss of integrity precludes their consideration for the NRHP. Table 3-25 lists the historic sites recorded along Kalispell Alternative B.

Table 3-25
US 93 Existing Alignment
Kalispell Alternative B

Address	Name/Description	Status/Smithsonian #
Somers to Kalispell	Railroad Spur line	H / 24FH350
105 Valley View	**Simmons Farm**	**N**
335 Valley View Drive	McDonnell Place	H / 24FH496
405 Valley View Drive	Bastam Place	N
1433 Highway 2	Wager/Martin Place	N
505 2 Mile Drive	Sprenger Place	N
510 2 Mile Drive	Smith House	N
524 2 Mile Drive	Thorvildson Cabin	N / 24FH492
577 2 Mile Drive	Angus House	N

Table 3-25
(continued)

Address	Name/Description	Status/Smithsonian #
611 2 Mile Drive	Byrne Farm	H / 24FH493
720 2 Mile Drive	Frach Place	N
212 3 Mile Drive	McGlenn Place	U
236 3 Mile Drive	Nonemacher Place	U
327 3 Mile Drive	Don Schultz Place	H / 24FH494
245 Stillwater Road	Hill View Stock Ranch	N / 24FH495
605 Stillwater Road	Grossweiler Dairy	N

H = Eligible for the NRHP
N = Not eligible for the NRHP and not contributing to a historic district.
U = Undetermined eligibility for the NRHP status. Further ownership research is required to make a recommendation.

3.15.3.5 Whitefish - Spokane Avenue

From the southern city limits of Whitefish to 2nd Street East, the existing alignment of US 93 runs along Spokane Avenue. Spokane Avenue is historically significant for the large number of cottages and bungalows dating from the 1910s and 1920s that still exist and retain their integrity. Along Spokane Avenue 28 historic sites were recorded with an additional three sites along Riverside Street. Of these 31 sites, three are eligible for the NRHP and 21 sites contribute to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District. Only eight sites are not eligible for the NRHP nor do they contribute to the Whitefish Historic Residential District. Table 3-26 lists the sites along this segment along with their status in regards to the NRHP.

Table 3-26
US 93 Existing Alignment
Spokane Avenue Historic Sites, Whitefish, Montana

Address	Name/Description	Status/Smithsonian #
335 Spokane Avenue	Methodist Parsonage	CR/24FH499
345 Spokane Avenue	Methodist Church	H
405 Spokane Avenue	Rygg Cottage	CR
406 Spokane Avenue	Hospital	H/24FH519
411 Spokane Avenue	Village Square Realty	CR
422 Spokane Avenue	Carter cottage	CR
429 Spokane Avenue	Bowden Cottage	N
432 Spokane Avenue	Atchison Bed and Breakfast	CR
444 Spokane Avenue	Wicks Cottage	N
445 Spokane Avenue	Gilliland Bungalow	CR
504 Spokane Avenue	Garden Wall Inn	H/CR/24FH520
505 Spokane Avenue	Big Mountain Insurance	N
511 Spokane Avenue	Nelson Cottage	N
514 Spokane Avenue	Mace Bungalow	CR
519 Spokane Avenue	Barnett Bungalow	CR
527 Spokane Avenue	Wagner Cottage	N
533 Spokane Avenue	Smith Cottage	CR
538 Spokane Avenue	Frasier Bungalow	CR
543 Spokane Avenue	Reimer Bungalow	CR

Table 3-26
(continued)

Address	Name/Description	Status/Smithsonian #
547 Spokane Avenue	The Landlord	N
550 Spokane Avenue	Ost House	N
560 Spokane Avenue	Sargent Cottage	CR
565 Spokane Avenue	Benda Cottage	CR
566 Spokane Avenue	Sparks Cottage	CR
567 Spokane Avenue	Chuck Olson Real Estate	N
570 Spokane Avenue	Russell Bungalow	CR
737 Spokane Avenue	Cyrus Nelson House	N/24FH521
615 Riverside Drive	Foundation	N/24FH522
633 Riverside Drive	Linn House	N/24FH523
639 Riverside Drive	Gordon Cottage	N/24FH524
647 Riverside Drive	Willoughby House	H/24FH525

H = Individually eligible for the NRHP
CR = Contributing to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District.
N = Not eligible for the NRHP and not contributing to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District.

3.15.3.6 Whitefish - Baker Avenue

This alternative route for US 93 runs through a relatively recent commercial development and a gravel pit on the south end and a residential area on the north. To the north of the Whitefish Bridge on the east side of the street, the historic dwellings have been removed to make room for a new post office and the new Whitefish Credit Union building. Along this route 21 historic structures have been recorded. The Ray E. Taylor House (24FH449), more commonly known as the "Castle", was previously recorded and is listed on the NRHP but both are well away from Baker Avenue. Two dwellings, the Hennessey House at 844 Baker Avenue which was originally built as a garage for the Castle and the **Dr. William Taylor House** at 550 Central Avenue are eligible for the NRHP. Two buildings on the north end of the street contribute to the proposed Whitefish Historic Business District. Six sites contribute to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District and 10 sites are not eligible nor do they contribute to the Whitefish Historic Residential District. Several additional structures such as the Assembly of God Church were also recorded, but dropped from consideration when research revealed that they were not historic. Table 3-27 is a listing of all historic properties recorded on Baker Avenue.

Table 3-27
Whitefish, Montana
Baker Avenue Historical Sites

Address	Name / Description	Status / Smithsonian #
221 Baker Avenue	Flathead Travel	N/24FH561
239 Baker Avenue	Harry Hotel Garage	N/24FH562
305 Baker Avenue	Alpine Chiropractic	CR
315 Baker Avenue	Nelson Bungalow	CR
331 Baker Avenue	Winton Cottage	N
500 Baker Avenue	Riverside Park	CR
550 Central Avenue	Dr. William Taylor House	H/CR/24FH563
577 Baker Avenue	Hoppe House	N
580 Baker Avenue	Hansen Cottage	H

Table 3-27
(continued)

Address	Name / Description	Status / Smithsonian #
583 Baker Avenue	Jan Bell House	CR
603 Baker Avenue	Feeney House	N
604 Baker Avenue	Meirsma Bungalow	CR
612 Baker Avenue	Gaertner House	CR
704 Baker Avenue	Moen House	N
722 Baker Avenue	Thompson House	N
728 Baker Avenue	Jungs House	N
734 Baker Avenue	Johnson House	CR
109 Eighth Avenue	Cheff Cabin	N/24FH564
841 Baker Avenue	Gordon House	N/24FH565
847 Baker Avenue	Wicen Cabin	N/24FH566
844 Baker Avenue	Hennessey House	H/24FH567
200 Eighth Street	Ray E. Taylor House	H / 24FH449
9th and Baker Avenue	Tacheny Shop	N/24FH568

H = Eligible to the NRHP
CB = Contributing to the proposed Whitefish Historic Business District
CR = Contributing to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District
N = Not eligible for the NRHP and not contributing to a historic district

3.15.3.7 Whitefish - 2nd Street East

The existing alignment of US 93 turns west in downtown Whitefish at the corner of Spokane Avenue and 2nd Street East. The East designation continues from the corner to where the highway crosses the Whitefish River, west of this point the route is on 2nd Street West. On the 2nd Street East segment, 17 historic structures were recorded. Of these, five are eligible for the NRHP: **Central High School, Glacier Garage, the Masonic Temple, Duncan** Sampson Block, **and the J.A.** Sampson Residence. Several recorded structures such as the Whitefish Pilot building and the Peterson Dentist Office were dropped from consideration after research revealed them to be non-historic. Table 3-28 is a listing of all historic properties recorded on 2nd Avenue East.

Table 3-28
Whitefish, Montana
2nd Street East Historical Sites

Address	Name / Description	Status / Smithsonian #
628 2nd St. East	Central High School	H/24FH546
540 2nd St. East	Glacier Garage	H/24FH547
147 Central Avenue	Robinson Building	N/24FH549
205 Central Avenue	Orpheum Building	N/24FH548
148 Central Avenue	Haines Drugstore	N/24FH550
419 2nd St. East	Whitefish Meat Market	N/24FH553
429 2nd St. East	Central Hotel	N/24FH551
418 2nd St. East	Whitefish Credit Union	N/24FH552
410 2nd St. East	Grannie Annies	N/24FH554
Baker and 2nd St. East	City Hall	N/24FH555

Table 3-28
(continued)

Address	Name / Description	Status / Smithsonian #
336 2nd St. East	Great Northern Bar (Glacier Cyclery)	N/24FH556
304 2nd St. East	Masonic Temple	H/24FH558
301 2nd St. East	Duncan Sampson Block	H/CB/24FH559
223 2nd St. East	J.A. Sampson House	H/CR/24FH560
226 2nd St. East	Campbell Funeral House & LaBrie Bungalow	N/CR
220 2nd St. East	Wright Impressions	N
214 2nd St. East	Episcopal Rectory	CR
212 2nd St. East	Episcopal Church	N

H = Eligible to the NRHP
CB = Contributing to the proposed Whitefish Historic Business District
CR = Contributing to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District
N = Not eligible for the NRHP and not contributing to a historic district

3.15.3.8 Whitefish - 2nd Street West

From the Whitefish River Bridge to a point west of the Whitefish Golf Course where the road bends to the southwest at Lion Mountain Loop Road, the present alignment of US 93 follows 2nd Street West. Primarily a residential street, 38 of the 39 historic sites recorded were dwellings. Of the 38 residences, 25 contributed to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District (WFHRD) and four were not eligible for the NRHP nor do they contribute to the proposed Residential District. The Harlow House at 415 2nd Street West is eligible for the NRHP and contributes to the WFHRD. Several structures such as those at 33 and 37 2nd Street West appear to be old enough for recordation, but further research revealed that they were moved onto their present location after the construction of Hungry Horse Dam. The only historic structure on this stretch of highway that is not a dwelling is the Whitefish Country Club, which is eligible for the NRHP. Table 3-29 lists the historical sites and buildings along 2nd Street West.

Table 3-29
Whitefish, Montana
2nd Street West Historical Sites

Address	Name / Description	Status / Smithsonian #
11 West 2nd Street	Morgan Bungalow	CR
20 West 2nd Street	Brennan House	CR
25 West 2nd Street	Edmundson Bungalow	CR
38 West 2nd Street	Murphy House	CR
40 West 2nd Street	Stewart Bungalow	CR
50 West 2nd Street	McGrath House	N
114 West 2nd Street	Babcock Cabin	CR
118 West 2nd Street	Hennessy Log Bungalow	H/CR/24FH569
121 West 2nd Street	Monk Bungalow	CR
124 West 2nd Street	Cookingham House	CR
133 West 2nd Street	Purves House	N
134 West 2nd Street	Best Cottage	CR

Table 3-29
(continued)

Address	Name / Description	Status / Smithsonian #
144 West 2nd Street	Hair Connection	N
214 West 2nd Street	Dugan House	N
224 & 226 West 2nd Street	Tibbits Cottages	CR
225 West 2nd Street	Hogan House	N
244 West 2nd Street	Karstetter Cottage	CR
245 West 2nd Street	Markus Cottage	N
305 West 2nd Street	Littlefield Bungalow	CR
314 West 2nd Street	Harris Cottage	CR
315 West 2nd Street	Franklin Bungalow	CR
322 West 2nd Street	Aylesworth Cottage	N
327 West 2nd Street	Josephson Bungalow	CR
336 West 2nd Street	Dunham Shanty	N
340 West 2nd Street	Dunham Shanty II	N
414 West 2nd Street	Kastella Bungalow	CR
415 West 2nd Street	Harlow House	H
424 West 2nd Street	Loomis Cottage	N
427 West 2nd Street	Midby Bungalow	H
435 West 2nd Street	Lodinaff House	CR
438 West 2nd Street	Geddes House	N
514 West 2nd Street	Steury Cottage	N
526 West 2nd Street	Narnst Cottage	N
527 West 2nd Street	Search House	CR
532 West 2nd Street	Hamlin House	N
640 West 2nd Street	Hanson Bungalow	N
702 West 2nd Street	Funk House	N
714 West 2nd Street	Knapton Cabin	CR
724 West 2nd Street	Storkson Cottage	CR
205 Parkhill Avenue	Northern Silver Fox Farm	N/24FH572
	Whitefish Country Club	H/24FH573

H = Eligible to the NRHP
CD = Contributing to the Whitefish Historic Business District
CR = Contributing to the Whitefish Historic Residential District
N = **Not** eligible for the NRHP **and not contributing** to a historic district

3.15.3.9 Whitefish - West

This portion of US 93 runs through the wooded hills to the west of Whitefish, ending at MP 135. **Nine** historic sites were examined along the project corridor. **Three** sites, the Patten Mattress Factory (24FH497) at 2055 US 93 West, **the Westermark Place (24FH579) and the Woodsman Cottage (24FH580) are** eligible for the NRHP. The other **six** sites are not eligible nor do they contribute to any historical district.

3.15.4 Rural Historic Landscapes

The primary rural historic landscape between Somers and Whitefish revolves around an agricultural theme. However, along major arterials such as US 93, there has been a remarkable growth of commercial and residential development. While agricultural properties such as the Altenburg Farm (24FH276) and McCormack Farm (24FH277) may be individually eligible for the NRHP, they have become imbedded in a corridor of relatively recent development.

A key component to the historic agricultural landscape is the spatial relationship between farmsteads. The original 64.8-hectare (160-acre) farms were characterized by a house and barnyard separated from its neighbors by expanses of open fields. The urbanization of the US 93 corridor has filled in the expanses with commercial enterprises, subdivisions and trailer courts.

The project area has two agricultural areas that are exceptions to this corridor of modern development: Alternate B west of Kalispell and a portion of US 93 at the extreme northwest end of the project.

The land within the Kalispell Alternative B area is characterized by gently rolling hills and occasional small winding creeks. The farm buildings are generally clustered near the roads, and the fields are both fenced and open and have not been reshaped by major construction projects.

Kalispell was founded in 1891, and for several decades the area just a few miles to the west was agricultural. Some of the land may have been a natural meadow, as the Kalispell townsite was, and some may have needed clearing before agricultural activities could take place. The land was originally settled as 64.8-hectare (160-acre) and smaller homesteads that have subsequently been divided. Mixed farms were typical of the area, with most people raising hay and grains for livestock and some running more specialized operations such as orchards, a dairy, or hog farm. Farmers marketed their goods locally, primarily in Kalispell, or regionally via the Great Northern Railway beginning in 1892.

Within the past few decades, however, this landscape has been significantly altered by development as Kalispell as grown in size. Indicative of this increase in population and activity on the west edge of town, the new post office serving Kalispell was recently built within half a mile of some of the historic properties within the project area. Impacts on the physical integrity of the rural landscape just west of Kalispell include subdivisions and new home construction and the widening and paving of the roads in the area. The ridges of the rolling hills west of Kalispell are now dotted with modern houses.

No longer does the area have a dominantly agricultural feel. Views of rather densely-developed subdivisions are common, and in some cases they are adjacent to the project area. The only properties that retain an open, agricultural feeling are those on Stillwater Drive, where a large livestock operation still raises crops on the surrounding fields. The buildings on one of the properties (605 Stillwater Road), however, have been so greatly modified and added to that this property and its associated landscape are not eligible for the National Register. The 32.4-hectare (80-acre) field to the north of another property [Don Schultz Farm (24FH494), 327 Three Mile Drive] which is adjacent to Stillwater Road might be contributing to the significance of the property.

To the south of Stillwater Road the fields adjacent to the historic properties have been reduced in size, split by roads and houses, and otherwise altered to preclude nomination to the National Register. In most cases the surrounding area detracts from the historic feel and associations because of modifications and modern intrusions. The physical continuity of the agricultural community has been broken. Modern houses, apartment complexes and commercial sites line the roads and have also made inroads into some of the fields. This increasing suburbanization has disrupted the integrity of the historic patterns of land division and organization. Similarly, the construction of non-historic residences and agricultural buildings had reduced the ability of the

landscape to convey historic significance. Other properties in the Flathead Valley (including farm buildings and associated landscapes) possess greater integrity and continuity than any of the properties along Alternative B.

Beginning around Milepost 130 and continuing to Milepost 135, US 93 runs through an agrarian landscape. This landscape is characterized by meadows (both natural and man-made) utilized as pastures or for forage crops. While the area has the feel of a historic landscape, historic research has revealed that the majority of farms in this area were developed in the last 45 years. Only one property in the study corridor, the farmstead at 3980 Highway 93 West, was developed prior to World War II. Further, the size of the open fields has grown rapidly since the war. The practice of clearing the timber from the land is continued to this day. There is no practical way of separating modern fields, historic fields and natural meadowland.

3.15.5 Archaeological Properties

No archaeological sites were identified as a result of the field surveys performed for this project.

3.15.6 Other Cultural Sites

Both the Blackfeet Tribe and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have been contacted to solicit their concerns regarding Native American cultural issues relating to the proposed project. For the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, two culture committees, the Kootenai and the Flathead were also contacted.

Information provided by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation is that areas along Kalispell Alternative B may be of concern. This area was a gathering place for the Ktunaxa Nation which consisted of the many bands of the Kootenai people.

3.15.7 Park and Recreation Properties

Park properties are protected by Section 4(f) of the DOT Act. Coordination is required with the agency having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property and with the Department of the Interior.

3.15.7.1 General Description

The Somers to Whitefish study area includes a wide variety of recreational opportunities. A combination of topography, climate, vegetation and water features provides an opportunity for almost any type of athletic or outdoor activity. Outdoor activities are seasonally dependent in the Flathead Valley as in other places, and there are many activities as there are conditions. The following is a partial list of recreational activities available in the Flathead Valley:

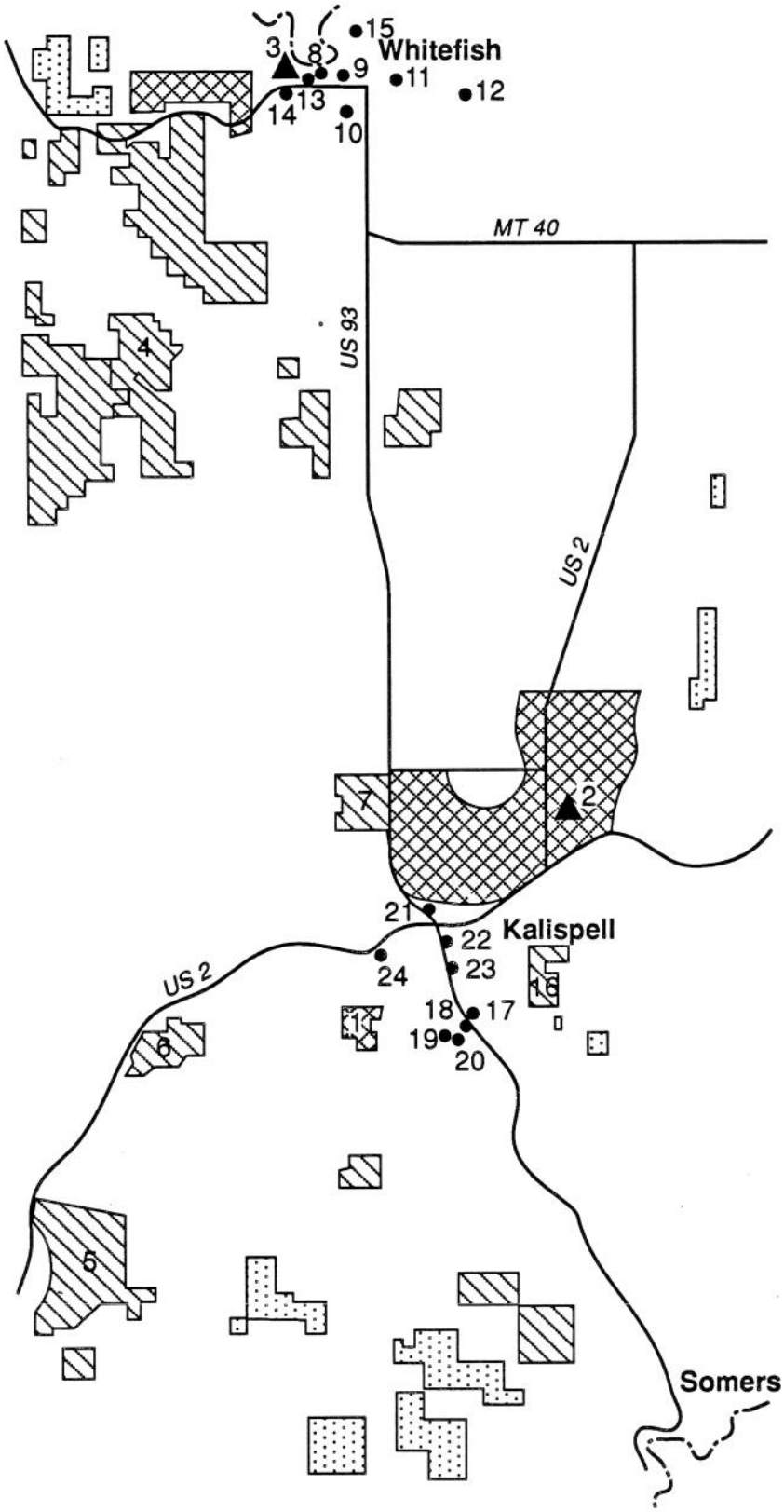
Hiking	Fishing	Golf
Biking	Swimming	Horseback Riding
Skiing	Boating	Ultralight Flight
Hunting	Tennis	Baseball
Football	Sightseeing	Softball
Soccer	Ski Touring	Rafting
Wildlife viewing	Birding	Ecotourism

Two of the largest recreational attractions associated with the study area are Glacier National Park and Big Mountain Ski Area. Other federal areas of note for their recreational value are The Flathead National Forest which include the Great Bear and Bob Marshall Wilderness Areas, all of which provide excellent outdoor opportunities. Figure 3-15, 3-16 and 3-17 describes the locations of the significant state and local parks and recreation areas. All of these recreation resources depend heavily on the existing transportation network within the Somers to Whitefish study area.

In addition to the regional federal, state and private recreation areas there are numerous state, county and local parks, preserves and natural areas. Table 3-30 summarizes the existing and/or developable areas of recreation within the Flathead Valley.

Table 3-30
State, County and City Parks

Park / Recreation Area	Hectares (Acres)	Location/Activity
State Parks:		
Lone Pine Preserve	81(200)	Residential/hiking, wildlife viewing
Stillwater Game Preserve	1,134(2,800)	Residential/hiking, wildlife viewing
Stillwater State Forest	38,880(96,000)	Hiking, boating, 4-wheel driving, biking, cross-country
Whitefish Lake State Park	--	Boat launch, picnicking
Coal Creek State Forest	5,702(14,080)	Hiking, boating, 4-wheel driving, biking, cross-country
Kuhn's Wildlife Mgmnt Area	530(1,309)	Wildlife viewing, hiking
Batavia Waterfowl Production Area	241(595)	Birding, wildlife viewing
Flathead Waterfowl Production Area	1,053(2,600)	Birding, wildlife viewing
Developed Parks:		
Ben Williams	2.03(5)	picnic, barbecue, pavilion, playground, benches, volleyball
Two County Boat Ramps	0.08(.20)	ramps and docks
Ashley Lake Green Belt	4.05(10)	hiking/X-country trails
Conrad Complex	11.17(27.57)	softball, baseball, playground, concession, well house, bathrooms
Evergreen Lions	1.36(3.36)	basketball, tennis, playground
Foy's Lake	0.61(1.5)	boat launch, bathrooms
Foy's Community Center	0.81(2)	gathering hall
Green Acres West	1.03(2.54)	playground, volleyball
Herron Park	48.1(118.7)	equestrian, shelters, X-country trails, sledding, outhouses, picnic
Hillcrest Park	2.84(7)	baseball, bathrooms, playground
Kings Loop	2.11(5.21)	barbecue pits
Leisure Island	6.18(15.25)	boat launch
Meadow Hills	1.17(2.89)	playground, barbecue, picnic
North Haven	0.45(1.12)	playground
Silver Shadows	0.38(.93)	playground, backstop
Sunrise Terrace	0.87(2.16)	playground, picnic, benches
Little Bitteroot Boat Access	0.49(1.21)	boat launch
Whitefish Boat Access	0.18(.45)	outhouse, picnic, barbecue
Columbia Falls GSA	0.81(2)	picnic, playground, exercise trail
Blankenship Ridge	-----	boat launch, outhouse, picnic
Kokanee Bend	1.7(4.2)	playground, backstop
Hungry Horse Islands	0.55(1.35)	picnic
Martin City Park	0.33(.82)	outhouse
Hungry Horse Ballfield	3.24(8)	ballfield
Aero Lane	0.81(2)	ballfield
Big Fork Access	0.08(.2)	boat dock
Big Fork GSA-Potozcny Field	0.93(2.3)	ballfield, outhouse, pavilion, storage



LEGEND

1. Lone Pine Preserve
2. Stillwater Game Preserve
3. Whitefish Lake State Park
4. Kuhns Wildlife Management Area
5. Smith Lake Waterfowl Production Area
6. Batavia Waterfowl Production Area
7. Dept. of State Land Administration

Whitefish

8. City Beach
9. Soroptimists Park
10. Riverside Park
11. Memorial Field
12. Softball Fields
13. Golf Course & Cemetery
14. Soccer Fields & Tennis Courts
15. Mountain Trails Park

Kalispell

16. Owen Sowerine
17. Lions Park/Haven Field
18. Daley Ball Parks/Bert Holler Field
19. Airport Park
20. Soccer Park
21. Buffalo Hill Golf Club
22. Depot Park
23. Courthouse Park
24. Ashley Creek Trail

State Preserve

State Land

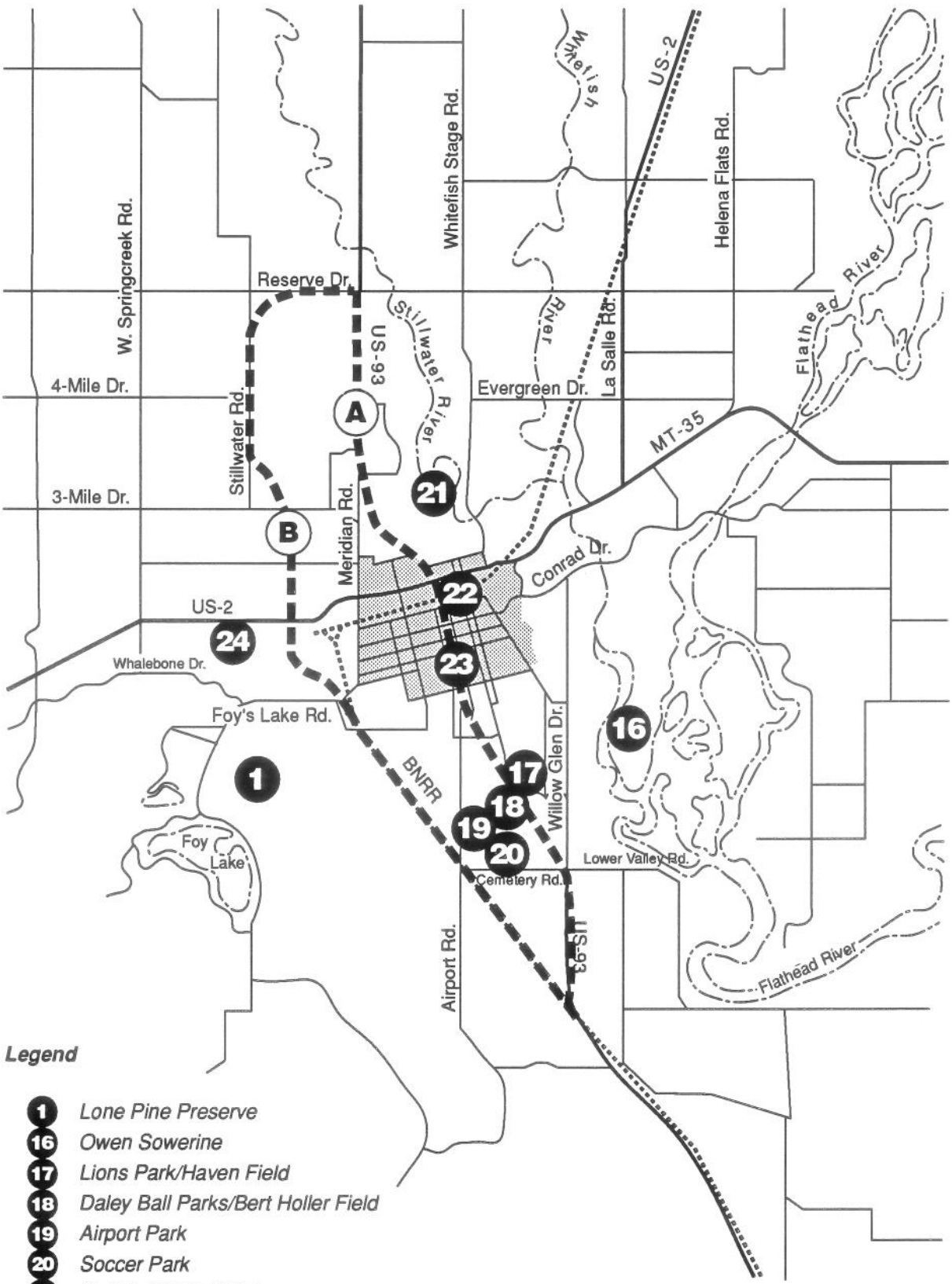
Flathead National Forest

North

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 3-15

Parks • US 93 Corridor



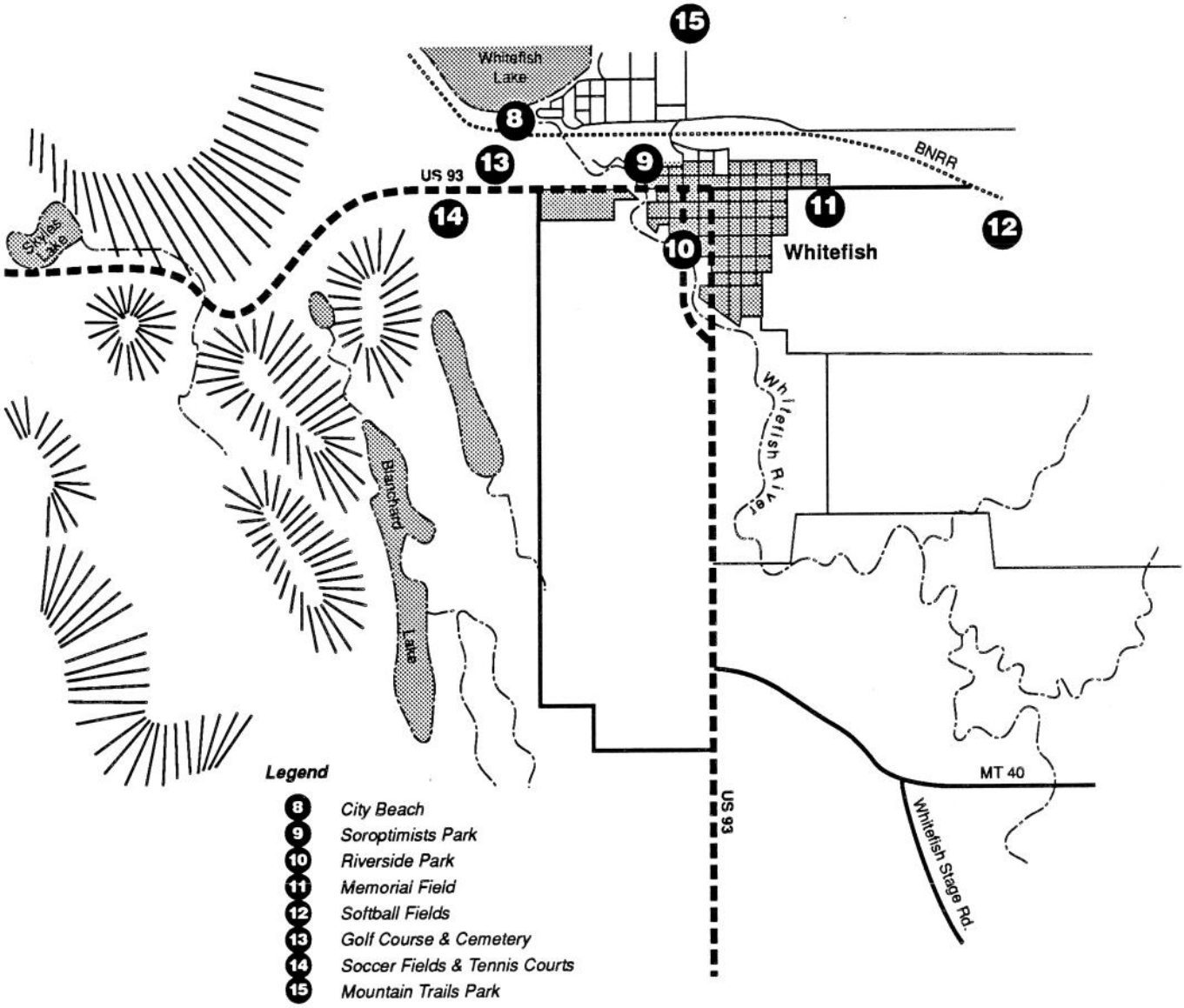
Legend

- 1 *Lone Pine Preserve*
- 16 *Owen Sowerine*
- 17 *Lions Park/Haven Field*
- 18 *Daley Ball Parks/Bert Holler Field*
- 19 *Airport Park*
- 20 *Soccer Park*
- 21 *Buffalo Hill Golf Club*
- 22 *Depot Park*
- 23 *Courthouse Park*
- 24 *Ashley Creek Trail*

North

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 3-16
Parks • Kalispell Area



Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 3-17
Parks • Whitefish Area

Table 3-30
(continued)

Park / Recreation Area	Hectares (Acres)	Location/Activity
Big Fork PP&L-Sliter Park	1.36(3.35)	band shell, playground, picnic, benches, bathroom
Undeveloped Parks/Sites:		
Somers Big Park	4.2(10.4)	Section 23 Twp 27 Rng 21
Somers 5N & 5J	0.11(.27)	Section 26 Twp 27 Rng 21
Caroline Point	0.06(.15)	Section 6 Twp 26 Rng 20
Tamarack Woods	2.14(5.28)	Section 18 Twp 26 Rng 20
Troutbeck	1.94(4.8)	Section 12 Twp 26 Rng 21
Big Sky #9	0.31(.76)	Section 12 Twp 28 Rng 22
Camelot Estates	1.52(3.76)	Section 27 Twp 29 Rng 21
Country Estates	1.50(3.71)	Section 25 Twp 29 Rng 22
Two Mile Tracts	.07(.17)	Section 11 Twp 28 Rng 22
Wapati Acres	1.38(3.41)	Section 31 Twp 28 Rng 21
Western Acres	0.72(1.79)	Section 18 Twp 28 Rng 21
Lone Pine Ranch Top	10.35(25.55)	Section 24 Twp 28 Rng 22
Pleasant Hill	.41(1.01)	Section 4 Twp 28 Rng 22
Blue Grouse Park	.65(1.6)	Section 16 Twp 27 Rng 24
Kelsey Lot #21	.20(.5)	Section 16 Twp 27 Rng 24
Happy Valley	9.72(24)	Section 25/36 Twp 30 Rng 22
Eagle Point	0.77(1.91)	Section 4 Twp 31 Rng 22
Lazy Bay	1.3(3.21)	Section 5 Twp 31 Rng 22
Hilltop	0.75(1.86)	Section 12 Twp 30 Rng 21
Hewitts Homesites	0.49(1.21)	Section 3 Twp 31 Rng 19
Scenic View	3.04(7.5)	Section 35 Twp 32 Rng 19
Hungry Horse "H"	3.36(8.31)	Section 8 Twp 30 Rng 19
Tri-Lakes	13.7(33.82)	Section 10 Twp 31 Rng 20
Roy Cooper Park	1.11(2.74)	Section 27 Twp 35 Rng 21
Paola	1.56(3.86)	Section 16 Twp 30 Rng 16
Parma	1.06(2.61)	Section 19 Twp 29 Rng 16
Lake Hills	1.62(4.01)	Section 25 Twp 27 Rng 20
Swan River #7	0.28(.69)	Section 33 Twp 27 Rng 19
Alpine #2	1.76(4.35)	Section 9 Twp 27 Rng 19
Echo Acres and Access	2.36(5.82)	Section 4 Twp 27 Rng 19
Amy and Ann Lakes	0.61(1.5)	Section 13 Twp 28 Rng 20
Bass Lakes	0.69(1.7)	Section 24 Twp 28 Rng 20
Dan Lake	0.43(1.07)	Section 14 Twp 28 Rng 20
Double Lake	0.38(.94)	Section 24 Twp 28 Rng 20
Douglas Lake	0.23(.58)	Section 13 Twp 28 Rng 20
East Bass Lake	1.28(3.16)	Section 24 Twp 28 Rng 20
Gilbert Lake	0.28(.7)	Section 14 Twp 28 Rng 20
Horseshoe Dr.	0.54(1.34)	Section 14 Twp 28 Rng 20
John Lake	1.71(4.22)	Section 11/14 Twp 28 Rng 20
Kathy Lake	1.20(2.97)	Section 14 Twp 28 Rng 20
Kid Lake	1.58(3.91)	Section 13 Twp 28 Rng 20
Meredith Lake	4.04(9.98)	Section 24 Twp 28 Rng 20
Plummers Lake	0.41(1.01)	Section 14 Twp 28 Rng 20
South Many Lakes	3.41(8.41)	Section 23 Twp 28 Rng 20
Swimming Lake Court	0.71(1.76)	Section 14 Twp 28 Rng 20
Tamarack	1.13(2.80)	Section 13 Twp 28 Rng 20
Triangle	0.49(1.2)	Section 13 Twp 28 Rng 20
Flathead River Park & Assoc.	1.09(2.7)	Section 4 Twp 27 Rng 20
Pleasant View	2.65(6.54)	Section 4 Twp 28 Rng 20
Open Space / Natural Areas:		
Owen Sowerine	179(442)	Section 16 Twp 28 Rng 21

Table 3-30
(continued)

Park / Recreation Area	Hectares (Acres)	Location/Activity
Whitefish Parks:		
Mountain Trails Park	2.03(5)	gathering hall, ice rink, playground, volleyball
City Beach	1.22(3)	public access, swimming, paddleboats
Soroptimists Park	0.36(.9)	playground
Riverside Park	2.03(5)	tennis, picnic, playground
Memorial Field	4.05(10)	baseball, football
Softball Fields	10.13(25)	softball
Golf Course & Cemetery	51.43(127)	golf, visitation
Soccer Fields & Tennis Courts	3.05(7.53)	soccer, tennis
Kalispell Developed Parks:		
Woodland Park	15.59(38.5)	ballfields, bathrooms, playground, picnic, shelters, sledding, ice skating, swimming, horseshoes
Northridge Park	2.89(7.15)	tennis, playground, shelters, sledding
Meridian Park	1.34(3.3)	ballfields, playground, shelters
Thompson Field	.81(2)	ballfield, tennis, playground,
Hawthorne Park	.97(2.39)	tennis, playground
Washington Street Park	.41(1)	playground
Lions Park / Haven Field	4.05(10)	ballfield, restroom, playground, shelter
Depot Park	.41(1)	picnic, shelter
Park View Terrace	.13(.3)	playground
Sunset Park	1.84(4.55)	ballfield, playground
Daley Ball Parks / Bert Holler Field	4.05(10)	ballfield, restroom, playground,
Begg Park	3.35(8.27)	ballfield, restroom, soccer, shelter
Dry Bridge Park	10.13(25)	shelter, sledding, hiking trails
Lawrence Park	22.68(56)	restroom, playground, shelter, sledding, hiking trails
Courthouse Park	0.51(1.26)	shelter
Eagle Park	0.10(.25)	picnic, shelter
Heritage	0.81(2)	restroom, shelter
Bruckhauser Pool	—	picnic, restroom,
Buffalo Hill Golf Club	—	golf, restroom
Gallagher Park	0.81(2)	picnic, soccer, basketball,
Airport Park	22.28(55)	—
Soccer Park	4.05(10)	ballfields, soccer
Kalispell Undeveloped Parks:		
Grandview Dr. Park	1.82(4.5)	—
S. Woodland Park	2.43(6)	—
Airport Road Lot	0.96(2.36)	—
Buffalo Head Park	0.32(.8)	—

The total number of parks within the county is as follows:

County Park Totals

No.	Category	Hectares (Acres)
81	Parks	365.1(901.4)
31	Developed Parks	94.71(233.85)
49	Undeveloped Parks	91.35(225.55)
1	Natural Areas	179(442)

3.15.7.2 Description of Parks Adjacent to US 93

The following description of parks is for those immediately adjacent to US 93, Baker Avenue and the Kalispell bypass corridor.

Lone Pine State Park

Lone Pine State Park is an approximately square, steep and heavily wooded area that overlooks the Flathead Valley. It is located southwest of Kalispell in Township 28 North and Range 22 West. The park is owned by the State of Montana and included inside the Lone Pine State Game Preserve. There are picnic sites and walking trails in the area. Also included in this park is a visitors center. Access to the park and the visitors center is from the west.

Daley/Bert Holler Fields

The Daley / Bert Holler Ball Fields are located on the west side of US 93 at milepost 110.8, directly south of the Montana National Guard Armory. The site is located on a flat grassy area 4.05 hectares (10 acres) in size. This resource is owned and operated by the City of Kalispell. Available activities include baseball and softball. Facilities include parking, portable restrooms, bleachers, dugouts, storage shed and five ball diamonds. It has two access points; one directly off of US 93 halfway along its frontage and a secondary access along the Armory or north end of the park. For a detailed layout of Daley / Bert Holler Field refer to Figure 3-18.

Lions Park / Haven Field

Lion's Park and Haven Field are located at milepost 111.1 situated between US 93 and 3rd Avenue East. The site is located on a flat, grassy area with stands of coniferous and deciduous trees located about the Lion's Park section. The combined area of both portions is 4.05 hectares (10 acres). Both parks are owned by the City of Kalispell and Lion's Park is managed by the Kalispell Lions Club. Available activities include picnicking, playground use, baseball, softball and horseshoes. Facilities include parking, a tourist information center, two restrooms, public telephones, three picnic shelters, picnic tables, two baseball/softball diamonds, a batting cage and a press box/storage structure. Lion's Park has one access from US 93 and one access from 3rd Avenue East. Haven Field has one access point from 18th Street, between US 93 and 3rd Avenue East. For a detailed layout of Lion's Park / Haven Field refer to Figure 3-19.

Ashley Creek Trail / Rails to Trails

Ashley Creek Trail is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 of this document.

Depot Park

Depot Park is an urban public park commemorating the historic Great Northern Railroad Depot, which is located within its boundaries. The park is located at the corner of US 93 and Center Street and is approximately .4 hectare (1 acre) in size. Depot Park is owned and maintained by the City of Kalispell. It is a grassy flat site with paved pedestrian walkways. Available activities include pedestrian use, picnicking. Facilities include the Great Northern Railroad Depot, picnic tables and strolling paths and a gazebo. Vehicle

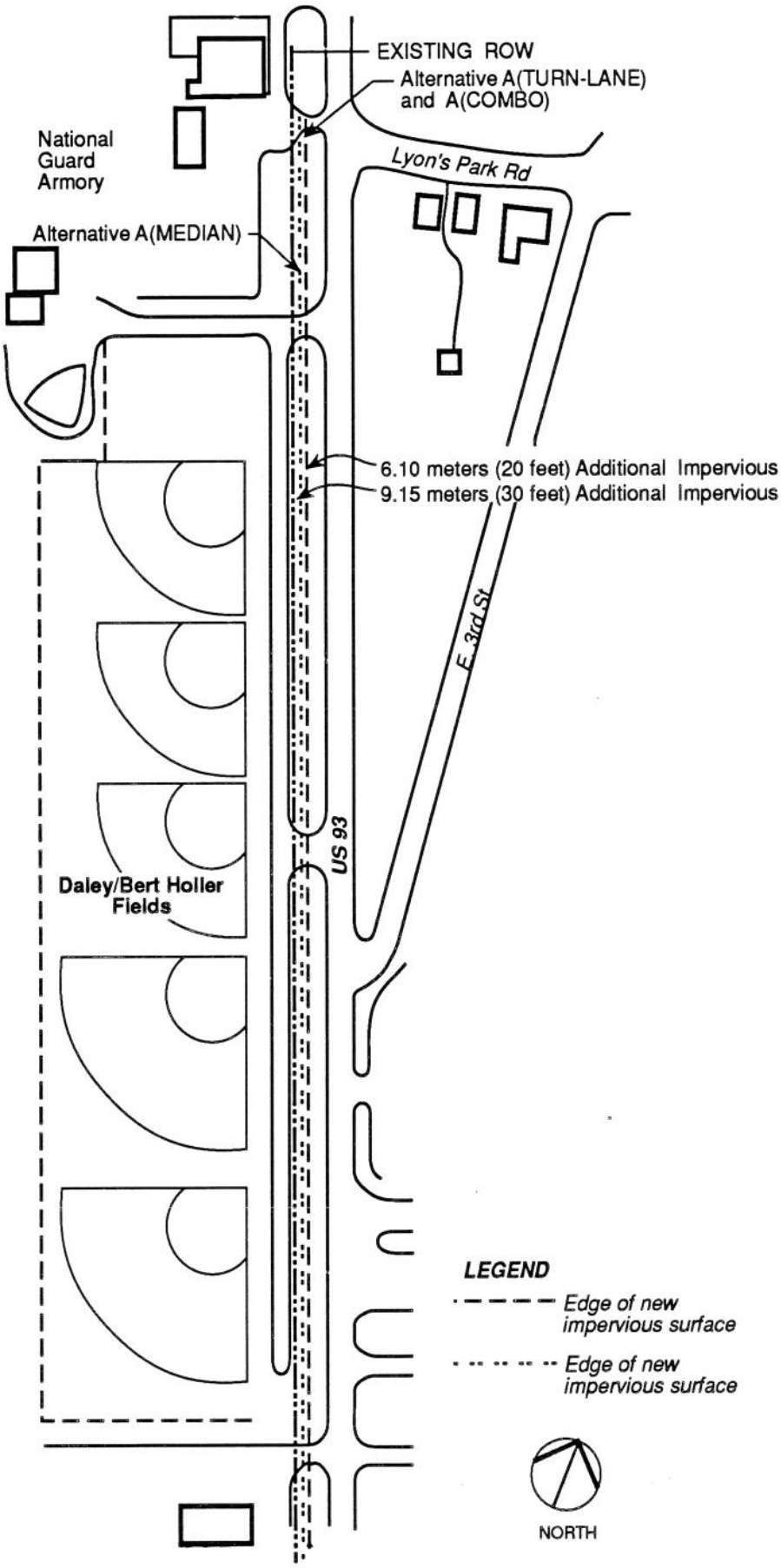

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Figure 3-18
Daley/Bert Holler Fields

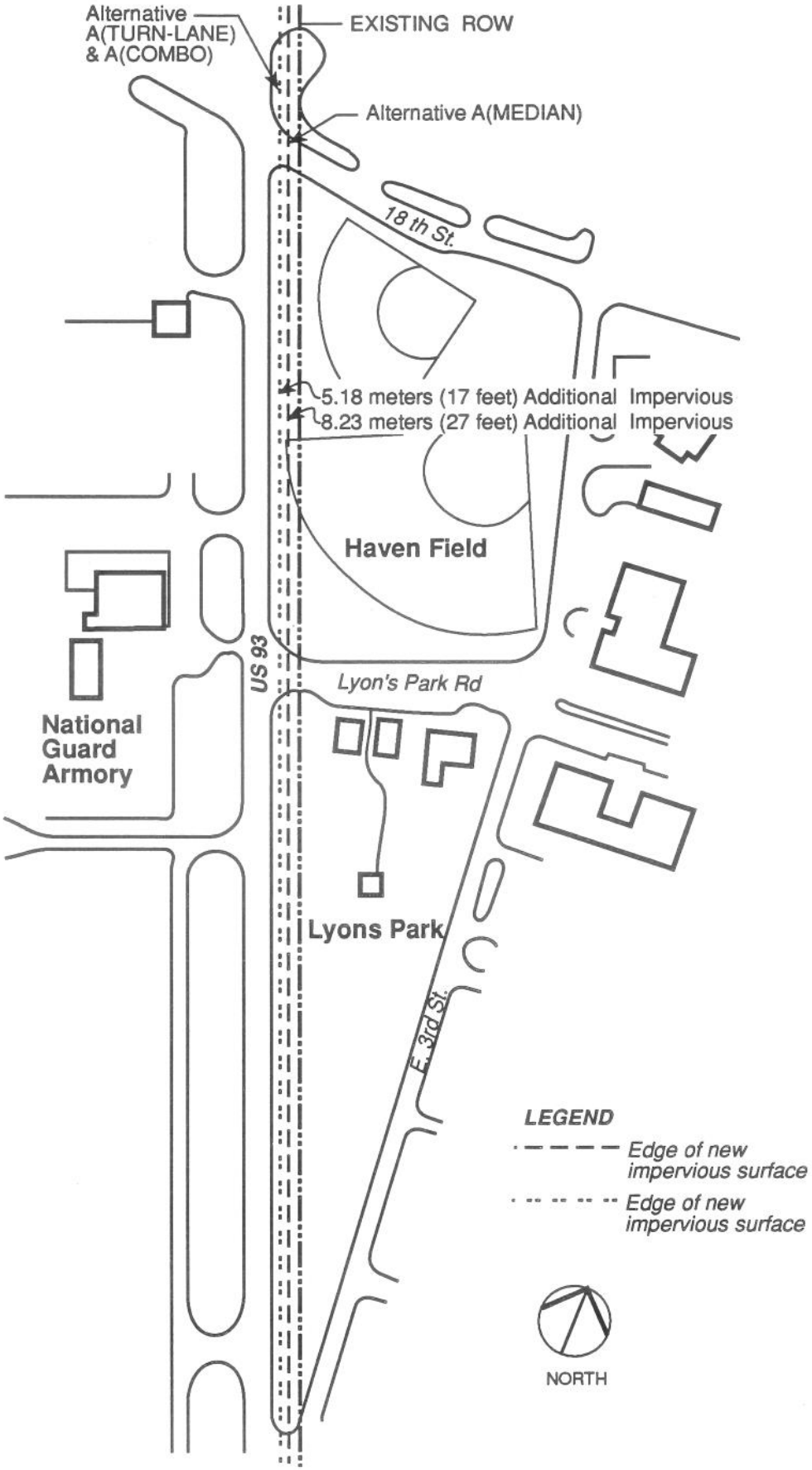

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Figure 3-19
Lyon's Park/Haven Field

access is located next to the Depot building itself along First Avenue. Pedestrians can access the park from any direction. The Depot building itself is currently used to house the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce. For a detailed map of Depot Park refer to Figure 3-20.

Buffalo Hill Golf Course

Buffalo Hill Golf Club is a public course owned by the City of Kalispell. It is large grassy area approximately 109 hectares (270 acres) in size with stands of coniferous and deciduous trees located along US 93 and North Main Street. Activities include golfing and cross-country skiing. Facilities include a clubhouse, restrooms, and an 18-hole golf course. The Stillwater River crosses through the northeastern side of the property (see Figure 3-21).

Riverside Park

Riverside Park is located on the east and west sides of Baker Avenue between the Whitefish River and Fifth Street. It is a 2 hectare (5 acre) site located on a sloped grassy area with mature stands of deciduous and coniferous vegetation. It is owned and managed by the City of Whitefish, Montana. Available activities include picnicking, playground use, tennis, and pedestrian use. Facilities include parking, portable restrooms, six tennis courts, pedestrian trail, picnic tables, park benches, and playground equipment. The park has three informal access points from Baker Avenue, including informal on-street parking (see Figure 3-22).

Whitefish Lake Golf Club

This public golf course is located of the north side on US 93 between mileposts 128.6 and 129.0, directly west of the Whitefish Cemetery. This 48.6 hectare (120 acre) site is located on a grassy area with topographic variations and mature stands of coniferous vegetation. It is owned and managed by the City of Whitefish. Available activities are golf, dining, and shopping. Facilities include parking, an 18-hole golf course, putting greens, clubhouse with dining area, pro shop, equipment rental, and restrooms, maintenance/storage structures and paved pedestrian pathways. This public property has one formal paved access point from US 93.

An unusual feature of this public property is that it was developed with federal assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, so it is protected by Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. For a detailed map of Whitefish Lake Golf Club area refer to Figure 3-23.

Whitefish Tennis Courts/Soccer Fields

These public tennis courts and soccer fields are located on the south side of US 93 West at milepost 128.8, west of the Grouse Mountain Lodge. The 3.04 hectare (7.5 acre) site is located on flat paved and grassy areas, with intermittent coniferous trees. It is owned and managed by the City of Whitefish. Available activities are tennis and soccer. Facilities include parking, three tennis courts, and two soccer fields. This public property has one formal, paved access point from US 93 West.

An unusual feature of this public property is that it was developed with federal assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, so it is protected by Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. For a detailed layout of Whitefish Tennis Courts and Soccer Fields refer to Figure 3-23.

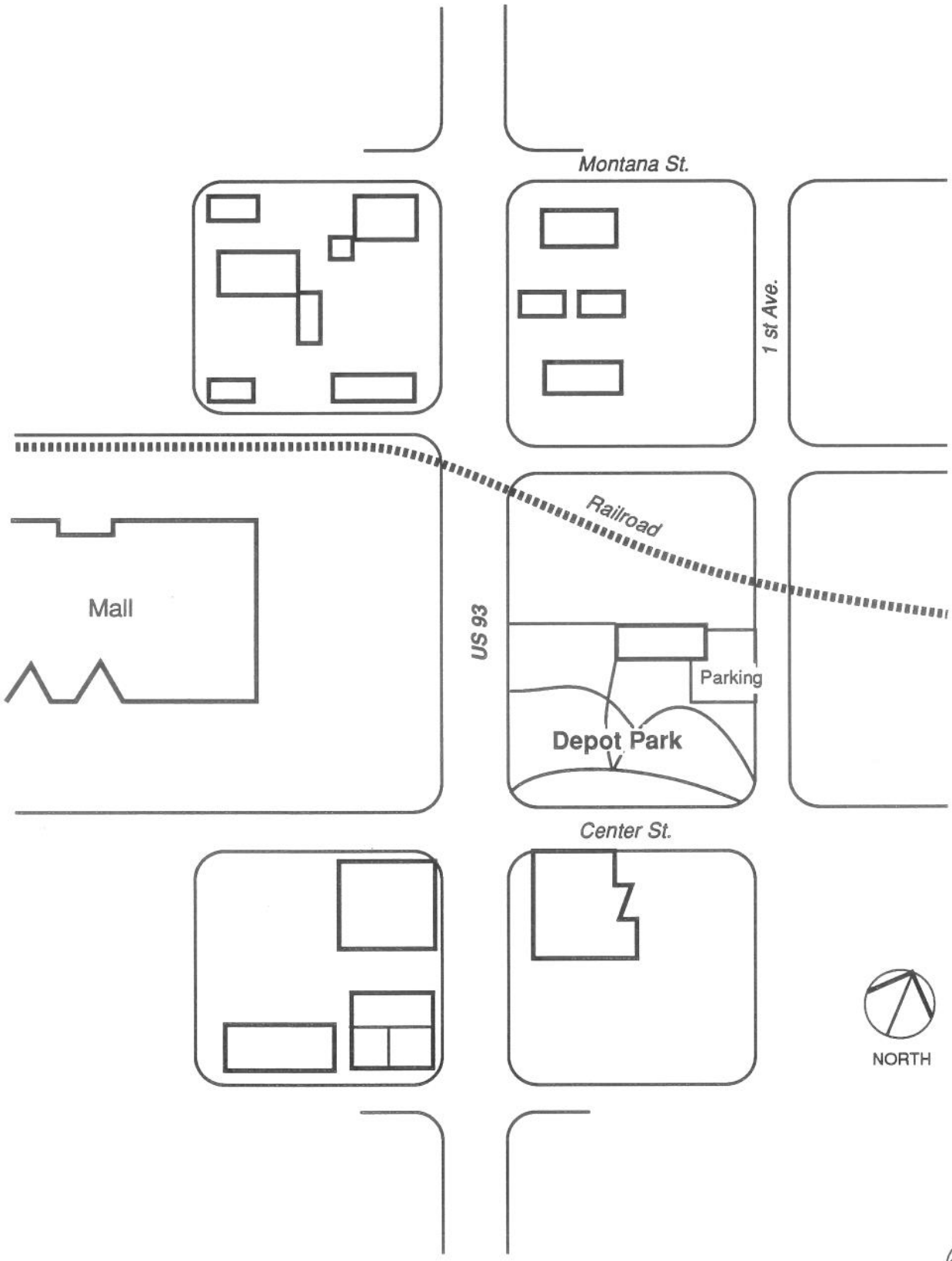

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Figure 3-20
Depot Park

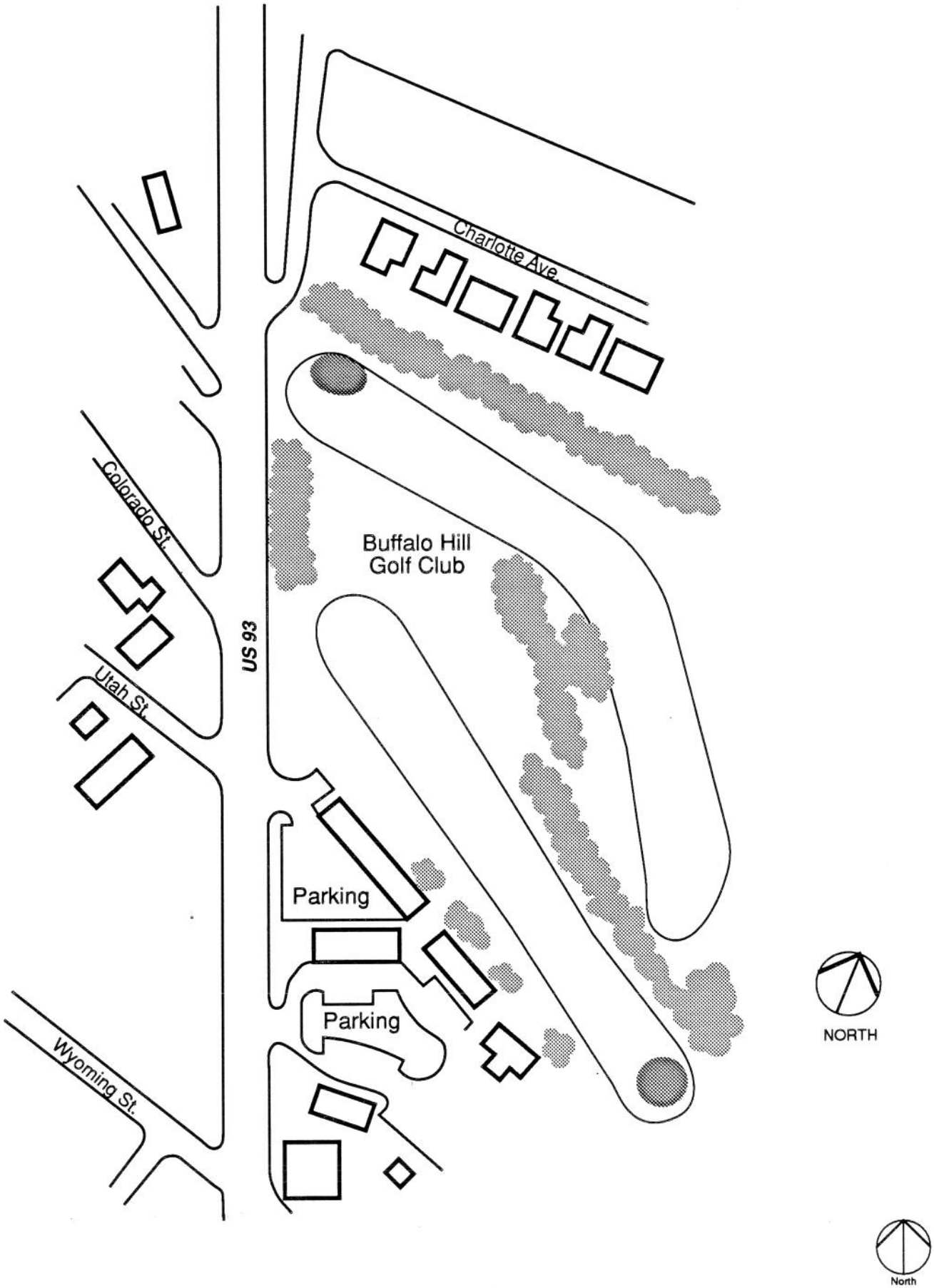

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Figure 3-21
Buffalo Hill Golf Club

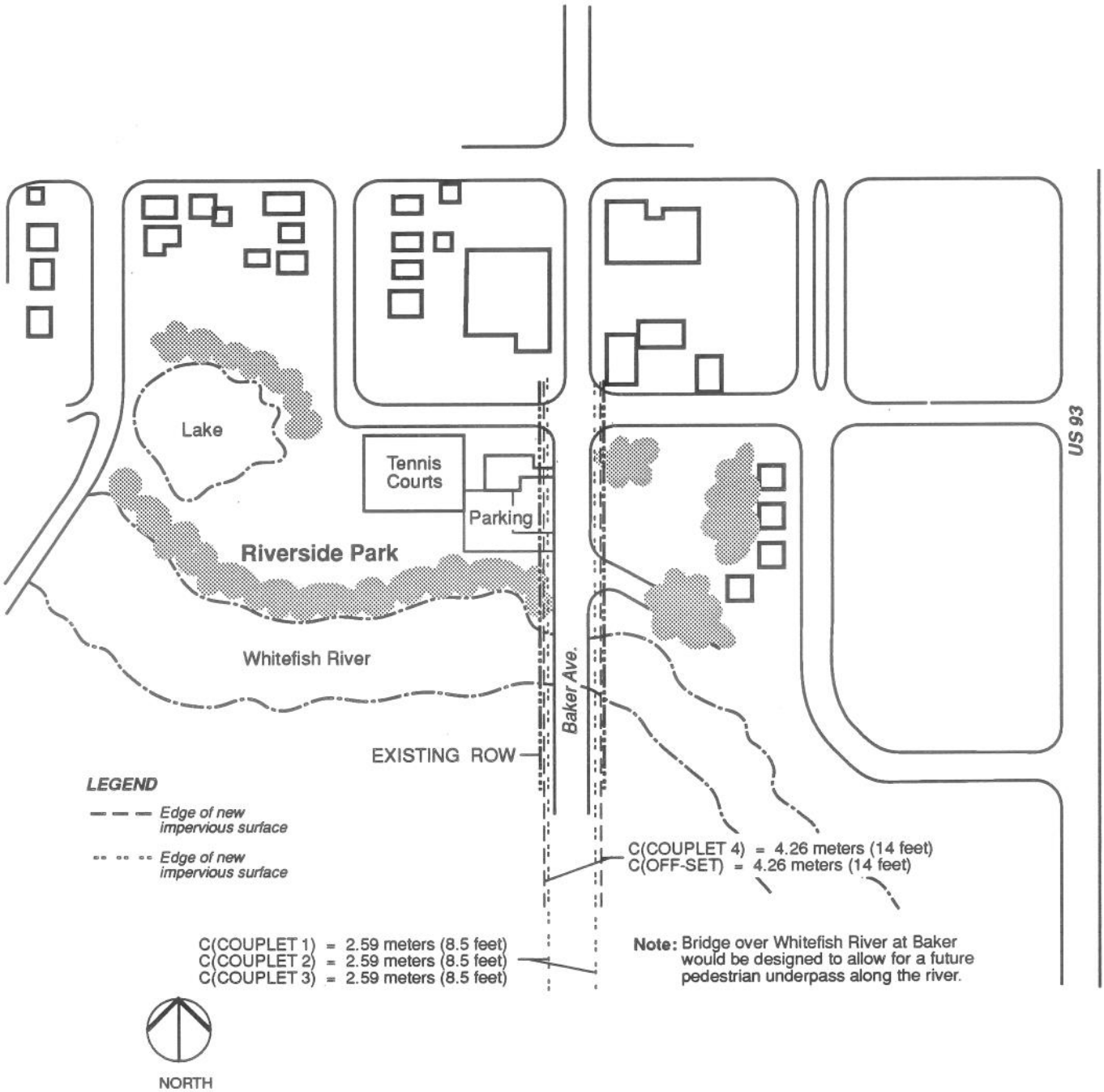

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Figure 3-22
Riverside Park

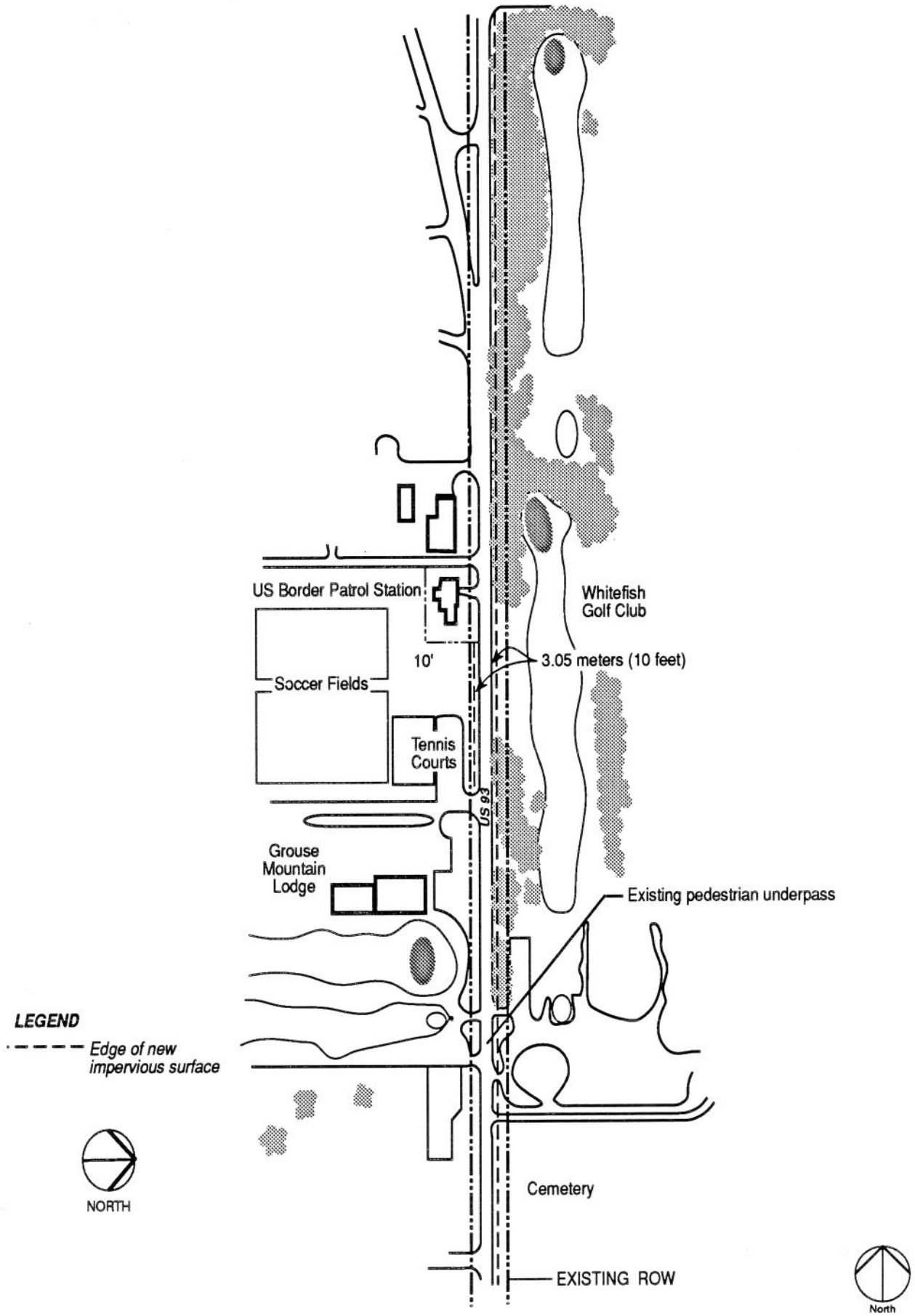

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Figure 3-23
Whitefish Golf Club/Whitefish Tennis & Soccer

Skyles Lake Access

Skyles Lake Access is a State owned sportsman's access to Skyles Lake as part of the larger Stillwater State Forest. The access is 1.54 hectares (3.8 acres) in size and available activities include fishing, hiking and boating. Facilities include an unimproved dirt road connecting US 93 to the waters edge. This water's edge provides informal boat launching facilities. For a detailed layout of the Skyles Lake Access refer to Figure 3-24.

3.16 Hazardous Material Sites

Information regarding the presence of hazardous materials or incidents was requested by file searches from appropriate agencies, listings of current and historic land uses, and the use, storage, and disposal conditions observed from the public right-of-way during field investigations conducted in July and August 1993. Sites of interest are shown in Figure 3-25.

For the purposes of this assessment, hazardous materials are defined as products or wastes regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the State of Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences (MDHES). These include substances regulated under the Comprehensive Emergency Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA or Superfund), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the Toxic Substances Control Act (ToSCA), the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), solid waste management, and underground storage tanks (USTs).

In Montana, Federal CERCLA and RCRA programs and site inventories are administered and maintained by the MDHES. The USEPA maintains a National Priority List (NPL) and Non-NPL of sites within the state that have been investigated and documented.

Petroleum hydrocarbons are the primary contaminant of concern identified by assessment of the study area.

A total of 103 sites located within, or adjacent to US 93, and five sites located within, or adjacent to Kalispell Bypass Alternative B, were identified as having documented or potential hazardous material contamination issues. In general, these sites can be characterized as follows: one site has been documented by the MDHES and U.S. EPA for traces of soil contamination; 27 sites were documented by the MDHES as using, storing or generating hazardous materials/wastes (RCRA or UST lists); 58 sites consist of commercial/industrial users observed in the field as having a moderate to high probability of using, storing, or generating hazardous materials/wastes but were not listed by government agencies; and 23 sites are of potential concern due to their past and/or present land uses. Potential hazardous materials sites are listed in Table 3-31.

Site B5 (a small livestock feedlot) is the former location of the North American Oil Refinery which operated in the 1920's. The five acre site was inspected under Superfund in 1988. The soil sample revealed slightly elevated levels of two heavy metals, Lead and Zinc, and traces of Cadmium and Thallium. According to the report, soil covering the entire site could be contaminated by heavy metals and should be avoided or removed. No groundwater contamination is suspected beneath or near the site, and the site appears on the MDHES Non Priority List (NPL).

In 1988, 2.2 liters (ten gallons) of oil was reported spilled on the east edge of US 93 south of Kalispell in front of Site 72 (Swartzenberger's salvage yard). In 1992, an unknown quantity of gasoline was dumped down a storm drain at Site 50 (City Service station). Both incidents were documented by the MDHES and neither incident was considered to cause harmful residual effects upon the population or the environment.

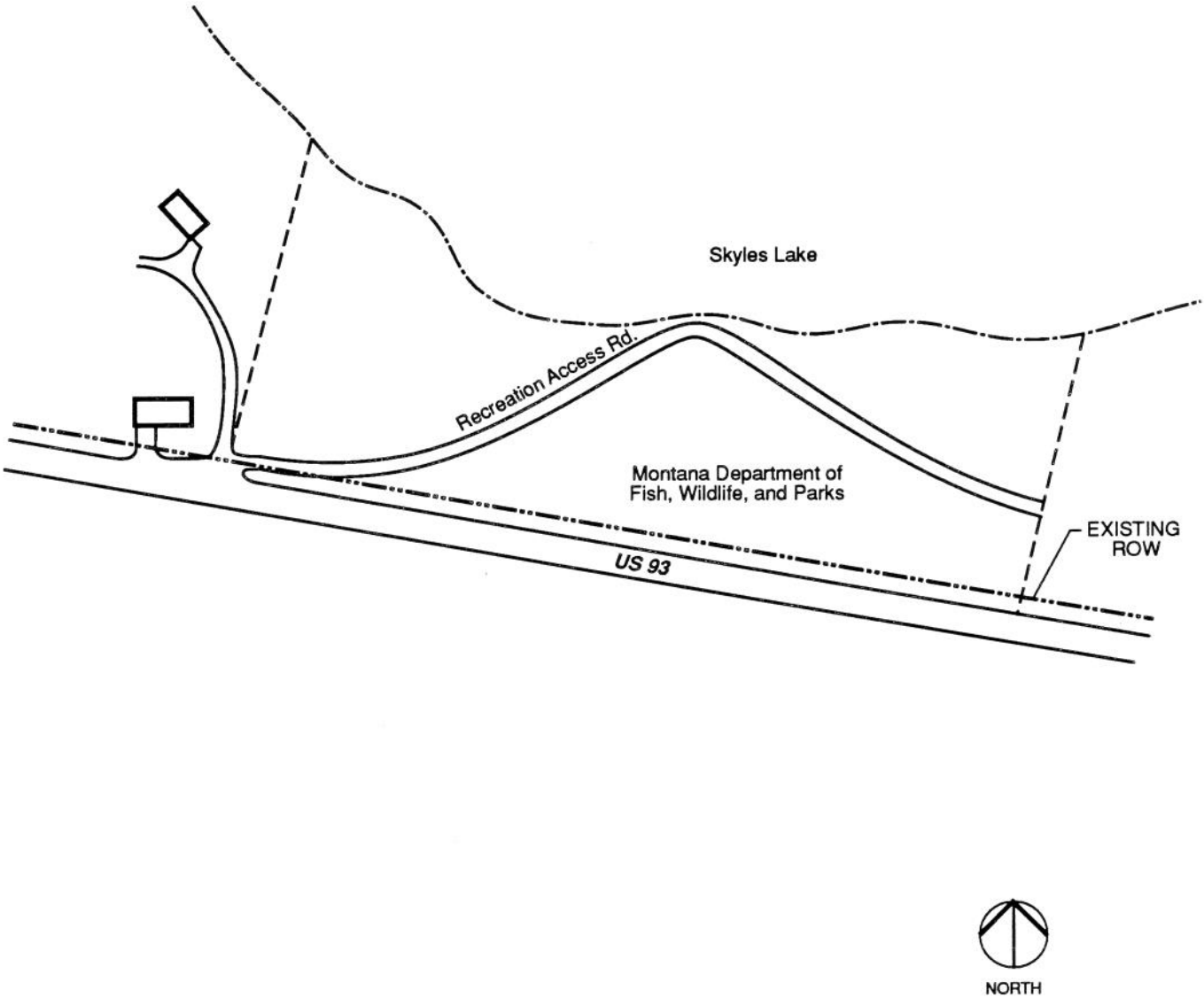

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Figure 3-24
Skyles Lake Access

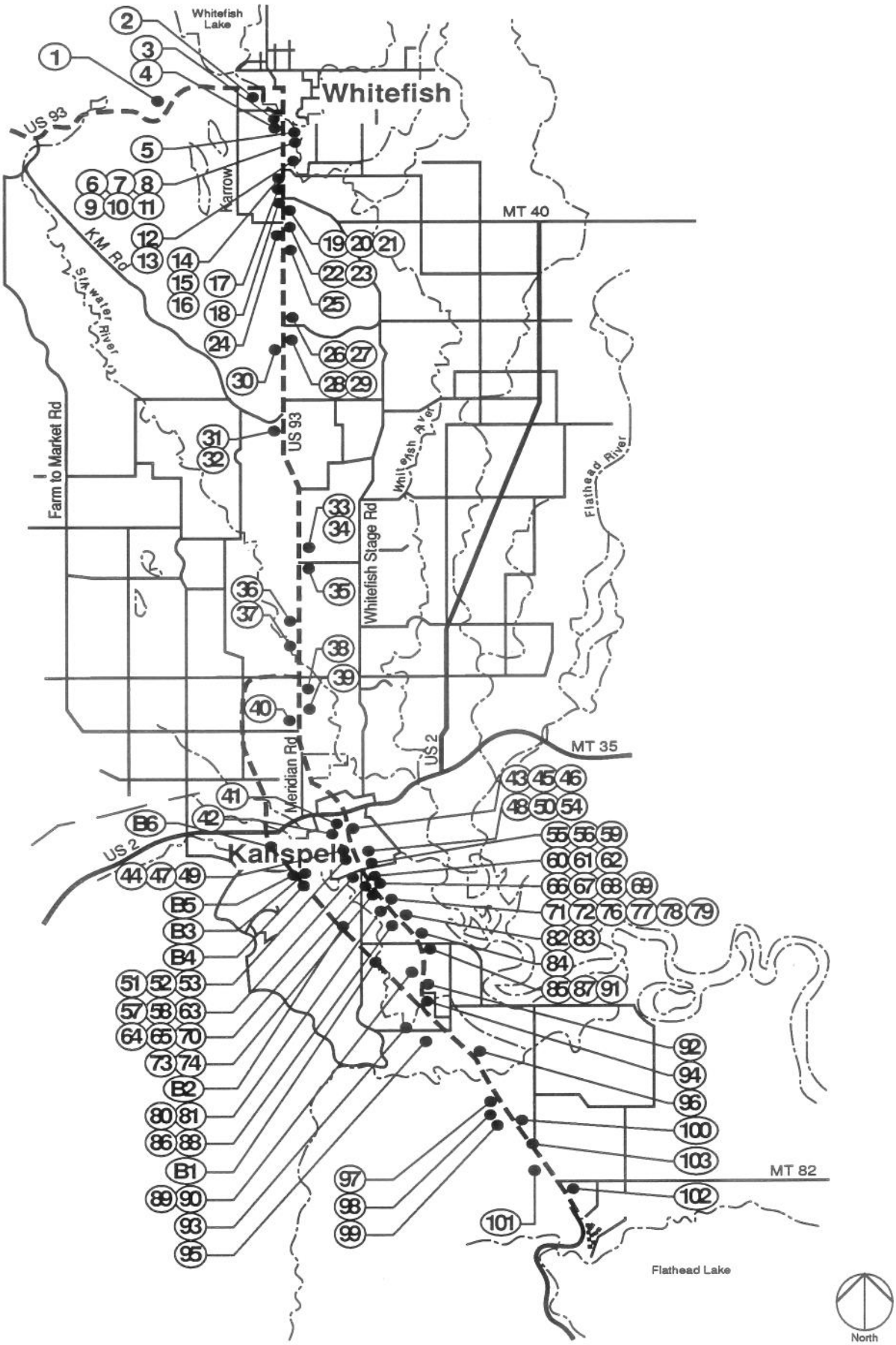

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Figure 3-25
Potential Hazardous Materials Locations

Two of the 27 sites listed by the MDHES as using, storing or generating hazardous materials are on the MDHES Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) list. Site 3 (Town Pump #2) and Site 5 (Ron's Conoco), are located on US 93 south of Whitefish. 26 of the 27 agency-listed sites are of moderate concern due to observed storage and/or disposal of hazardous materials/wastes and past/present land uses. Soil contaminants present at Sites 2, 3, 5, 12, 28, 31, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 50, 52, 59, 70, 78, 83, 87, 88, 89, 95, 97 and 99 may include petroleum hydrocarbons, solvents, heavy metals, and chemical compounds. Site 86 (Parker Livestock Supply/Swallow Grain/Valcard Fuel Systems) is of substantial concern due to past and present railroad activity, storage of agricultural products including anhydrous ammonia, petroleum hydrocarbons, and metal equipment.

Five of the 58 sites which were observed as using, storing, or disposing of hazardous materials/wastes are considered to have a high probability of soil contamination. Site B1 (Burlington Northern spur track southwest of Kalispell) is of substantial concern due to its long history and present use as a railroad facility. Possible soil contaminants may include petroleum hydrocarbons, wood preservatives, agricultural products, solvents, and heavy metals. Similar hazardous materials concern can be assessed for Site 103 (abandoned BN track bed) located within the US 93 right-of-way from milepost 104.2 - 108.4.

Site B6 (Montana Forest Products) has a high probability of soil contamination by petroleum hydrocarbons, wood preservatives, solvents, and heavy metals. Site 25 (North Valley Refuse) and Site 91 (93 Wood Products) are of substantial concern due to observed use, storage and disposal of wood products, scrap metal and machinery, petroleum hydrocarbons, and drums.

The remaining 53 sites are of moderate concern due to their past/present land uses. These sites include 39 automobile/machinery supply, repair or salvage businesses, and nine light manufacturing/construction-related businesses. The access drive to the County landfill, Bonneville Power Administration maintenance/storage facility, and the Kalispell Stockyards are also considered to have moderate potential for hazardous materials contamination.

Twenty-three of the 109 sites are considered to have low potential for contamination, but are included on the list based upon past or new land uses. At the time of site inspections, Site 16 (new Western Building Center site) and Site 76 (unknown commercial/industrial site) were undergoing construction. Site 4 (casino) and Site 49 (restaurant) were former automobile service businesses, but each of these sites have been paved or landscaped, mitigating residual soil contamination. The remaining 19 sites either lacked substantial evidence of use, storage and disposal of hazardous materials/waste, or such activity occurred outside the areas of proposed improvements within the study area.

Table 3-31
Potential Hazardous Materials Sites

Site No.	Milepost	Facility Name	Agency list/Contaminants of potential concern	Hazardous Material Threat Potential
1	129.7	Michael's Auto Repair	None/PH,solvents,metals	Moderate
2	128.2	Circle K #706	UST/PH,solvents	Moderate
3	126.9	Whitefish Town Pump #2	LUST,UST/PH,solvents	Moderate
4	126.8	Best Bet Casino (former auto rental)	None/PH, solvents	Low
5	126.8	Ron's Conoco	LUST,UST/PH, solvents	Moderate
6	126.55	Western Building Center	None/metals,chem.,hh. refuse	Low
7	126.5	NAPA Auto Parts	None/solvents,lubes.,metals	Low
8	126.5	Carlson's Alignment	None/PH,solvents,metals,lubes.	Moderate
9	126.5	Northwest Tool Repair	None/metals,lubes	Low
10	126.5	Big Mountain Glass	None/hh. refuse, chem.	Low

Table 3-31
(continued)

Site No.	Milepost	Facility Name	Agency list/Contaminants of potential concern	Hazardous Material Threat Potential
11	126.5	Funshine Car Wash	None/PH,solvents,lubes.	Low
12	126.1	DePratu Ford	RCRA,UST/PH,solvents	Moderate
13	126.0	Car Quest Auto Parts	None/hh. refuse, solvents	Low
14	125.8	Midway Rental & Equipment	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
15	125.8	All Season Equipment	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
16	125.6	Western Building Center (new)	None/construction debris	Low
17	125.4	Harold's Auto Repair	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
18	125.3	Montana Air Systems	None/chemicals	Low
19	125.2	Whitefish Taxidermy	None/chemicals	Low
20	125.1	Hill Bros. Towing	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
21	125.0	A-1 Towing	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
22	124.8	Shirno Cabinets	None/wood pres.,hh. refuse	Low
23	124.7	? used appliances	None/metals,chem.,hh. refuse	Low
24	124.4	Glacier Log Homes	None/PH,wood pres.,metals	Moderate
25	124.0	North Valley Refuse	None/metals,chem.,hh. refuse	High
26	123.0	OHS Body Shop	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
27	122.9	? auto sales	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
28	122.6	Midway Mini Mart	UST/PH, lubes, solvents	Moderate
29	122.5	Montana Arch & Truss	None/metals,chem.,solvents	Moderate
30	122.1	KMJ Radiator/A Auto Center	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
31	121.7	Vars (residence)	UST/PH, hh. refuse	Low
32	120.7	Flathead Co. Landfill Access Drive	None/PH,chem.	Moderate
33	118.5	North Wind Center (mult. businesses)	None/hh. refuse	Low
34	118.2	Tuma Inc. used equipment	None/PH,metals,lubes,hh.refus e	Moderate
35	118.0	Hedstrom (residence)	UST/PH,ag. products	Moderate
36	116.9	Sonju's Body Shop	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
37	116.5	M&T Auto Body	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
38	115.8	Ole's Country Store #10	UST/PH,lubes,solvents	Moderate
39	115.6	NUPAC	RCRA,UST/PH,metals,chem.	High
40	115.2	Montana Dept. of State Lands	UST/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
B1	108.4,NW to s/o Appleway	BNRR Spur Track	None/PH,lubes,wood pres.,metals,ag.products	High
B2	NE corner of Airport Rd./BNRR track	Wisher's Salvage	None/PH,metals,lubes	Moderate
B3	SE corner of Sunnyside Dr./BNRR track	private equipment maintenance garage	None/PH,metals,lubes	Moderate
B4	SW corner of Foy's Lake Rd./BNRR track	salvage business (name unknown)	None/PH,metals,lubes	Moderate
B5	NW corner of Foy's Lake Rd./BNRR track	private agricultural property (small livestock feedlot) former North American Oil Refinery	CERCLIS/metals,PH,ag. products	Moderate
B6	SW corner of BNRR track WYE	Montana Forest Products	None/wood pres.,PH,metals	Moderate
41	111.8	Flathead Co. Justice Center	UST/PH	Low
42	111.6	Scarff's Auto Center	UST/PH,solvents	Low
43	111.6	Withey's Health Foods (former service station)	UST/PH	Low
44	111.5	? art gallery (former maint.shops)	None/PH	Low
45	111.5	Mini Mart	UST/PH,lubes,solvents	Moderate
46	111.4	vacant lot (former car wash)	None/PH,lubes,solvents,refuse	Moderate
47	111.5	Conoco	None/PH,lubes,solvents	Moderate

Table 3-31
(continued)

Site No.	Milepost	Facility Name	Agency list/Contaminants of potential concern	Hazardous Material Threat Potential
48	111.4	? (former auto repair)	None/PH,metals	Moderate
49	111.4	Fred's Restaurant/Diamond Lil's	None/PH	Low
50	111.3	City Service/Exxon	RCRA,UST/PH,lubes,solvents	Moderate
51	111.3	Elks Lodge (former auto repair)	None/PH	Low
52	111.2	MT Army Nat'l Guard (former maintenance shop)	RCRA/PH,metals	Moderate
53	111.1	MT Army Nat'l Guard	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
54	110.8	Kalispell Marine	None/PH,solvents	Moderate
55	110.7	Flathead Sports	None/PH,solvents	Moderate
56	110.7	Western Auto Repair	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
57	110.6	Hines Auto Centre	None/PH,solvents	Low
58	110.6	Burton's Warehouse Showroom	None/metals,chem.,hh. refuse	Low
59	110.5	Valley Transfer & Storage	UST/PH,metals,chem.,hh. refuse	Moderate
60	110.5	Color World	None/chemicals,metals	Moderate
61	110.5	Montana Bell RV Sales	None/PH,solvents	Moderate
62	110.4	Harvey's Lil Trucks	None/PH,lubes,solvents	Moderate
63	110.4	Jesco Boat Center (former auto repair)	None/PH,metals,solvents	Moderate
64	110.3	Rich's Saw Sharpening	None/PH,metals	Moderate
65	110.3	Morken's Auto Repair	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
66	110.3	vacant (former precast concrete)	None/chemicals,metals	Low
67	110.3	Big Sky Carpet & Tile	None/chemicals	Low
68	110.2	Glacier Pre-Cast Concrete	None/chemicals,metals	Low
69	110.2	A-1 Vacuum	None/chemicals,hh. refuse	Low
70	110.2	S & S Canopies/Campers	UST/PH, solvents	Low
71	110.2	Mountain Bag Mfg.	None/chemicals,metals	Low
72	110.1	Swartzenberger's auto repair & salvage yard	None/PH,metals,lubes,hh. refuse	Moderate
73	110.1	R & J Wrecking	None/PH,metals,lubes,hh. refuse	Moderate
74	110.1	CMI Masonry Supply (former auto repair)	None/chemicals,metals	Low
75	109.8	MacDonald's Washer	None/metals,solvents	Low
76	109.3	Mergenthalier Transfer & Storage	None/construction debris	Low
77	109.1	Triple W Equipment	None/PH,metals	Moderate
78	109.0	Townsend Sales/Repair	UST/PH,metals	Moderate
79	109.0	Montana Tractor	None/PH,metals	Moderate
80	109.0	Montana Log Homes	None/PH,metals,wood pres.	Moderate
81	109.0	Treweek Construction	None/metals, hh. refuse	Moderate
82	109.0	JBM Machining (former livestock supply)	None/PH,metals,ag. products	Moderate
83	108.8	Ashley Creek Animal Clinic	UST/PH,metals,chemicals	Moderate
84	108.8	Snow-Line Trees	None/PH,metals,ag. products	Moderate
85	108.5	BPA Maintenance	None/metals,solvents	Moderate
86	108.4	Parker Livestock Supply/Swallow Grain/Valcard Fuel	UST/PH,ag. products,metals,wood pres.	High
87	108.4	Fun Beverage (former livestock supply)	UST/PH,solvents,ag. products,chem	Moderate
88	108.4	Long Machinery	RCRA/PH,metals,solvents	Moderate
89	108.3	Solberg Trucking	UST/PH,metals,solvents	Moderate
90	108.2	NW Diversified Trucks	None/PH,metals,solvents	Moderate

Table 3-31
(continued)

Site No.	Milepost	Facility Name	Agency list/Contaminants of potential concern	Hazardous Material Threat Potential
91	107.9	93 Wood Products	None/PH,metals,wood pres.,chemicals,lubes	High
92	107.3	Kalispell Livestock Auction	None/PH,ag. products	Moderate
93	107.2	Executive Auto Center	None/PH,solvents	Moderate
94	107.2	private truck operator	None/PH,metals,lubes,solvents	Moderate
95	107.0	Liberty Drilling	UST/PH,metals,solvents	Moderate
96	106.7	multiple antique dealers	None/metals, solvents	Low
97	106.6	multiple manufacturers	RCRA/PH,metals,chem., solvents,wood pres.	Moderate
98	106.5	Drift Exploration Drilling	None/PH,metals,solvents	Moderate
99	106.4	Howard's Furniture	RCRA/PH,metals,wood pres.	Moderate
100	106.2	Coca-Cola Distribution	None/PH,metals,chemicals	Moderate
101	104.3	vacant Speedy Mart	None/PH	Moderate
102	104.3	Lee Marine	None/PH,metals,solvents	Moderate
103	104.2-108.4	abandoned BNRR track bed	None/PH,metals,wood pres.	High

Legend: PH = petroleum hydrocarbons
UST = underground storage tank
LUST = leaking underground storage tank
RCRA = Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
CERCLIS = Comprehensive Emergency Response, Compensation and Liability Information System

3.17 Visual Quality

3.17.1 Introduction

The Flathead Valley is mostly rural in character but the communities tend to generate a more downtown character with residential, commercial and industrial development. The Flathead Valley is bordered by the Swan Mountain range on the east, the Whitefish Range on the north and the Salish Mountain Range on the west. These mountain ranges are all within the Flathead National Forest jurisdiction. The valley bottom can be considered flat to rolling and is approximately 19.31 to 24.14 kilometers (12 to 15 miles) wide. Where not developed as part of the local communities, this flat to rolling valley bottom is mostly divided into various sized agricultural holdings.

This scenic corridor is important on a national basis because it serves as the western entrance to the Glacier National Park. The Park is north and east of the valley bottom but tourist traffic must travel the length of the corridor to reach this scenic resource.

3.17.2 Inventory of Corridor

3.17.2.1 Landscape Units

Because of the nature of the Flathead Valley, foreground and background landscape units predominate. Landscape units are those visible areas of distinct similar visual character which contain similar landscape elements that are different than other distinct areas. These landscape units are mapped in Figure 3-26.

Background landscape units are all within the Flathead National Forest with mountain peaks ranging from 1,372 to over 1,982 meters (4,500 feet to over 6,500 feet). Background landscape units include:

- **Swan Mountain Range**. This range lies to the east of the Flathead Valley and is a dominant background feature of most views from the roadway. This is a steep range with seasonal white capped peaks and forested mountain sides.

- **Whitefish Range**. This range lies to the north of the Valley and features rounded mountain tops with the Big Mountain Ski Resort a prominent feature visible from the northern part of the corridor.

- **Salish Mountain Range**. This range lies to the west of the Valley and is also a dominant background feature of views from the roadway. Visible from most of the roadway corridor the Salish Mountain Range features rounded mountain groupings which are mostly forested. Some seasonal white capped peaks are visible at a distance.

Foreground landscape units are those immediately visible throughout the valley. These areas describe the local character of the valley. Foreground landscape units in the Flathead Valley include:

- **Agricultural**. Most of the northern Flathead Valley is of a rural character with open flat to rolling terrain, pastures and crop land visible. This landscape unit is mostly open and views of the background are most visible across the agricultural land.

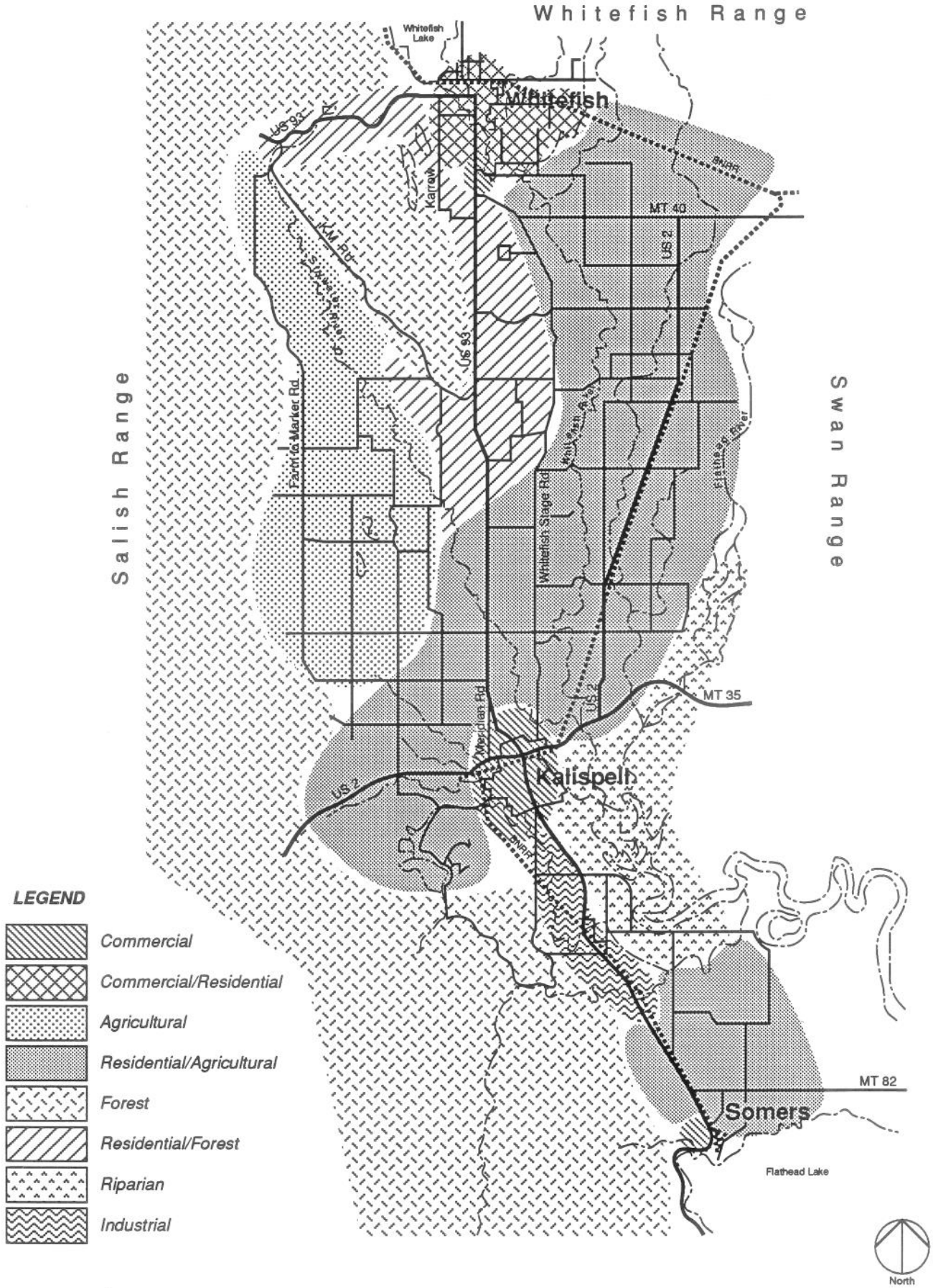
- **Riparian**. Throughout the valley bottom small creeks and rivers are bordered by deciduous vegetation and add to the overall character of the valley bottom. This landscape unit also helps define the river character of the valley even though the river is not visible.

- **Forest**. North of Kalispell the terrain becomes more rolling and agriculture is unable to utilize the sloping hill side land. This area is mostly forested with pine, spruce, larch and fir trees. Some of the forested land contains residential development but the overall character is more forest than residential.

- **Residential**. Areas near Whitefish and Kalispell contain housing developments and can be described as residential in nature. Some of this character is also visible in areas scattered throughout the valley where development is underway. Residential land units would be characterized by the homes and associated landscaping and streets.

- **Commercial**. Downtown areas of Kalispell, Whitefish and Somers contain a concentrated commercial landscape unit character. Areas to the outside of these communities also can exhibit this landscape character with street parking, retail businesses, store signs, and parking lots.

- **Industrial**. Characterized by larger buildings, outlot storage, storage structures, equipment handling facilities and large truck access drives. These areas are becoming more visible along US 93. Most visible industrial areas are south of Kalispell and along US2.



Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 3-26
Landscape Units

3.17.2.2 Inventory of Visual Resource

Landscape units visible from the roadway corridor were mapped. Throughout the corridor background views dominate. Importantly, these background views are supported and often framed by the lower foreground fields, hills and vegetation.

The foreground landscape changes on a seasonal basis with the changing of the agriculture field crops and lowland vegetation. Autumn colors are provided along river and creek channels and in the local communities throughout the valley where maple, cottonwood, larch and willow which provide color. Local fog conditions are frequent and present another element to the visible landscape. Winter snow is seen on the mountain peaks well into summer providing a sharp contrast on the background mountain ranges.

3.17.2.3 Corridor Segment Descriptions

3.17.2.3.1 Somers to Kalispell

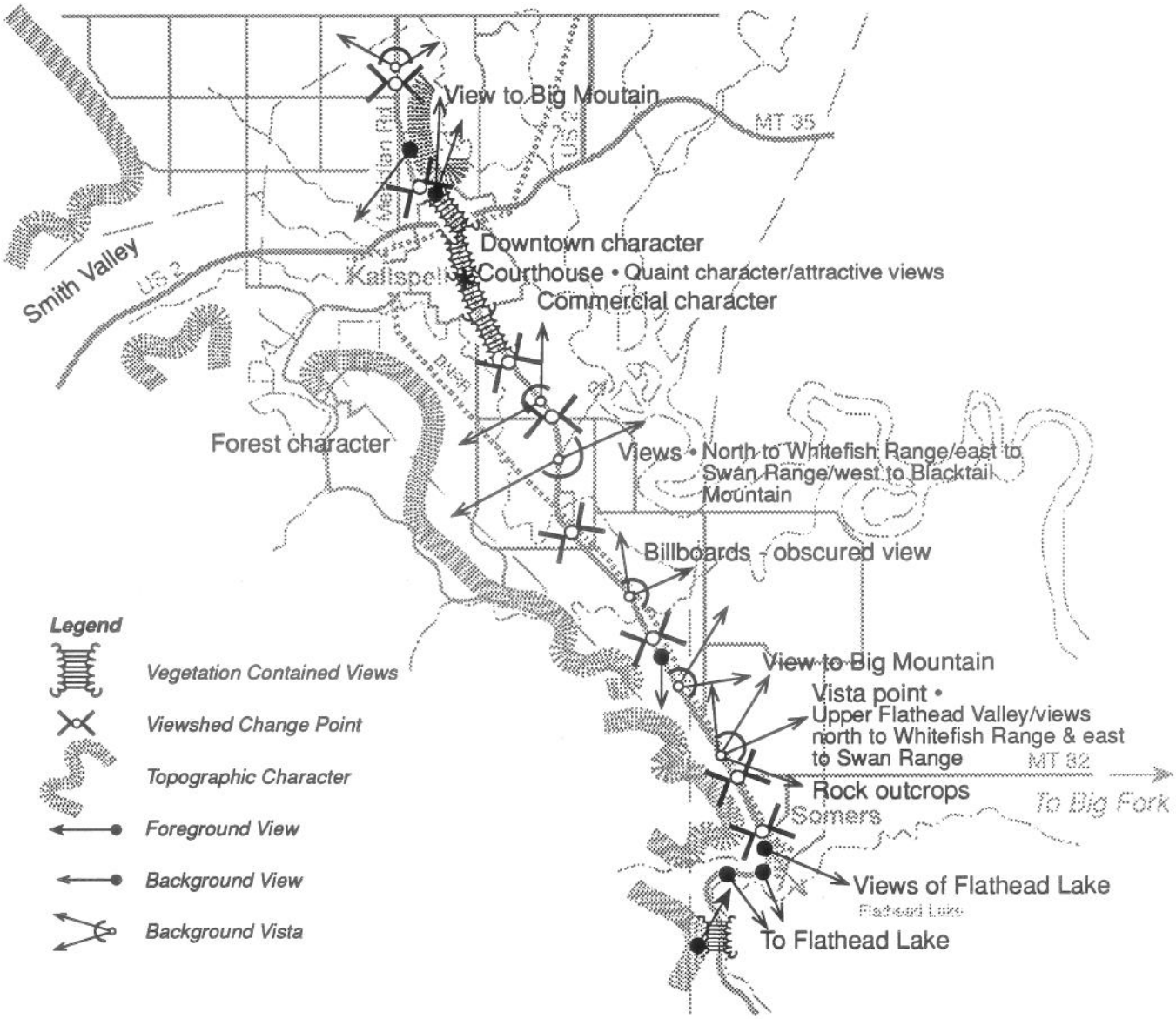
This southern segment of the corridor traverses open terrain at the eastern edge of the hill slopes. Just north of Somers views are expansive for south bound motorists. Crossings at Ashley Creek and other small drainages offer foreground riparian vegetation and open water views. Closer to Kalispell, views are restricted to foreground billboards and industrial development. The roadway is set lower in the terrain and these foreground views dominate (Figure 3-27). Several older farms are visible along side of the highway.

Within the southern Kalispell entrance, motorist views of nearby commercial, industrial and residential development dominate. Due to the scattered and dissimilar nature of this development no unique community image is formed until one enters the older development north of 11th Avenue. This historic district north and south of the Court House presents the strongest character image of Kalispell with boulevard trees, roadside landscaping and narrower streets. In downtown Kalispell buildings are at the edge of the walk and although few trees are present, the downtown image is strongly commercial. Local traffic, street side parking and older buildings add to that character. The downtown depot is located at the rail crossing at Main Street. This historic building and surrounding park land provide a downtown focus for Kalispell. Newer development is obvious with large parking lots and greater building set backs. Downtown buildings are of mostly brick or quarry rock construction. Newer buildings present stucco, glass or wood frontages (see Figure 3-28).

3.17.2.3.2 Kalispell to Whitefish

North of Kalispell US 93 crosses through residential and commercial development which is separated from the roadway by topography and local streets. The highway does have a median but it is narrow to support plantings. Nearby development is well landscaped and northbound motorists do have a scenic foreground of green lawns and plantings. Southbound motorists entering Kalispell are offered a panoramic view of the City and the surrounding forested mountains (see Figure 3-29).

North of the Kalispell city limits the terrain opens up and background views of the surrounding mountain ranges are possible. Along this segment a striking shift occurs from open agricultural/residential land to an enclosed roadside within a forest. This shift occurs around mile post 119 at the Fenders restaurant location. Southbound traffic leaves the forested segment with expansive views to the south, east and west. Northbound traffic enters the forested foreground segment and only has limited background views to the north and east. These northbound views are further focused down the straight alignment of US 93 toward Big Mountain north of Whitefish.



Somers to Whitefish
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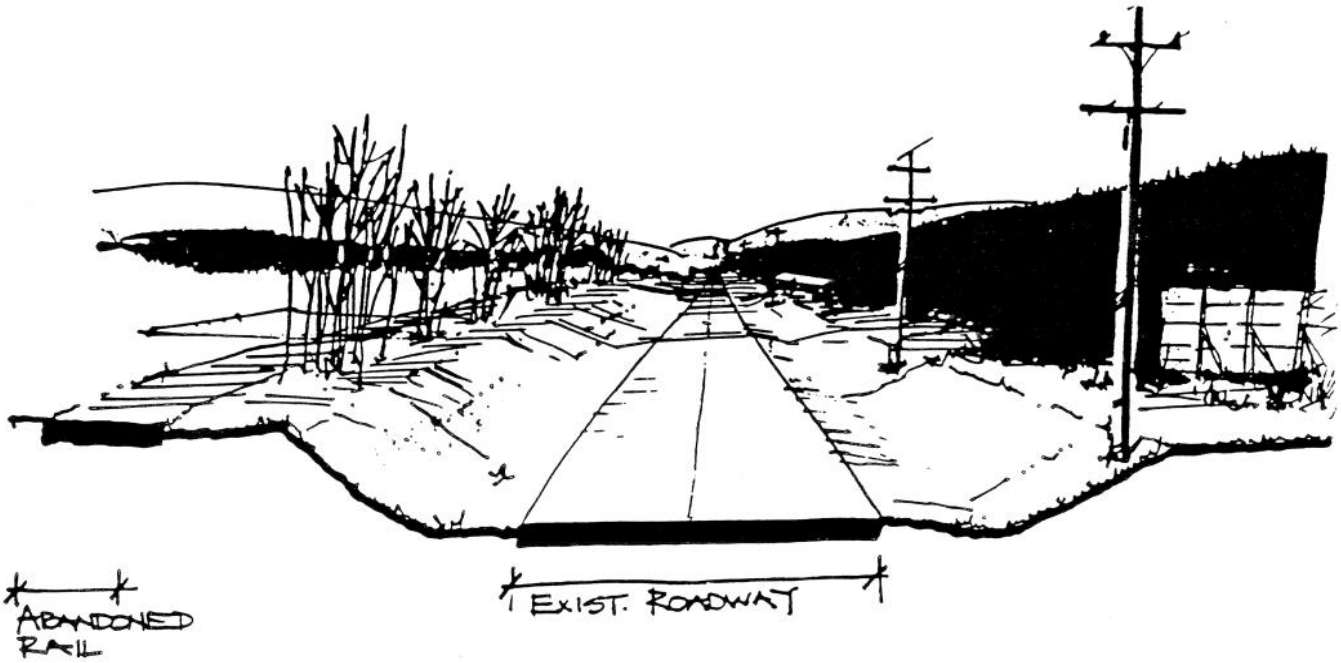
Figure 3-27
Visual Analysis - US 93 Corridor



Existing: MP 106.8 • looking south

Existing: Downtown Kalispell

North

Somers to Whitefish
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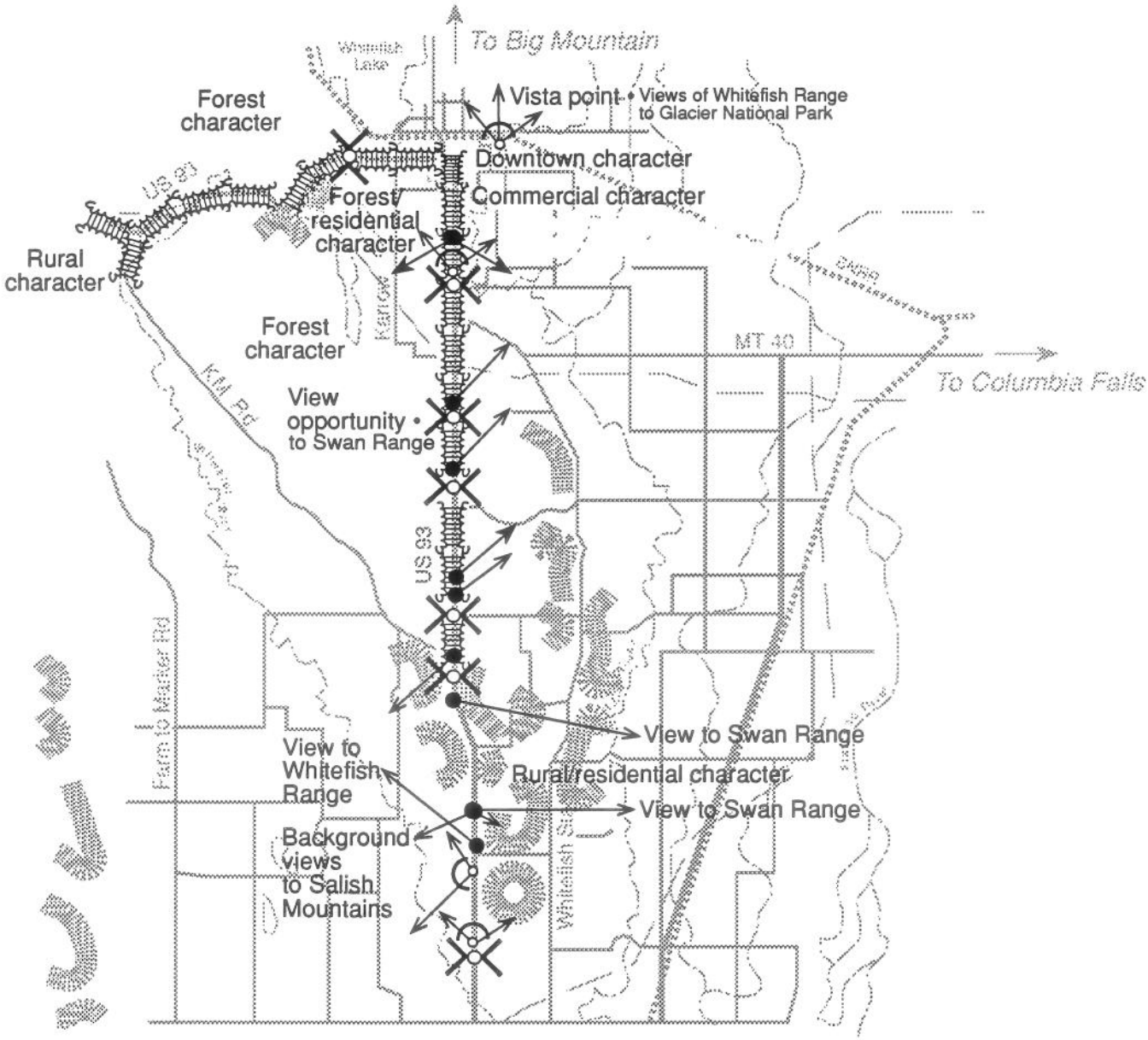
Figure 3-28
Existing Views



Legend

- *Vegetation Contained Views*
- *Viewshed Change Point*
- *Topographic Character*
- *Foreground View*
- *Background View*
- *Background Vista*

North

Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 3-29
Visual Analysis - US 93 Corridor

At Whitefish, roadside character changes from a forested residential character to one with commercial development adjacent to the roadway and background views beyond that of Big Mountain and the peaks of Glacier National Park. For the most part, this commercial development is limited and has some landscaping along the roadway. At the south entrance to Whitefish, the roadway crosses the Whitefish River and again the riparian vegetation dominates the foreground. Downtown Whitefish also has building frontages at the sidewalk but not as well defined as downtown Kalispell. The Whitefish School at Second and Spokane is a dominant feature adjacent to US 93 within Whitefish. Future development just north of this school is planned which will further define the character of downtown Whitefish. Downtown buildings are of wood construction and newer businesses include parking lots along the street.

3.17.2.3.3 Whitefish West

The northern part of downtown Whitefish features another crossing of the Whitefish River, adjacent golf course and open residential development. Once outside of this development, forested mountain sides dominate the foreground and views do not open up until Spencer Lake near the Twin Bridge Road intersection. Roadsides are typically steep mountainous terrain but some openings to small meadows are present. True background views are not available to the motorist for another couple of miles north of the Spencer Lake area (see Figure 3-30).

3.17.2.3.4 Viewer Groups

Viewers of the landscape units described include local and non-local motorists and residents alongside of the roadway. Local motorists have the opportunity to see the valley and surrounding mountain ranges change with seasonal variety. Non-local or tourist visitors to the valley see the mountains and valley as it presents itself during their visit.

The importance of visual quality has been identified at a number of public meetings for the US 93 project. A quality scenic highway was seen as a way to encourage community centered growth, allow development and promote the pleasure of driving between their communities. Additionally, local landscape character is an important quality of living in the Flathead Valley and is the attraction which forms the basis for local tourist industries. With Glacier National Park just northeast of this corridor and the variety of recreation opportunities in the area, tourist traffic is seen as an important aspect to the local economy. The unique character and visual quality of the Flathead Valley are generally felt to be a primary reason that tourists travel through this corridor.

From residential neighborhoods views of the existing two lane roadway are limited due to the lower density of local developments, the size of the existing roadway, and the forested nature of much of the roadside.

3.17.3 Analysis of Visual Resource

3.17.3.1 Visual Quality of the Landscape

Generally the character of this valley can be described as low lying agricultural and residential development surrounded by mountain ranges and forest land. Driving the existing US 93 corridor offers the motorist a range of views which either enhance the character of the valley bottom or tend to distract from the panoramic scenic quality that exists today (see Figure 3-31).

Existing: South Entrance to Whitefish

Existing: Roadway near Spencer Lake

North

Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 3-30
Existing Views

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 3-31
Photos of Area

Historically, the valley bottom has enjoyed undisturbed views of the surrounding mountains but this has changed during recent years. Billboard advertising and industrial development at the roadside block many of the background views previously possible and with major changes in the foreground the visual character of the valley is no longer dependent on the background mountain ranges. This development represents the most recent change to the US 93 roadside landscape with former tree lined city entries giving way to strip shops, gas stations and hotels with multiple driveways and parking lots extending up to the roadside.

Other changes are also occurring in the valley bottom. Agricultural land is being converted to residential development. Open fields are being replaced by the homes, landscaping and streets typical of most neighborhoods. These changes are most apparent to local residents. Historic views and landscape character still exist and dominate but concern has been expressed that new development and construction could further change the roadside character of US 93.

As part of the **recently completed** Flathead County Master Plan update, a survey was conducted to determine resident's opinions about existing visual quality and what the appropriate level of change might be in different areas. Protecting scenic areas (or areas with high visual quality) was identified as a priority by 61 percent of the respondents. Landscapes that were identified as having high visual quality were:

- Edges of water bodies
- Mountain slopes
- Fields and meadows
- Forested areas

Correspondingly, the following landscapes were felt to be areas where visual improvements were recommended:

- Industrial areas
- Extraction areas
- Strip commercial developments
- Urban and semi-urban areas

3.17.3.2 Visual Resources of Cultural Significance

Between Somers and Kalispell several historic farmsteads are located just west of US 93. The structures appear stable and some are in use. These farmsteads date back to the late 1800's and are of some local historic significance. This roadway segment also contains a historic rail corridor which has been identified as a location for a historic marker to identify the location of an early 1900's rail spur built to aid the local timber industry.

In Kalispell the Court House Historic District is of major local importance and characterizes the early nature of this City. Other Main Street retail buildings and the old train depot are important structures, adding to the historic character of Kalispell.

In downtown Whitefish some of the downtown buildings are of historic importance which present the character of the community. The Whitefish High School and depot are off the highway but serve to strengthen the character of the community. A Frank Lloyd Wright office building is also in Whitefish approximately 2 blocks from US 93.

Chapter Four

Environmental Consequences

Chapter 4.0 Environmental Consequences

Changes in text between this document and the Draft EIS are in bold and underlined.

This chapter describes the direct and indirect impacts that will be expected to occur as a result of the alternatives described in Chapter Two. Mitigation measures are also identified.

Alternatives which are evaluated in this chapter include:

Segment	Alternatives Being Considered
1. Somers to Kalispell	No-Build, A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)
2. Kalispell Area	No-Build, A*, A* plus B(MEDIAN), A* plus B(TURN-LANE)
3. Kalispell to Whitefish	No-Build, A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)
4. Whitefish Area	No-Build, A(FOUR-LANE), C(OFF-SET), C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), C(COUPLET-4)
5. Baker to Karrow and West of Whitefish	No-Build, A*
6. Karrow Avenue to MP 129	No-Build, A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE)

**Alternative A in Kalispell and Whitefish is a unique cross-section, as described in Section 2.4.2.*

These alternatives are described in detail in Section 2.4.2. Aerial photos illustrating **the preferred alternative** are included in Appendix A.

Alternative A(COMBO) is the preferred alternative. It varies slightly from the A(COMBO) alternative which was evaluated in the DEIS.

4.1 Transportation

Existing transportation conditions are described in Chapter One (Purpose and Need) and in Section 3.5.

4.1.1 Future Traffic Projections

4.1.1.1 Methodology

Future traffic projections for the year 2015 were developed using a transportation modeling software program , QRS II. **The Year 2015 was chosen as the future design year to represent approximately 20 years from beginning of construction**. This analysis includes the incorporation of future land use scenarios (projected population and employment), existing and committed roadways, and the traffic characteristics of each roadway (capacity, running speed etc.). **The model also used parameters that were developed from the origin/destination data that were collected for the study area**. An increase in traffic volumes will

occur with all alternatives, including the No-Build Alternative. Refer to Figures 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3 for the projected traffic volumes for **the preferred alternative**

4.1.1.2 Results

The projected traffic volumes are evaluated to determine the ability of each alternative to effectively move traffic along the corridor and to balance the ease of entrance to and exit from the roadway facility. Procedures utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of each alternative are outlined in the *Highway Capacity Manual* (NCHRP Special Report 209). The procedures and methodologies outlined in the manual reflect the wide range of empirical research within North America.

Traffic projections for the No-Build Alternative and the Alternative A alternative show an increase of approximately 7,400 vpd from the existing condition (between Somers and Kalispell) to 10,800 vpd (just north of Kalispell). The largest increase in traffic is anticipated on US 93 just north of MT 40 in Whitefish of approximately 12,000 vpd. This growth in traffic represents approximately a 50 percent increase in traffic over the next 20 years. Minimal growth in traffic is projected west of Whitefish.

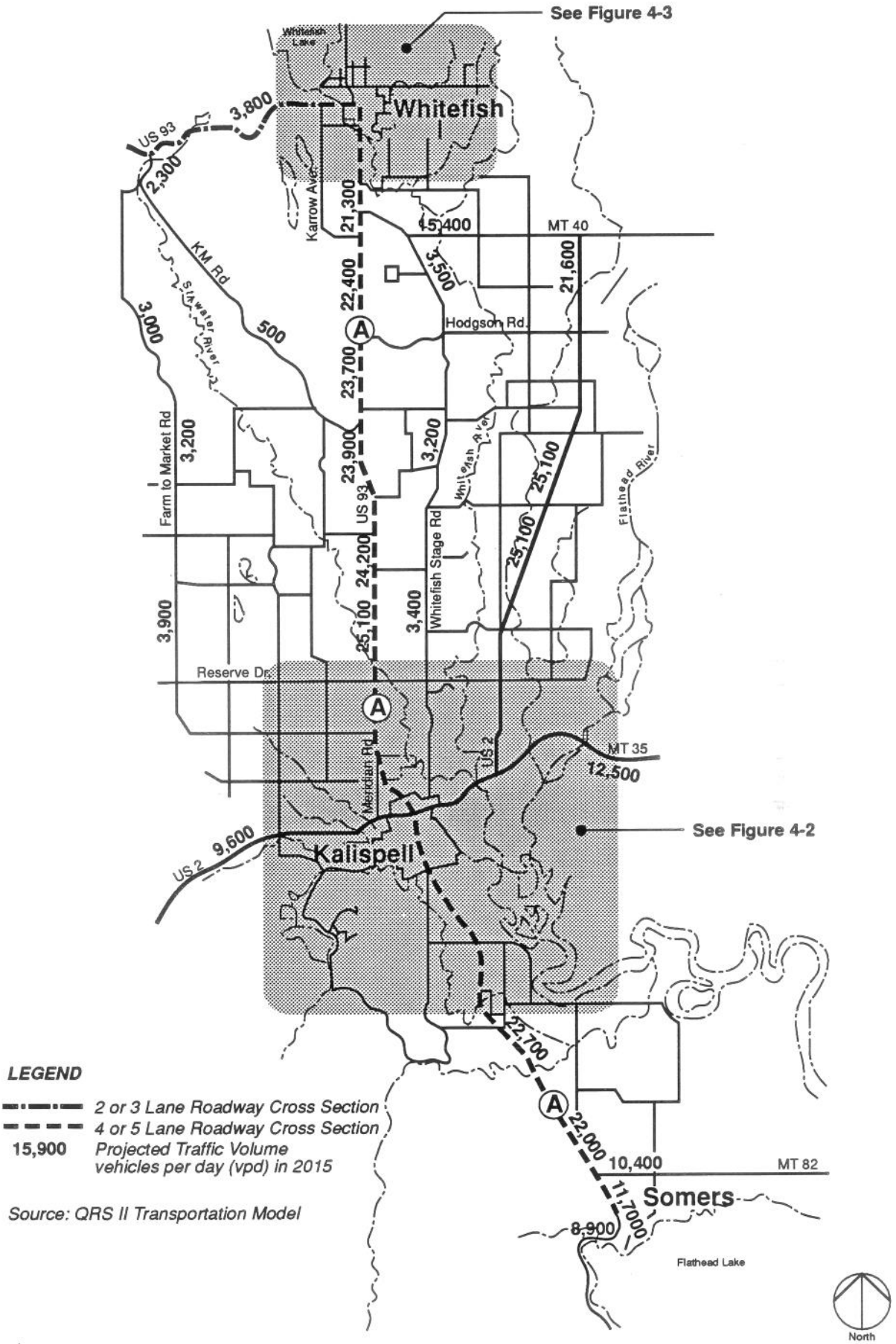
Common to all design alternatives is the assumption that improvements to US 93 will attract trips to the roadway that otherwise use local alternative routes. Improvement Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) indicate an additional growth over the "No-Build Alternative" of traffic in the year 2015 ranging from 2,500 vpd to 3,000 vpd between Kalispell and Whitefish.

Alternative B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN-LANE) relieves between 8,400 vpd and 12,100 vpd from US 93 through downtown Kalispell. In addition, Alternative B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN-LANE) will also provide local relief by providing an additional roadway to carry between 2,300 vpd to 7,600 vpd of local trips, and reducing approximately 5,100 vpd through the intersection of Main/Idaho, the most congested intersection within the study area.

Impacts within Whitefish show a substantially higher additional growth over the No-Build Alternative ranging from 1,000 vpd (along 2nd Street) to 5,300 vpd (just north of MT 40). This additional growth is due to traffic diverting back to US 93 from the local street network. Committed improvements to the extension of Baker Street south to Columbia Street will result in increasing traffic volume on Baker Street through Whitefish. With no further capacity improvements (No-Build Alternative), projected traffic volumes on Spokane are not anticipated to increase as substantially as on Baker, as traffic demand balances with available north/south capacity provided by the two corridors. This balancing will be especially evident under Whitefish Alternatives C(OFF-SET) or C. Sub-alternatives to Alternative C will result in traffic projection differences on the southern termini roadways, with greater volume on Baker at US 93 under sub-alternative C(COUPLET-1), on Columbia under sub-alternative C(COUPLET-2) and C(COUPLET-4), and on the new segment of 7th between Spokane and Baker under sub-alternative C(COUPLET-2) and C(COUPLET-3).

4.1.1.3 Level of Service Analysis

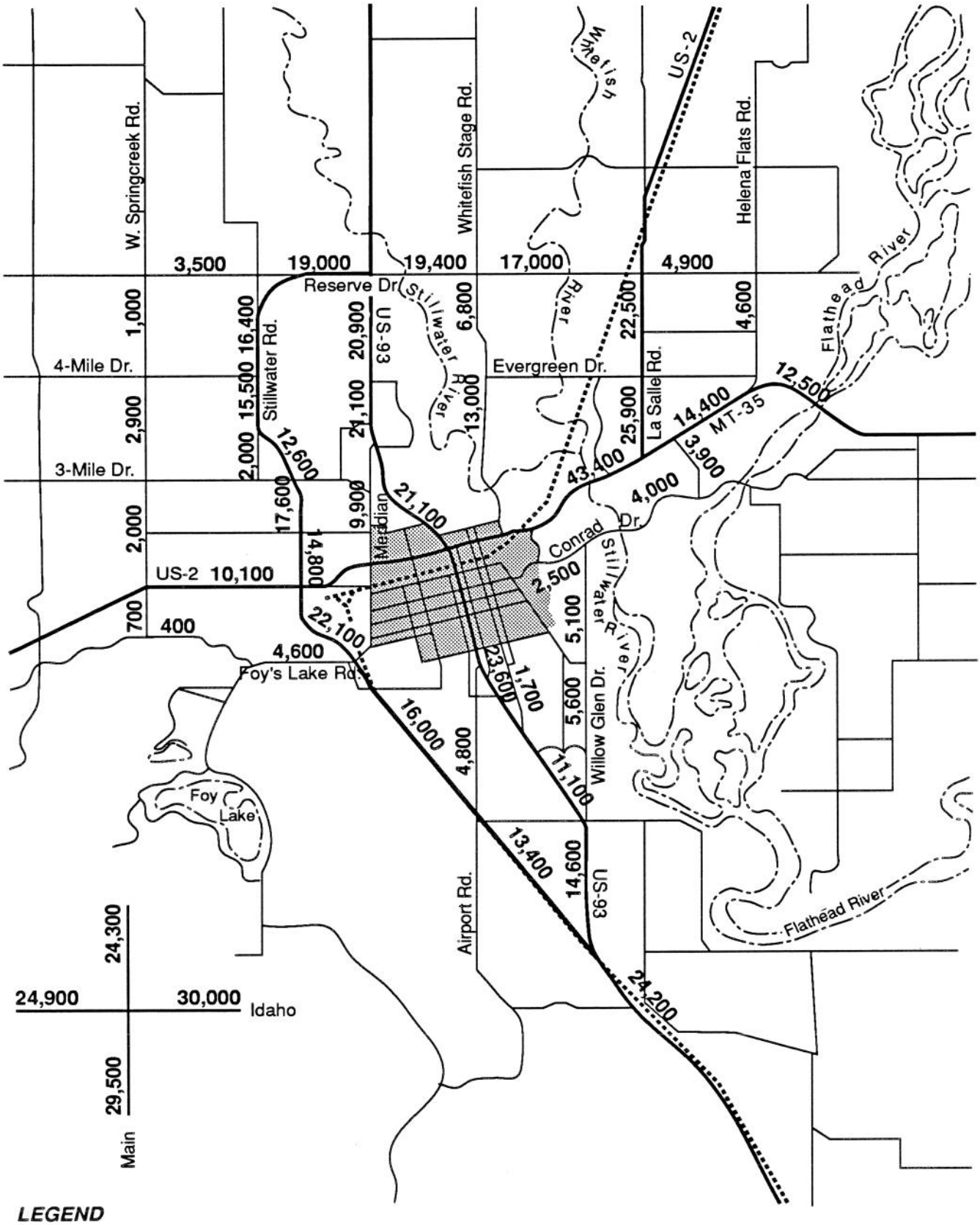
Analysis was conducted applying the traffic projections to each of the alternatives to determine how the traffic will operate. Descriptors of this traffic operations are called levels of service. The concept of level of service is a qualitative measure describing the anticipated operational conditions within the traffic stream. The level of service defines conditions in terms of speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, convenience and safety.



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 4-1

2015 Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)
Summer Daily Traffic Volumes



LEGEND

15,900 *Projected Traffic Volume vehicles per day (vpd)*

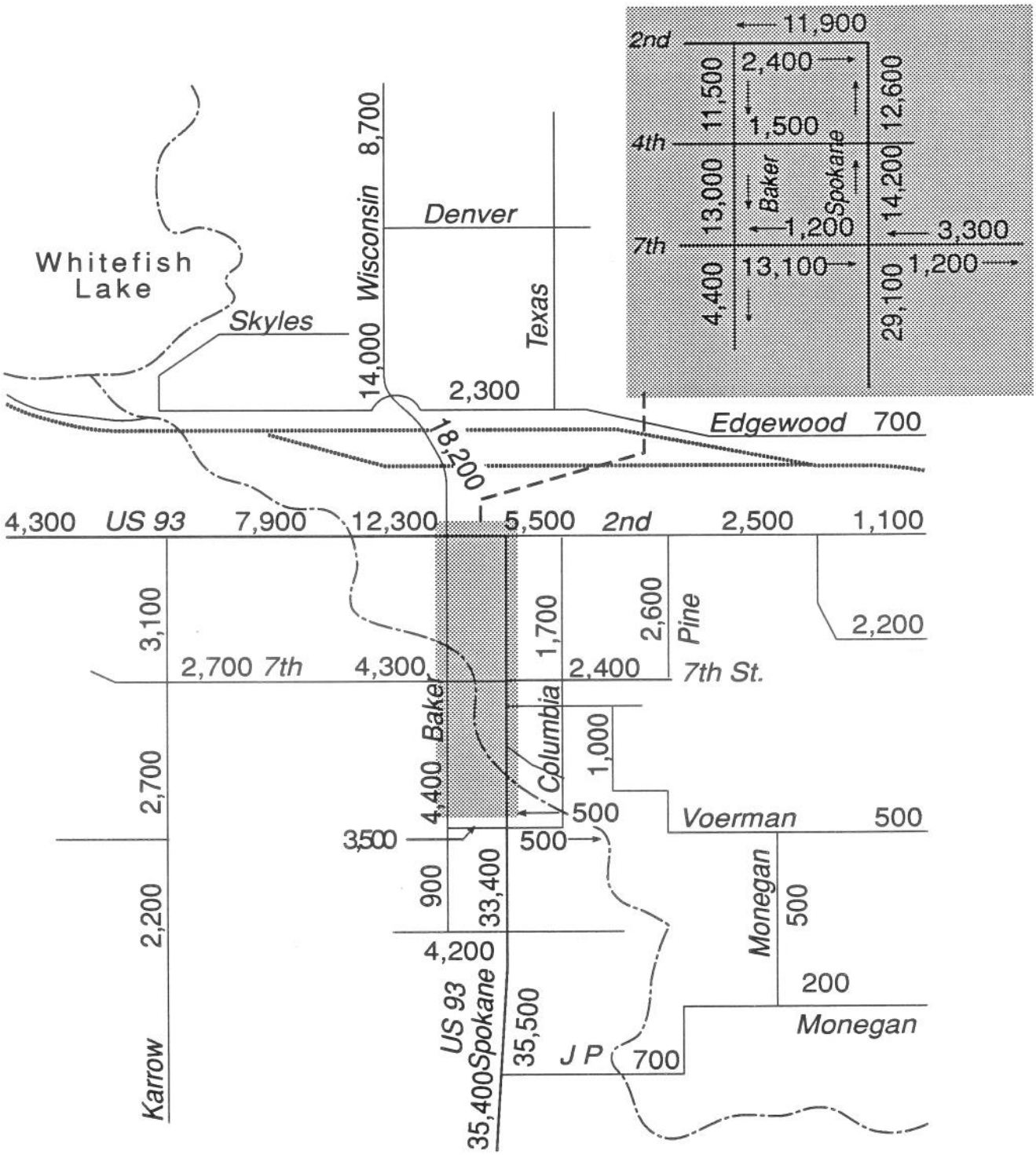
Source: QRS II Transportation Model

North

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 4-2

2015 Kalispell Summer Daily Traffic Volumes with Bypass



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 4-3

2015 Whitefish Alternative C(COUPLET-3) with 7th Street
Spokane to Kalispell • Summer Daily Traffic Volumes

Congestion is characterized by slower than desired travel speed, increased and unpredictable travel times, increased accident frequencies, erratic stop and go, increased vehicle operating costs and other undesirable conditions resulting in user dissatisfaction (source: *Traffic Engineering Handbook*, ITE, 6th Edition).

The No-Build Alternative is expected to operate in the Year 2015 at a Level of Service E and F, which is considerably more congested than the existing LOS D and E operations condition. Fewer gaps will be available for additional traffic to enter or exit the highway, particularly for left turns. This congestion is due to the increase in traffic projected by the year 2015.

Common to all the build alternatives is the improvement in traffic flow. The additional lanes will provide opportunities to pass slower moving vehicles, reducing driver frustration which in turn reduces certain accident potentials, and removes left turning vehicles from the through traveled lanes by providing separate turn bays at intersections. Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) through traffic operations are projected to operate at Level of Service B for the southern rural segments and Level of Service C for the northern rural segments **in the Year 2015. Over time (beyond 2015), the A(MEDIAN) alternative will likely operate at a higher level-of-service than the A(TURN-LANE) alternative. Left-turning vehicles will continue to find it difficult to enter the highway at unsignalized intersections, although additional signals will create some gaps in traffic. Unsignalized intersections will operate at LOS E or F, based primarily on increased volume and increased number of lanes.**

Signalized intersections on Main Street through the City of Kalispell will operate generally in the range of Level of Service B to Level of Service C, assuming Alternative B is in place (which diverts approximately 9,000 through-trips from US 93). The Main Street and Idaho intersection, constrained by abutting land uses and high cross street demand, will continue to operate at capacity (LOS E). Without Alternative B in place, the downtown area will operate between Level of Service D and Level of Service E with the exception of the intersection of Main Street and Idaho Street which will operate at Level of Service F.

Table 4-1 illustrates future operations for major intersections in the study area, assuming the intersection layouts illustrated in Appendix A. This analysis is documented in a separate report: *Technical Memorandum: Major Intersection Analysis*, Carter & Burgess, June 1994.

Table 4-1
Projected Year 2015 Major Intersection Operational Analyses

Intersection	Capacity Level	Approximate LOS (Preferred Alt.)	LOS (No-Build Alt.)
MT 82/US 93	Under	C	--
South Bypass Intersection/US 93	Under	A	--
Kalispell Bypass/US 2	Under	C	--
Reserve Drive/US 93	Under	C	F
MT 40/US 93	Under	B	--
18th Street/US 93	**Under**	**C**	**--**
Columbia/US 93	Under	C	D
7th Street/Spokane Avenue	Under	C	--
7th Street/Baker Avenue	Under	B	--
2nd Street/Spokane Avenue	Under	B	D
2nd Street/Baker Avenue	Under	C	F

Table 4-2
Projected 2015 Level of Service: Segments

Segment	Approximate LOS (Preferred Alt.)	LOS (No-Build Alt.)
Somers to Kalispell	B	F
Kalispell to Whitefish	C	F
West of Whitefish	A	C

Note: In the urban areas of Kalispell and Whitefish, the intersections control overall level-of-service. The operations of the intersections are shown in Table 4-1.

4.1.2 Traffic Operations and Circulation Impacts

4.1.2.1 Impacts

The No-Build Alternative will continue to provide inadequate traffic flow through and across the Flathead Valley. In the Kalispell area, traffic will continue to divert to parallel local streets which were not designed to handle the volume of traffic. In addition, this traffic would be diverted through residential areas.

The Kalispell area's traffic analysis under the No-Build Alternative and all design alternatives indicate that Main Street/Idaho Street will continue to be the bottleneck to operations for US 93. The least impact will be seen under Alternatives B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN-LANE), where through traffic is provided the opportunity to bypass the congested downtown area. Local traffic with trip destinations in the highly developed vicinity of the Main/Idaho intersection, will continue to cause traffic congestion typical of a major arterial/major arterial intersection in a thriving downtown area. However, traffic will still continue to use Meridian Road west of US 93, and 3rd and 4th Streets east of US 93 to avoid traveling through the Main Street/Idaho Street intersection.

The intersection of Reserve Street and US 93 will also become more congested by the year 2015. The intersection will operate at LOS C/D by 2015 as long as Reserve Street is widened to accommodate westbound double left-turn lanes for both Alternatives A and A/B, eastbound double left-turn lanes for A/B, and separate right-turn lanes for northbound US 93 to eastbound Reserve Street. This is an improvement over the No-Build Alternative. Alternative A plus B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN-LANE) operates at a higher level of service because it divides the intersection approach volumes and provides additional lanes of capacity.

Benefits common to all the build alternatives incorporating access control measures, although at varying degrees, will result from access consolidation. Improved intersections will provide traffic with a safer haven by construction of turn bays at intersections, installation of traffic signals when warranted and a lateral separation of the opposing traffic flows which reduces headlight glare.

The Restrictive Access Control Alternative, most associated with Alternative A(MEDIAN), will improve through traffic operations and safety by reducing the number and frequency of conflict points but will alter cross street and intersecting driveway traffic flow. Intersections with no turn restrictions will typically be spaced at minimally every .40 kilometer (.25 mile) to .80 kilometer (.50 mile) to minimize out-of-direction travel and yet still provide access to the highway. This design will require vehicles exiting an intermediate right-turn-only access location to proceed north if the intersection is on the east side of the highway and proceed south if the

intersection is on the west side of the highway, until an unrestricted turn intersection is provided. Traffic then desiring to proceed in the opposite direction can make a U-turn at the intersection, provided that sufficient geometry and traffic controls are in place. The U-turning traffic will increase the delay to left-turning vehicles. Left-turning vehicles currently comprise between **two and** three percent of total traffic, depending on the location along US 93. **Most of this turning traffic is likely to occur at a location where there is a break in the median so that only approximately one percent of total traffic could be subject to U-turning requirements.** Special designs will be included for U-turns by trucks and recreational vehicles. This design will encourage trucks to use routes that intersect US 93 with full turning movement capabilities. The 9.15-meter (30-foot) median provides the opportunity for most left turning traffic onto US 93 to accomplish the turn in two movements. Entering traffic can deal with one direction of travel on US 93 at a time and stop in the median prior to merging into the mainstream of traffic.

The Situational Access Control Alternative, typically associated with Alternative A(TURN-LANE), allows for traffic to enter and exit the traffic stream at generally the desired location depending on the level of access control for driveway and minor street approaches. The design of intersections will minimize the potential for head-on conflicts in the continuous left-turn lane, but increases accident potential over the Restrictive Access Control Alternative due to the greater number of conflict points associated with the greater number of driveway approaches. While this alternative increases vehicular operational flexibility, there is no refuge area in the median for pedestrians, and may result in greater accident potential.

The No Access Control Alternative provides the least benefit to through traffic operations, dispersing turning traffic to frequently spaced access locations with the greatest accident potential. This alternative, over time, will generally limit the traffic carrying capacity of any of the alternatives.

Alternative A(COMBO), with a combination of access alternative applications, provides flexibility in tailoring the control of left-turn access to the highway consistent with local development, existing access and topographic conditions. Some driveway and minor intersecting street traffic flow patterns will be altered, while through traffic will benefit from the decrease in conflict points. Alternative A(COMBO) provides the optional traffic operations of Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(TURN-LANE).

Alternative B will alter traffic flows in the downtown Kalispell area by diverting through traffic volume. The bypass will also accommodate local traffic on the west side of Kalispell by providing connections at Foy's Lake Road, US2, Two, Three and Four Mile Drives. The result will be smoother traffic flow in the downtown area with excess capacity available for summer tourist traffic. In addition, trucks not destined for Kalispell will be able to travel on Alternative B with fewer stops. Alternative B is anticipated to carry up to 3,000 local truck trips per day and 100-200 through truck trips per day.

In the Whitefish area, analysis of traffic operations under the No-Build Alternative indicate that the greatest impacts will be on Baker Street as its traffic volume increases to accommodate traffic diverted from traffic congestion on Spokane. Increased traffic and resulting congestion on Baker will be a direct impact to businesses and residents whose primary access is to/from Baker Street.

Alternative A(FOUR-LANE) may require left-turn prohibitions during peak travel hours at intersecting streets and major driveways and will require removal of all on-street parking on Spokane south of 2nd and on 2nd between Baker and Spokane. Further, there will be no provision for bike traffic other than in the general vehicle lanes/mix. Congested traffic operations are projected on Spokane between 2nd and Baker considering the 22,000 to 24,000 vpd projected volume, number and proximity of street and driveway intersections, the narrow lanes and no center median or adjacent parking/shoulder area, and the amount of large truck traffic in the vehicle mix.

LOS C operations are projected at the critical Spokane/2nd intersection, assuming curve radii improvements to accommodate large truck turns. Additional widening of the intersection will be a direct impact on pedestrians crossing the street, especially considering the intersection proximity to the school. Double left turns for northbound to westbound movements and double right turns for eastbound to southbound movements are needed for desirable traffic operations. Right-of-way acquisition to provide sufficient curve radii for dual turn lanes is required and will increase pedestrian crossing time of the wide intersection, decreasing pedestrian safety.

Circulating traffic on cross-streets that intersect with US 93 through Whitefish will experience increased traffic volume. Additionally, parallel streets to Spokane will experience increased traffic volume as local traffic diverts from the congested flow on US 93. Columbia and Kalispell Streets east of US 93 and Baker Street west of US 93 will all likely experience traffic that would otherwise use US 93 if sufficient capacity and free turning ability was provided.

Alternative C(OFF-SET) traffic operations will require parking removals on Spokane and Baker south of 2nd on the north side of 2nd between Baker and Spokane. Automobile and truck traffic operations will benefit from 3.66 meters (12-foot) wide travel lanes (on Spokane) and the additional clearance width provided by the adjacent bike lanes, as contrasted with the 3.35-meter (11-foot) lanes in A(FOUR-LANE). Approximately three percent additional capacity is provided by the 3.66 meters (12-foot) lanes over the 3.35-meter (11-foot) lanes. Less congestion will also result from the removal of parking maneuvers from through travel lanes.

Through traffic operations will benefit from the unbalanced lane conditions on Spokane and Baker. The additional capacity northbound on Spokane and southbound on Baker reinforces the current unbalanced traffic flows that are approximately 1,000 to 1,500 vpd higher on the respective streets/directions. Drivers unfamiliar with the unbalanced lane configuration may be confused by the uncommon laneage, and snow cover of pavement markings will further add to driver uncertainty of the unusual design. Double left-turns for northbound to westbound movements at the Spokane/2nd intersection are needed for desirable traffic operations. The additional widening for eastbound to southbound double right turns would not be necessary due to the divided traffic flow to Baker Avenue.

Increased traffic on Baker will directly impact traffic operations at the post office, medical center and credit union located along Baker. Truck traffic on Baker will be a direct impact to the residences with front and side yards along Baker. In addition, increased traffic and increased speed of traffic on Baker will be a direct impact to local traffic turning onto Baker from 6th, 7th or 8th Streets, especially considering the rolling profile and resulting limited sight distance. Circulating traffic and diverted traffic on parallel and intersecting streets is anticipated to be significantly reduced as additional capacity is provided by improved Baker and Spokane.

Alternative C impacts, resulting from one-way operation of the Baker/Spokane pair, include increased traffic on Baker Street, increased circulating traffic on cross-streets and streets parallel to the one-way pair, and increased travel time and distance due to out-of-direction travel. Double left turns for northbound to westbound movements at the Spokane/2nd intersection are needed for desirable traffic operations. Each sub-alternative will have differing direct and indirect impacts to local Whitefish traffic circulation as noted below:

- Alternative C(COUPLET-1) will result in the greatest out-of-direction travel time and distance, particularly for residents of the neighborhoods west of Baker served by 6th, 7th and 8th Streets. Increased traffic will also be an impact on 5th Street between Spokane and Baker.

- Alternative C(COUPLET-2) will significantly reduce out-of-direction travel and circulating traffic by the construction of the new segment of 7th Street between Spokane and Baker, approximately midway between 5th Street and the Baker/US 93 intersection. Extension of the one-way segment of

Baker to Columbia, included in this sub-alternative, will have operational impacts to commercial land uses adjacent to the US 93/Columbia intersection. Large truck, as well as automobile traffic, will be required to negotiate two 90 degree turns, from Baker to Columbia then from Columbia to US 93, with intersection curve radii constructed to accommodate large trucks.

- Alternative C(COUPLET-3) will have less potential impact to commercial land uses adjacent along US 93 from Columbia to Baker since the one-way pair will operate only between 7th and 2nd. Under this sub-alternative, two 90 degree turns, from Baker to 7th then from 7th to Spokane, will be required with necessary turn radii constructed for large truck turns. **Detailed layouts of several critical intersections in Whitefish are illustrated in Appendix A.**

- Alternative C(COUPLET-4) will limit out-of-direction travel by operation of a single northbound lane on Baker between 8th and 5th Streets. Projected traffic volume and speed of southbound Baker Street traffic will impact local turning traffic onto Baker from 6th, 7th and 8th Street. Circulating traffic will impact 5th Street both east and westbound and two 90 degree turns will be required at the southern end of the one-way pair at Columbia.

4.1.2.2 Mitigation

Possible measures include the coordination of all traffic signals in the downtown Kalispell and in Whitefish which would include upgrade of the signal hardware in several locations. In addition, as side street traffic volumes increase in the suburban and rural areas in addition to the increasing through traffic along US93, signalization will need to be considered. Section 4.1.5.2 lists possible intersections where additional signalization could be required. Prior to installation of any traffic signal, traffic signal warrants shall be met in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The plan should include a progression analysis along the corridor to minimize the number of traffic signals and to properly space traffic signals to provide gaps in through traffic for intermediate unsignalized intersections.

In addition, new developments along the corridor should be encouraged to develop access to the local street network. Concentrated traffic volumes on designated intersecting streets may help warrant traffic signals. Also, local street networks should be developed to offer an alternative roadway system for local traffic.

Mitigation for Alternative A(MEDIAN):

1. Access design for existing and future development should follow the Restrictive **(with flexibility)** Access Control Guideline outlined in Table 2-2.

Mitigation for A(TURN-LANE):

1. No special mitigation will be required beyond appropriate pavement markings and signage consistent with the generally unrestricted access provisions of this alternative.

Mitigation for A(COMBO):

1. Some special access designs would be necessary depending on the extent of access control as described in the access control guideline alternatives presented in Table 2-2.

Mitigation for Alternative C(COUPLET-3):

1. Appropriate intersection construction/reconstruction will be necessary to accommodate large truck turns and the increased circulating traffic on cross-streets.

2. Reconstruct the segment of Baker Avenue south of the Whitefish River to improve vertical geometry and stopping sight distance.

3. Improve driveway access to the post office, medical center and credit union and construct new access where applicable to cross-streets or parallel streets to Baker Avenue.

4. Post one-way signs along Baker Avenue and Spokane Avenue.

5. Traffic signalization of the 7th/Spokane and 7th/Baker intersections would be desirable when traffic signal warrants are met.

4.1.3 Traffic Safety

4.1.3.1 Impacts

The **accident potential along US 93 will increase with the** No-Build Alternative due to the increase in driver frustration, the lack of opportunity to pass, inadequate intersections to handle the volume of traffic, insufficient number of through lanes and left-turning traffic turning from the through lanes. **Two-lane alternatives have been shown to have significantly greater accident rates and severity rates than roadways with higher capacity.**

Common to all the Build Alternatives (south of Whitefish) is the addition of a second through lane which allows drivers to pass when desired, minimizing driver frustration, and improvements at intersections by providing turn lanes. Benefits derived in the Build Alternatives include:

1. Reduction in rear end and angle accidents associated with left-turn maneuvers

3. Shoulder widths [**2.44** meter (**eight**-foot) desirable width] which could reduce the accident potential as compared to the existing 0.61-meter to 2.44-meter (two- to eight foot) shoulder widths. This provides additional area for recovery of errant or out-of-control vehicles and for emergency stopping with less effect on through travel at higher speeds.

4. Clear zones to provide errant vehicles enough time to enter back onto the highway or maintain control of their vehicle.

5. Separation between through travel lanes to minimize headlight glare and potential for head-on conflicts.

Safety comparisons can be made between the different design alternatives. Suburban highways with medians tend to reduce rear-end and angle accidents associated with left-turn maneuvers and provide a physical separation to reduce head-on accidents. Suburban highways with a center turning lane reduce the frequency of rear-end and angle accidents associated with left-turn maneuvers, provide spatial separation to reduce head-on accidents but may generate safety problems at closely spaced driveways and intersections. Table 4-3 summarizes these safety factors.

Table 4-3
Summary of Safety Factors

Safety Factors	Four-Lane Undivided		A(MEDIAN) and B(MEDIAN)		Alternative A(TURN-LANE) and B(TURN-LANE)	
1. Minimize rear-end conflicts between left-turning and through vehicles and allow left-turn drivers to evaluate opposing gaps.	–	●	+ +	○	+ +	○
2. Minimize high concentration of driveways and overlapping conflict patterns.	–	●	+ +	○	–	●
3. Control conflicts between left turns into and out of driveways.	–	●	+ +	○	-	●
4. Minimize or eliminate conflicts between opposing lefts off of highway.	–	●	+ +	○	-	●
5. Minimize or eliminate conflicts between left turns and right turns from/to same lane.	+ +	○	+ +	○	+ +	○
6. Minimize or eliminate conflicts caused by encroachment on opposing lanes of vehicles turning right into and out of driveways.	+ +	○	+ +	○	+ +	○
7. Minimize or eliminate conflicts caused by encroachment on adjacent land of vehicles turning right into and out of driveway.	+ +	○	+ +	○	+ +	○
8. Minimize or eliminate conflicts in opposing lanes of vehicles turning left off of highway.	+ +	○	+ +	○	+ +	○
9. Minimize time during which left-turn conflicts which opposing traffic can occur.	-	●	-	●	-	●
10. Provide protected position in median for crossing pedestrians	–	●	+ +	○	-	●
11. Minimize conflict between bicycles and motor vehicles.	+ +	○	+ +	○	+ +	○
12. Increase width of roadside clear recovery area.	+	○	+	○	+	○

○ + ++ More opportunity to reduce accidents ● - – Less opportunity to reduce accidents

Source: Multilane Design Alternatives for Improving Suburban Highways, March 1986, Harwood, Douglas W. (Transportation Research Board).

Safety factors also vary depending on the adjacent land use. Table 4-4 provides relative projected accident rates for Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and Alternative A(TURN-LANE). It is difficult to accurately predict an accident rate on a segment of roadway in the future because of all the range of variables. Therefore, rates provided are for comparison between alternatives and each component of an alternative and are not implied to be absolute rates for each alternative, particularly due to the alternative access control measures that may be applied along the corridor or corridor segments. A summary of the major finding includes:

- Alternatives A(TURN-LANE) and B(TURN-LANE) have a higher accident rate for non-intersection related accidents in both commercial and residential areas. **Typically, these alternatives would result in a significantly higher number of mid-block left-turn accidents**.

- Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and B(MEDIAN) have a higher accident rate at unsignalized intersections **(such as median breaks where traffic may U-turn)** in both commercial and residential areas. **This includes accidents associated with fixed objects and U-turns. In undeveloped areas, assuming median breaks are located approximately every 0.80 kilometer (one-half**

mile) and there are approximately 12 signalized intersections, there would be approximately 28 unsignalized intersections where the higher accident rate could occur.

- Similarly, non-intersection accident severity (as shown in Table 4-5) tends to be higher with Alternatives A(TURN-LANE) and B(TURN-LANE) and tends to be lower at unsignalized intersections.

- Accident severity increases in commercial areas as driveway density increases. Driveway density is more likely to increase with Alternatives A(TURN-LANE) and B(TURN-LANE), although the total number of driveway approaches (some with turn restrictions) may be just as high under the A and B(MEDIAN) alternatives if no access control is implemented.

Table 4-4
Accident Rates

Alternative	Adjacent Land Use	Driveway Density (1)	Accident Rate (2)	
			Non-Intersection	Unsignalized Intersection
Alternative A(TURN-LANE)/B(TURN-LANE)	Residential	0-30	0.91	0.78
Alternative A(TURN-LANE)/B(TURN-LANE)	Commercial	0-30	2.21	2.04
Alternative A(MEDIAN)/B(MEDIAN)	Residential	0-30	0.63	1.64
Alternative A(MEDIAN)/B(MEDIAN)	Commercial	0-30	1.67	3.64

Table 4-5
Accident Severity

Alternative	Adjacent Land Use	Driveway Density (1)	Accident Severity (3)	
			Non-Intersection	Unsignalized Intersection
Alternative A(TURN-LANE)/B(TURN-LANE)	Residential	0-30	0.35	0.21
Alternative A(TURN-LANE)/B(TURN-LANE)	Commercial	0-30	0.74	0.65
Alternative A(TURN-LANE)/B(TURN-LANE)	Commercial	30-60	1.49	0.65
Alternative A(MEDIAN)/B(MEDIAN)	Residential	0-30	0.13	0.74
Alternative A(MEDIAN)/B(MEDIAN)	Commercial	0-30	0.42	0.98
Alternative A(MEDIAN/B(MEDIAN)	Commercial	30-60	0.54	0.98

Note: Accident rate and severity are based on truck percentages between 5 and 10 percent and 0-5 intersections per mile.
(1) Number of driveways per mile.
(2) Accident rate in accidents per million vehicle miles.
(3) Accident severity in fatal/personal injury accidents per million vehicle miles.
(4) Alternative A(COMBO) will be similar to either Alternative A(MEDIAN) or A(TURN-LANE), depending on the cross-section in the particular location.

The analysis in Tables 4-4 and 4-5 is based on pavements that are dry and well-maintained (including well swept with lane striping that is clear and reflective). When these factors are not in place, accident rates and accident severity for Alternatives A(TURN-LANE) and B(TURN-LANE) may increase, since lane striping needed to delineate the center turn lane would be obscured. **This issue is of particular relevance and concern in the Study Area because:**

- **The northern location results in more hours of darkness, with reduced visibility.**
- **The colder climate results in more snow and ice.**
- **The sand used for traction wears off the lane striping quickly.**

A study in Idaho, Utah and Illinois indicated that snow increased the accident rate by four to nine times greater than that on dry pavement. No differentiation was made in this study for highway design, however.

Concerns were expressed during the EIS public hearing process that the A(MEDIAN) alternative would result in more drifting of snow when compared to the A(TURN-LANE) alternative. Discussions with MDT personnel who are responsible for maintaining different types of highways in areas where drifting snow is a concern indicate that as long as late season mowing of the grassy area in the median is conducted, there is little or no difference in the amount of drifting that occurs.

Widely-spaced, uncoordinated traffic signals, if warranted by the greater concentration of traffic, could affect through traffic capacity on US 93 (while potentially increasing level-of-service for traffic accessing the highway). Traffic conflicts would be created by the introduction of new traffic signal controls, but these conflicts could offset a reduction in potentially greater severity accidents at more frequent unsignalized intersections with uncontrolled access. The median concept could concentrate an equal number of conflicting movements to a few number of intersections. However, the access restrictions could help to encourage an improved secondary roadway network and greater cross access agreements serving properties along the corridor which could result in a net reduction of conflicting movements on the highway.

Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) create a safer environment for pedestrians to cross since they provide a median area that can be used as a refuge. **Noticeable differences in accident and severity rates would occur between the A(MEDIAN) and A(TURN-LANE) alternatives in those areas that are of low access density and serve primarily through traffic. These areas include MT 82 to Rocky Cliff Road and MP 119 to MP 121.**

MDT has an urban median policy which states that raised medians have application on high volume arterial streets (such as MT 40 to the Whitefish River in future years). In these applications, raised medians "provide physical protection for vehicles turning left at bays, provide a refuge for pedestrians, and reduce the potential for head-on collisions" (*Urban Median Policy*, MDT, January 12, 1989).

Through Kalispell, the No-Build Alternative will result in the greatest accident potential as increasing traffic congestion leads to greater driver frustration, use of parallel city streets not designed to accommodate heavy through traffic volumes, and increased delay resulting from insufficient turning opportunities at downtown intersections. Alternative A through Kalispell would provide a minor amount of additional turning opportunities as some parking is removed to create left-turn lanes. However, minimal new through traffic capacity is provided, resulting in traffic congestion levels and diverted traffic onto city streets much the same as under the No-Build Alternative.

The A plus B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN-LANE) alternatives would decrease accident potential over the No-Build or A alternatives. Higher speeds on the bypass road may result in greater accident severity, but an overall fewer number of accidents. Differences between Alternative B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) are summarized in Tables 4-4 and 4-5.

Through Whitefish, the No-Build Alternative will also result in the greatest accident potential due to the high level of traffic congestion with projected traffic volume on the existing substandard road segments of US 93. The greatest safety concern of the proposed Whitefish alternatives is the increased traffic volume on Baker Street. Parking traffic, pedestrian crossings, bicycle traffic and access to businesses and residents will be affected by the increased volume. The potential increased speed of traffic under the one-way pair alternatives and with two southbound lanes under Alternative C(OFF-SET) will be an impact, especially in the segment

south of the Whitefish River where the rolling grade of the road results in limited stopping sight distance. Alternative C(OFF-SET) could also have increased accident potential due to the somewhat unusual lane imbalance, particularly when snow covers roadway pavement markings.

Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3) and C(COUPLET-4) will result in less potential vehicle and pedestrian conflict points at intersections and driveways. However, drivers not familiar with the one-way conversion may present a potential for wrong-way travel for an interim period.

4.1.3.2 Mitigation

The following mitigation **will be implemented** to improve safety:

1. Reconstruct the segment of Baker Avenue south of the Whitefish River **(but north of Seventh Street)** to improve vertical geometry and stopping sight distance.

2. Construct sidewalks/bike paths along Baker Avenue.

3. Improve intersection and driveway sight distance by prohibiting parking near intersections and tree limb and foliage removal.

4. Install speed limit signs on Baker and Spokane appropriate for design speed **and monitored driver behavior after construction** of these downtown streets and install sufficient "One-Way", "Do Not Enter" and "Wrong Way" signing for one-way street operations.

5. Enforcement of posted speed limits.

6. Use larger-size traffic signs and wider pavement marking to accommodate **the elderly**.

7. Consider the use of a permanent marking tape for a longer life of pavement marking than paint.

8. Intense re-education program of correct use of features within a roadway design including deceleration lanes, two-way left-turn lanes, etc. **This will only work for drivers who live in the area and not for visitors to the area**.

9. Advance signage for street names at major intersections along the corridor.

4.1.4 Parking

4.1.4.1 Impacts

As with any rural highway, no parking is permitted with any of the design alternatives in the rural areas. However, in the urban areas of Whitefish and Kalispell, on-street parking will be removed. Approximately 12 blocks of parking removal (with an average of ten spaces per block) will be required in Kalispell for all build alternatives. Only limited parking removal near intersections and driveways will be required under the one-way pair alternatives.

Table 4-6 shows parking impact in Whitefish by alternative.

Table 4-6
Whitefish Area Parking

	Number of Spaces					
	Spokane Ave. (7th to 2nd)	Baker Ave. (2nd to 5th)	2nd Street (Spokane to Baker)	2nd Street (Baker to Whitefish River)	Total Parking Available	Parking Lost
Existing Parking	93	45	27	50	215	N/A
Alternative A(FOUR-LANE)	0	45	0	0	45	170
Alternative C(OFFSET)	0	0	0	0	0	215
Alternative C(COUPLET-1)*	50	20	10	25	105	115
Alternative C(COUPLET-2)*	50	20	10	25	105	115
Alternative C(COUPLET-3)*	50	20	10	25	105	115
Alternative C(COUPLET-4)*	50	20	10	25	105	115

Parking assumed to be on the west side of Spokane, east side of Baker, north side of 2nd between Baker and the Whitefish River Bridge, and south side of Second between Spokane and Baker. Intersection geometry and safety improvements may require additional parking removals.

This loss of on-street parking will create a demand for more on-street parking on the side streets and in adjacent parking lots.

4.1.5 Access

4.1.5.1 Impacts

Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) would change the existing unrestricted access to right-in, right-out utilizing a flexible application of the Restrictive **Access Control (with flexibility), as described in** Table 2-2. Consolidation of access points would also result.

Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) with Restrictive Access Control will have the following impacts on future access:

- Minor street intersections may be limited to right-turns only.
- Full turn access in undeveloped areas will be allowed at approximately .80-kilometer (half-mile) intervals.
- **Additional cost and delay in the right-of-way acquisition process.**

Alternative A(TURN-LANE) with Situational Access Control will allow full turn access at major and minor street intersections. In undeveloped areas, future unrestricted turn access would be allowed at intermediate locations, controlled by purchase of access rights.

Along US 93, there will be modifications to existing driveways. The addition of lanes and/or shoulders will require existing driveway approaches to be reconfigured. In addition, some driveway

consolidation will occur and in some cases, internal circulation roads will be added to serve multiple driveways.

Alternative A(FOUR-LANE) will result in access impacts to businesses along Spokane and to cross-streets serving residential neighborhoods east of Spokane since turn prohibitions will be required during peak traffic hours. Increasing congestion on Spokane will also limit easy access to businesses and residences.

Alternative C(OFF-SET) will result in some access impacts to businesses and residents along Baker Street as the increased volume of a portion of US 93 traffic is introduced to this arterial street. Sub-alternative C(COUPLET-1) will have the greatest out-of-direction travel impact to the residential neighborhood west of Baker since northbound traffic must first travel south on Baker approximately 1.29 kilometers (0.8 mile) before turning north onto Spokane. Sub-alternatives C(COUPLET-2) and C(COUPLET-3) will provide improved access to this residential area via construction of the 7th Street extension between Spokane and Baker, while sub-alternative C(COUPLET-4) will provide convenient northbound access on Baker to 5th Street.

The one-way alternatives will impact access to businesses and residents along Baker and Spokane, resulting in some out-of-direction travel, typically around the immediate block in which the business/residence is located. Greater out-of-direction travel will be required for businesses and residences near the Whitefish River since the grid of city street network is discontinuous in this area of town.

4.1.5.2 Mitigation

1. Guidelines for the location of direct access points on US 93 have been developed on the basis of desired traffic operation on US 93 with consideration of land ownership patterns. Where there are numerous curb cuts along one or both sides of the roadway and a limited number of vehicles use any one driveway , the continuous two way left turn lane as in Alternative A(TURN-LANE) (or portions of Alternative A(COMBO)) is appropriate.

2. Consolidation of access points will improve traffic flow along the corridor and minimize the cost of improving all intersections. In addition, consolidation can concentrate traffic to certain driveways or minor road approaches to meet appropriate signal warrants when necessary.

3. Signals can be provided to improve overall access and circulation. Potential access points which might warrant additional traffic signals **in future years** might include:

   - US 93/Columbia Avenue
   - US 93/Willow Glen/Cemetery Road
   - US 93/Airport
   - US 93/Happy Valley
   - US 93/MT 40
   - US 93/MT 82
   - US 93/18th Street**/Greenwood Drive**
   - Alternative B/US 2
   - Alternative B/Two Mile Drive
   - Alternative B/Three Mile Drive
   - Alternative B/Four Mile Drive

   Intersections that potentially could be signalized were determined by identifying the location of existing operational problems, where operational problems could exist in the future or where forced gaps are needed to create gaps in traffic to allow side street traffic to access the highway. Prior to the installation of a traffic signal, traffic signal warrants set forth by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control* must be met. Examples of some types of these warrants include the investigation of the volume of intersecting traffic, traffic volume on a major street is so heavy that traffic on a minor street suffers excessive delay, high pedestrian usage, inadequate gaps for school children to cross,

maintain proper grouping of vehicles and effectively regulate group speed, high accident experience, and a need to encourage concentration and organization of traffic flow. Once traffic signal warrants are met, the decision whether to install or not the traffic signal needs to be investigated to determine whether any other adverse conditions are created.

4. Consider construction of supplemental business/residential access to adjacent cross-street or parallel street.

5. Provide signage to alternative access and increase size of street name signs for better visibility by circulating traffic.

4.1.6 Compatibility With Plans

Alternatives **including the bypass** are consistent with transportation plans in Kalispell and Flathead County. All of the proposed actions of the US 93 alternatives through Kalispell are generally consistent with the *Kalispell Area Transportation Plan*.

The proposed actions of the US 93 alternatives through Whitefish are generally consistent with the Whitefish City-County Master Plan and Whitefish Traffic Study, except as noted below:

- Baker Street is considered currently a collector street from 2nd Street south to US 93. The preferred alternative will require reclassification of Baker to arterial.

- The segment of 7th Street between Spokane and Baker is not currently included in the Master Plan and will need to be added with the preferred alternative.

- A bypass west of Whitefish does not meet the purpose and need for this US 93 project. It is being studied as a part of the ongoing *Whitefish Traffic Operations Study*.

4.1.7 Transit/Future Transportation

All build alternatives will improve overall transit conditions in the study area, since all include park-n-ride facilities and the potential for a future transit corridor.

Alternative A(MEDIAN) and B(MEDIAN) are potentially more compatible with the need to expand US 93 in the future to accommodate transit or another transportation use (such as an HOV lane). The larger median area can more easily accommodate future expansion.

4.1.8 Rail Service

Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) will affect rail service to customers currently served by a rail spur, just south of US 2. An at-grade crossing (controlled by signals and gates) is planned at this location, which should adequately accommodate the infrequent rail service to these businesses.

4.1.9 Construction

4.1.9.1 Impacts

During construction, delays will be anticipated for all the build alternatives. Drivers attempting to access abutting land uses will be delayed. Two traveling lanes will be maintained at all times during construction; however increase in delays will occur for the general traveling public depending on the construction techniques employed. Traffic is anticipated to be detoured within the US 93 right-of-way or on other local streets **as much as possible.**

The most noticeable delays and detours will occur in the following locations:

- **In Kalispell, from Ashley Creek to the Courthouse.**
- **In Whitefish.**
- **At the Stillwater Bridge area.**
- **In areas of transition between one cross-section to another; or shifting from one side to another.**

Construction of the new segment of 7th Street between Spokane and Baker can occur with minimal if any traffic disturbance to US 93 or Baker Street traffic. Intersection reconstruction for intersection curve radius improvements will cause minor inconvenience to traffic.

The most notable indirect impact of the proposed action will be the inconvenience to motorists caused by the construction delays. Motorists will be required to adjust their travel schedules to consider the length of possible delays. Some facility users may choose alternate travel routes to avoid construction sites, impacting local city streets.

4.1.9.2 Mitigation

MDT will require the contractor for the proposed action to schedule construction operations and provide traffic control in a manner that will assure:

1. Adequate safety and convenience to motorists and pedestrians, and the safety of construction workers at all times.

2. The progress of the project is advanced in a manner most beneficial to the public.

3. Traffic control for all construction activities within 9.15 meters (30 feet) of the existing road.

4. Traffic control conforms with all MDT specifications and plans and the Manual on Uniform Traffic control Devices (MUTCD).

5. Construction signing is removed or covered when the facility is returned to normal use.

6. Work zone signing conforms with that shown on construction plans.

The contractor will be required to submit detailed traffic control plans that designate how access will be maintained to abutting land uses, keeping a minimum of one lane open in each direction of travel at all times during construction. A public information plan will also be developed that warns motorists in advance of the construction activity that construction will be occurring. This will involve the use of the various communication media including radio and newspapers to inform motorists of the location of construction, advise alternate routes and the length of delay anticipated. Where plans will also restrict certain construction activities to the off-peak hours including some night time construction where traffic volumes are substantially less than between 7am and 7pm.

4.2 Land Use

Existing land use conditions are described in Section 3.1.

Flathead County will experience substantial expansion of residential and commercial land uses irrespective of which US 93 alternative is selected. From 1993 to 2015, the county is forecasted to add 10,000 additional housing units. Most new business development will be in the retail and service sectors.

4.2.1 General Impacts

US 93 alternatives will not substantially affect the total amount of new development occurring in the Flathead Valley, but will have some influence on characteristics and the geographic distribution of this development. US 93 alternatives are one of many factors which will influence the character and distribution of future land uses in the Flathead Valley. Other factors include: city and county land use plans and regulation practices; Montana Department of Transportation highway access restrictions; city and county road improvement policies; the characteristics of public and private utility services; the locations of business markets and job centers; site specific amenities and physical and socioeconomic constraints; land owner and developer resources and preferences regarding development; and, the availability of other developable lands.

The US 93 "Build Alternatives" will directly displace a small number of residential, commercial and industrial buildings. Residential land areas displaced by the "Build Alternatives" consist mainly of yard and driveway areas. Commercial and industrial lands displaced by the project are mainly driveway, parking, and green areas. Agricultural land removed from production includes a mix of crop and grazing lands.

4.2.2 No-Build Alternative

No existing or planned land uses will be directly displaced by the No-Build Alternative.

The No-Build Alternative will provide no resolution of existing US 93 traffic problems and will allow traffic conditions to worsen in the future. This will perpetuate and intensify the influences US 93 traffic congestion and access impediments are having on land use patterns in the Flathead Valley.

Growth in traffic congestion, highway noise, air pollution, and the exacerbation of hazards and inconveniences associated with driveway access on to and off of US 93 will further discourage new single-family home development in urban and rural areas adjacent to the highway corridor. Inside Kalispell and Whitefish, higher density residential development may occur on urban lands paralleling the highway. High density residential development is most likely to occur in areas which are served by signalized intersections or where other city

streets provide alternative access. Single family houses which will be built along rural segments of US 93 are likely to be set back long distances from the highway.

Inside cities, commercial development will continue to occur along US 93 in the southern sections of Kalispell and Whitefish. The business development benefits created by increasing highway traffic will be undermined by congestion and driver difficulty in making cross lane turns and parking movements. Constraints to turning movements will place a premium on commercial sites near signalized intersections. Elsewhere, businesses will increasingly be oriented to serving one-directional traffic. Congestion and obstacles to turning may divert commercial investment away from central business districts and other commercial areas on US 93 in Kalispell and Whitefish, to more accessible locations along US 2, MT 35, MT 40, and other major thoroughfares.

The No-Build Alternative will motivate increasing numbers of city drivers to use side streets to avoid US 93 congestion. Elevated traffic, noise, and air pollution in residential areas may discourage reinvestment in residential properties, and foster conversions to higher density residential and commercial land uses.

Flathead County's comprehensive plan encourages infilling of vacant lots in existing rural subdivisions located near the US 93 corridor. As highway driving conditions deteriorate and access to and from county roads becomes more constrained, new residential development nearby the highway will be discouraged. Rural residential development will become more oriented to using parallel north-south county roads as travel routes to Kalispell and Whitefish. This development pattern will accelerate residential development in more pristine and agriculturally productive areas of the Flathead Valley. Traffic congestion on US 93 will also cause increasing use of county roadways such as Whitefish Stage Road, Karrow Drive, Blanchard Lake Road, Stillwater Road, Demersville Road, and Lower Valley Road also will be used as defacto bypasses. Some of these roads may attract small scale commercial developments, e.g., convenience store type of land uses.

The Kalispell Comprehensive Plan encourages industrial development along the highway to the south of the city. Again, difficulty of turning movements, and in particular poor access and egress for large trucks, will constrain the growth of truck oriented industrial land uses.

The recent enactment of zoning between Kalispell and Whitefish will restrict development of new commercial land uses along this highway segment.

4.2.3 Impacts Common to Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), and A(COMBO)

The land uses effects of the "A" alternatives will generally be the same within the cities of Kalispell and Whitefish. US 93 improvements will directly displace one commercial land use in Whitefish. No land uses will be displaced in Kalispell. (A separate project planned by the Montana Department of Transportation will displace up to three commercial land uses at the intersection of US 2 and US 93 in Kalispell.) The conversion of parking and shoulder areas to traffic lanes will bring traffic closer to city residences along the US 93 corridor and will encourage conversion of remaining low density residential land uses to higher density residential and commercial uses. Improvements to turning movements may enhance the attractiveness and encourage new investment viability of higher density residential developments adjacent to the highway. Reductions in drive-through traffic on city residential streets may help to preserve and encourage reinvestment in residential neighborhoods.

Traffic flow improvements in Central Business District areas will mainly be achieved by redesigning traffic lanes, rebuilding intersections, enhancing crosswalk areas, and by restricting of on-street parking. Highway improvements will enhance traffic flows and turning movements through downtown Kalispell and Whitefish and

will support expansion of office, personal and business service, and specialty retail land uses. The elimination of on-street parking will increase demand for parking lot areas on CBD side-streets, and will additional encourage conversions of public and private lands parking area.

Proposed improvements will encourage upgrading and expansion of commercial land uses on US 93 south of the county courthouse in Kalispell and along the Spokane Avenue segment of US 93 in Whitefish. Improved spacing of highway traffic and the development of center turn lanes or turn bays will reduce traffic barriers to customer access, and prompt more intensive commercial development. During peak traffic periods, congestion will still restrict turning movements and inhibit businesses development from fully benefiting from growth in drive-by traffic.

Improvements to traffic spacing and turning movements will enhance truck access to and from the highway and will encourage development of properties south of Kalispell for truck oriented industrial development. Industrial-type land uses are encouraged south of the Kalispell by the city's comprehensive plan.

Highway improvements also will improve the viability to rural residential development in areas which are served by US 93. The influence of highway improvements on rural residential development patterns will primarily occur to lands. Several existing subdivisions are located along county roads which access on to US 93, and safer and more convenient turning movements will encourage infilling of vacant lots in these developments. Infilling of these lands will attract development away from other more pristine and agriculturally productive rural areas.

Improved access onto nearby county roads will also improve the viability of new residential development in undeveloped areas. Enforcement of city and county zoning will restrain intensive new developments, but access improvements will enhance the feasibility of very large lot residential development. Highway improvements also will make it easier to make turns to and from driveways located along the highway. Traffic, noise and air pollution will continue to discourage substantial amounts of single family home development in close proximity to US 93.

Highway improvements will also enhance the viability of commercial and industrial development along rural highway segments. Roadway improvements will enhance the ability of existing businesses to serve drive-by customers and will encourage expansion of existing business land uses. Recently adopted county zoning will restrict development of new commercial and industrial land uses between Kalispell and Whitefish. Kalispell's industrial zoning extends southward along the highway corridor to the Balls Crossing area. Highway improvements will encourage industrial development in this area. Highway improvements will facilitate unplanned commercial and industrial development in the unzoned area north of Somers. Figure 3-1 shows the zoned and unzoned areas within the project area.

4.2.4 Impacts Which Differentiate Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), and A(COMBO)

Differences in the effects of Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), and A(COMBO) on future land uses will occur in urban-rural transition areas and along rural sections of highway.

Alternative A(MEDIAN) favors concentration of new commercial and industrial uses at city intersections served by turn bays and mid-block locations accessible from cross lane turning areas. A divided highway design will encourage denser and more coordinated commercial land development on US 93 in south Kalispell and along Spokane Avenue in Whitefish. This will be consistent with the community's stated desire to create a gateway to Whitefish. A center median design also will advance south Kalispell industrial development near intersections and along frontage roads. In rural areas, Alternative A(MEDIAN) will encourage expansion of

existing commercial land uses at intersections and turning areas between Kalispell and Whitefish. This alternative also favors new residential development along nearby county roads. The presence of a center median will discourage investment in residential, commercial and industrial land uses located in mid-block areas. The presence of the center median will reinforce the implementation of the city/county planning objectives to preserve agricultural lands and restrict new development along the US 93 corridor. In the unzoned area north of Somers, Alternative A(MEDIAN) will favor new business development at highway intersections with county roads.

Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will support reinvestment and new commercial development at intersections and at irregular locations along the highway corridor. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will encourage less dense and uneven extension of commercial strips south of Kalispell and Whitefish. This will not be as consistent with the community's stated desire to create a gateway to Whitefish. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will permit trucks to make left-turns onto the highway from individual driveways and will support low density dispersed industrial land adjacent to US 93 south of Kalispell. Two directional access onto US 93 also will allow for development of new access roads onto US 93 serving new subdivisions and large lot residential development setback from the highway. A five-lane design also will support random development of businesses in unzoned areas north of Somers. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will not reinforce the implementation of the planning objectives to preserve agricultural lands and restrict new development.

Alternative A(COMBO) uses a blend of four-lane divided highway and five-lane highway designs. Alternative A(COMBO) generally provides for five-lane highway segments inside Kalispell, Whitefish, and Somers and divided highway designs in rural areas. Alternative A(COMBO) will support less intensive and more linear commercial and industrial development along city highway segments. Use of center medians along rural segments will favor new commercial and industrial investment near intersections served by turn bays. The presence of the center median will reinforce the implementation of the city/county planning objectives to preserve agricultural lands and restrict new development along the US 93 corridor. The rural portion of Alternative A(COMBO) differs from Alternative A(MEDIAN) where it extends the five-lane highway design farther to the south of the City of Kalispell. Extending the five-lane design farther will encourage less dense commercial and industrial development patterns along this highway segment.

4.2.5 Impacts Common to Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE)

Alternative B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN-LANE) will create a southwestern and western bypass around the Kalispell urban area. The bypass will primarily serve non-stop travelers and commercial truck traffic. Development of a west bypass will be in addition to improvements to the existing US 93 corridor through Kalispell.

Development of a west bypass around Kalispell will lessen traffic volumes on existing US 93 through the city, without substantially affecting the market for commercial goods and services created by US 93 travelers. Coupled with highway design improvements within the city, customer accessibility to business on US 93 in the Kalispell Central Business District and commercial areas south of Kalispell will be improved. Highway improvements will make business locations on US 93 more competitive with rival commercial areas elsewhere in the Flathead Valley, and will encourage new investment and expansion of commercial land uses along the existing highway corridor through Kalispell. Expansion of certain types of business land uses may be inhibited by development of bypass route. For example, truck stops located on existing US 93 will be disadvantaged by the rerouting to drive-through and commercial truck traffic.

The land use effects of beltways (or bypasses) have been extensively studied, including a landmark study by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development which analyzed land use effects of

beltways in numerous United States cities. The findings of these analyses are that beltways do not attract development to a region where a market for growth does not already exist. Beltways do, however, influence the location and timing of development within a region. This basic supposition is consistent with the opinions of the land use planners and other local development experts who served on the US 93 Land Use Subcommittee. These land use planners and others agreed that development is currently occurring in the west Kalispell area, is programmed to continue in the west Kalispell area, and will be accelerated upon completion of the bypass of the west Kalispell area.

The southwestern segment of Alternative B generally follows a Burlington Northern Railroad spur line from US 93 to Foy's Lake Road. It will supplant approximately 13.37 hectares (33 acres) occupied by the rail spur. Two small segments of this rail spur alignment will be located outside of the railroad's property. These segments will not directly displace any houses, but will result in removal of one building and storage area used by a construction contractor. The railroad alignment also will displace about 1.22 hectares (three acres) of agricultural land used for pasture, and about .04 hectares (0.1 acre) devoted to residential and 0.12 hectare (0.3 acres) serving commercial/industrial land uses.

The development of the southwestern segment of the bypass will improve the road access into areas south and southwest of Kalispell. This area is classified as agricultural by the Kalispell Comprehensive Plan, and only very low density residential development is permitted to occur. Low density residential ranchette-type development is occurring in the area and improved access is likely to increase the number of ranchettes which are constructed in this area. Intensive residential development southwest of Kalispell will be constrained by current zoning restrictions, and the absence of public water and sewer services. To the extent that added low density residential development will occur southwest of Kalispell, it will **accelerate the displacement of** additional agricultural land uses.

From Foy's Lake Road to US 93, Alternative B will cross through lands devoted to industrial, commercial, and agricultural uses. From Foy's Lake Road to US 2, the B alignment will displace about 2.03 hectares (five acres) of industrial land. The alignment splits a large industrial parcel and removes three support buildings. At US 2, the project will take an estimated 1.22 hectares (three acres) of undeveloped land zoned for commercial land uses. North of US 2, the bypass will supplant an estimated 10.94 hectares (27 acres) of agricultural land. Most of this land is devoted to growing small grains.

North of US 2, the bypass will traverse the western edge of the Kalispell urban area. This area is in transition from agricultural to residential land uses and is designated for high and moderate density residential development by the Kalispell Comprehensive Plan. There are long-term plans to extend city services into the area which will increase the ability of the area to support intensive residential development. By splitting numerous agricultural parcels, the bypass will make it more difficult to carry on farming and may hasten the conversion of farmland to residential land uses. Some land use subcommittee members have suggested that Alternative B will create a barrier, which will eventually separate urban density residential development to its east from agricultural and low density residential land uses to its west (Land Use Subcommittee, 1993).

The bypass's intersections with US 2 and the existing US 93 corridor (Snowline Road to the south) and (West Reserve to the north) will become more favorable locations for traveler and truck oriented commercial developments. A bypass will encourage more intensive commercial development at these intersections, and will to lure investment away from proposals for similar land development elsewhere in the Flathead Valley. Elsewhere along the bypass route, commercial land uses are not permitted by current zoning.

4.2.6 Impacts Which Differentiate Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE)

Local government planning, zoning, and subdivision regulations and MDT imposed restrictions on left turning movements and new road and driveway accesses will be used to restrict development of non-agricultural land uses along rural sections of the southwest segment of the bypass corridor. **The impacts of these are the same, regardless of the alternative chosen**. The difference in the land use effects of the design Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) will be that center median provided for in Alternative B(MEDIAN) also will create a physical barrier which will inhibit new development along mid-block areas of the corridor; whereas, the five-lane highway proposed in Alternative B(TURN-LANE) will rely on the regulatory authorities of state and local government agencies.

The Kalispell Comprehensive Plan encourages new residential development in the area to be traversed by the northern segment of the bypass. To the extent that a center median will discourage residential development along roads and driveways accessing on to the bypass corridor, it will favor residential development in areas served by east-west county roads. A five-lane highway will provide housing developers with more flexibility in developing residential land uses which access directly or indirectly onto the bypass highway.

4.2.7 Impacts Common to Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), and C(COUPLET-4)

The Alternative C options will convert US 93 into opposite flowing one-way streets or parallel two-way streets.

Development of a Baker-Spokane Avenue couplet will decrease traffic congestion in Whitefish's Central Business District, without reducing overall markets available to CBD businesses. The couplet system is not likely to change the character of existing commercial land uses along Second Street, or on the north side of the CBD. The alleviation of traffic congestion and better pedestrian access will help to offset the effects of reduced drive-by traffic and loss of on-street parking on Second Street businesses. Development of a Baker-Spokane Couplet will enhance the viability of Baker Avenue as a location for downtown business development. A couplet system may also encourage more intensive commercial development along Third Street, which will become a more integral part of downtown circulation patterns. In general, the Whitefish Central Business District will become more accessible to pedestrians, and commercial land uses will be allowed to become more oriented to serving walk-in clientele.

A couplet system also will influence commercial development patterns along Spokane Avenue. More intensive commercial land uses are likely to develop near the Baker Avenue (or Seventh Street) intersection with Spokane Avenue; where US 93 will be returned to two-directional traffic flows. This area is also likely to benefit the most from recently adopted zoning restrictions for areas south of US 40. Some of the business growth which would have occurred along rural segments of US 93 is now likely to occur in the Spokane Avenue segment of the highway.

Conversely, reduced drive-by traffic will make lands to the north of the Baker-Spokane intersection (the northbound one-way segment) less attractive for commercial development and will slow the transition this section of Spokane Avenue from residential and home occupation type land uses to highway commercial-type land uses.

Elevated traffic volumes on Baker Avenue also may encourage higher housing densities in residential areas adjoining this roadway. Denser residential land uses are permitted under current zoning. There also may be an increase in home occupation-type businesses in the Baker Avenue residential area. Improvements to Baker

Avenue will also improve access into residential areas in southwestern Whitefish. These areas are designated as residential growth areas by the Whitefish Comprehensive Plan.

4.2.8 Impacts which Differentiate Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), and C(COUPLET-4)

Baker Avenue alternatives which extend the roadway southward to a new intersection at Spokane Avenue will displace a small amount gravel pit area and commercial property. Alternatives C(COUPLET-2) and C(COUPLET-4) will both supplant about .81 hectare (two acres) of gravel pit and two acres of commercial land, while option C(COUPLET-3) will depose about .41 hectare (one acre) of commercial land. Alignment option C(COUPLET-1) is located exclusively within existing Baker Avenue corridor and will require no additional land.

The location of the Baker Avenue intersection with Spokane Avenue will influence the distribution of commercial development patterns along Spokane Avenue. Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), and C(COUPLET-4) will locate the couplet intersection in the vicinity of Columbia Avenue. These design alternatives will favor commercial development patterns which are more intensive to the south and less intensive to the north of Columbia Avenue. Alternative C(COUPLET-3) will extend the reach of two-way traffic on Spokane Avenue to Seventh Street, and will favor commercial development patterns which are more intensive to the south and less intensive to the north of this intersection.

Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-3), and C(COUPLET-4) may encourage businesses some businesses on Spokane Avenue to extend entryways and expand facilities westward to serve southbound traffic on Baker Avenue.

4.2.9 Access Control Alternatives

Alternative access control policies (restrictive, no access and situational) regarding new road and driveway access onto US 93 will be implemented for this project. Depending on the access control policy implemented, land uses and development patterns will be affected.

4.2.9.1 Restrictive Access Control Policy

Imposition of restrictive access controls will further discourage development of commercial and residential land uses at new locations along rural highway segments. MDT restrictions of new road or driveway access onto US 93 will reinforce the effectiveness of rural zoning ordinances which seek to prohibit new commercial land uses and intensive residential development. Especially in urban and urbanizing areas, strict limitations on new access will favor new development and reinvestment in areas with established access onto the highway. Stringent access controls will favor more intensive (higher density) commercial and industrial development patterns. Highway access controls will also favor industrial development along frontage roads.

This policy (with flexibility) is the preferred access control policy.

4.2.9.2 No Access Control Policy

If MDT does not limit new road and driveway access onto the highway corridor, developers will have greater flexibility in locating new residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. In the absence of access controls, additional low density residential development will occur adjacent to rural highway segments. Most of this development will be set back from the highway. Permissive access policies will allow for establishment of new roads onto rural segments of US 93, which will open up new areas to low density residential development. Residential ranchette development in previously undeveloped areas is likely to displace agricultural lands, and intrude into wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas. The absence of restrictive access controls also will increase requests for zoning variances to permit new commercial uses along rural highway segments.

In urban and urbanizing areas, a no access control policy will help to perpetuate ongoing commercial and industrial development patterns south of Kalispell and Whitefish. Unrestricted location of driveways and new access roads will favor incremental and lower density business development patterns. Uncontrolled access will more evenly distribute the business development opportunities among US 93 properties. Even if location of new roads and driveways is not regulated, developers will still be required to construct new accesses to MDT specifications.

4.2.9.3 Situational Access Control Policy

A situational access control policy will allow MDT flexibility to enact restrictive or permissive access policies based on highway design, traffic conditions, land use objectives, and other public policy objectives. Such a policy could be used to discourage development along high speed highway segments, and in agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas. By allowing for more flexible access in undeveloped urban lands, MDT may encourage infilling of undeveloped or underdeveloped properties.

4.3 Farmland

Existing farmland conditions are described in Section 3.2.2.

4.3.1 Impacts

Impacts to farmland occur whenever the surface area is paved with impervious surface, covered by fill or removed by cutting to accommodate the installation of the roadway. Also the purchase of ROW can preclude the use of the area for agricultural purposes although it may be physically left untouched.

4.3.1.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative will not directly impact prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance.

4.3.1.2 Impacts Common to Build Alternatives

Impacts common to all build alternatives will be created by the interruption of existing patterns of transportation and/or the execution of routines. These interruptions can create economic impact by creating patches of land too small to be economically feasible for farming. Additionally, reconfiguring transportation routes may adversely effect the transportation of farm or ranch commodities to their markets or impede with the necessary grazing, herding and movement of livestock.

Indirect impacts also occur when an alternative results in the conversion of prime farmland to residential or commercial use. This indirect impact will occur with all alternatives, including the No-Build Alternative. **Alternative B in Kalispell will accelerate the conversion of farmland to other land uses.**

Table 4-7 includes a tabulation of direct impacts on farmland. Direct impacts have been defined as the farmland that is within the right-of-way of the alternatives.

4.3.1.3 Impacts Which Differentiate Build Alternatives

- Alternative A(MEDIAN): This alternative will require the purchase of additional right-of-way in agricultural locations. There will be a total of 7.57 hectares (18.7 acres) of prime farmland and 1.65 hectares (4.07 acres) of prime if irrigated farmland directly affected by this additional right-of-way. The greatest portion of these affected acres are located near the split alignments.

- Alternative A(TURN-LANE): There will be no additional right-of-way for this alternative. This is due to the fact that previous right-of-way purchases for this project were made with a similar configuration in mind. Most of the necessary right-of-way **(in rural areas)** for this alternative has already been in place for several years. **This alternative will result in increased indirect impacts on farmland, as a result of likely increased strip development.**

- Alternative A(COMBO): This alternative is a combination of both of the above alternatives. **It has less impact than the A(MEDIAN) alternative. It is the preferred alternative.**

- Alternative B(MEDIAN): This alternative has the largest direct impact on Prime and Unique Farmland as it is creating a new alignment through open lands. This would be true of any alternative that does not overlay an existing alignment.

Table 4-7
Farmland Impacts
Hectares (Acres)

	Preferred Alternative		No-Build	
Segment	Prime	State/Local	Prime	State/Local
Somers to Kalispell	0.34(0.83)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Kalispell Area	16.43 (40.61)	3.68 (9.09)	0(0)	0(0)
Kalispell to Whitefish	7.45 (18.4)	5.02 (12.4)	0(0)	0(0)
Whitefish Area	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
West of Whitefish	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

4.3.2 Coordination

Coordination with the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) has occurred. Form AD 1006 (Farmland Conversion) was submitted to **and approved by** the SCS. **This is included in the Draft EIS.**

4.3.3 Mitigation

Mitigation will be addressed during the design of the roadway. Mitigation measures possible to lessen these types of impacts **to farmland** are; under or overpasses, median refuges, U-turn **accommodations** or widened shoulders.

4.4 Social

Existing social conditions are described in Section 3.3.

4.4.1 Impacts

Flathead County is predicted to experience substantial population growth regardless of whether improvements are made to US 93. From 1993 to 2015, the county's year-round population is forecasted to increase from 64,000 to 86,000, and with the peak summer population increasing from about 75,000 to over 100,000. The build alternatives will not meaningfully affect the ability of the Flathead area's economy to support population, or change the area's appeal as a place to retire or locate a second home.

US 93 alternatives may have some influence on the geographic distribution of area's future population growth. This will occur in areas where highway alternatives substantially change the quality of access into an areas with development potential. Impacts of US 93 alternatives are one of many factors will influence the distribution of future settlement in Flathead County.

The effects of US 93 alternatives on the distribution of settlement in Kalispell, Whitefish, and rural areas of the central Flathead Valley are discussed in Section 4.2, Land Use. Highway alternatives will have very minor impacts on population growth and the distribution of new settlement in southern sections of the Flathead Valley. Big Fork, Lakeside, and rural subdivisions the along north end of Flathead Lake will experience substantial growth irrespective of improvements to US 93 (Land Use Advisory Committee, 1993). Potential for new settlement in the Somers area will be enhanced by the recent addition of natural gas service, the expected development of a community sewer system, and the gradual alleviation of environmental problems associated with the nearby Super Fund site. Travel times from Somers, Lakeside, Big Fork, and north lake subdivisions are already rapid enough to support substantial commuting to Kalispell. Proposed highway improvements will reduce travel times by about 1 minute, which is not sufficient to induce major additional development in these areas. Likewise, US 93 alternatives will have little effect on long distance commuter patterns in the north end of the Flathead Valley. Travel times from east and west valley areas to Kalispell and Whitefish will not be sufficiently improved to induce substantial additional commuter oriented settlement. Greatest traveler time savings for commuters will be for persons commuting between Kalispell and Whitefish (an estimated 2 to 4 minute savings).

Improvements to the Somers to Whitefish segment of US 93 will have little influence on population growth or the distribution of new settlement in neighboring counties or the Flathead Indian Reservation. Improvements to US 93 will not sufficiently improve travel times from the reservation and Lake County to cause major noteworthy increases in people commuting to jobs located in Flathead County. Proposed improvements to US 93 from Somers to Kalispell and planned improvements to the "Polson Hill" north of Polson will reduce the travel time between Polson and Kalispell by only about 2 minutes. No other major improvements are planned for US 93 from Somers to Polson. Improvements are proposed areas south of Polson, but these areas are too far from Flathead County job centers to support substantial commuting oriented new settlement.

The northern end of the Somers to Whitefish highway project is on the west side of Whitefish. Planned highway improvements to northern segments of US 93 will have minimal effects on travel times to Whitefish from the north (Jim Weaver, 1993).

Regardless of compensation and procedures designed to reduce relocation impacts on individuals, it is often traumatic to be uprooted from one's home, or place of employment. The build alternatives will displace up to 5 residences and 7 businesses. Highway alternatives will not displace the homes or places of employment of substantial numbers of elderly or handicapped persons, transit dependent persons, members of racial or ethnic minorities, or other special population groups.

4.4.1.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative is opposed by the vast majority of voters responding to the Flathead Valley Voters Survey. The No-Build Alternative will not offer Flathead County residents and visitors relief from the impacts of US 93. Most (73 percent) of Flathead Valley voters surveyed in 1993, felt there are serious problems with current traffic conditions on US 93. The vast majority of voters (86%) felt that traffic conditions will get much worse if improvements are not made to the highway (Flathead County Voters Survey, 1993).

The No-Build Alternative will not require the acquisition of any land and will not directly displace households, yards, recreation areas, or other areas used for human activities. The Montana Department of Transportation has plans to construct improvements to the intersection of US 2 and US 93 in Kalispell irrespective of which US 93 alternative is selected. The MDT's intersection project will displace up to 3 small businesses.

Predicted population and economic growth in Flathead County and increases in tourist and drive through traffic will cause increased traffic congestion along the Somers to Whitefish corridor, and will increase travel times, stress, and inconveniences and worsen safety conditions for vehicle operators, passengers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. In Whitefish, many children must cross US 93 to walk or bike to school grounds. Increased traffic on US 93 will heighten traffic hazards for these children. Congestion also will cause vehicles to operate less efficiently, exposing vehicle operators and pedestrians, persons living and working at near the highway to greater amounts of automobile noise and air pollution. Congestion will also lower the fuel efficiency of vehicles. Increased congestion will impair resident and visitor access to community services and facilities, and intensify the traffic barrier to pedestrian and bicycle movements in central business districts and neighborhoods.

Inside Kalispell and Whitefish and in rural areas, traffic congestion and delays will further encourage drivers to use parallel city streets and county roads to avoid driving on US 93. Use of city streets and county roads for drive-through travel will heighten traffic impacts to residential neighborhoods and rural areas, and make it less comfortable walk and bicycle in these areas. Increased traffic may also create traffic barriers between neighborhoods and depreciate residential property values. Increased traffic on rural roads also will create additional obstacles for agricultural vehicles using county roads.

As congestion increases on US 93, it will further delay response times and create additional hazards for local police, fire, and ambulance vehicles responding to emergencies.

4.4.1.2 Impacts Common to Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), and A(COMBO)

The right-of-way needed to construct Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), and A(COMBO) will be the same for highway segments located inside of the cities of Kalispell and Whitefish. Most road improvements will be accomplished within existing highway property, with land acquisition being limited to property needed to widen selected intersections. Some minor adjustments to location of public and private utilities will be necessary in both communities.

Proposed improvements to US 93 in Kalispell and Whitefish will reduce traffic impacts, but congestion will still be a problem during peak periods of travel. By improving traffic flows and turning movements, and upgrading facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, highway improvements will make conditions better than they will be if no action is taken. Highway improvements will reduce travel times, provide for safer movements, and reduce stress, and inconveniences for vehicle operators, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Improvements to US 93 traffic flows are also likely to decrease drive-through traffic in city residential neighborhoods (caused by drivers using side streets to avoid driving on US 93). Reduced drive-through traffic on residential streets will help to preserve neighborhood character, property values, and facilitate safe pedestrian and bicycle movements within and between residential areas. Highway improvements also will foster faster and safer delivery of emergency services.

People living and working in close proximity to US 93 are already exposed to traffic noise, pollution, loss of privacy, and inconveniences associated with a heavily traveled highway. Conversion of parking lanes to traffic lanes will bring noise and air pollution closer to where people live and work. Impacts due to closer proximity to traffic will be somewhat offset by smoother traffic flows, which will reduce pollution and noise levels emitted from passing vehicles. Improvements to traffic flows will also result in more efficient fuel consumption.

Expansion of in-city traffic lanes will increase the area of exposure to traffic for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing US 93. The dangers to pedestrians and bicyclists due to crossing a wider traffic zone will be partially reduced by improved spacing of highway traffic, and upgrades to crosswalk areas (installation of safety zones), and improvements to in-city bike routes.

People also will be inconvenienced by the loss of on-street parking. This impact will be most prominent in the Kalispell and Whitefish central business districts.

Outside of cities, Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), and A(COMBO) will displace a small number of residences and businesses. Highway widening also will bring high speed traffic impacts closer to households and businesses located along rural segments of the corridor.

Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) will reduce travel times, improve driver safety and convenience, and lessen the stress of traveling on rural segments of US 93. These alternatives also will enhance the safety and convenience of entering or exiting the highway from side roads, and business and residential driveways. Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) will reduce the growth in drive-through traffic on rural area roads (caused by drivers using county roads to avoid driving on US 93), which will lessen traffic impacts on rural residential areas and agricultural operations. Bike paths and

improvements to highway shoulders will enhance the safety of school bus, bicycle and pedestrian movements along rural highway segments.

Highway widening will supplant small amounts of land from numerous agricultural parcels (see 4.3: Farmland). Displacement of crop and grazing areas at the edges of fields will not by itself necessitate the discontinuation of family farm operations.

Most relocation of electrical and natural gas transmission lines occurred previously in anticipation of the widening of US 93.

4.4.1.3 Impacts Which Differentiate Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), and A(COMBO)

Widening US 93 will bring highway traffic impacts closer to households living adjacent to the highway corridor. Differences in the traffic impacts of Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), and A(COMBO) will occur along rural highway segments. Households living closer to the highway will generally experiencing the most severe impacts. Impacts which could occur include increases in noise, decreases in property value and increases in visual impact. Alternative A(MEDIAN) will cause the right-of-way to be within 15.25 meters (50 feet) of 13 residences and within 15.25 to 30.5 meters (50 to 100 feet) of 38 residences. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will cause the right-of-way to be within 15.25 meters (50 feet) of 18 residences and within 15.25 to 30.5 meters (50 to 100 feet) of another 30 residences. Alternative A(COMBO) will cause the right-of-way to be within 15.25 meters (50 feet) of 13 residences and within 15.25 to 30.5 meters (50 to 100 feet) of another 38 residences. Proposed improvements will not cause appreciable changes in highway impacts to households living greater than 30.5 meters (100 feet) from the new highway rights-of-way.

Expanding US 93 from two to four lanes and the associated reduction in traffic congestion will improve the safety and convenience of US 93 access and egress. The center median used in rural segments of Alternative A(MEDIAN) will prevent left turns to and from US 93 except where left turn bays and turning zones are provided, and will increase travel times for persons traveling to and from residences and commercial locations in mid-block areas. The center turn lane provided for in Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will provide two-directional access and egress for businesses and residences along most rural segments of US 93. Most rural segments of Alternative A(COMBO) will be built with a center median, which will limit left turn movements except at intersections and in turning zone areas. South of Kalispell, Alternative A(COMBO) will be built using a five-lane design, which provides direct left turn access to businesses and remaining residences located along this commercial-industrial segment of highway.

Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), and A(COMBO) will also improve the travel times and the safety of emergency vehicle operations on highway rural segments. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will allow law enforcement vehicles, ambulances, and fire truck operators to use the center lane to pass congested vehicles and is preferred by emergency vehicle operators. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) also will facilitate left turning movements along most rural highway segments. Depending on the characteristics of center medians, Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) may restrict cross-traffic turns in areas where turn bays or turning zones are not provided, **although special locations could be designated for emergency vehicle crossing areas.**

Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) will have a slightly lessened effect on the Happy Valley community area. Approximately 20 residences which are immediately adjacent to US 93 will be approximately 6.1 to 9.15 meters (20 to 30 feet) further away with Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) since the alignment is offset to the west in this area.

Concerns were expressed during the public review process about increased traffic on Antelope Trail Road. Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) both assume that traffic accessing the residences and some businesses in the vicinity of Meadows Road and Hodgson Road will use Antelope Trail Road in addition to US 93. This will result in some increased traffic on Antelope Trail Road, with accompanying increases in noise and some degradation of neighborhood character. These alternatives have been planned with full-turning movement intersections approximately every 0.80 kilometer (one-half mile) so through traffic will not need to continue on Antelope Trail Road.

The center median provided for in Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) may create an obstacle to farm machinery movements along US 93.

Concerns were expressed during the public review process about the social impacts of the various alternatives on a community's sense of "place." There are social values (such as feelings of stability or security) to residents of an area that may be associated with the sense of community character or identity. Community character or identity is generally defined by that which differentiates one community from another and may include scenic views or other visual assets. To the extent that one alternative or another may contribute to the loss of elements which make up community character or identity, that alternative may have greater social impact, or loss of social values such as feelings of stability or security.

4.4.1.4 Impacts Common to Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE)

Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) call for development of a bypass highway which will divert much of the drive-through personal vehicle traffic and commercial truck traffic to the west of Kalispell. The bypass will reduce the amount of through traffic and truck traffic on US 93 inside the City of Kalispell; thus will lessen traffic congestion, speed up travel times, improve driver safety, and improve the convenience and lower the stress for city drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. A bypass will meaningfully reduce traffic impacts in the Kalispell downtown area, making the area more accessible for drivers and providing for more convenient and safer pedestrian movement. The rerouting of trucks and drive through vehicles will lessen highway noise and air pollution within the city; thus improving the aesthetics of the downtown area.

Improvement of traffic flows on US 93 through Kalispell also will decrease drive-through traffic in city residential neighborhoods. Reduced use of residential streets by drive-through traffic will help to preserve residential character, property values, and facilitate safe pedestrian and bicycle movements within and between neighborhoods.

The lessening of in-city traffic congestion will also improve response times and the safety of emergency services operations.

Alternatives B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN-LANE) will bring auto and truck noise, air pollution, and the physical presence of the highway into agricultural and rural residential areas. Persons farming or residing near the bypass route will experience much less pastoral working and living environments and will have to make lifestyle adjustments to accommodate living near a heavily traveled roadway.

The segment of Alternative B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN-LANE) south of Foy's Lake Road will displace one business and no households, and the highway right-of-way will be within 15.25 meters (50 feet) of two residences and 30.5 meters (100 feet) of one residence.

Between Foy's Lake Road and US 2, the alignment will cross through an industrial properties, and may result in the dislocation of one industrial employer.

North of US 2, Alternative B will traverse areas in transition from an agricultural to residential land uses. Development of this segment of the bypass will not displace any existing residences or businesses. From US 2 to West Reserve Drive, the bypass right-of-way will pass within 15.25 meters (50 feet) of three residences and between 15.25 and 30.5 meters (50 and 100 feet) of another three residences. The north side of West Reserve Drive is developed at urban residential densities. The bypass right-of-way will pass within 15.25 to 30.5 meters (50 to 100 feet) of numerous single family houses and apartment dwellings. Bypass traffic and road alignments which split agricultural fields will have disruptive effects on farming operations north of US 2, and may encourage more rapid conversion of family farms to residential land uses.

4.4.1.5 Impacts Which Differentiate Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE)

Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) will use the same alignments and right-of-way area. The center lane provided in Alternative B(TURN-LANE) will allow emergency vehicle operators to use the center lane to pass congested vehicles. Alternative B(TURN-LANE) also will facilitate left turning movements along most rural highway segments. Depending on the characteristics of center medians, Alternative B(MEDIAN) may restrict cross-traffic turns in areas where turn bays or turning zones are not provided.

4.4.1.6 Impacts Common to Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), C(COUPLET-4)

Development of a Baker Avenue couplet will reduce the amount of traffic carried by Spokane Avenue and Second Street east of the US 93-Baker Avenue intersection. The division of highway traffic on to two roads will reduce traffic congestion; and improve travel times, driver safety, and access to businesses an services along the existing US 93 corridor. The couplet system also will reduce highway noise and air pollution, and improve the fuel efficiency of vehicles operating along the existing US 93 alignment. Reduction of congestion will also benefit pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The dangers to school children crossing Spokane Avenue will be diminished. The lessening of traffic congestion on Spokane Avenue and Second Street will allow the Whitefish Central Business District to become more congenial to pedestrians. Road design improvements and the lessening of in-city traffic congestion will also improve response times and the safety of emergency services operations in Whitefish.

Proposed improvements to Baker Avenue will not displace any households or businesses, and will not take property from the front of residences and businesses located along the roadway.

The development of Baker Avenue as a parallel highway corridor will bring highway traffic, auto and truck noise, air pollution, and the physical presence of the highway into a low intensity commercial area and residential areas. Conversion of Baker Avenue from a local collector street to a highway will noticeably change the character of adjoining neighborhoods. Couplet development will also eliminate on-street parking for houses and businesses located along Baker Avenue.

Transformation of Baker Avenue into a highway will create a new traffic obstacle within Whitefish, which will partition neighborhoods south of the central business district into east and west sectors and create a new barrier to pedestrian and bicycle movement. School children living on the west side of Baker Avenue will need to cross both Baker Avenue and Spokane Avenue (existing US 93) to walk or bicycle to school.

If Spokane Avenue and Baker Avenue are designated as north and southbound one-way couplets, residents of the Baker Avenue neighborhood south of the Whitefish River will be unable to drive north across the Baker Avenue Bridge. This neighborhood will become more isolated from the rest of the city. Its residents will be inconvenienced by having to travel roundabout routes to access shopping and services in the city's central business district. Designation of one-way couplets also will change local travel patterns in other Whitefish neighborhoods residents. The one-way couplet system will increase the use of CBD cross streets and neighborhood streets by local drivers.

4.4.1.7 Impacts Which Differentiate Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), C(COUPLET-4)

Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-4) will cause the right-of-way of the southbound couplet to be within 15.25 meters (50 feet) of six residences and 30.5 meters (100 feet) of another 12 residences. The right-of-way of Alternative C(COUPLET-3) will be within 15.25 meters (50 feet) of five residences and between 15.25 and 30.5 meters (50 and 100 feet) of another three residences. Alternative C(COUPLET-3) will result in a new road segment and bridge being constructed through a undeveloped wetland area used for dispersed recreation by nearby residents. If Baker Avenue is designated as a one-way southbound couplet, Alternative C(COUPLET-3) will provide the most convenient access to the Whitefish central business district for persons living south of the Whitefish River.

4.5 Relocation

4.5.1 Right-of-Way Impacts

The discussion of relocation impacts focuses on residences and businesses located inside the proposed rights-of-way of highway alternatives. Alignments for Alternatives A and B will directly displace a small number of housing units and businesses. Alternative C alignments will not displace any residences or business buildings.

All dwelling units potentially displaced by the project are detached single family houses. At least one of these houses is a rental unit. All commercial buildings displaced by the highway project support single occupant business operations. Employment at potentially supplanted businesses range from less than 5 to between 15 and 20 employees. Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of small numbers of affected households and business employees are not discussed in environmental impact statements to protect personal privacy.

Right-of-way requirements **for the preferred alternative** are shown in Table 4-8. These quantities include right-of-way needed for a separated bikepath. **The quantities in Tables 4-8 and 4-9 are approximate and based on design prepared to a conceptual level of detail. They do not include temporary or permanent easements which may be needed for fill/cut slopes or construction work. These will be determined during the final design process.**

Table 4-8
Approximate Right-of-Way Requirements
Hectares (Acres)

Segment	Quantity Required
MT 82 to Rocky Cliff Road	2.84 (7.01)
Rocky Cliff Road to Airport Road	8.02 (19.81)
Kalispell Bypass	36.32 (89.68)
Airport Road to Ninth	0.004 (0.01)
Ninth to Grandview	0.0 (0.0)
Grandview to MP 117	1.25 (3.09)
MP 117 to MP 122.7	13.87 (34.24)
MP 122.7 to MT 40	0.41 (1.0)
MT 40 to Whitefish River	0.0 (0.0)
Whitefish River (South) to Whitefish River (West)	0.17 (0.41)
Whitefish River (West) to MP 133	6.52 (16.1)
TOTAL	69.40 (171.35)

Right-of-way required for particular design elements is:

- Standard highway right-of-way: Approximately 58.57 hectares (144.61 acres)
- Intersections: Approximately 3.72 hectares (9.19 acres).
- Frontage Roads: Approximately 0.85 hectare (2.1 acre).
- Special design features: Approximately 1.11 hectare (2.75 acres).
- Park-n-rides: Approximately 1.22 hectares (3.0 acres).
- Separated bikepath: Approximately 3.93 hectares (9.7 acres).

Table 4-9 includes information about displaced housing units and businesses.

Table 4-9
Number of Displaced Housing Units and Businesses
(for Preferred Alternative)

Segment	Housing Units	Businesses	Outbuildings
MT 82 to Rocky Cliff Road	0	0	0
Rocky Cliff Road to Airport Road	2	2	1
Kalispell Bypass	3	3	1
Airport Road to Ninth	0	0	0
Ninth to Grandview	0	0	0
Grandview to MP 117	0	0	0
MP 117 to MP 122.7	3	1	0
MP 122.7 to MT 40	0	0	0
MT 40 to Whitefish River	0	0	0
Whitefish River to MP 133	0	0	0
TOTAL	8	6	2

4.5.2 Impacts which Differentiate Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), and A(COMBO)

Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) will displace **five** houses. These units are located along US 93 between Ball's Crossing and Kalispell, and between Reserve Drive and Bowdish Road.

Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) will displace **three** businesses, including a **second-hand store**, a recreation vehicle dealership and one auto repair operation. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will **also** displace **the second-hand store, the recreation vehicle dealership and the junkyard**. Alternative A(FOUR-LANE) will displace a photo processing establishment and a pizza store. C(OFF-SET) will displace a photo processing establishment.

Alternative A(MEDIAN) will displace an estimated 61 acres of agricultural land, Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will remove less than 0.405 hectare (one acre) of agricultural land, and Alternative A(COMBO) will displace 24.3 hectares (60 acres) of agricultural lands. The agricultural lands to be displaced by the highway project will be located on the edges of fields. Expansions of the highway right-of-way will reduce farm and ranch productivity, but should minimally affect agricultural operations on remainder parcels, and will not necessitate the discontinuation of any family or corporate farming operations.

4.5.3 Impacts which Differentiate "B" Alternatives

A west bypass of Kalispell, will cross a mix of agricultural, rural residential, and industrial properties. The relocations required to develop Alternatives B(MEDIAN) or Alternative B(TURN-LANE) will be the same, since the same right-of-way area is required.

Alternative B (from US 93 to Foy's Lake Road) will supplant 4.34 kilometers (2.7 miles) of railroad track and railroad right-of-way. Just south of Foy's Lake Road the alignment will the displace the operations building and storage yard of a construction contractor. Only about 1.22 hectares (three acres) of agricultural land and **three** residences will be displaced by Alternative B.

The bypass route crosses through a lumber yard/milling operation, where the route will supplant three large open walled buildings used for storing lumber, materials, and equipment. The highway would also supplant grounds used for storing inventory and conducting lumber yard operations. The disruptive effects of the bypass on this business operation may necessitate the lumber yard's relocation. North of US 2, the bypass route will directly displace an estimated 10.94 hectares (27 acres) of agricultural land, most of which is used for growing small grains. A portion of this bypass segment will be routed diagonally across fields, which may render remainder parcels too small or remote to be economically farmed. Where this occurs, the bypass development could result in discontinuation of family or corporate farming operations.

4.5.4 Impacts which Differentiate Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), AND C(COUPLET-4).

None of the Alternative C alignments will displace residences or commercial buildings. Alignments C(COUPLET-2) and C(COUPLET-4) will remove about .81 hectare (two acres) from a gravel pit area, portions of which are owned by the State of Montana and a private business person. Gravel from the pit area may be purchased for highway construction.

4.5.5 Mitigation

In an effort to make property acquisition as equitable as possible, standards have been developed to ensure adequate consideration and compensation for persons whose property is required for public improvement projects.

Property which is required for construction of a federal highway will be subject to the provisions of the Public Law 91-646, as amended by Public Law 100-17. Public Law 91-646 is the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (as amended). This is a federal law. The Public Law 100-17 is the Surface Transportation Act of 1987 which amended certain provisions of P.L. 91-646. It also is a federal law.

Provisions of the current Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) H.R.2950 have included all references to the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, and these provisions require compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (H.R.2950-34, Section 1017 Acquisition of Rights-of-Way).

It is the policy of the Montana Department of Transportation that no person will move from their dwelling until a comparable replacement dwelling has been made available to that person. A comparable replacement dwelling is safe, decent, and sanitary. The replacement housing must also be open to persons regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin.

Under most circumstances, persons residing in mobile homes will be eligible for relocation payments as will relocates who live in conventional dwellings. Relocates will be eligible to receive referrals of available replace properties, assistance in filing claims and other reasonable assistance necessary to assure successful relocation. Comparability will be based primarily on functional rather than physical similarity. Occupants of residents and businesses are entitled to receive reasonable and necessary moving costs and related expenses in relocating their personal property, provided the established procedural requirements of the Montana Department Transportation are followed.

Right-of-way needed from the Burlington Northern (BN) rail line for Alternative B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) will need to follow a process initiated by BN through the Public Service Commission and Interstate Commerce Commission to seek approval for abandonment of the rail line. **If shippers are still being served by rail at the time right-of-way is needed, this FEIS assumes either the shippers would be purchased or their shipping rights would be compensated by MDT since this is right-of-way required to build the bypass.**

4.5.6 Availability of Replacement Real Estate

The 1990 Census listed 4,145 residential vacancies, of which 2,517 were reported as seasonally vacant (US Department of Commerce, 1991). The high percentage of seasonal vacancies housing units reflects the prevalence of ski-season and summertime second home residents in the Flathead area. Seasonally occupied units are generally not available to for occupancy by year-round residents.

The 1990 Census reported the median value of owner occupied housing to be $64,200 and the median rent to be $332. Since the census, Flathead County has experienced a period of vigorous population growth. Robust demand for housing has increased the market values of housing units and costs for rental housing. The median

sales price for a house sold in 1993 is estimated to be about $88,000, a 38 percent increase since the census. (Jim Kelly, 1993).

Table 4-10 illustrates that 952 housing units were on the market in Flathead County in December of 1993, which is about 3 percent of the county-wide housing stock. The asking price for the majority of houses for sale in Flathead County exceeds $100,000. The number of houses for sale in Flathead County tends to increase during summer months.

Table 4-10
Houses for Sale in Flathead County by Asking Price
December, 1993

Asking Price	Number of Units
less than $50,000	54
$50,000 to $79,999	144
$80,000 to $99,999	140
$100,000 to $119,999	68
$120,000 to $139,000	103
$140,000 to $159,999	43
$160,000 to $179,999	65
$180,000 to $199,999	58
$200,000 to $249,999	79
$250,000 to $299,999	78
$300,000 to $399,999	60
$400,000 to $499,999	16
$500,000 and greater	44
Total Housing Units For Sale	952

Source: Flathead Board of Realtors, Flathead Multiple Listing Service, December, 1993.

The market values for most of the houses potentially displaced by the highway project are expected to be less than $100,000, with 1 or 2 of the units being in the less than $50,000 value range. Moderate and low cost housing are the least procurable part of the Flathead County housing market (Shirley Schmidt, 1993). It is noteworthy, that only 30 percent of housing units for sale at the end of 1993 were priced in the $50,000 to $100,000 range, and only 6 percent were priced at less than $50,000. In the Kalispell area there were 93 housing units for sale in the $50,000 to $100,000 range and 7 houses selling for less than $50,000. In the Whitefish area there were 33 units for sale in the $50,000 to $100,000 range and 1 house selling for less than $50,000 (Flathead Board of Realtors, 1993).

The highway project could displace one moderate cost rental unit (a detached single family home). Low and moderate income rental housing is generally in short-supply in Flathead County. This is particularly true for single family housing units in the less than $500 a month price range (Shirley Schmidt, 1993).

In December 1993, there were 108 commercial properties for sale in Flathead County, with asking prices ranging from $23,700 to $2.6 million. Most commercial properties which are for sale are located in the Kalispell and Whitefish areas (Flathead Board of Realtors, 1993).

4.6 Economic

4.6.1 General Impacts

Flathead County will experience substantial economic growth irrespective of whether or not improvements are made to US 93. From 1990 to 2015, average annual employment is forecasted to increase from 32,000 to 51,000. Increases in employment and commerce will add considerably to the transportation demands placed on US 93 and other major roadways in Flathead County.

US 93 alternatives will not meaningfully affect trends for growth and decline in Flathead area's key basic industries or the overall growth in the area's economy. By affecting the distribution of traffic on area roadways and the accessibility of business districts and individual businesses, highway alternatives will have some influence on the geographic distribution of economic growth within the county. Retail and service businesses catering to drive-through travelers, tourists, and serving local and regional trade are most susceptible to changes in highway conditions. Businesses gaining superior access to customer markets will enjoy competitive advantages over rival businesses with less advantageous access. Market values for business properties benefiting from improved access will increase.

Highway alternatives which influence the geographic distribution of new investments in residences and businesses will also have minor influences on the distribution of the local property tax base. Highway alternatives will not affect overall trends in the county-wide tax base, but may affect which cities, school districts, other special taxing jurisdictions benefit from new investments. The "build" alternatives will permanently remove a small amount of agricultural land from production, taxes paid on this land will be lost to local taxing jurisdictions. The small number of residences and businesses displaced by the "build" alternatives will be replaced by new investment in homes and businesses.

Improvements to US 93 which reduce travel times and contribute to more efficient operation of vehicles will lessen the costs of doing business in and through Flathead County. Improvements in highway safety conditions will reduce personal and business economic losses due to traffic accidents.

4.6.2 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative will not directly displace any business buildings, parking areas, agricultural land uses. However, the No-Build Alternative will provide no relief from traffic problems on US 93. As US 93 traffic increases, congestion will slow travel times for local, regional, and international commerce and contribute to less efficient operation of commercial vehicles; thus increasing the costs of doing business in and through Flathead County. Deterioration of highway safety conditions will also contribute to increases in the incidence of traffic accidents and result in greater personal and business economic losses due to accidents.

The effects of increasing traffic on US 93 will vary from business to business depending on type of business and individual access situations. Where keen competition exists among businesses, these establishments becoming less accessible are likely to lose potential customers to rival businesses in more convenient locations. For example, tourists and drive-through travelers may delay stopping to purchase gas or food at difficult to access locations, but will eventually make these purchases at more convenient locations elsewhere in the county.

Worsening of traffic congestion will limit the ability of businesses in downtown Kalispell and Whitefish to fully benefit from growth in the area's population and economy. Particularly in summer months, drivers will have increasing difficulty in making left turns and performing parking movements in central business districts.

Increasing congestion may further encourage local residents to use side streets to circumvent driving on US 93 through main street businesses areas. Traffic, noise, and pollution will detract from the aesthetics of the downtown areas, which may dissuade tourists from stopping.

Business growth along commercial strips in Kalispell and Whitefish also will be limited by congestion and impeded turning movements. Businesses along US 93 commercial strips will become increasingly oriented to serving one-directional traffic. For businesses located along rural areas US 93, growth in highway traffic speeds and the absence of traffic signals and turning bays will further confound customer ingress and egress to business locations.

Traffic congestion and access problems will influence where new commercial investment occurs along the US 93 corridor. Business locations where traffic signals or turn bays are provided will enjoy location advantages over areas where turning movements are less protected. Congestion and access constraints on US 93 also will divert business investment to alternative Flathead County highways providing better conditions for customer access.

Increases in traffic congestion will also discourage growth in truck oriented industrial operations along the US 93 corridor.

4.6.3 Impacts Common to Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), and A(COMBO)

Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), and A(COMBO) will enhance the ability of businesses located along the US 93 corridor to benefit from overall expansion of the Flathead County economy. None of the design alternatives will fully reconcile the obstacles to business growth created by traffic congestion problems or constraints to customer turning movements. Proposed improvements will make conditions for US 93 businesses better than if no improvements are made. All three alternatives will allow for a greater volume of drive-by traffic and generally improve customer access for businesses located along the corridor. Nearly all businesses located adjacent to US will benefit from improved customer access due to better traffic spacing and improvements in right turning movements. Improvements will help to make US 93 businesses more competitive with other Flathead area businesses.

Improvements to US 93 through Kalispell and Whitefish will be accomplished by redesigning traffic lanes, restricting on-street parking, upgrading crosswalks, and reconstructing key intersections. Driving in the Kalispell and Whitefish central business districts will be more convenient and less stressful for tourists and local shoppers. Improvements to crosswalk areas will be particularly beneficial in central business district areas, because of heavy use by of downtown areas by pedestrian tourists, local shoppers, and business persons.

Outside central business district areas, better traffic spacing, and improvements at intersections, development of center turn lanes and turn bays will enhance customer access and egress from highway businesses. Improvements will cause additional business growth along the commercial strips in Kalispell and Whitefish. Smaller commercial nodes on US 93 also will benefit from the addition of traffic lanes and turning zones.

Reconfiguration of traffic lanes through Kalispell and Whitefish will eliminate on-street parking. Adverse impacts will be greatest for downtown businesses where substitute parking is unavailable on side streets, or in nearby city or private parking lots. The loss of on-street parking also will pose problems for some individual businesses located outside of central business districts. However, most businesses outside of central business areas have access to off-street parking areas.

US 93 will still route high volumes of drive-through traffic and truck traffic through the downtown areas of Kalispell and Whitefish. During the peak travel periods, and traffic congestion will detract from the aesthetic appeal of downtown areas to tourists and inhibit left turning along most of the highway corridor.

4.6.4 Impacts which Differentiate Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)

4.6.4.1 General

Development of Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) will displace an estimated **three** businesses, employing an estimated **30** persons. Owners will be compensated for the value of businesses property displaced by the highway project, and will also be eligible to receive funds to relocate their businesses. Individual owners will decide whether or not they will re-open their businesses. **Crop and grazing land displaced by Alternative** A(COMBO) will not have important effects on overall productivity of the county's agricultural sector, but will reduce the earnings of individual farms and ranches.

A four-lane divided highway will limit left-turn movements to turn bays, whereas a five-lane highway will allow for left-turns at most business locations along the corridor. Business most affected by convenience will be businesses selling highly competitive (readily available) and relatively low cost goods and personal services. For example, gas stations/convenience stores, fast food restaurants, and hotel/motel services rely on spontaneous purchasing decisions by potential customers, and sales are affected by convenience of access. **The design detailed in Appendix A, however, provides for full turning movement intersections at most if not all of such businesses currently located along US 93**. Less affected will be specialty retail, personal service businesses (medical), and general retail (grocery and discount) stores; where consumer decisions also consider costs and qualities of goods and services. Convenience of access has little effect on purchasing patterns for expensive durable goods such as automobiles.

Differences in the effects of the design alternatives on business growth will be greatest along the commercial strips south of Kalispell and Whitefish. The A(MEDIAN) alternative favors businesses near where left-turning bays are provided, and is likely to promote additional business growth near intersections. The center median employed by Alternative A(MEDIAN) will create a physical barrier which will prevent spontaneous left turns and inhibit customer access to businesses in mid-block areas. Alternative A(MEDIAN) will favor higher density business development patterns and will encourage cooperation among business property owners in the development of common driveways and parking. Alternative A(MEDIAN) is likely to result in greater growth in business property values near intersections, and slower growth for properties in mid-block areas.

By allowing direct left-turn access into virtually all business locations along US 93, Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will help to evenly distribute the business opportunities created by general market growth along the US 93 corridor. A five-lane highway will encourage less dense and more irregular business development patterns. Businesses property owners will be more likely to develop driveways and parking areas which function independently of other businesses. As traffic congestion increases along US 93, the advantages of direct left turn access into to business properties will be reduced.

Alternative A(COMBO) uses a five-lane highway design **south of Kalispell,** within Kalispell and Whitefish, but maintains four-lane divided highway in rural areas. Alternative A(COMBO) will help to evenly distribute the business opportunities created by general market growth within cites and south of Kalispell. In rural areas, Alternative A(COMBO) is likely to promote additional business growth near intersections.

Recent enactment of restrictive zoning along US 93 between Kalispell and Whitefish will reduce the influence of highway design alternatives on businesses development patterns along this highway segment. Zoning will restrict development of new commercial and industrial land uses along the corridor. Zoning does allow for some expansion of existing land uses. Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) will encourage additional business growth where turning bays are provided and restrain growth where left turn access is available. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will provide improved left turn access for nearly all existing business properties, and will more evenly distribute the business development benefits of growth in traffic. **These improvements may degenerate over time, however, as the level of service degrades.**

4.6.4.2 Impacts of Strip Development on Tourism

Further proliferation of strip development along US 93 has the potential to detract from the visual enjoyment provided to tourists driving along US 93 through the Flathead Valley. It may reduce tourism primarily associated with the visual attractiveness of driving through the Flathead Valley, but since this is typically part of an overall package of factors that attract visitors to the Flathead Valley (such as Glacier National Park, Big Mountain, Bob Marshall wilderness area, the lakes) it is likely that the overall impact of increased strip development to the tourism industry will not be significant. The unattractiveness created by further strip development will not, by itself, significantly reduce the growth of the region's tourism industry.

From the perspective of building a stronger tourism industry, strip development is probably not the best use of Flathead area investment capital. For example, tasteful tourist-oriented business investments (hotels, eating and drinking, tourist services) in older sections of the City of Whitefish will add to this community's appeal to tourists; motivating more people to visit this community and prompting visitors to stay longer and spend more. Likewise, additional investment in Kalispell's CBD will serve to enhance this community's viability as a state and national convention center, as well as promoting general growth in tourism.

4.6.4.3 Impacts of Strip Development on Inmigration

Technological changes and economic and other quality of life factors have spurred considerable migration from metropolitan America to high amenity areas in the Rocky Mountain region. The Flathead Valley is one of several areas in the Rocky Mountain west which is experiencing substantial population growth. The natural beauty and social and recreational attributes of the Flathead Valley make the area an attractive place for residents of metropolitan states to relocate.

Many people migrating to the Flathead Valley could choose to live anywhere in the United States. Furtherance of commercial strip development patterns along the US 93 corridor will detract from the visual attractiveness of the Flathead area. Should the haphazard commercial development patterns and other urban sprawl type land use patterns profoundly detract from the visual and aesthetic appeal of the Flathead area, prospective inmigrants may choose to relocate elsewhere. It is noteworthy that strip commercial development is the predominant commercial development pattern in nearly all growing areas of the Rocky Mountain region. At least in the 20-year time horizon addressed in the EIS, it is unlikely that strip commercial development will sufficiently detract from the natural beauty and amenities of the Flathead Valley to significantly affect the area's population growth.

4.6.4.4 Impacts of Strip Development of the Costs of Providing Public Services

The physical form in which new commercial development is created has considerable impact on the total amount of resources (both environmental and economic) needed to accommodate commercial growth. For a fixed amount of commercial development, low density-strip commercial development is likely to be much more expensive in terms of economic costs, environmental costs, and natural resource consumption than denser development located within or adjacent to areas served by existing urban infrastructure and human services.

Strip commercial development increases the amount of right-of-way necessary to extend capital services such as community water and sewer systems, city and county roads, and quasi-public utility services (electricity and natural gas). Similarly, strip development increases the costs of building public and utility infrastructure by increasing materials, supplies, and labor inputs into construction. The energy and labor necessary to operate and maintain capital facilities and to provide local government human services (such as police, fire and ambulance) are also increased by the greater travel distances and travel times involved in serving strip development.

Strip commercial development maximizes urban intrusion into environmentally sensitive areas by directly converting more land to commercial land uses than would be converted by more consolidated development patterns and extending the range of urban influence. Strip commercial development maximizes direct displacement of agricultural land and indirectly displaces agricultural uses by rendering remaining parcels too small or inaccessible to be economically farmed. Strip development fosters increased energy consumption and air pollution by increasing travel distances for shopping and work trips. Strip development also tends to result in more dispersed turning traffic and may eventually decrease highway level of service.

4.6.4.5 Effect of Access Changes to Market Value

There are no hard data for Montana on the impacts of highway design alternatives on the market values of adjoining properties. The highest potential market value for exurban properties along the Somers to Whitefish corridor is likely to be for commercial land uses. Since 1990, several thousand new residences have been developed in the Flathead Valley. It is notable that very few of these new housing units are located adjacent to the US 93 corridor. The absence of significant new residential development adjoining the highway corridor is consistent with land use patterns along other busy highway corridors in Montana. With the exception of multi-family development on the periphery of cities, lands adjoining Montana's busy highway corridors are not prime lands for residential development. The demand for residential land adjoining the US 93 corridor is limited, and highway design options will have little effect on market values of these properties for housing development.

In recent decades, urban-rural transitional areas along the Somers to Whitefish corridor have proven to be viable locations for commercial development. The US 93 corridor has seen the extension of commercial strip type development to the south of both Kalispell and Whitefish. In addition, spot commercial development has occurred along rural segments of the highway. Given projections for Flathead Valley population and economic growth and predicted increases in US 93 traffic volumes, transitional and rural segments of the Somers to Whitefish corridor are likely to continue provide workable locations for commercial development.

Whether a four-lane divided highway or a five-lane highway (with center turn lane) is developed, highway improvements will improve the quality of access and commercial development potential for transitional and rural properties along the US 93 corridor. Commercial development along two-lane highway segments is already constrained by highway traffic volumes. During the peak travel periods of summer, it is not only inconvenient, but hazardous for vehicle operators to make left turns along two lane highway segments. As traffic volumes on US 93 increase, the problems associated with ingress and egress to and from business and residential properties will be exacerbated.

Zoning

Irrespective of whether a four-lane divided highway or a five-lane highway with a center turn lane is constructed, city and county zoning will affect the developableness and market values of properties along the US 93 corridor. City and county zoning regulations are in place inside cities and along most of the unincorporated segments of US 93 corridor from Somers to Whitefish. The zoning generally allows commercial and industrial land uses to continue to occur to the south of Kalispell. The zoning attempts to preserve the agriculture land uses and open space between Kalispell and Whitefish by restricting new development to very large lot residential-ranchette type development [16.2 hectares (40 acres) and greater].

Kalispell to Whitefish:

The zoning which is in place between Kalispell and Whitefish restricts development of new commercial land uses along this highway segment. In order for land owners to develop new commercial uses between Kalispell and Whitefish, they must gain local government approval of a change in zoning or a variance allowing for commercial development on their property.

The zoning does allow for limited expansion of existing commercial uses between the two cities. By restricting development of new competitive commercial land uses between Kalispell and Whitefish, the zoning may actually serve to heighten the market values for existing properties with "grandfathered" commercial land uses. A four-lane divided highway is likely to provide greatest benefit to existing businesses at intersections and at other locations where turn bays are provided. If turn-lanes are constructed to serve businesses located in mid-block areas, the property value benefits of the divided highway design will be more evenly distributed along the corridor.

A five-lane highway design will tend to distribute the property value benefits of the highway improvements more evenly among existing commercial properties.

South of Kalispell:

Zoning allows for additional commercial and industrial development on the US 93 corridor south of Kalispell. Both a four-lane divided and a five-lane highway will be conducive to commercial and industrial development. Montana has many examples of intensive commercial and industrial development along both four-lane divided highways and five-lane highways. US 2 through the Kalispell-Evergreen area, US 93 south of Missoula, US 12 east-west through the Helena area, and US 191 east-west through the Bozeman area are examples of highway corridors which mix four-lane divided highway and five-lane highway designs. Significant commercial development has occurred

on both the four-lane divided and five-lane segments of these highway corridors. The presence of the divided highway's center median has not prevented commercial development from occurring along the aforementioned highways, and is unlikely to do so along US 93 south of Kalispell.

Whether a four-lane divided highway or five-lane highway is constructed may have some influence on the market values of individual parcels south of Kalispell. As previously discussed, construction of a four-lane divided highway will favor business development at intersections and other places where left turn lanes are provided and will benefit the market values of these properties. Conversely, the divided highway design may constrain the growth in the value of mid-block properties which are not provided with direct cross-lane access.

A five-lane highway design is likely to provide for more dispersed development of commercial and industrial land uses along the US 93 corridor south of Kalispell. As a result, the five-lane highway will more evenly distribute the property value increases among properties. Relative to the divided highway design, the five-lane design is likely to increase the growth in the value of mid-block properties and constrain the value growth for properties at or near intersections.

It is important to recognize that numerous other factors will also influence the market value of properties for commercial land uses. Examples include: the particulars of zoning regulations; parcel size and configuration; parcel visibility from the highway; its visual attractiveness, the nature of adjoining land uses, access to public and private utility services, traffic speeds, and location relative to major cross streets.

4.6.4.6 Effect to Zoning

Development of four-lane divided or five-lane highway will not dictate the type of zoning that is assigned to adjoining properties. Montana has many examples where commercial development has occurred along both four-lane divided and five-lane highways. Development of a four-lane divided highway will not prevent commercial development from occurring on adjacent property. If Flathead area local governments desire to manage land uses along the US 93 corridor they will need to employ land use controls. Irrespective of which highway design is constructed, local government planning and zoning will continue to be the preeminent way of regulating land use along the US 93 corridor.

4.6.5 Alternative B

Alternative B is intended to carry commercial truck traffic and non-stop travelers around the City of Kalispell. The diversion of this traffic will minimally affect Kalispell business sales to tourists and local and regional residents. Alternative B will lessen traffic congestion on US 93 through Kalispell, and will enhance the effectiveness of US 93 lane reconfiguration, intersection improvements, turn lanes and turn bay installations, and crosswalk upgrades. The estimated five percent reduction in traffic carried by US 93, will make it more convenient for tourists and local and regional residents to stop and shop in the Kalispell Central Business District. The diverting of through traffic and truck traffic also will improve the attractiveness of the downtown areas for tourists and resident shoppers. Reductions in drive through traffic volumes will also improve customer access to businesses located on the commercial strip and small business nodes on US 93 in Kalispell.

Some sales to drive-through travelers and truck services will be directed away from business on US 93 in Kalispell. For example, truck stops and business selling fuel and food to drive-through travelers will lose some sales. Most deferred purchases of truck services, fuel and food will be made elsewhere in Flathead County, and the change in purchasing patterns will not effect the area's overall economy.

The southwestern segment of the Kalispell Bypass will be built over the Burlington Northern Rail Spur Line. It will eliminate rail service to areas south of Kalispell. The spur line serves only one customer, an agricultural supply company. Displacement of the rail spur will require that rail shipments to the agricultural supply company be delivered by truck, which will increase the business's costs of purchasing these supplies. The southwestern segment of Alternative B will also displace one construction contractor and remove storage property from a salvage yard. The salvage business will need to relocate salvaged materials. The southwestern segment will also displace 13.37 hectares (33 acres) of agricultural land, mainly used for grazing and hay production.

North of Foy's Lake Road, the bypass will bisect a lumber yard and milling operation, removing 3 support buildings and displacing storage areas for raw and processed timber. The highway route will split the yard and will create a barrier will make it more difficult to carry on connected operations between the two remainder parcels. An at-grade crossing will be constructed where the bypass will intersect Burlington Northern east-west rail line paralleling US 2. The crossing will not affect rail service to nearby businesses, but may occasionally interfere with the railroad's switching operations.

North of US 2, the bypass corridor crosses mainly agricultural land. An estimated 11.34 hectares (28 acres) of agricultural land will be removed from production. Farmland in this area is mainly used for barley and wheat production. The estimated annual production value of this land is ranges from $150 to $300 an acre (Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Agricultural Statistics Service, 1993). The lost production will not have important effects on overall productivity of county agricultural sector, but will meaningfully reduce the earnings of individual farms.

The north segment of Alternative B also will split numerous agricultural parcels and will increase the costs of farming remainder parcels. Areas west of Kalispell are also being affected by expansion of Kalispell residential development. The combination of highway impacts and urban encroachment will hasten the conversion of this farmland to non-agricultural uses.

Alternative B will increase the commercial development potential and market value for properties located at the bypass's two intersections with US 93 and at its intersection with US 2. The bypass will also increase the selling prices for previously isolated agricultural lands southwest of Kalispell by making them more available for ranchette-type residential development.

4.6.6 Impacts Common to Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), and C(COUPLET-4)

A Baker-Spokane Avenue couplet will continue to route US 93 drive-through travelers, tourists, and local and regional residents through Whitefish business districts. Development of the couplet system will not displace any existing additional businesses. The couplet system will enhance the effectiveness of downtown highway improvements by lessening congestion along the Second Street-Spokane Avenue segments of US 93. The effects of the diversion of southbound traffic on downtown businesses will be counterbalanced by a less stressful driving environment; allowing better visibility of downtown shopping opportunities, improved turning movements, and better access to parking areas. Downtown Whitefish is oriented to serving pedestrian tourists. The lessening of congestion will improve the mobility of this clientele.

The rerouting of highway traffic will encourage the upgrading of commercial properties on Baker Avenue and adjoining side streets. The rerouting of traffic on to Baker Avenue will also improve traveler access to public parking in southern areas of the central business district, which will help to entice travelers and tourists to stop in downtown Whitefish.

4.6.7 Impacts Which Differentiate Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), and C(COUPLET-4)

The major difference between Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), and C(COUPLET-4) will be determined by the location of couplet's the southbound segment with Spokane Avenue. Spokane Avenue business properties located to the north of this intersection will experience a decrease in the market created by highway travel. Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), and C(COUPLET-4) will favor additional business growth for commercial properties to the south of Columbia Avenue, and will inhibit business growth north of Columbia Avenue. Alternative C(COUPLET-3) will promote business growth south of Seventh Street and inhibit growth north of this intersection. To the extent that alternatives will affect business growth potential along Spokane Avenue, they will also affect market values for commercial properties.

4.7 Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Existing pedestrian and bicycle conditions are described in Section 3.6.

4.7.1 Impacts

4.7.1.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative will result in worsened conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. As traffic and congestion increases, it will become increasingly difficult to cross US 93 and to use US 93 as a travel corridor for pedestrians or bicyclists. In addition, no provisions are planned to enhance other planned pedestrian corridors in the Flathead Valley.

4.7.1.2 Impacts Common to All Build Alternatives

Overall conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists are projected to be improved by implementation of any of the build alternatives. The build alternatives all include provisions for bicyclists either on the shoulder or on a separate bike path. As described in Section 2.4.4.2, special accommodations are being planned to facilitate easier pedestrian crossing of US 93. This will improve pedestrian safety as well. In addition, bridges are planned at the crossings of Ashley Creek, specifically to accommodate plans for future pedestrian and bicycle use of the railroad corridor west of the Ashley Creek crossing.

4.7.1.3 Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO)

Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) will have improved conditions for pedestrians since the median area can be used as a refuge for pedestrians crossing US 93. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) has no such refuge area.

The preferred alternative includes a separated bikepath along US 93 as much as possible.

4.7.1.4 Alternative A(TURN-LANE)

Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will **have substantially degraded** conditions for pedestrians, since no median refuge area for pedestrians crossing US 93 will be provided **and since a much wider paved area will need to be crossed**.

4.7.1.5 Whitefish Alternatives

Alternative C(COUPLET-3) includes a designated on-street bike lane and sidewalks on both Spokane and Baker with bicycle travel on Spokane northbound and Baker southbound, which will improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists in Whitefish. The 7th Street extension across the Whitefish River will also improve circulation for east-west movement. **However, no bike lanes are provided along Spokane between Seventh and Columbia or on Second Street. Bicycles can be accommodated on the wide sidewalk over the new Seventh Street bridge.**

4.7.2 Mitigation

The following mitigation will be implemented:

1. Continued coordination with Flathead County bicycle groups to determine the best location and design of bicycle facilities.

4.8 Air Quality

Existing air quality conditions are described in Section 3.7.

4.8.1 Methodology

The anticipated effects of No-Build and Build alternatives on particulate matter that is less than ten microns in diameter (PM10) emissions are considered. The analysis has been conducted in accordance with 40 CFR Parts 51 and 93, *Criteria and Procedures for Determining Conformity to State or Federal Implementation Plans of Transportation Plans, Programs, and Projects Funded or Approved Under Title 23 U.S.C. or the Federal Transit Act*, EPA, November 1993.

The methodology for the air quality analysis has been developed and approved through consultation with EPA, MDT, MDHES and FHWA. Consultation letters are in Volume II.

The major components of PM10 emissions in the Flathead Valley are re-entrained road dust and smoke produced from residential wood burning. Population and employment growth can be expected to affect both the amount of re-entrained road dust and the amount of wood smoke in the valley. Different alternatives for the US 93 Corridor can be expected to produce variations in the amount of re-entrained road dust. Therefore, this analysis focuses on projected PM10 emissions due to re-entrained road dust. Tailpipe exhaust from vehicles also produces low levels of PM10 emissions and these emissions of PM10 are also included in this analysis.

Re-entrained road dust and tailpipe emissions are affected by vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT). VMT is vehicles per day multiplied by distance in miles. VMT can be summed by functional classification and road segments over a region to obtain regional VMT.

Re-entrained road dust and tailpipe emission factors for PM10 were developed in consultation with MDHES and EPA. The factors for re-entrained road dust are classified by road functional classification. Emission factors are inversely proportional to functional classification. Factors for local streets are higher than those for collector streets, which are in turn higher than those for arterial streets. Re-entrained road dust emission factors also vary by season. Emission factors are higher during winter and early spring than during other seasons because sanding material is applied to roads resulting in increased re-entrained road dust. Tailpipe emission factors do not vary by functional classification nor season. PM10 emission factors are provided in Table 4-11.

Table 4-11
PM10 Emission Factors

Functional Classification	Re-Entrained Road Dust Emission Factor (lbs./VMT)		Tailpipe Emission Factor (lbs./VMT)
	Kalispell (Winter/Spring)	Whitefish (Spring)	
Local	0.0923	0.2855	NA
Collector	0.0874	0.1029	NA
Arterial	0.0522	0.0968	NA
Total	NA	NA	0.000335

NA - not applicable.

VMT figures by functional classification were estimated using the QRS II transportation model which was developed to produce traffic forecasts for this study. The area covered by the model is bounded approximately by the Flathead River on the east, Flathead Lake on the south, Farm-to-Market Road on the west, and Whitefish Lake and the Big Mountain Ski Area on the north. This area is larger than that contained within the Kalispell and Whitefish PM10 nonattainment areas. Therefore, links within the nonattainment areas were specially coded for their functional classifications and nonattainment areas in order to calculate VMT and PM10 emissions by functional classification and nonattainment area.

Two land use subcommittees developed assumptions regarding the distribution of projected population and employment growth. These include the proposed expansion of the Big Mountain Ski Area. Details regarding future land use projections are included in Section 3.1.5. The forecast population and employment data were used to produce 1998, 2005, and 2015 traffic forecasts. The models forecast summer daily traffic volumes. Population and employment projections being used in this analysis include any effect that completion of the build alternatives may have upon growth.

4.8.2 Impacts: PM10 Regional Emissions Analysis

VMT figures were estimated for a base year of 1993 and for No-Build and Build alternatives for 2005 and 2015. In addition, VMT figures were estimated for the No-Build Alternative for 1998 in Whitefish. The analysis years were chosen by EPA and MDHES. The Build Alternative includes projects which are both regionally significant and financially feasible, as defined in 40 CFR Parts 51 and 93, for 1998, 2005, and 2015. These projects were determined through a consensus among C&B, FHWA, MDT, MDHES, and EPA. These projects are shown by year below.

1998: US 2, Reserve to south of Glacier Park International Airport, widen from two to five lanes.
Baker Avenue, 10th Street to Commerce Street, construct new two-lane street.

2005: Meridian Road, Idaho Street to Three-Mile Drive, widen from two to four lanes.
Meridian Road, Three-Mile Drive to US 93, widen from two to three lanes.

2015: LaSalle Drive, Conrad Drive to MT 35, construct new two-lane street.

In addition, for Build alternatives, it was determined that US 93 improvements through the existing rural corridor (Alternative A), through Kalispell along Main Street (Alternative A), and through Whitefish along Spokane Avenue, Baker Avenue, 2nd Street, and 7th Street (Alternative C) are regionally significant and financially feasible for 2005. The US 93 Bypass around Kalispell (Alternative B) is regionally significant and financially feasible for 2015.

Daily PM10 emissions were calculated using the VMT figures, the winter emission factors for re-entrained road dust, and the tailpipe emission factor. Projected PM10 emissions due to re-entrained road dust represent worst-case scenarios because of the multiplicative effects of summer VMT and winter emission factors, which are both high relative to other seasons. The daily VMT and PM10 emission projections for re-entrained road dust are given in Tables 4-12, 4-13 and 4-14.

Table 4-12
1998 Projected Daily VMT and PM10 Emissions From Re-Entrained Road Dust
Whitefish Nonattainment Area

	Functional Classification	Alternative	
		1993 Existing	1998 No-Build
Summer Daily VMT	Local	10,700	12,300
	Collector	41,400	47,600
	Arterial	86,200	93,600
	Total	138,300	153,500
Winter PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	Local	3,050	3,510
	Collector	4,260	4,900
	Arterial	8,340	9,060
	Total	15,650	17,470

Table 4-13
2005 Projected Daily VMT and PM10 Emissions From Re-Entrained Road Dust

	Functional Classification	Kalispell Alternative				Functional Classification	Whitefish Alternative		
		1993 Existing	2005 No-Build	2005 Alt. A			1993 Existing	2005 No-Build	2005 Alt. C (COUPLET-3)
Summer Daily VMT	Local	64,900	82,900	82,800		Local	10,700	14,000	13,300
	Collector	134,700	185,700	182,500	Summer	Collector	41,400	55,200	48,100
	Arterial	284,900	351,600	356,900	Daily VMT	Arterial	86,200	100,800	114,400
	Total	484,500	620,200	622,200		Total	138,300	170,000	175,800
Winter PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	Local	5,990	7,650	7,640	Spring	Local	3,050	4,000	3,800
	Collector	11,770	16,230	15,950	PM10	Collector	4,260	5,680	4,950
	Arterial	14,870	18,350	18,630	Emissions	Arterial	8,340	9,760	11,070
	Total	32,630	42,230	42,220	(lbs./day)	Total	15,650	19,440	19,820

Table 4-14
2015 Projected Daily VMT and PM10 Emissions From Re-Entrained Road Dust

	Functional Classification	Kalispell Alternative				Functional Classification	Whitefish Alternative		
		1993 Existing	2015 No-Build	2015 Alt. A + B			1993 Existing	2015 No-Build	2015 Alt. C (COUPLET-3)
Summer Daily VMT	Local	64,900	97,700	83,900		Local	10,700	16,700	15,800
	Collector	134,700	233,700	197,100	Summer	Collector	41,400	67,500	57,300
	Arterial	284,900	390,500	424,600	Daily VMT	Arterial	86,200	107,000	128,000
	Total	484,500	721,900	705,600		Total	138,300	191,200	201,100
Winter PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	Local	5,990	9,020	7,740	Spring	Local	3,050	4,770	4,510
	Collector	11,770	20,430	17,230	PM10	Collector	4,260	6,950	5,900
	Arterial	14,870	20,380	22,160	Emissions	Arterial	8,340	10,360	12,390
	Total	32,630	49,830	47,130	(lbs./day)	Total	15,650	22,080	22,800

Tables 4-15, 4-16 and 4-17 show projected daily tailpipe PM10 emissions.

Table 4-15
1998 Projected Daily VMT and PM10 Tailpipe Emissions
Whitefish Nonattainment Area

	Alternative	
	1993 Existing	1998 No-Build
Summer Daily VMT	138,300	153,500
PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	50	50

Table 4-16
2005 Projected Daily VMT and PM10 Tailpipe Emissions

	Kalispell Alternative				Whitefish Alternative		
	1993 Existing	2005 No-Build	2005 Alt. A		1993 Existing	2005 No-Build	2005 Alt. C (COUPLET-3)
Summer Daily VMT	484,500	620,200	622,200	Summer Daily VMT	138,300	170,000	175,800
PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	160	210	210	PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	50	60	60

Table 4-17
2015 Projected Daily VMT and PM10 Tailpipe Emissions

	Kalispell Alternative				Whitefish Alternative		
	1993 Existing	2015 No-Build	2015 Alt. A+B		1993 Existing	2015 No-Build	2015 Alt. C (COUPLET-3)
Summer Daily VMT	484,500	721,900	705,600	Summer Daily VMT	138,300	191,200	201,100
PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	160	240	240	PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	50	60	70

Tables 4-18, 4-19 and 4-20 show projected total daily PM10 emissions, including tailpipe as well as emissions from re-entrained dust.

Table 4-18
1998 Projected Total Daily PM10 Emissions
Whitefish Nonattainment Area

	Alternative	
	1993 Existing	1998 No-Build
PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	15,700	17,520

Table 4-19
2005 Projected Total Daily PM10 Emissions

	Kalispell Alternative					Whitefish Alternative		
	SIP Budget	1993 Existing	2005 No-Build	2005 Alt. A		1993 Existing	2005 No-Build	2005 Alt. C (COUPLET-3)
PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	53,500	32,790	42,440	42,430	PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	15,700	19,500	19,880

Table 4-20
2015 Projected Total Daily PM10 Emissions

	Kalispell Alternative					Whitefish Alternative		
	SIP Budget	1993 Existing	2015 No-Build	2015 Alt. A + B		1993 Existing	2015 No-Build	2015 Alt. C (COUPLET-3)
PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	53,500	32,790	50,070	47,370	PM10 Emissions (lbs./day)	15,700	22,140	22,870

According to 40 CFR Parts 51 and 93, this project must meet two conformity tests:

1. Projected vehicular emissions for the Build scenarios must be lower than those for the No-Build scenario. This applies to both the Whitefish and Kalispell areas.

2. Projected vehicular emissions for all scenarios must be less than or equal to the vehicular emissions budget specified in the applicable State Implementation Plan (SIP). (This test is not applicable to the Whitefish Nonattainment Area because a SIP does not yet exist for this area).

An analysis of Tables 4-19 and 4-20 shows the following for the Kalispell Nonattainment Area:

- Projected PM10 emissions are lower for both Alternative A and Alternative A + B than for the No-Build Alternative. With both Build alternatives, compared to No-Build, a higher proportion of projected VMT is on arterials, for which the emission factor is relatively low.

- Projected PM10 emissions for all alternatives in all analysis years are below the Kalispell PM10 SIP vehicular emissions budget of 53,500 pounds per day (source: MDHES).

An analysis of Tables 4-19 and 4-20 shows the following for the Whitefish Nonattainment Area:

- Projected PM10 emissions for Alternative C COUPLET-3 **(the preferred alternative)** are higher than that for the No-Build Alternative in 2005 and 2015 by less than one percent.

4.8.3 Hot Spot Analysis

40 CFR Parts 51 and 93 requires a hot spot analysis for FHWA and FTA projects in PM_{10} non-attainment areas. This analysis has not been conducted for this FEIS because EPA has not yet released guidance pertaining to this analysis.

4.8.4 Findings

Analysis of projected PM10 emissions based on VMT shows that emissions from Build alternatives will be lower than under the No-Build Alternative in the Kalispell Nonattainment Area. In addition, emissions from all alternatives will fall within the vehicular emissions budget specified in the Kalispell PM10 SIP. In Kalispell, this project meets the conformity guidelines.

PM10 emissions from the Build Alternative will be higher than under the No-Build Alternative in the Whitefish Nonattainment Area, **thus mitigation is needed.**

4.8.5 Coordination

Extensive coordination has occurred with the EPA and the MDHES, including several meetings and telephone conference calls. Volume II includes letters from the EPA and **MAQD** related to air quality. **A finding of conformity is in Volume II.**

4.8.6 Mitigation

The following **design features have been committed to in writing by MDT (see Volume II). These will be implemented together with (and therefore at the same time as) construction of US 93 improvements in Whitefish. These features, which are applicable between MT 40 and Lion Mountain Road, have been shown to reduce PM_{10} levels in Whitefish to below No-Build levels by reducing carry-on dust.**

1. **Surfacing of gravel and dirt shoulders.**

2. **Construction of curb and gutter.**

The following mitigation will be considered during construction of the US 93 project:

1. Daily street sweeping (when needed and necessary) on both ends of the project during the construction phase. This will reduce the major carry-on of dirt from the project onto the paved streets within the nonattainment boundaries.

2. If any detours are unpaved, they should be watered and/or chemically stabilized so that the emissions are less than 20 percent opacity.

3. Any slash being burned due to right-of-way clearing should be stacked with a brush blade and cured. Open burning restrictions must be followed, and a major open burning permit and fee may be required from the county.

4. Asphalt plants and gravel crushers in the immediate vicinity are also substantial contributors to the PM10 emissions from highway construction. An air quality permit must be obtained from **MAQD** to operate crushers and asphalt plants in Montana.

4.9 Noise

Existing noise conditions are described in Section 3.8.

4.9.1 Impacts

A noise analysis was performed to compare existing noise conditions to predicted future noise levels associated with proposed road alternatives. The noise study was conducted consistent with procedures of Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 772. The design year used is 2015 and all assumptions represent probable

traffic conditions for that year. Receptors were selected based on proximity to proposed road alternatives and types of land use.

4.9.1.1 Future Noise Levels

Existing and future peak-hour traffic volumes, operating speeds, and vehicle mix were derived from a QRS II transportation model developed to produce traffic forecasts. The model was validated to 1993 summer daily traffic volumes and was used to forecast 2015 summer daily traffic volumes for various alternatives. This information was input into the FHWA-accepted STAMINA2.0 noise model to calculate 1993 noise levels and predict 2015 noise levels. The receptors utilized for this analysis are representative of the residences and churches which are closest to each alternative. The calculated noise levels are indicated in Tables 4-21, 4-22 and 4-23 for rural areas, Kalispell, and Whitefish, respectively.

Table 4-21
Predicted Noise Levels - Rural Areas (dBA Leq)

Alternative	Location			
	Somers to Ball's Crossing	Reserve Drive to KM Road	KM Road to MT-40	West of Karrow Avenue
1993 Measured	64	64	NM	70
1993 Calculated	60-76	55-71	59-73	56-74
2015 No-Build	61-78	57-73	61-74	57-72
2015 Alt. A(MEDIAN)	61-74	58-72	61-76	56-74
2015 Alt. A(TURN-LANE)	61-73	58-74	61-75	56-74

NM - Not Measured

Table 4-22
Predicted Noise Levels - Kalispell
(dBA Leq)

Alternative	Location			
	Ball's Crossing to 11th Street	11th Street to Reserve Drive	Stillwater Road/ Reserve Drive	Bypass B Alignment
1993 Measured	NM	67	NM	52
1993 Calculated	56-76	58-70	33-61	NA
2015 No-Build	56-76	60-72	36-65	NA
2015 Kalispell Alt. A	57-78	60-72	38-64	NA
2015 Kalispell Alt. B & A	54-76	61-74	57-72	53-71

NM - Not Measured
NA - Not Applicable

Table 4-23
Predicted Noise Levels - Whitefish

Alternative	Location	
	Spokane Avenue MT 40 to Karrow Ave	Baker Avenue Spokane to 2nd
1993 Measured	68	59
1993 Calculated	56-69	59-65
2015 No-Build	57-69	60-66
2015 A(FOUR-LANE)	58-70	55-60
2015 C(OFFSET)	58-68	62-67
2015 C(COUPLET-1)	58-68	63-69
2015 C(COUPLET-2)	58-68	63-69
2015 C(COUPLET-3)	58-70	51-61
2015 C(COUPLET-4)	58-68	63-68

Significant differences occur between 1993 measured and calculated noise levels because noise measurements include all exterior noise sources, and traffic characteristics on the day of measurements may differ from those of summer afternoon peak-hour traffic. Calculated noise levels represent those generated by summer afternoon peak-hour traffic only.

4.9.1.2 Traffic Noise Impacts

There are criteria for determining noise impacts. These are:

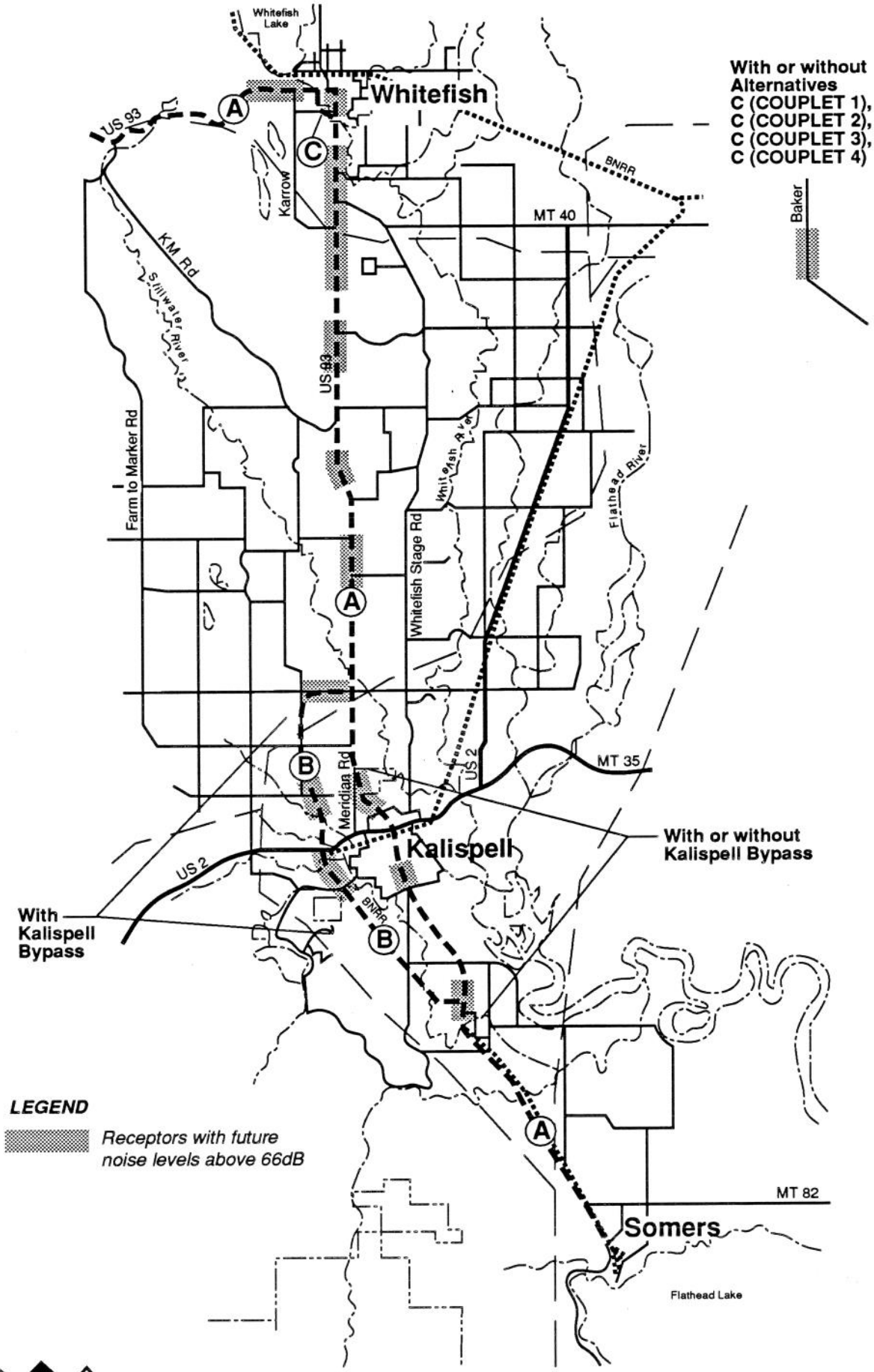
- Comparison of predicted noise levels with FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC). Any predicted noise level which approaches or exceeds the NAC level is considered an impact requiring consideration for noise abatement. MDT has defined the term "approach" to mean 1 dBA Leq less than FHWA NAC.

- Determination of whether a substantial increase will occur from existing to predicted noise levels. MDT has defined a "substantial increase" as one of 10 dBA Leq or greater.

Receptors along the existing US-93 alignment experience noise levels in 1993 which approach or exceed FHWA NAC. More are also expected to experience noise levels in 2015 under all alternatives which approach or exceed FHWA NAC. No receptors are expected to receive a substantial increase in noise levels from 1993 to 2015 under Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) or A(COMBO).

Receptors along Stillwater Road, Reserve Drive, and the Bypass B alignment in Kalispell do not experience noise levels in 1993 which approach or exceed FHWA NAC. Some are expected to experience noise levels in 2015 under the Kalispell A and B Alternatives which approach or exceed FHWA NAC, and some are expected to experience substantial increases in noise levels from 1993 to 2015 under the Kalispell B & A Alternative. Figure 4-4 shows receptor concentrations which are expected to exceed FHWA NAC.

No receptors along Baker Avenue in Whitefish experience noise levels in 1993 which approach or exceed FHWA NAC. Some are expected to experience noise levels in 2015 under the Whitefish C Alternatives which approach or exceed FHWA NAC. No receptors are expected to receive a substantial increase in noise levels from 1993 to 2015 under any alternative.



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 4-4

Concentrations of Receptors with Future Noise Levels above 66dB

Tables 4-24, 4-25 and 4-26, show predicted noise impacts to rural areas, Kalispell, and Whitefish, respectively. They show numbers of receptors which approach or exceed FHWA NAC. In addition to the impacts shown in these tables, 10 receptors along Stillwater Road and Reserve Drive, and 13 receptors along the Bypass B alignment in Kalispell are expected to receive substantial increases in noise levels from 1993 to 2015 under the Kalispell B & A Alternatives.

Table 4-24
Predicted Noise Impacts - Rural Areas
Number of Receptors Which Approach or Exceed FHWA NAC

Alternative	Location				Total
	Somers to Ball's Crossing	Reserve Drive to KM Road	KM Road to MT-40	West of Karrow Avenue	
1993 Existing	14	9	33	12	68
2015 No-Build	22	15	39	13	89
2015 A(MEDIAN)	18	17	48	11	94
2015 A(TURN-LANE)	19	18	48	11	96

Table 4-25
Predicted Noise Impacts - Kalispell
Number of Receptors Which Approach or Exceed FHWA NAC

Alternative	Location				Total
	Bell's Crossing to 11th Street	11th Street to Reserve Drive	Stillwater Road/Reserve Drive	Bypass B Alignment	
1993 Existing	11	18	0	0	29
2015 No-Build	11	25	0	0	36
2015 Kalispell Alt. A.	11	29	0	0	40
2015 Kalispell Alt. B + A	9	29	24	4	66

Table 4-26
Predicted Noise Impacts - Whitefish
Number of Receptors Which Approach or Exceed FHWA NAC

Alternative	Location Spokane Avenue MT 40 to Karrow Ave	Baker Avenue Spokane to 2nd
1993 Existing	52	0
2015 No-Build	62	3
2015 A(FOUR-LANE)	62	0
2015 C(OFF-SET)	60	7
2015 C(COUPLET-1)	62	7
2015 C(COUPLET-2)	62	7
2015 C(COUPLET-3)	62	0
2015 C(COUPLET-4)	62	7

4.9.2 Mitigation

Title 23 CFR 772 requires that noise abatement measures be considered if a traffic noise impact is identified. An analysis of reasonableness of providing noise abatement has been prepared for this project.

Noise barriers do not appear to be reasonable for receptors located along the existing US-93 alignment. This is because almost all of these receptors have direct access to and from the highway and the constant breaks that will be required in order to accommodate this access will severely compromise the effectiveness of a noise barrier. In addition, noise barriers in these locations will block views from residential areas.

Changes in the horizontal and/or vertical alignment of the road can be effective in reducing noise. In particular, lowering the profile of the road in residential areas can effectively reduce noise by taking advantage of natural topography to screen noise. This mitigation measure can be considered in more detail after a preferred alternative has been selected and during final design of the project.

The provision of interior noise insulation is an acceptable noise abatement measure to reduce interior noise levels in public buildings only. Since none of the sensitive receptors of concern is a public building, this will not be an appropriate mitigation measure.

No abnormal construction noise impacts are anticipated with this project. The major construction tasks are expected to be earth moving and removal, hauling, grading, and paving. If noise problems due to construction activities are identified, the most effective means to control the noise is by limiting the hours of construction activities to daytime hours (7:00 AM to 5:00 PM). Other measures to be considered are noise shields (temporary barriers) and to plan detours which do not create additional noise impacts for sensitive receptors.

4.10 Water Resources and Quality

Existing water resource conditions are described in Section 3.9.

4.10.1 Impacts

Two major issues related to water resources or water quality are:

- Increased impurities in stormwater runoff water from increased traffic flow, increased impervious surface and/or increased maintenance activities.
- Sediment loading during and after construction activities due to the exposure of bare substrate.

Surface water quality can be affected and degraded by contaminated highway stormwater runoff. Highway surface runoff contains organic and inorganic chemicals and compounds as well as significant quantities of suspended solids. These components are usually a product of petroleum/combustion products, vehicle and pavement wear and highway maintenance procedures (Rexnord 1985).

In typical rural sections of highway storm water runoff is usually collected in roadside ditches and channeled away to the receiving water feature, by way of natural open drainage flows. In such sections water quality impacts on the receiving water feature are usually diminished or completely removed by filtration and dilution

of pollutants with vegetation and soils. The threshold of traffic volume for which this natural filtration is adequate protection against water quality degradation is approximately 30,000 ADT (Rexnord 1985).

4.10.1.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative will result in less surface runoff than the build alternatives since the total amount of impervious surface will be less. However there will be more opportunity over time for chemical or hazardous material spills as the accident potential increases. Both Flathead Lake and Whitefish Lake are far removed from any of the proposed alternatives and bypasses. Although their proximity precludes a direct spill, it is possible that direct spills in any of the upstream features will have a serious impact on lake water quality. The No-Build alternative, under such terms, is the only alternative that has a future negative impact by not lowering the accident / spill potential of the corridor.

4.10.1.2 Impacts Common to All Build Alternatives

Water resource impacts associated with the build alternatives are expected to be minor for two reasons. First, the project overlays and existing transportation corridor with its specific profile and grading that has been used consistently for a number of years without excessive water or stream degradation. Second, because the corridor passes over the water features in an approximately perpendicular manner, as opposed to running longitudinally adjacent to them, there are fewer opportunities for impacts.

Alternative B will result in more stream crossings, with resulting increases in exposure to more surface water impacts.

None of the build alternatives are projected to have traffic volumes exceeding this 30,000 ADT in rural areas. However, in urbanized locations there are a few instances where this threshold will be reached. In these cases, for all of the build alternatives, the stormwater runoff is channeled by curb and gutter to the existing and appropriate municipal stormwater delivery systems, where it will be diluted to necessary levels before being discharged into a water feature. **Stormwater delivery systems will be designed in accordance with current MDT and local jurisdictional practice.**

During construction for any of the build alternatives, there will likely be temporary fluctuations in sediment and suspended material loads due to excavation and denudation of surrounding surfaces. There may also be a need for dewatering procedures in locations of bridge pier construction. In most instances these temporary situations if contained and mitigated appropriately, will not create any long term impacts.

Although there will not be significant differences in contamination of stormwater runoff, there will be **increases in** based on the difference in area of required pavement. **Stormwater detention areas constructed for this project will also be available to detain hazardous or toxic materials spills, as well as other chemicals and sediments. Spill materials, chemicals and sediment which are detained will not directly enter the aquatic environment.**

4.10.1.3 Area of Impervious Surface

Table 4-27 summarizes the new impervious surface that will be created as a result of each alternative:

Table 4-27
Impervious Surface
Hectares (Acres)

Segment	Alternative						
Somers to Kalispell	No-Build	A(MEDIAN)	A(TURN-LANE)	A(COMBO)			
	0(0)	7.7 (19.0)	9.0 (22.2)	7.7 (19.0)			
Kalispell Area	No-Build	A	A + B(MEDIAN)	A + B(TURN-LANE)			
	0(0)	0.00 (0)	47.34 (117)	47.34 (117)			
Kalispell to Whitefish	No-Build	A(MEDIAN)	A(TURN-LANE)	A(COMBO)			
	0(0)	19.28 (47.63)	22.15 (54.74)	20.29 (50.14)			
Whitefish Area	No-Build	A(FOUR-LANE)	C(OFF-SET)	C(COUPLET-2)	C(COUPLET-2)	C(COUPLET-3)	C(COUPLET-4)
	0(0)	0.97 (2.4)	2.65 (6.55)	0.68 (1.68)	0.98 (2.43)	0.62 (1.52)	1.12 (2.76)
West of Whitefish	No-Build	A(MEDIAN)	A(TURN-LANE)				
	0(0)	3 (7.9)	3 (7.9)				

Alternatives C(COUPLET-2) and C(COUPLET-3) will have potentially greater effects due to the new bridge over the Whitefish River. Alternative C(COUPLET-4) will have greater effects due to the widening of the Baker Street bridge.

4.10.1.4 River Encroachment

The design intention for all of the proposed build alternatives is to limit encroachment below the mean high water mark as much as is feasible at each crossing. The major water crossings such as the Stillwater and Ashley Creek at US 93, have been bridged. There are no plans to place any abutment materials below the mean high water mark. Only the pier substructure necessary for support will be placed directly in the flow of the rivers.

Table 4-28 describes all of the river crossings and their associated alternatives. These descriptions of sites along the alternative corridors include the type of site, type of involvement and approximate quantity of fill materials necessary at that site.

Where a bridge structure is not practical or economically feasible on the smaller streams and creeks, culverts will be specified and sized to meet FHWA and MDT hydraulic design standards **and if needed, fish passage requirements.** The fill figures associated with these culvert areas are estimates based on these criteria.

Volume calculations are in cubic meters for riparian encroachment areas. These volumes represent quantities that would be below the **ordinary** high water mark. Site numbers refer to the wetland locations discussed in Section 3.10, Table 3-20.

Table 4-28
Section 404 Riparian Sites and Approximate Fill Quantities in Cubic Meters (cu. yds.)

Site No.	Site Location	Site Type	Type of Involve-ment	No-Build	A (MEDIAN)	A (TURN-LANE)	A (COMBO)	A (FOUR-LANE)	C (OFF-SET)	B (MEDIAN)	B (TURN-LANE)
5	Patrick Creek	Riparian	Culvert	0.0							
6	Patrick Creek	Riparian	Culvert	0.0	57 (74)	11 (15)	57 (74)				
7	Patrick Creek	Riparian	Culvert	0.0							
8	Ashley Creek	Riparian	Bridge	0.0	28 (37)	28 (37)	28 (37)				
9	Ashley Creek	Riparian	No Involve-ment	0.0						0.0	0.0
10	Ashley Creek	Riparian	Culvert	0.0						7300 (9600)	7300 (9600)
15	Ashley Creek	Riparian	Culvert	0.0						20000 (26200)	20000 (26200)
16	Ashley Ck. Trib.	Riparian	Culvert	0.0						2600 (3400)	2600 (3400)
17	West Spring Creek	Riparian	Culvert	0.0						8600 (11200)	8600 (11200)
18	Stillwater River	Riparian	Bridge	0.0	42 (56)	42 (56)	42 (56)				
21	Whitefish South	Riparian	Bridge	0.0				42 (56)	42 (56)		
24	Whitefish North	Riparian	Bridge	0.0	14 (18)	14 (18)	14 (18)				

Site No.	Site Location	Site Type	Type of Involvement	No-Build	C(COUPLET-1)	C(COUPLET-2)	C(COUPLET-3)	C(COUPLET-4)
22	White-fish 7th St.	Riparian	Bridge	0.0	0.0	18 (23)	18 (23)	0.0
23	White-fish Baker St.	Riparian	Bridge	0.0	14 (18)	14 (18)	14 (18)	14 (18)

4.10.2 Mitigation

Although there are no significant impacts associated or predicted for this project, conformance to MDHES stormwater management guidelines is recommended for the implementation of any of the alternatives. Throughout the construction phase of any alternative, the use of procedures described in the MDT Highway Construction Standard Erosion Control Work Plan will be considered. Some of these acceptable mitigation measures include:

1. The use of vegetative cover and long flow distances in all waterways conveying stormwater away from roadways and into water features to optimize percolation and provide additional water quality protection.

2. Use of a design that conveys stormwater into appropriate stormwater facilities where possible in urban areas.

3. The use of appropriately designed and located silt fences (during construction) to strain excessive sediment from runoff before entering a water features.

4. The use of temporary and permanent retention ponds (during construction) to optimize settling time for sediment laden runoff before entering a water features.

5. The express use of settling ponds for the effluent of dewatering operations, if needed.

6. Minimization of vegetation disturbance and rapid revegetation of areas of disturbance.

7. Restriction of movements of construction vehicles on unpaved areas where possible.

8. **Preparation of a stormwater pollution prevention plan in the construction specifications which will be implemented by the contractor.**

4.11 Wetlands

Existing wetland conditions are described in Section 3.10.

4.11.1 Impacts

Impacts that will occur to wetlands include short-term impacts during construction, long-term impacts due to the placement of dredged or fill material in wetland and long-term indirect effects due to receipt of runoff from the highway. More detailed information about wetlands is contained in a separate report: *Wetlands Inventory and Assessment*, Carter & Burgess, February 1994.

4.11.1.1 No-Build Alternative

Wetlands along the existing roads are currently receiving impacts due to activities on adjacent agricultural lands, maintenance mowing along existing roads, herbicide application, and sedimentation and pollutants (e.g. road salt) released during wind and runoff events.

4.11.1.2 Impacts for the Build Alternatives

Somers to Kalispell

In the segment between Somers to Kalispell along US 93, effects on the eight wetlands vary with location of the wetland and the design concept implemented. Because improvements to this segment of road will involve constructing east from the existing road, **most** of the wetlands on the west side of the existing road will not be affected. Thus wetlands 3 or 5 will not be adversely affected by implementation of **any of the build alternatives, including A(COMBO), the preferred alternative**.

Wetland 1 is affected minimally, 0.01 hectares (0.03 acres), by A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO). This wetland is located at the southern project terminus where the alternatives taper to meet the existing sections of US 93. It may be possible with further taper design considerations to avoid this wetland altogether. **This will be incorporated into the design if at all possible.**

Wetlands 2 and 3 are mostly to the west side of the road and **impacts are thus minimized** by the shift of the alignment to the east. There is one small portion of wetland 2, east of the existing highway, that will be impacted 0.04 hectares (.09 acres) for A(MEDIAN) **and A(COMBO)** and 0.02 hectares (.06 acres) for A(TURN-LANE).

Wetlands 6, 7 and 8 are the wetlands that will have some impact. Due to the use of existing vehicle and railroad grades, wetland 7 will most likely suffer **0.12 hectare (0.3 acre) direct** impacts from fill as a result of regrading related to A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO). Wetland 6 will **receive** 0.2 hectare (0.5 acre) **of impact**.

Wetland 8 is a riparian wetland associated with Ashley Creek. All of the alternatives are centered over the existing alignment and therefore the difference in impact is related to the cross-sectional width of the roadway. **Any impact in this location will be at least partially mitigated by the project underway by MWQB and MDT to construct wetlands at the stormwater outfall adjacent to Ashley Creek.**

Kalispell Area Including Bypass B

There are nine wetlands within this segment. All are related to the B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) alternatives. These alternatives both have the same right of way configuration and thus have the same impacts to all affected wetlands.

Wetland 9 **will incur impact of 0.11 hectare (0.27 acre)**. Wetland 10 has a direct impact of 0.3 hectares (.75 acres) from regrading and fill slopes.

Wetlands 11, 12 and 13 are located near Airport Road across from Wisher's Salvage. Wetlands 11 and 12 will receive 0.05 hectare (0.13 acre) and 0.53 hectare (1.32 acre) impacts, respectively, from regrading and fill slopes. Wetland 13 will **receive 0.37 hectare (0.92 acre) of impact**.

Wetlands 14 through 17 are all riparian except for 14. There are no differences in impacts between the build alternatives for any of these areas.

The Kalispell bypass results in more direct wetland impacts than completion of Alternative A only through Kalispell. The bypass may also accelerate impacts to wetlands as a result of conversion of land use.

Kalispell to Whitefish

Wetland 18 is a riparian wetland associated with the Stillwater River. **The estimated impact for a five-lane bridge alternative is 0.17 hectare (0.43 acre).**

Wetland 19 is adjacent west of the existing roadway. A(TURN-LANE) is centered over the existing roadway centerline at this location and A(MEDIAN) is shifted slightly east to accommodate the split alignment to the south. The result is that there will be some, 0.01 hectare (0.03 acres) of impact with A(TURN-LANE) and no impact with A(MEDIAN) or A(COMBO)**, which is the preferred alternative.**

Wetland 20 also lies west of the existing highway. A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) are shifted to the east and thus have less impact to the wetland than A(TURN-LANE) which is centered over the existing roadway.

Whitefish Area

Wetlands 21, 22, 23, and 24 are within this segment. They relate to the south entrance over the Whitefish River, the potential Seventh Street bridge, Baker Avenue bridge and the north crossing of the Whitefish River respectively.

At wetland 21, **a minimal amount of wetland impact will occur.**

Wetland 22 will be undisturbed under alternative C(COUPLET-1) and C(COUPLET-4). Under C(COUPLET-2 and 3) the area removed will be equal to the total pier substructure cross section, 0.001 hectare (.003 acre). Wetland 22 is the wetland that would be under the new Seventh Street bridge.

The Baker Avenue bridge will have the same wetland impact 0.0004 hectares (0.001 acres) under all of the build alternatives. Pier cross section is the only wetland involvement.

West of Whitefish

Wetlands 25, 26, 27, and 28 are all located west of Whitefish along the existing US 93 corridor. None of the proposed alternatives are expected to have direct wetland impacts in this segment. None of the minor improvements to this area (turning and climbing lanes) will adversely affect any wetlands.

Table 4-29
Total Wetland Loss by Wetland
Hectares (Acres)

Wetland Impacted	Impact Hectares (Acres)	Functions, Overall Ranking	
1	0.012 (0.03)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention.	9.5
2	0.036 (0.09)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	12
6	0.20 (0.5)	Major functions: nutrient retention.	9.5
7	0.12 (0.3)	Major functions: nutrient retention, food chain, wildlife habitat.	13
8	0.09 (0.22)	Major functions: flood storage.	12
9	0.11 (0.27)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	14.5
10	0.3 (0.75)	Major functions: flood storage, food chain.	11.5
11	0.05 (0.13)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	12.5
12	0.53 (1.32)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	12.5
13	0.37 (0.92)	Major functions: flood storage, food chain.	10
14	0.04 (0.11)	Major functions: flood storage, food chain.	11.5
15	0.06 (0.14)	Major functions: flood storage.	12
16	0.17 (0.41)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	12.5
17	0.08 (0.20)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	12.5
18	0.17 (0.43)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	14.5
19	0(0)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	10.5
20	0.012 (0.03)	Major functions: flood storage, food chain	12
21-24	0.04 (0.10)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	14-17
25-28	0(0)	Major functions: flood storage, wildlife habitat	
Total	2.4 (5.95)		

In regard to indirect and cumulative impacts of the project as it relates to the growth in the project area, local governments have existing plans and are updating plans to include protection of wetlands and water quality. As discussed in detail in the Land Use Planning Section 3.1.4, local governments have adopted plans which incorporate the goal of preserving environmental resources including water quality. Early drafts of the Flathead County Master Plan Update also include preservation of wetlands and water quality as goals.

In addition to the permanent impact identified for each wetland, temporary wetland impact will occur during construction.

4.11.2 Coordination

Coordination which has occurred related to wetland impacts is with the USCOE, USEPA, USFWS and MDFWP. Appendix B has been provided to these agencies and their coordination letters are in Volume II.

Appendix B includes the 404(b)(1) evaluation. The 404(b)(1) guidelines are the substantive criteria used in evaluating discharges of dredged or fill materials in Waters of the United States under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and are applicable to all 404 permit decisions. Approval by the USCOE of the 404(b)(1) document is required.

4.11.3 Mitigation

The US 93 roadway has been designed to avoid if possible, then to minimize disturbance and impacts to identified wetlands. However, since some wetlands are immediately adjacent to the existing roadway or the Kalispell railroad right-of-way, complete avoidance of wetlands is not possible. MDT policy states that when avoidance is not possible, on-site mitigation will be given priority. In the event that replacement or enhancement is not possible due to construction, maintenance, safety, or other constraints, off-site mitigation will be considered.

Permits for placing fill in wetlands must be obtained from the US Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act, amended.

The overall mitigation goal must be no net loss in wetland area or quality. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 CFR 1508.20) provides regulations for sequencing of mitigation, in the following order of priority:

- Avoidance of Wetlands. Avoiding the impacts altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- Minimization of Impacts. Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- Repair, Rehabilitation, Restoration. Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.
- Preservation and Maintenance. Reducing or elimination the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.

- Replacement. Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resource or environments.

Additional minimization of wetland impacts as a result of implementation of one of the Build alternatives can occur through use of retaining wall or slope steeping adjacent to wetlands. This effort to minimize wetland impacts will be conducted during the final design process for this project.

Replacement wetlands (either created or restored) can only be used if there is no practical alternative to the discharge of dredged or fill material in a wetland which will have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem and without other significant adverse environmental consequences that do not involve discharges into Waters of the United States.

The goal of mitigation is to replace the functions and values of the unavoidably lost wetlands, in areas adjacent to or as close as possible to the area of wetland loss.

A wetland mitigation plan has been discussed and agreed to with the resource agencies. It consists of the following three elements:

A. Replacement or enhancement of wetlands at two or three "on-site locations," adjacent to the area of impact. These will likely be on parcels acquired by MDT. Locations for these will be determined during the final design process.

B. Enhancement of 3.3 hectares (8.2 acres) of wetlands in the Waterfowl Production Area on the north end of Flathead Lake. As shown on Figure 4-5, activities to take place in this location include removal of logs and debris and construction of a berm with a headgate to control water flow.

C. Replacement at Lawrence Park (see Figure 4-6).

4.11.3.1 Description of Waterfowl Production Area Enhancement

The proposed wetland enhancement project would included three basic activities:

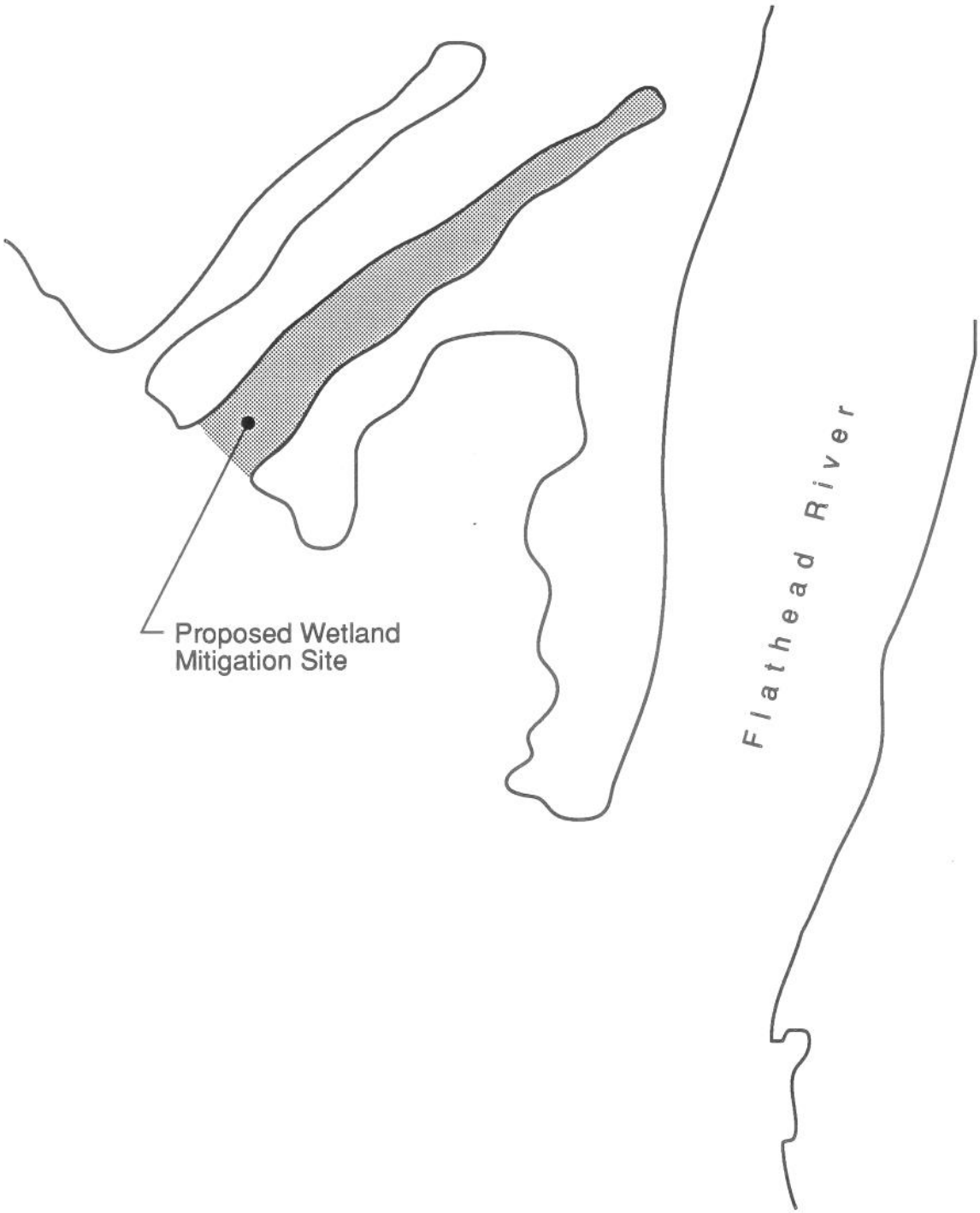
a. Remove the woody debris in the existing wetland.

b. Prevent the woody debris from being redistributed into the wetland by construction of a short earthen berm.

c. Achieve water control capability on the wetland to prevent its annual dewatering by construction of a water control structure at the wetland opening to the lake.

The berm with the water control structure would allow manipulation of water levels in the wetland while simultaneously preventing additional woody debris from being redistributed into the wetland from the lake.

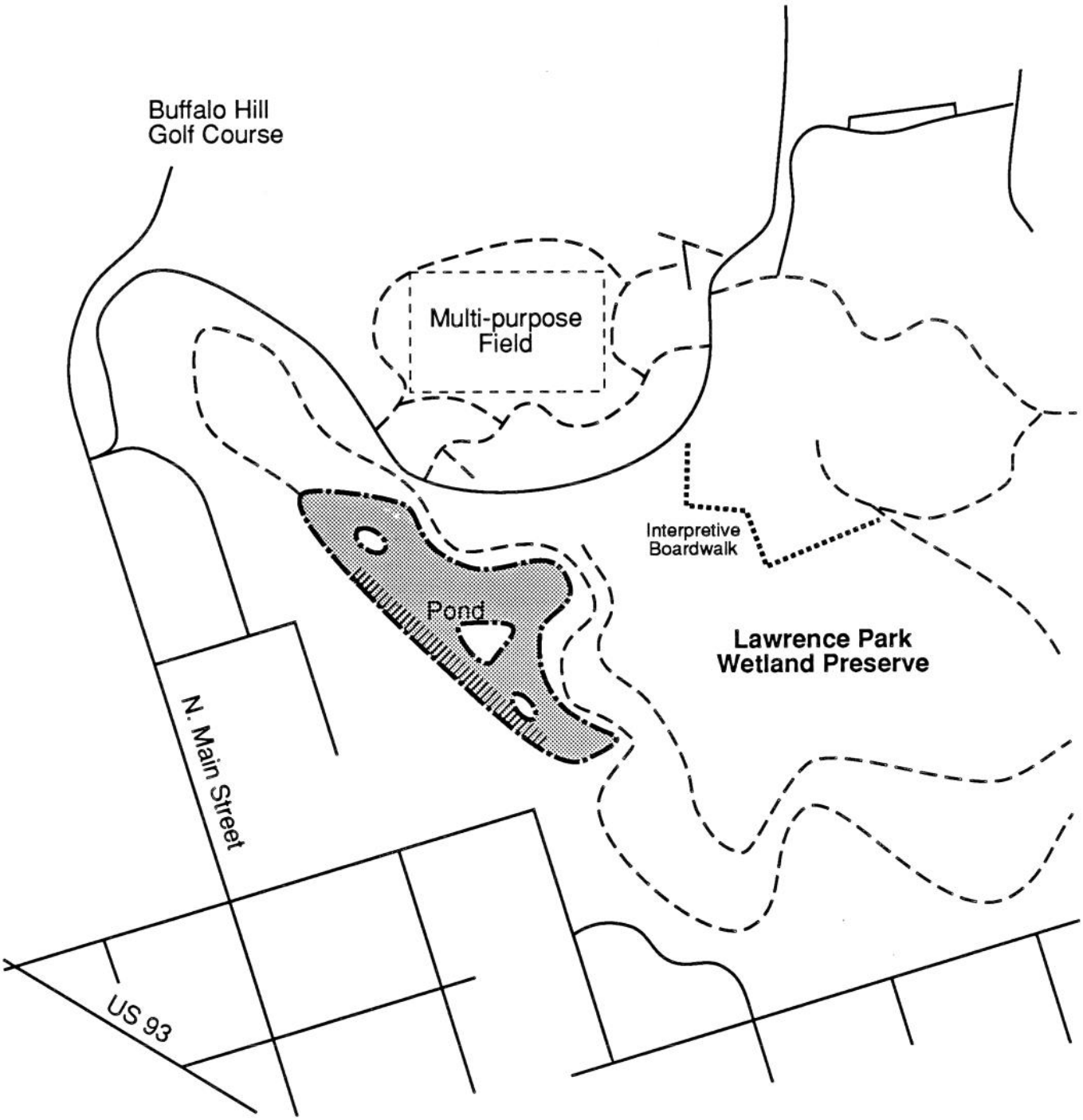
Ongoing management of this wetland enhancement project will be undertaken by the Refuges And Wildlife Division of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.



North

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 4-5
Waterfowl Production Area Wetland Enhancement Plan



LEGEND

Proposed Wetland Mitigation Site

North

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 4-6

Lawrence Park Wetland Mitigation Site

4.11.3.2 Description of Lawrence Park Wetland Mitigation

The proposed wetland mitigation area is currently vacant, with fill dirt in areas. It is an old oxbow area. It is adjacent to and within the floodplain for the Flathead River, with riparian vegetation in the vicinity.

Approximately 2.43 hectares (six acres) could be made available for wetland mitigation. The general plan calls for:

- **Creation of a deep water pond with shallow, vegetated edges.**
- **Islands to serve as wildlife habitat.**
- **Interpretive signage and a boardwalk.**

Due to the presence of visible surface water in the general area, there appears to be sufficient water available to support a new wetland; however, data from groundwater monitoring is not yet available to support this premise. The site is located adjacent to a vegetated ditch to the west, high quality wetlands to the south and the Stillwater River floodplain to the east.

Functions planned at this wetland are:

- **Flood storage**
- **Wildlife habitat**
- **Food chain**

In order to protect the value of this new wetland as wildlife habitat, the following control could be implemented:

- **Control of human access. The planned boardwalk is well away from the eastern edge of the new wetland. Signage and enforcement will be used to prevent human access into the wetland itself.**
- **Implementation and enforcement of the city's pet control ordinance.**
- **Implementation of a buffer area to further protect the wetland area from access by humans or pets.**

4.11.3.3 General Mitigation Guidelines

This detailed mitigation plan will be developed in close coordination with the USCOE, EPA and USFWS. The mitigation plan will follow the USCOE *Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Proposal Guidelines* and will be finalized prior to the issuance of the 404 permit. **MDT is the responsible entity for funding and implementing the mitigation plan. Wetland mitigation is part of the project cost.**

Success criteria for wetlands mitigation will consider the following:

a. Percent vegetative cover within the mitigation wetlands should be equal to or greater than the percent vegetative cover of the lost wetlands within a five-year period.

b. Vegetative species composition and diversity should closely approximate the composition and diversity of lost wetlands. One method for doing this could be by comparison of plant numbers and vegetative species lists at the lost wetlands and the mitigated wetlands.

Corrective action will be taken if criteria established for wetland mitigation success at the time of Section 404 permit application are not being met.

4.11.3.4 Minimization During Design and Construction

Where wetland losses are unavoidable, wetland losses will be minimized by implementing conservation measures in highway design and construction.

These conservation measures will include:

- removal of vegetation will be kept to the minimum necessary for completion of the project;
- all exposed areas will be revegetated according to MDT standards and specifications to reduce potential erosion and sedimentation, provide desirable ground cover, to inhibit the invasion of noxious weeds, and for aesthetic purposes;
- perennial stream crossing mitigation measures will be addressed in the Montana Stream Protection Act permit;
- mulching, reseeding, netting, plantings, and other bank stabilization and erosion-control measures will be considered;
- placement of siltation fences along the Flathead River crossing may be used to minimize sedimentation;
- noxious weed control, revegetation seeding, and fertilizing will be coordinated with the county weed district in accordance with MDT standard procedures; and
- flagging or fencing of wetland areas during construction to avoid unnecessary disturbance due to construction activities.

4.11.3.5 Wetland Finding

Based upon the above considerations, it is determined there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in wetlands and that the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use.

4.12 Fisheries and Wildlife

Existing fisheries and wildlife conditions are described in Section 3.11.

4.12.1 Impacts

More detailed information about impacts to wildlife is contained in the *General Wildlife Technical Report*, Carter & Burgess, February 1994.

4.12.1.1 No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative no improvements to the existing corridor will be made. Impacts to wildlife will **generally** remain the same as they are currently, **although as accident potential increases, the likelihood of a spill of hazardous materials increases, which could impact fishery resources at stream crossings (Table 4-30).**

4.12.1.2 Impacts Common to All Build Alternatives

All the build alternatives will physically remove habitat available to wildlife. The amount of habitat lost will vary with each alternative. These losses will be due to increasing the road width and constructing new bridges. The majority of losses will occur in agricultural areas. However, none of the areas to be impacted are critical or limiting for wildlife species.

All the build alternatives will result in additional wildlife/vehicle collisions. However, the potential for these collisions is not expected to increase substantially because the road is already there. Wildlife species in the area are already accustomed to the highway's presence. **Widening traffic lanes and removal of vegetation from the right-of-way would likely inhibit movement of some big game across the highway. Increased traffic volumes and vehicle speed, resulting from highway improvements, would increase the risk of mortality due to vehicle-animal collisions; however, highway improvements would also increase motorists' visibility of animals on or near the highway and allow for some avoidance of collisions. Widening the highway would also provide a greater opportunity for drivers to change lanes and avoid animals.**

Displacement of some species of wildlife will occur with implementation of the build alternatives. This displacement will be a result of disturbances related to the highway including noise, and increasing human activities. However, this displacement is not expected to substantially impact wildlife because all the action alternatives involve improvements to an existing roadway.

Temporary and localized effects to wildlife and fishery resources will be expected during construction. Surface disturbances will result in some increased erosion and turbidity and sedimentation in adjacent bodies of water. Some additional wildlife habitat will be temporarily displaced during construction activity. Revegetation of disturbed surfaces will allow this to be re-used. In addition, noise and disruption associated with construction activities may result in temporary displacement of some wildlife species from the general area and temporary disruption of normal wildlife reproductive cycles.

Impacts associated with the build alternatives will result in wildlife displacement and habitat fragmentation. Displacement will result from wildlife being unable to utilize habitats adjacent to the highway due to increased human activity. However, as wildlife become accustomed to these disturbances they may potentially utilize these areas.

Additional impacts will result from an expected increase in development along the highway. This increase in development may occur as businesses and residents move into previously unpopulated areas along the highway. This development will result in habitat fragmentation. Fragmentation will result from wildlife being unable to access habitats due to increased human activity. This increase will restrict wildlife from utilizing all available habitats.

However, these impacts are not expected to adversely impact wildlife because the habitats to be impacted are common within the general project area **and additional carrying capacity remains. Significant displacement will not occur.**

4.12.1.3 Impacts for the Build Alternatives

4.12.1.3.1 Somers to Kalispell

Impacts to wildlife are expected to be low along this section of the corridor. The majority of habitats within this area are agricultural. However, small amounts of wetland and riparian habitat may be affected at the stream crossing. For Alternative A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO), approximately 30.78 hectares (76 acres) of habitat will be converted to highway. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will convert approximately 17.01 hectares (42 acres) of habitat to highway (Table 4-30).

Table 4-30
Potential Impacts to Wildlife by Road Section

Road Sections	Big Game Habitat	General Wildlife	Raptors	Habitat Types Converted	Threat-ened or Endang-ered Species	Alternatives A(MEDIAN) & A(COMBO) Hectares (Acres)	Alternative A(TURN-LANE) Hectares (Acres)	Stream Crossings
Somers to Kalispell	White-tail Winter Range	Low	Low	Agricultural; Riparian	None	30.78 (76) (preferred)	17.01 (42)	Ashley Creek; Patrick Creek
Kalispell Bypass B	None	Low	Low	Agricultural; Riparian	None	35.64 (88)*	32.81 (81)* (preferred)	Spring Creek and Ashley Creek
Kalispell	None	Low	Low	Agricultural; Urban	None	9.72 (24)	9.72 (24) (preferred)	None
Kalispell to Whitefish	White-tail Winter Range	Low	Low	Agricultural; Coniferous Forest; Riparian	None	49.41 (122)	34.83 (86) (preferred)	Stillwater River
Whitefish A(FOUR-LANE)	None	Low	Low	Urban; Riparian	None	6.48 (16)	--	Whitefish River
Whitefish C(COUPLET-1)	None	Low	Low	Urban; Riparian	None	6.48 (16)	--	Whitefish River
Alt. C(COUPLET-2)	None	Low	Low	Urban; Riparian	None	11.75 (29)	--	Whitefish River
Whitefish C(COUPLET-3)	None	Low	Low	Urban; Riparian	None	6.48 (16) (preferred)	--	Whitefish River
Whitefish C(COUPLET-4)	None	Low	Low	Urban; Riparian	None	6.48 (16)	--	Whitefish River
Whitefish to West Terminus	White-tail Winter Range	Low	Low	Coniferous Forest	Low	10.5(26)	10.5(26)	None
No-Build	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

Low: Impacts will be minor and will not require specific mitigation measures.
None: Will have no perceptible impact on the resource.
**These quantities include the impacts of Alternative A in Kalispell.*

Within this section of the corridor, a limited amount of winter/spring big game habitat occurs. However, the proposed expansion is expected to have a low impact on this habitat. This is based on the following consideration. Wildlife species in the area are already accustomed to highway related disturbances. Therefore, an increase in road width will not change the type of disturbance already occurring in the area.

Although the type of disturbance will remain the same, increasing the width of the highway may increase the number of deer/vehicle collisions due to the greater travel distance needed for deer to cross the highway. Within this area a higher number of collisions already occurs as compared to other areas along the corridor (Cross 1993). However, over time the deer will become accustomed to the increase in road width and therefore, the impacts are expected to be low.

Impacts to raptors are expected to be low primarily because no raptor nests have been identified near the corridor. Although raptors are known to occur in the area, they are already accustomed to highway-related disturbances. Thus, the additional width probably will not substantially affect them.

One stream crossing occurs within this section of the corridor. The Ashley creek crossing is not expected to adversely impact aquatic species, since it does not contain a significant fishery (Hanzel 1993). Also, it does not provide habitat for any threatened, endangered, or sensitive fish species, including bull and westslope cutthroat trout (Craig 1993).

4.12.1.3.2 Kalispell Bypass B

Impacts to wildlife species within this area are expected to be low. Approximately 25.92 hectares (64 acres) of habitat will be converted under this alternative with Alternative B(MEDIAN). With Alternative B(TURN-LANE), approximately 23.08 hectares (57 acres) of habitat will be converted. Like in the Somers to Kalispell segment, the majority of habitat impacted will be agricultural. **The bypass may also accelerate impact to wildlife habitat associated with conversions of land from open or agricultural to higher intensity uses.**

Impacts under this section are expected to be the same as those for the Somers to Kalispell section. However, no big game winter range has been identified within this section of the right-of-way. Therefore, mitigation measures described to limit deer/vehicle collisions will not be necessary within this section of highway.

Two streams are crossed by this alternative. They are Spring Creek and Ashley Creek. As described previously Ashley Creek does not support a significant fishery. Spring Creek also does not support a fishery or habitat for sensitive fish, including bull and westslope cutthroat trout. Therefore, impacts to these two areas will be minimal. However, proper construction practices will be implemented to minimize impacts to the waterways.

This section also passes adjacent to the Lone Pine State Preserve west of Kalispell. Although designated as a preserve the area is not managed for any wildlife species (Cross 1993). Currently the area contains residential property, and experiences a high degree of human disturbance. Therefore, the highway is not expected to greatly impact this area.

Potential impacts to raptors will be the same as for the Somers to Kalispell section.

4.12.1.3.3 Kalispell Through Town

This section will convert approximately 9.72 hectares (24 acres) of habitat. However, the majority of these habitats occur within either urban or agricultural type habitats.

Impacts along this section will be the same as those described for Alternative B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE). However, within this section no streams will be crossed. Also, no designated preserves are crossed by this section of highway.

4.12.1.3.4 Kalispell to Whitefish

Within this section of highway, approximately 49.41 hectares (122 acres) of habitat will be converted under Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO), while under Alternative A(TURN-LANE) approximately 34.83 hectares (88 acres) of habitat will be converted. The majority of habitats impacted are agricultural, however, small amounts coniferous forest and riparian type habitats may be impacted.

Impacts to wildlife for this section will be the same as those described for the Somers-to-Kalispell section. South of Whitefish, approximately four miles of big game winter range is bisected by the corridor. During the winter this area accounts for a high rate of vehicle-killed deer as they move throughout the area.

Within this section one major stream is crossed, the Stillwater River. The Stillwater River, like previously described streams, does not support a significant fishery (Hanzel 1993). The majority of fish species in the river are migratory and therefore, resident fish population is not of concern to resource management agencies. However, proper construction practices will be utilized to minimize impacts to the waterway, including maintaining flow around the construction area to facilitate migrating fish, such as bull and westslope cutthroat trout.

4.12.1.3.5 Whitefish Alternative A(FOUR-LANE)

Within this section approximately 6.48 hectares (16 acres) of habitat will be converted. The majority of habitats disturbed will be urban. However, a small amount of riparian habitat also will be disturbed along the Stillwater River.

Impacts to general wildlife will be the same as those described for the previous sections. However, no big game winter range has been identified within this segment.

The Whitefish River is the only aquatic habitat crossed by this section. However, like the Stillwater River, the Whitefish River does not support a significant resident fish population. Therefore, any impacts from road construction will be minimal and similar to those described above.

4.12.1.3.6 Whitefish Alternative C

Impacts associated with this section will be similar to those described in the previous section. The amount of habitat impacted by this section will be approximately the same. Also, the types of habitats to be impacted will be the same, as well as the number of stream crossings.

There is variation within the Whitefish sub-alternatives. Alternatives C(COUPLET-2) and C(COUPLET-3) **(preferred)** will both impact a wildlife habitat area along the Whitefish River. Although this area will be

bridged, its usefulness as wildlife habitat will be severely compromised. Alternative C(COUPLET-4) will result in impacts due to the widening of the Baker Street bridge over the Whitefish River.

4.12.1.3.7 Whitefish to Western Terminus of Project

Approximately 10.94 hectares (27 acres) of habitat will be converted. The majority of habitats impacted are coniferous forest, however some urban habitats will be affected. Impacts to wildlife for this section will be the same as those described for the Somers-Kalispell section.

4.12.2 Mitigation

Mitigation measures that will be implemented to minimize impact to fishery and wildlife resources include:

1. Proper erosion control techniques will be utilized during construction, including the use of soil retention blankets, silt fences and hay bales where needed. Areas disturbed during construction will be revegetated. All construction equipment will be serviced away from any stream crossings preventing the accidental spill of petroleum products into waterways.

2. Bridge structures or underpasses will be **sized to accommodate wildlife if possible.** Crossing of major watercourses will be done in a perpendicular manner as much as possible.

3. Loss of trees will be avoided wherever possible.

4.13 Floodplains

Existing floodplain conditions are described in Section 3.12.

4.13.1 Impacts

4.13.1.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative has no floodplain impacts. There are no risks of new flooding incurred, no impacts on natural and beneficial floodplain values, and no support of probable incompatible floodplain development.

4.13.1.2 Impacts Common to All Build Alternatives

Floodplain impacts related to the Somers to Whitefish project will be minimal in general, due to specific aspects of the possible alternatives. Encroachments on the floodplain will be minimal. Floodplain hydraulics will not be appreciably changed or modified. The build alternative generally cut across the impacted water features as opposed to running parallel to them. This cross-cutting configuration, while not always perpendicular, limits the impacts to specific points of intersection instead of lengthy stretches of adjacency and interaction. The majority of the floodplains that are crossed by the alternatives have narrow and steep cross sectional grades.

Flooding risks are negligible in all alternatives since roadway elevations are set above the 100 year flood levels as a result of design requirements.

Impacts on natural and beneficial floodplain values are insignificant. The footprint of fill placed within the floodplain is minimal when compared to the total extent of the floodplain surface area. Roadway fill will not be allowed to impact the natural stream channel, and will not be allowed to encroach into floodplains beyond that which will create **0.15 meter (0.5 foot)** of standing backwater during a predicted **100** year flood event. These minimal encroachments if they occur will not be allowed to result in a loss of significant flood conveyance or storage. Impacts due to increased turbidity during construction will occur. These will be temporary and localized. All floodplain crossings except Patrick Creek are relatively narrow with steep embankments. Patrick Creek, however, is a broad, flat lowlands floodplain with a small channel. Due to its broad nature the Patrick Creek encroachment calculations are large relative to the size and flow of the channel. There is a larger than expected difference between A(MEDIAN) and A(TURN-LANE) due to the shift east of Alternative A(MEDIAN) at this location.

Support of probable floodplain development is not anticipated for any alternative since most of the floodplains and their crossings are located on the rural sections of the project. Also the steep, narrow and compact physical character of the floodplains at these points discourage development within their own boundaries.

All proposed alternatives are consistent with local state and federal floodplain and water resource management programs. Impacts to the floodplain have been minimized by following standard stream crossing design criteria, avoiding direct impacts on stream channels, and adjusting alignments where possible. All practical measures to minimize harm to floodplains have been incorporated.

4.13.1.3 Quantities of Floodplain Encroachment

The following table describes the potential impact locations, the type and number of crossing structure(s), and the areas of encroachment within the 100-year flood level.

Table 4-31
100-Year Floodplain Impacts

Alternative	Location	Type of Structure(s)*	Sq. Meters (Sq. Ft.) of Encroachment
A(MEDIAN), A(COMBO)	Patrick Creek	box culvert	14,945 (49,000)
A(TURN-LANE)	Patrick Creek	box culvert	8,967 (29,400)
A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)	Ashley Creek	concrete bridge	9.3 (100)
A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)	Stillwater River	concrete bridge	9.3 (100)
A(FOUR-LANE), C(OFF-SET)	Whitefish River (south)	concrete bridge	6.98 (75)
A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)	Whitefish River (north)	concrete bridge	4.65 (50)
A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)	Skyles Lake	--	(0) 0
A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO)	Spencer Lake	--	(0) 0
B(MEDIAN), B(TURN-LANE)	Ashley Creek (south)	box culvert	2,408 (25,900)
B(MEDIAN), B(TURN-LANE)	Ashley Creek (north)	3 box culverts	16,163 (173,800)
B(MEDIAN), B(TURN-LANE)	Ashley Creek @ US 2	box culvert	5,682 (61,100)
B(MEDIAN), B(TURN-LANE)	West Spring Creek	box culvert	11,253 (121,000)
C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), C(COUPLET-4)	Whitefish River @ Baker Avenue	concrete bridge	4.65 (50)
C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3)	Whitefish River @ 7th Street	concrete bridge	11.63 (125)

Note: These are structures used to calculate the encroachment. The type of structure ultimately used may vary from what is shown in this table, as determined during the final design process.

4.13.2 Mitigation

Mitigation that will be provided to minimize impact to floodplains includes:

1. Use of standard MDT erosion control techniques to minimize impact to natural and beneficial floodplain values during construction.

2. Coordination with Flathead County related to any floodplain encroachment.

4.14 Threatened or Endangered Species

Existing threatened or endangered species conditions are described in Section 3.14.

4.14.1 Impacts

4.14.1.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative will have no impacts to any threatened or endangered species.

4.14.1.2 Impacts Common to All Build Alternatives

4.14.1.2.1 Bald Eagle

Although several bald eagle nests occur in the general project area, all occur more than one mile from any of the proposed corridors. In addition, any eagles utilizing the area are accustomed to highway-related disturbances. **No known mortality of bald eagles feeding on road-kill deer has occurred.** Therefore, no adverse indirect, direct, or cumulative impacts are anticipated to bald eagles or their nests as a result of any of the proposed alternatives. In addition, no mitigation measures are recommended to reduce potential impacts on eagles.

4.14.1.2.2 Peregrine Falcon

No peregrine falcons are known to occur in the general area, although some peregrines may occur during their seasonal migrations. Therefore, no adverse indirect, direct, or cumulative impacts are expected to the peregrine falcon. In addition, no mitigation measures are proposed for the peregrine falcon.

4.14.1.2.3 Sensitive Species

Ten sensitive species potentially occur within the project area. However, only one may experience adverse effects from the project (if it is indeed present).

One sensitive plant may potentially occur within the corridor. Western witchgrass is associated with marsh areas near Spencer Lake within the Whitefish to northern terminus section of the corridor. However, habitat for this

species is not expected to be impacted by the project. Therefore, no adverse indirect, direct, or cumulative impacts are anticipated for this species.

No other sensitive species are known to occur near or within any of the proposed corridors. Therefore, no direct or cumulative impacts to any sensitive species are anticipated. In addition, no mitigation measures are proposed for any sensitive species.

4.14.1.3 Coordination

Coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service has been undertaken. Copies of letters from the US Fish and Wildlife Service are in **Volume II and the Draft EIS**.

The USFWS has concurred in the determination that the build alternatives are not likely to adversely affect threatened or endangered species (USFWS, January 1994).

4.15 Cultural Resources

Existing cultural resource conditions are described in Section 3.15.

4.15.1 Impacts

4.15.1.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative will have no effect on the eligible, formally recorded cultural resource properties located within or near the project area.

4.15.1.2 Impacts Common to All Build Alternatives

Potential direct effects associated with the proposed project to eligible, formally recorded, cultural resource properties will include both physical and visual effect. Direct physical effect includes ground disturbing construction activities that result in the alteration of eligible cultural resources. With regard to historical properties, this includes the destruction and/or removal of buildings, structures and landscaping elements from their original locations. Properties eligible under National Register criteria A, B, C or D may be impacted by direct physical effect.

In addition to direct physical effect, the proposed project may directly affect visual characteristics of the setting of eligible historical properties. The impact resulting from visual effect is considered only in relationship to cultural resource properties for which integrity of setting is an important integral component of eligibility. These types of properties are usually those eligible under National Register criteria A or B. Cultural resource properties eligible only for their architectural value (criterion C) or their informational potential (criterion D) tend not to be susceptible to, or adversely affected by, visual effects.

4.15.1.3 Alternative A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO)

No direct physical impact or indirect impacts to eligible properties within Kalispell or Whitefish or properties contributing to the Kalispell Commercial Historic District, the proposed Whitefish Historic Business District (WHBD) or proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District (WHRD) are anticipated due to the minimal nature of the proposed construction associated with these alternatives.

There are **five** eligible properties located outside of the urban areas of Kalispell and Whitefish that are **adversely** affected by these alternatives. They include a railroad spur, two farm sites**, properties on West Second Street and the Kalispell Courthouse Historic District (see Figure 4-7)**.

The Kalispell -Somers Railroad Spur (24FH350) runs parallel to US 93 between Somers and a point three miles south of Kalispell where it is crossed by the highway. Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) will have direct physical impacts to this historic property. Direct physical impacts to the Railroad Spur have previously been determined to have an adverse effect requiring mitigation through signage. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) **(dated 6/13/90)** has been previously prepared for these properties as part of the 1991 *Environmental Assessment*. These impacts, avoidance alternatives and mitigation are also addressed in Chapter 5.

The two farm sites, the Altenburg Farm (24FH276), and McCormack Farm (24FH277), south of Kalispell are both well away from the existing road. None of the proposed alternatives will create direct physical impacts to these properties. The change from a predominantly two-lane to a four-lane facility will create visual and audible impacts resulting from traffic locating closer to the properties that may affect these two eligible properties. These properties are also included in the **6/13/90** MOA referenced above for the Railroad Spur.

In Kalispell, adverse effects to the Kalispell Courthouse Historic District were documented as a part of the 6/13/90 MOA for the previous project. Between Ninth and Twelfth Streets, improvements to Main Street would occur within the limits of the existing pavement. Parking will be eliminated to provide for four 3.66-meter (12-foot) lanes. Trees will remain along the street and should not be affected by the replacement of curb and gutter or sidewalk. The new sidewalk will be placed at a higher grade to protect tree roots. Three trees will have to be removed to widen at the beginning of the couplet around the courthouse. The widening will take place on the side of the street away from the Courthouse.

West of Whitefish (adjacent to the West Second Street properties), proposed construction activities would include widening the existing two-lane, 14-meter (46-foot) wide paved roadway to a 18.3-meter (60-foot) roadway consisting of three 4.27-meter (14-foot) lanes, one 1.53-meter (five-foot) detached sidewalk and one 2.44-meter (eight-foot) sidewalk. All construction, however, would be confined to the existing right-of-way. No trees would be removed. Although the existing buildings would remain intact and their historic significance perpetuated, the addition of sidewalks where none currently exist would constitute an Adverse Effect to the setting of the historic neighborhood. The SHPO has concurred with this determination and it is addressed in the 9/1/94 MOA.

4.15.1.4 Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE)

Four historic properties have been formally recorded and are eligible for the NRHP along the Alternative B alignment. **(The Draft EIS also discussed impacts to the Simmons House, which has now been**

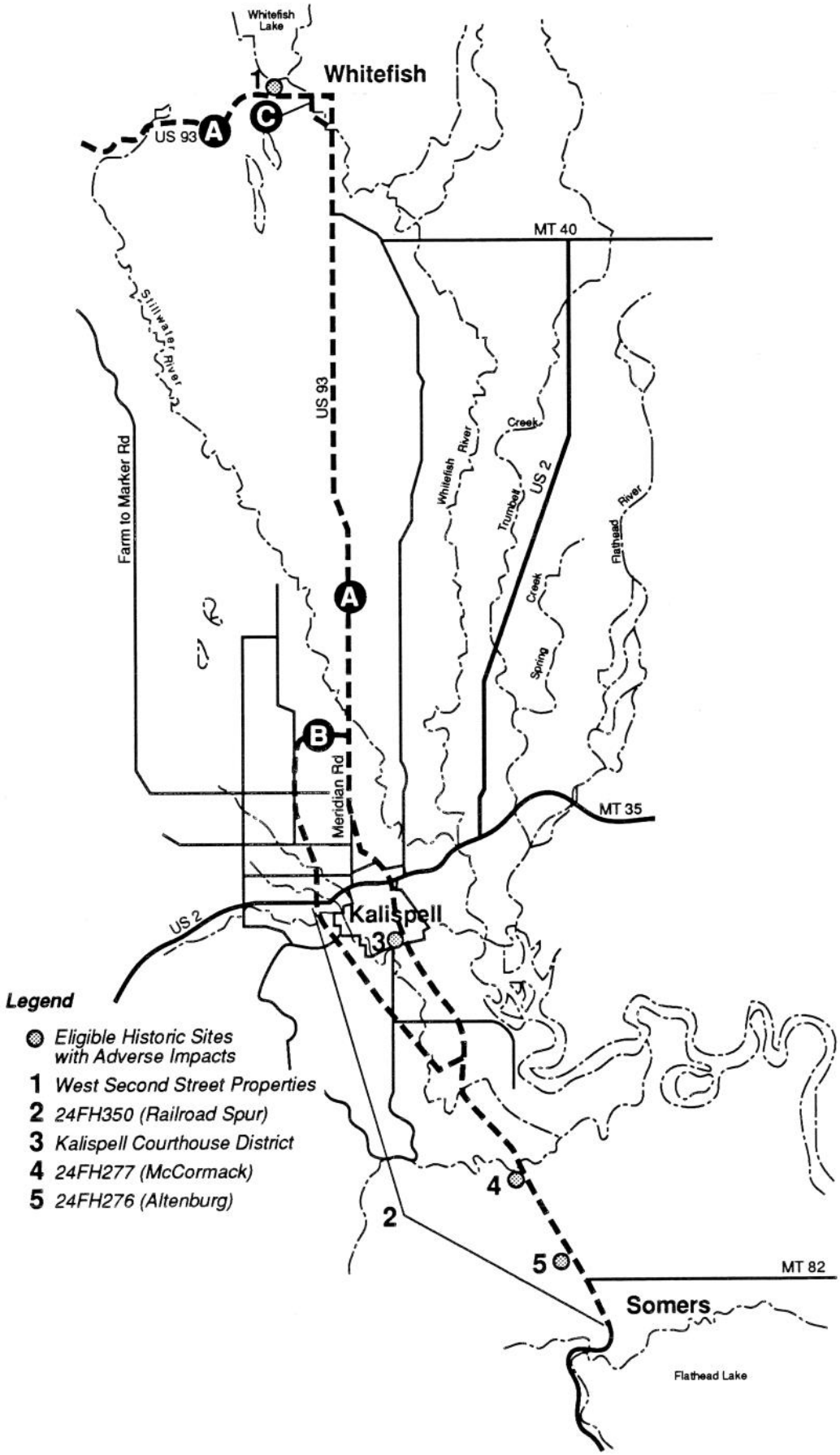


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Figure 4-7
Eligible Historic Sites with Adverse Impacts

determined not eligible for the NRHP.) These properties are the Kalispell - Somers Railroad Spur (24FH350), McDonnell Place (24FH496), **Byrne** Farm (24FH493), and the Don Schultz Place (24FH494). Other properties recorded along the route may also qualify for the NRHP, but they are substantially physically separated from the proposed right-of-way and will not be impacted by the alternative alignment.

Direct physical impacts and adverse effects to the railroad spur will occur if either alternative is implemented. These impacts, avoidance alternatives considered and mitigation are addressed in Chapter 5.

A determination of No Adverse Effect has been made for the McDonnell Place (24FH496) and the Dan Schultz Place (24FH494). The Byrne Farm is outside the area of impact and would thus not be impacted.

As addressed in Section 3.15.5, the rural setting in the area of the alternative alignment has already been changed to a more urbanized environment, so the area no longer would be considered a rural historic landscape.

4.15.1.5 Alternative C(COUPLET-3)

No direct physical or indirect impacts would occur **on Baker Avenue or Spokane Avenue** to properties contributing to the Whitefish Historic Residential District or Whitefish Historic Business District with any of these alternatives since no additional travel lanes will be added.

4.15.2 Coordination

Coordination with the SHPO has occurred and concurrence has been reached on Determinations of Eligibility **and Effect**. Coordination letters, the **6/13/90 MOA and the 9/1/94 MOA** are in Volume II.

4.15.3 Other Cultural Sites

The Flathead Culture Committee of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes has identified a concern relating to the proposed project.

The Committee has stated the following:

> "If the alignment remains close to the current centerline the likelihood of encountering cultural material is not as great as if the alignment is moved from the existing corridor. Due to the high probability of encountering cultural material outside of the disturbed area we would recommend that close communication be maintained with the Flathead Culture Committee throughout the decision-making process." **Specific areas and activities of concern which were identified in field visits are earth moving or excavation activities on previously undisturbed land.**

Therefore, Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE), would be of concern to the committee since it is not along an existing corridor. However, no specific sites or locations along Alternative B have been identified.

4.15.4 Mitigation

At 24FH350 (the railroad spur) on Alternative B, the MDT proposes to install a historic marker describing the history and significance of the Somers Branch of the Great Northern Railway. The market text will be identical to that determined suitable as part of the Somers to Kalispell segment of this project.

For the Whitefish Residential Historic District, the MDT proposes to conduct additional survey work and prepare the nomination of the district to the National Register of Historic Places. When the nomination has been completed and accepted by the NRHP, the MDT will then prepare a NRHP sign to the local historical society describing the Whitefish Residential Historic District and its significance to the history of the community.

The MDT will conduct monitoring at the Altenburg and McCormack farms to assess the visual and audible impacts to the site before, during and after construction. The results of the monitoring will be provided to SHPO and the ACHP within 18 months of the completion of construction.

If construction in the Kalispell Courthouse Historic District results in the removal of any trees, they will be replaced in kind by the Department.

Other mitigation includes:

- Continued communication with the Flathead Culture Committee regarding cultural materials of concern to the Committee.

Copies of coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office are in Volume II.

4.16 Parks and Recreation Impacts

4.16.1 General

The following is a detailed description of parks and recreational impacts within the Somers to Whitefish study area, particularly those closely related to the US 93 corridor. Section 4(f) properties that will be subject to specific direct or constructive use conversions as a result of the alternatives will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this DEIS.

Parks and recreation opportunities within the study area are heavily dependent on the existing and future transportation network. Over the next 20 years parks and recreation sites located within the project area will attract growing numbers of visitors, while regional population and tourist numbers continue to gradually rise as the socioeconomic forecasts suggest.

Increased traffic through the Highway 93 corridor, a product of this projected growth, will create additional noise, air pollution, accident potential, congestion and visual impacts on these public properties. These impacts will occur with both the build and the no-build alternatives. While these impacts may difficult to prevent they can be mitigated by improving access to some off highway sites and improving safety conditions around those sites adjacent to the highway. Generally, the build alternatives will result in improved access, safety and pedestrian and bicycle conditions.

4.16.2 Impacts to Parks and Recreation Areas

Lone Pine State Park

There are no direct impacts to the Lone Pine State Park or the larger Lone Pine State Game Preserve anticipated as a result of Alternative B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN-LANE). Although these alternatives pass close, within 305 meters (1,000 feet) of these areas, they are already experiencing a high degree of human disturbance and addition of this corridor would not be significant. There is considerable residential property contained within these areas. Although designated as a preserve, the surrounding areas are not currently managed for any wildlife species. The addition of the bypass is not expected to impact these properties.

Daley/Bert Holler Fields

The No-Build alternative will have no direct impact on the park, although access and safety problems will continue. Increases in noise and visual impacts will also occur.

No further right-of-way will be required along this park frontage for any of the build alternatives. Each of the proposed build alternatives [A(MEDIAN), A(COMBO) and A(TURN-LANE) will encroach upon a grass covered buffer strip aligning the eastern edge of the property, thus reducing the width of the buffer area. This grass strip is within MDT right-of-way.

Minor access impacts and minor hardscape changes to grassy areas including pavement and possibly curb and gutter will occur along the frontage of this property relating to all of the build alternatives. Alternative A(MEDIAN) will require the conversion of .04 hectares (0.11 acres) of grassy area to paved surface. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will require the conversion of .03 hectares (0.07 acres) of grassy area to paved surface. Alternative A(COMBO) will require the conversion of .03 hectares (0.07 acres) of grassy area to paved surface.

None of the build alternatives will displace public parking or disrupt the use of any of the ballfields. The landscaped buffer area contains a drainage ditch which can be maintained during construction and after the improvement is completed. The build alternatives will result in improved pedestrian circulation and safety.

Access and safety problems which presently occur at the park's east entrance along US 93, will likely be improved by the implementation of any build alternative, since overall road capacity and safety conditions will be improved.

There will be slight increases in noise and increases in the difficulty of pedestrian movements across US 93 associated with all the alternatives, as traffic volumes increase. Alternative A(MEDIAN) will include a median which can be used as a pedestrian refuge.

All of the proposed alternatives including the No-Build will contribute to indirect noise impacts to this park. The future noise level with Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is predicted to be 71-73 dB(A) Leq. The difference in calculated values between the No-Build alternative and Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is less than 2 decibels. This is not perceptible by the human ear. The existing noise level is 68 dB(A) Leq.

Lions Park / Haven Field

The No-Build Alternative will have no direct impact on these parks, although increased traffic will result in increased noise and visual impacts.

Minor hardscape changes to grassy areas including pavement and possibly curb and gutter will occur along the frontage of this property relating to all of the build alternatives. Alternative A(MEDIAN) will require the conversion of .04 hectares (0.11 acres) of grassy area to paved surface. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will require the conversion of .03 hectares (0.07 acres) of grassy area to paved surface. Alternative A(COMBO) will require the conversion of .03 hectares (0.07 acres) of grassy area to paved surface. The affected frontage is within MDT right-of-way.

None of the improvements will disrupt use of the Lion's Park tourist information center, the Haven ballfields or the batting cage west of the ballfields. The build alternatives will result in improved pedestrian circulation and safety, and will not displace any parking. Alternative A(MEDIAN) will include a median.

Although there no right of way changes along this frontage there are indirect impacts relating to noise. All of the proposed alternatives including the No-Build will contribute to indirect noise impacts to this park. The future noise level with Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is predicted to be 71-73 dB(A) Leq. The difference in calculated values between the No-Build alternative and Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is less than 2 decibels and not perceptible by the human ear. The existing noise level is 68 dB(A) Leq.

Ashley Creek Recreation Trail / Rails to Trails

Direct and indirect impacts will occur to Ashley Creek Recreation Trail/Rails to Trails as a result of implementation of Alternative B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE). These are discussed in Chapter 5.

Depot Park

None of the alternatives will have any direct impact on Depot Park. All of the alternatives share the same right-of-way configuration within the urbanized areas of the project. There will be no further or extended right-of-way required in these areas.

Although there is no direct impact to this property there are indirect impacts relating to noise. All of the proposed alternatives including the No-Build will contribute to indirect noise impacts to this park. The future noise level with Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is predicted to be 67-68 dB(A) Leq. The difference in calculated values between the No-Build alternative and Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is less than 2 decibels and not perceptible by the human ear. The existing noise level is 67 dB(A) Leq.

Buffalo Hill Golf Course

None of the build alternatives will have any direct impact on Buffalo Hill Golf Course. All the alternatives will share the same right-of-way configuration within the urbanized areas of the project. There will be no further or extended right-of-way required in these areas.

Although there is no direct impact to this property there are indirect impacts relating to noise. All of the proposed alternatives including the No-Build will contribute to indirect noise impacts to this park. The future noise level with Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is predicted to be 66-67 dB(A) Leq. The difference in calculated values between the No-Build alternative and Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is less than 2 decibels and not perceptible by the human ear. The existing noise level is 65 dB(A) Leq.

Riverside Park

Impacts to Riverside Park resulting from the conversion of Baker Avenue to the southbound leg of a US 93 one-way couplet through Whitefish will include increased noise and congestion associated with increased traffic along Baker Avenue, elimination of existing northbound traffic access to users south of the park, and higher vehicle speeds. The impervious surface will be widened variably according to the specific alternative, the direct impacts related to these change in cross-section are below. Associated improvements, including addition of curb and gutter along Baker Avenue will remain within the existing road right-of-way.

A positive benefit will occur as a result of the provision for a future pedestrian underpass along the river, under Baker Avenue.

Direct impacts are:

- Alternative A(FOUR-LANE): No Impact
- Alternative C(OFF-SET): .09 hectares (0.21 acres) of vegetated area (grass) converted to pavement.
- Alternative C(COUPLET-1): .05 hectares (0.13 acres) of vegetated area (grass) converted to pavement.
- Alternative C(COUPLET-2): .05 hectares (0.13 acres) of vegetated (grass) converted to pavement.
- Alternative C(COUPLET-3): .05 hectares (0.13 acres) of vegetated area (grass) converted to pavement.
- Alternative C(COUPLET-4): .09 hectares (0.21 acres) of vegetated area (grass) converted to pavement.

Although there are no right of way changes along this frontage there are indirect impacts relating to noise. All of the proposed alternatives including the No-Build will contribute to indirect noise impacts to this park. The future noise level with Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is predicted to be 68 dB(A) Leq. The difference in calculated values between the No-Build alternative and Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is 2 decibels or less and not perceptible by the human ear. The existing noise level is 62 dB(A) Leq.

Minor access impacts and minor hardscape changes to grassy areas (including pavement and possibly curb and gutter) will occur along the frontage of this property relating to all of the build alternatives.

Whitefish Lake Golf Club

The No-Build Alternative will have no direct impacts to this property. Indirect impacts will occur due to increased traffic, including noise, visual and difficulties in pedestrian access.

There will be minor impacts to the Whitefish Lake Golf Club as a result of the build alternatives. All three alternatives provide for the addition of one lane of traffic increasing the current two lanes to three in this area. This will result in the conversion of .18 hectares (0.44 acres) of grassy frontage area to pavement. This grassy frontage area is within MDT right-of-way, so no direct conversion of park property will occur. Minor reshaping of the road frontages will be required for each alternative but there will be no impact to existing infrastructure or facilities. The build alternatives include provisions for improving pedestrian circulation at this point.

Although there are no right of way changes along this frontage there are indirect impacts relating to noise. All of the proposed alternatives including the No-Build will contribute to indirect noise impacts to this park. The future noise level with Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is predicted to be 67-68 dB(A) Leq. The difference in calculated values between the No-Build alternative and Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is less than 2 decibels and not perceptible by the human ear. The existing noise level is 66 dB(A) Leq.

Whitefish Tennis Courts/Soccer Fields

The No-Build Alternative will have no direct impacts to this property.

There will be minor impacts to the Whitefish Tennis Courts / Soccer Field Complex as a result of the build alternatives. All three alternatives provide for the addition of one lane of traffic increasing the current two lanes to three in this area. This will result in the conversion of .04 hectare (0.11 acres) of grassy frontage area to pavement. This grassy frontage area is within MDT right-of-way, so no direct conversion of park property will occur. Minor reshaping of the road frontages will be required for each alternative but there will be no impact to existing infrastructure or facilities. The build alternatives include provisions for improving pedestrian circulation at this point.

Although there are no right of way changes along this frontage there are indirect impacts relating to noise. All of the proposed alternatives including the No-Build will contribute to indirect noise impacts to this park. The future noise level with Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is predicted to be 67-68 dB(A) Leq. The difference in calculated values between the No-Build alternative and Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is less than 2 decibels and not perceptible by the human ear. The existing noise level is 66 dB(A) Leq.

Skyles Lake Access

None of the proposed alternatives will result in the direct impact of Skyles Lake Access.

Although there are no right of way changes along this frontage there are indirect impacts relating to noise. All of the proposed alternatives including the No-Build will contribute to indirect noise impacts to this park. Neither the existing, the No-Build or any of the build alternatives meet the Noise Abatement Criteria. The future noise level with Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is predicted to be 66-68 dB(A) Leq. The difference in calculated values between the No-Build alternative and Alternatives

A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) is less than 2 decibels and not perceptible by the human ear. The existing noise level is 67 dB(A) Leq.

Table 4-32 and 4-33 summarizes impacts to park and recreation areas along the study corridor, and the noise level relationship between existing conditions, the No-Build and all the build alternatives as interpolated from noise modeling described in Section 4.9 of this document. These figures are assumed to apply at or near pavement edge for all listed properties.

Table 4-32
Parks and Recreation Areas Direct Impacts
Hectares (acres)

Property	No-Build	Preferred Alternative
Lone Pine Preserve	No Impact	No impact
Daley / Bert Holler	No impact	0.03 (0.07)
Lion's Park / Haven	No impact	0.03 (0.07)
Ashley Creek Recreation Trail	No impact	0.10 (0.25)
Depot Park	No Impact	No impact
Buffalo Hill Golf Club	No Impact	No impact
Riverside Park	No Impact	0.05 (0.13)
Whitefish Lake Golf Club	No impact	0.18 (0.44)
Whitefish Tennis / Soccer	No impact	0.04 (0.11)
Skyles Lake Access	No Impact	No impact

Note: All of the direct impacts described in this chart occur on property within MDT right-of-way.

Table 4-33
Parks and Recreation, Noise Levels in dBA Leq

4 (f) Property	Existing	No-Build	All Build Alternatives
Daley / Bert Holler	68	70-72	71-73
Lion's Park / Haven	68	70-72	71-73
Ashley Creek Recreation Trail	50-55	50-55	66
Depot Park	67	67-68	67-68
Buffalo Hill Golf Course	65	66-67	66-67
Riverside Park	62	66	68
Whitefish Lake Golf Club	66	67-68	67-68
Whitefish Tennis/Soccer	66	67-68	67-68
Skyles Lake Access	67	66-68	66-68

4.16.3 Mitigation

Ashley Creek Recreation Trail

This mitigation is described in Section 5.4.1.

Daley / Bert Holler Ballfields

The east access along US 93 will be eliminated entirely in conjunction with improvements of US 93. In order to mitigate the loss of this highway access the gravel drive along the eastern edge of the park and in front of the ballfields, will be extended to the south to create a new access at the southern end of the park. This will then be used as a one-way drive.

Lion's Park / Haven Field

The landscaped drainage area along the park's western edge will be maintained during and subsequent to construction of any proposed improvement to the adjacent highway. Utility poles located adjacent to the highway on the park's west edge may need to be relocated prior to construction.

Riverside Park

The bridge over the Whitefish River will be designed to accommodate a future pedestrian or bike path along the river.

Whitefish Golf Course

Landscape buffers **are planned in raised medians to** reduce the visual impact of the increased street width.

4.17 Hazardous Materials

Existing hazardous materials information is described in Section 3.16.

4.17.1 Impacts

4.17.1.1 Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO)

A total of 103 potential hazardous materials sites located adjacent to, or within, the existing US 93 right-of-way and six potential hazardous materials sites located adjacent to, or within the conceptual Kalispell bypass corridor are identified in Chapter 3.16 of this document. Figure 4-8 shows **potential** hazardous materials sites impacted **as a result of implementation of each of the build alternatives.**

Each of the alternatives proposed for the section of US 93 South, from Somers to Snow Line Road, result in unavoidable impacts to Site 103 (the historic Burlington Northern track bed). The site is located within the existing highway right-of-way. MDT has already purchased the railroad right-of-way to accommodate highway expansion.

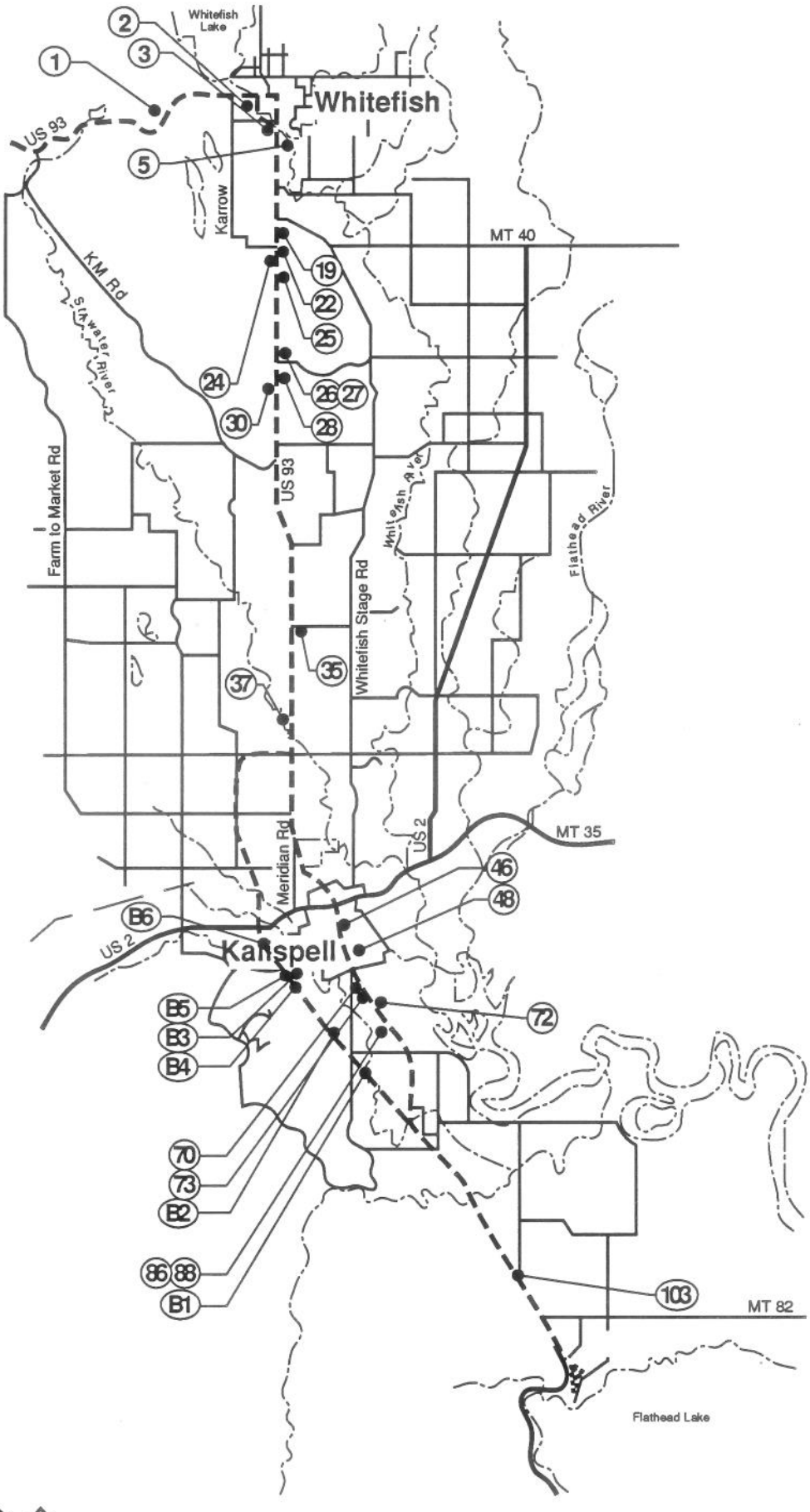

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Figure 4-8
Potentially Impacted Hazardous Materials Sites

Proposed improvements to this section of the highway will encroach upon Sites 86 (Parker Livestock Supply/Swallow Grain) and Site 88 (Long Machinery). Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) will impact a slightly larger area of these sites than A(TURN-LANE). For Site 86, mitigation measures similar to those required for Site 103 will be implemented before roadway construction (Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(TURN-LANE)) occurs within the area currently used for rail deliveries to this site. Proposed roadway improvements which include new pavement and adjacent landscaping, however, will reduce the potential for soil leaching or spread of airborne materials within each alignment proposed for this segment. Based on the nature of these improvements near these sites, potential impacts to the environment and humans will be minimized and no additional mitigation action will be required.

The likelihood of encountering substantial amounts of harmful contaminants along US 93 is minimal, and new pavement will reduce direct exposure to potential soil contaminants located within the proposed roadway of each alternative. New roadway construction upon five sites located adjacent to the roadway between Mileposts 110.0 and 111.5 could involve some exposure to potential soil contaminants. Sites 46 and 48 (former auto services), 70 (SSS Canopies/Campers), 72 (Swartzenberger's Wrecking & Auto Repair), and 73 (R&J Wrecking) have inadequate landscaping and exposed soil within the roadside drainage area fronting each property. Petroleum hydrocarbons are the most likely contaminants to be found in the surface soil at these locations.

Each of the proposed improvements to US 93 between Kalispell and the intersection of US 93 and MT 40 will encroach upon Sites 19 (Whitefish Taxidermy), 22 (Shirno Cabinets), 24 (Glacier Log Homes), 25 (North Valley Refuse), 26 (OHS Body Shop), 27 (auto dealer), 28 (Midway Mini Mart), 30 (KMJ Radiator), 35 (residence), and 37 (M&T Auto Body). Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) will likely require relocation of Site 30 due to substantial displacement of the parking area by new pavement construction.

Two service stations, Sites 3 and 5, located on either side of US 93 south of the Whitefish River are listed on the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences (MDHES) Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST) list and will be impacted by the proposed improvements.

Each of the alignment alternatives proposed for US 93 will encroach upon Sites 1 and 2 (auto services), located west of the Whitefish River. Due to the minimal likelihood of encountering harmful soil contaminants within the proposed right-of-way, potential impacts to these sites will not be cause for concern, and no mitigation measures beyond normal paving activities, will be necessary for these sites.

4.17.1.2 Alternative B

Alternative B, the Kalispell bypass route, will impact up to six potential hazardous materials sites. Impacts as a result of Alternative A(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) are identical. Two of these sites are located directly within the likely right-of-way alignment proposed for this new roadway.

Site B1, an active railroad spur track, is located within a substantial portion of Alternative B. In the event that the existing track is abandoned and becomes available for redevelopment as a bypass route, its entire length will be considered as a potential contaminant risk.

Alternative B bisects Site B6 (Montana Forest Products), and this site will undergo soils analysis and possible mitigation prior to construction of new roadway.

Impacts to Site B2 (Wisher's Salvage) will be avoided by shifting the roadway alignment west to avoid this property. Potential impacts to Sites B3 (private maintenance garage), B4 (salvage yard), and B5 will not be

cause for concern due to the minimal likelihood of harmful contaminants contained on these sites. Site B5 (former North American refinery) was investigated in 1988 by a geotechnical contractor to the MDHES Solid and Hazardous Waste Bureau. The Final Report of this investigation concluded that, "The site will be considered fully investigated and needs no further action. No hazard ranking is needed because there is no waste quantity."

4.17.2 Mitigation

Detailed hazardous materials analyses, including sampling and testing of questionable soils or water will be conducted during the design of the preferred alternative.

Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) located adjacent to the highway on Sites 2, 3, 5, 28, 45, 50, and 59 will be located prior to construction so that potential contact with the fuel tanks can be avoided during construction. Before roadway construction occurs on these sites, soil located adjacent to the roadway on these sites should be analyzed to determine if existing petroleum levels are higher than those accepted by the MDHES for this type of project. If so, mitigation possibilities include excavation of contaminated soil, or landfarming (spreading contaminated soils over an evenly-distributed area and providing the area with nutrients and vegetation). For the Burlington Northern trackbed located between Somers and Snowline Road, the right-of-way purchase agreement between MDT and railroad representatives requires specific pre-construction mitigation responsibilities of both parties involved in the property transaction. Upon completion of the remedial action mandated by this purchase agreement, no subsequent mitigation will be necessary for this site.

For Site B6, excavation and /or landfarming of potentially-contaminated soils are possible mitigation measures and will be implemented (if necessary) in concert with roadway construction. For the railroad track along Alternative B, removal of all track materials and surrounding surface soils **is recommended** before it is converted to new public right-of-way.

4.18 Visual

Existing visual conditions are described in Section 3.17.

4.18.1 Impacts

Visual impacts associated with this project can be described in terms of views from the roadway and views of the roadway. Visual impacts were evaluated based on the predicted response of viewers to any changes. Known concerns about visual impacts are:

- Concern about the visual impact of billboard proliferation.
- Concern about the visual impact of unrestricted adjacent development.
- Concern about maintaining and enhancing the character of certain "special" areas along the corridor.

4.18.1.1 No-Build Alternative

There will be visual impacts associated with the No-Build Alternative. Although no impacts are associated with the increase in pavement width, there are no opportunities to enhance visual quality associated with the design elements described in Section 2.4.4.3.

It is likely that this alternative will result in continued degradation of visual quality. Unplanned commercial and industrial development will occur in areas currently used for agriculture. This will tend to obscure the long vistas, confining views to the new foreground development. Additional driveway access will occur in a generally unorganized fashion.

4.18.1.2 Short-Term Visual Impacts

All build alternatives will result in short-term visual impacts during the period of construction. These will include:

- Stockpiling of excavated material and construction equipment and material.
- Dust and debris resulting from construction activity.
- Vegetation clearing, until revegetation occurs.
- Traffic congestion during construction.

The duration and intensity of visual impacts from construction activity varies by alternative. Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) tend to be of slightly longer duration for overall construction, but at least some of the construction will occur in areas that are less visible to traffic on US 93. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will be of slightly less duration but will be most visible to US 93 motorists.

4.18.1.3 Permanent Changes to Visual Character

There are a number of permanent changes to visual character that will occur with the build alternatives. These are described in the following pages and include:

- Expansion of width of pavement.
- Access that is more organized.
- Cut and fill sections.
- Addition of special design features.
- Addition of landscaping.
- Additional structures (such as retaining walls, guardrail and bridges).
- Expanded right-of-way, including the clear zone.

- Changes in adjacent land use.
- Expanded billboard control area.
- Addition of new roadway.

Figures 4-9, 4-10 and 4-11 show an aerial view which illustrates the basic differences in visual character with the different alternatives.

4.18.1.3.1 Pavement Width

The motorist's view of the road with the foreground element of broader pavement will be dramatically different from that provided by the existing road. As shown on Figure 4-12, this pavement expanse will be different with the different build alternatives. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will result in the most visual impact, with increases in pavement width from approximately 9.15 meters (30 feet) to a range of 23.18 to 25.62 meters (76 to 84 feet), depending on the urban versus rural sections. This will be perceived as a dramatic difference in visual impact. There will be increases in pavement width associated with Alternative A(MEDIAN) also, but in locations with a depressed median, the median will serve an important visual function of visually interrupting the pavement expanse. Although the pavement for the opposite direction of traffic will be seen, the primary visual impact of more pavement will occur in the same lane of travel as the motorist (an increase in pavement from approximately 9.15 meters (30 feet) to approximately 11.59 meters (38 feet). Alternative A(COMBO) will vary in visual impact throughout the corridor.

4.18.1.3.2 Access

The existing roadway is characterized by disorganized, undifferentiated access points. This results in visual character that is chaotic and confusing. The build alternatives will result in an improvement to this chaotic visual character. Access to side properties will be controlled and will be better differentiated, with clearly delineated driveways. Generally, Alternative A(MEDIAN) may result in more consolidation of access than Alternative A(TURN-LANE), although both will be an improvement over the existing situation and the No-Build Alternative.

4.18.1.3.3 Cut and Fill Impact

Noticeable visual impact can occur in areas where a new or expanded roadway does not fit well with existing topography. The majority of the US 93 corridor is generally flat, so there are minimal conflicts with existing topography. The exceptions to this are in the areas south of Whitefish and west of Whitefish. South of Whitefish in the forested section, there is a section where the existing roadway is adjacent to a drop-off in topography to the east. **There will be a large fill area in this location.** West of Whitefish, visual impact will occur, with cut and fill slopes to accommodate climbing lanes and some curve straightening to improve sight distance.

Somers to Whitefish
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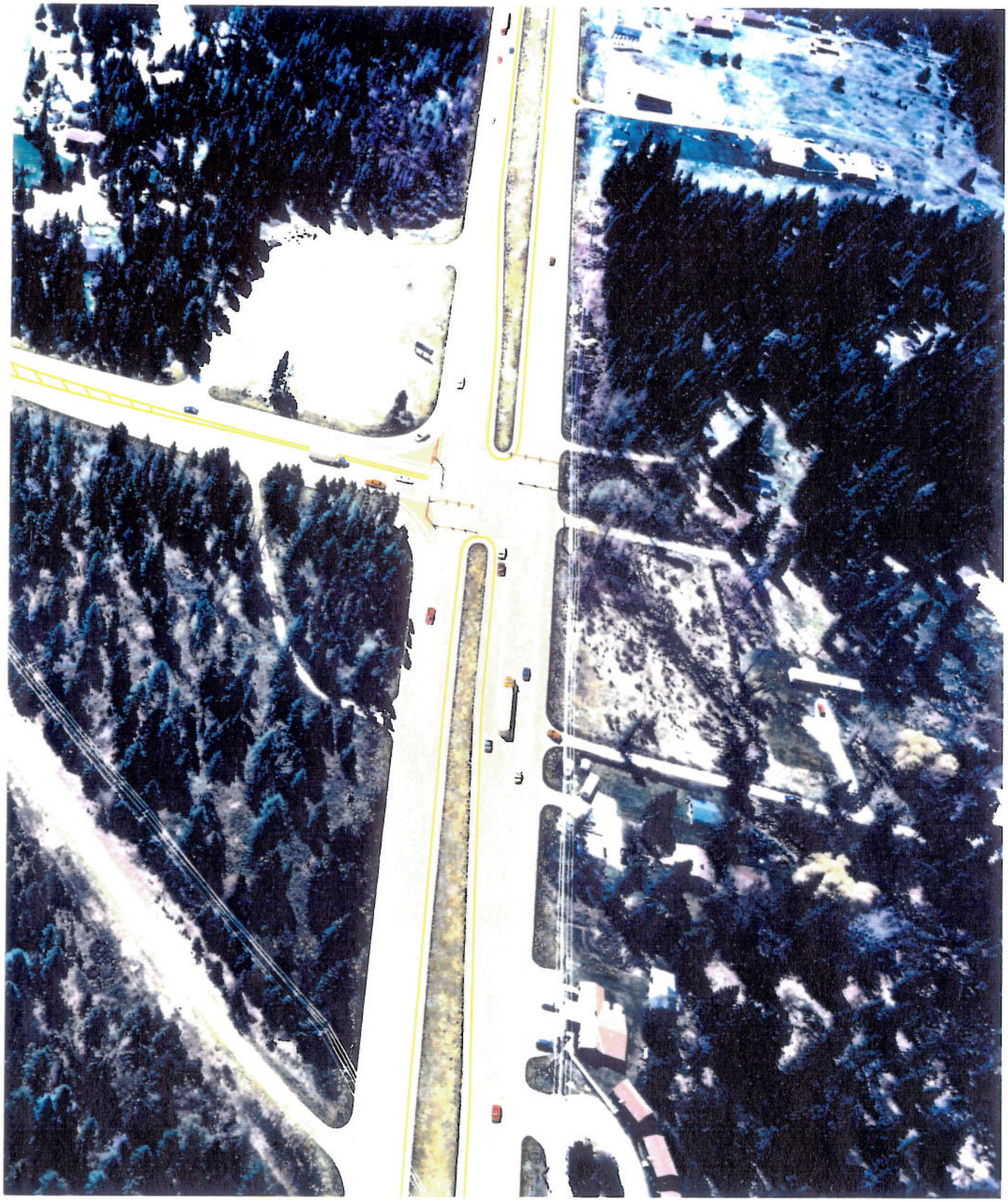
Figure 4-9
Existing Conditions just North of MT 40



Note: The exact location of this (west offset) is more clearly shown on the aerial photo drawings in Appendix A.

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Figure 4-10

Alternatives A(MEDIAN) & A(COMBO) just North of MT 40

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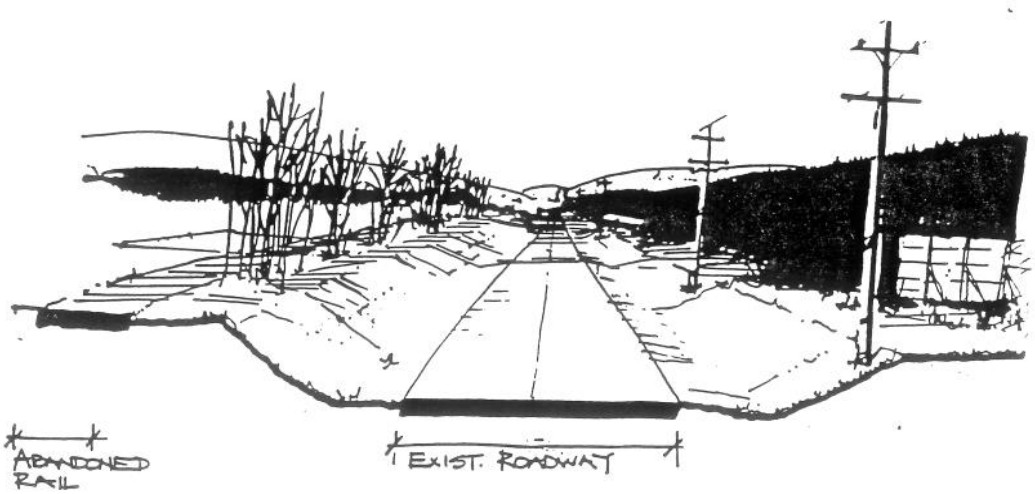
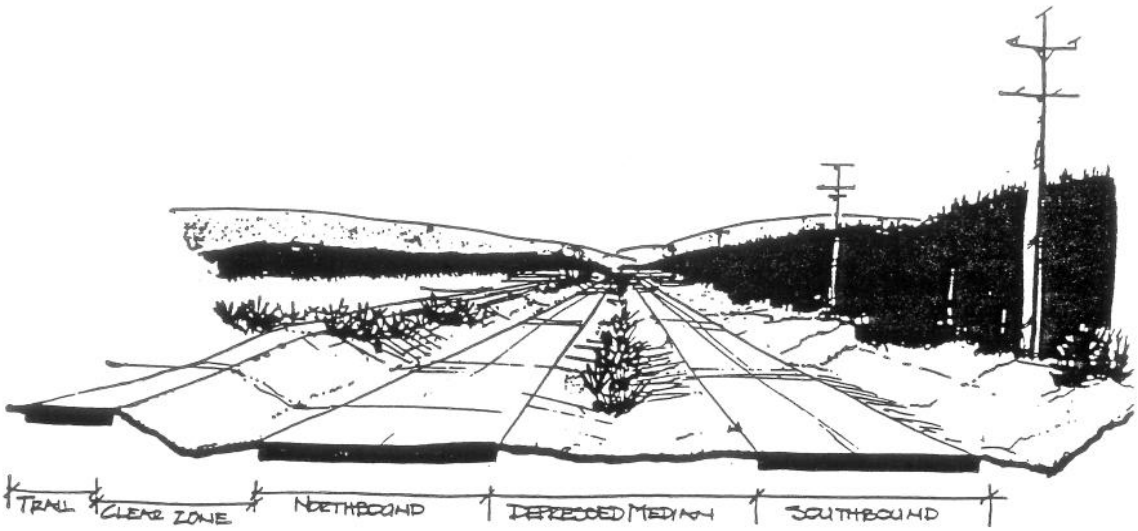
Figure 4-11
Alternative A(TURN-LANE) just North of MT 40



Existing Roadway



Alternatives A(MEDIAN) & A(COMBO)

Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 4-12
Visual Character at Milepost 106.8 (just north of MT 82)

4.18.1.3.4 Special Design Features

The build alternatives will all result in enhanced visual quality in the areas of the special design features described in Section 2.4.4.3. These design features have been specifically located to enhance scenic vistas, areas of natural resource significance and the gateways to the urban areas.

4.18.1.3.5 Landscaping

Visual character will be enhanced by the addition of landscaping in the median and along the roadsides. Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) include the greatest amount of landscaping and have been designed to take advantage of existing landscaping where possible.

Mature vegetation will be removed in some locations, resulting in a noticeable loss of the sense of enclosure provided by mature vegetation. An estimated three trees will be removed south of the courthouse in Kalispell.

4.18.1.3.6 Impact of Structures

Overall visual character will be changed by additional structures which will be needed. New bridges are proposed for the crossing of Ashley Creek and the bridge over the Stillwater River will be replaced. These bridges will be noticeable primarily from viewpoints up and down the rivers. Guardrail or bridge rail will be added in some locations and retaining walls may also be used.

Alternative C(COUPLET-3) in Whitefish will result in visual impact due to the intrusion of a new bridge across the Whitefish River at Seventh Street.

4.18.1.3.7 Expanded Right-of-Way Impacts

There are some locations along the US 93 corridor where there will be a visual impact associated with the expanded right-of-way or clear zone. This will be most apparent in the currently forested locations north of Milepost 119 and west of Whitefish. Large vegetation in these areas will need to be cleared to accommodate the clear zone requirements. This will change the visual character somewhat, although south of Whitefish the existing road already includes a relatively wide cleared area. This change will be more noticeable west of Whitefish.

4.18.1.3.8 Land Use Changes

The build alternatives are anticipated to result in differences in location and character of adjacent land use. Based on input gained during the scoping process, these differences result in perceived differences in visual quality as well. Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and B(MEDIAN) and in some locations, A(COMBO), will tend to encourage concentrations of commercial land use at intersections and discourage these uses at mid-block areas. This character of land use could result in blocks of land remaining as open, agricultural uses. From a visual quality standpoint, this will tend to leave intact some of the more expansive views of the Flathead Valley with the mountain ranges in the background. Alternatives A(TURN-LANE) and B(TURN-LANE) will tend to

encourage more of the extension of commercial strips, which will tend to concentrate motorist views more on these foreground elements, with the background views becoming less visible.

4.18.1.3.9 Other Impacts

The space within which MDT has control over some billboards will be expanded with the build alternatives, **because the amount of right-of-way needed will be expanded**. This space extends from the edge of the right-of-way out to a distance of 201.3 meters (660 feet) along primary roads. This does not extend, however, to signs which provide advertising for a use located on the property which actually includes the advertised use.

Outdoor advertising control **(not connected with this project)** can be done in a limited manner through the auspices of the Montana Outdoor Advertising Act and the Administrative Rules of Montana. The law does not prohibit advertising signs. It puts limitations on where they may be placed, how close together and how big they can be, how they may be illuminated, and how they must be maintained, as described here.

- Basically, signs may be placed in areas that are either (1) zoned for commercial or industrial use; or (2) unzoned, but within 183 meters (600 feet) of a full-time commercial or industrial enterprise.
- Signs must be at least 152.5 meters (500 feet) apart along interstate highways and at least 91.5 meters (300 feet) apart along primary highways, such as US 93. They cannot be closer than 152.5 meters (500 feet) from a park, national forest boundary, highway rest area, or from an interstate highway interchange.
- Signs may vary in size, but cannot be larger than 12.2 meters by 18.3 meters (40 by 60 feet).
- Signs may be illuminated, provided they do not imitate traffic signals nor impair drivers' vision.

Two categories of signs are not controlled. They are: (1) signs advertising the least or sale of the property on which they are located; and (2) signs advertising activity on the property on which they are located, such as motel signs, service station signs, or store signs. These are called "on premise" signs and do not require permits. However, they may be subject to local ordinances and regulations.

Flathead County **has a sign ordinance that is more restrictive than state law**. Its provisions are:

- Large off-site and/or billboard/painted bulletin signs are prohibited in portions of Flathead County not covered by a zoning ordinance.
- Signs 32 square feet or smaller are not controlled.
- Signs erected by a government agency are not controlled.

Views of the roadway will be most altered in locations where a roadway does not currently exist. There will be new views of Alternative B around Kalispell, from existing residential and commercial uses. In most cases, however, these views will alter the middle ground landscape while the background remains the same.

Interest has been expressed in the designation of US 93 as a scenic byway, through Montana's Statewide Program which is currently being **studied**. The proposed special design features of any of the build alternatives may increase the likelihood that US 93 could be designated as a scenic byway**, although it is impossible to**

predict whether or not the currently unknown designation criteria and process would permit the designation of US 93 as a scenic byway.

Another visual impact that will occur with the A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) alternatives is the effect of lighted raised median areas. Some light pollution may occur in areas adjacent to the raised median areas.

4.18.2 Mitigation

A number of different mitigation techniques are planned to minimize the visual impact of the proposed project. These include:

1. Final design will be done in such a manner as to best fit the new highway within the existing topography. This includes contour grading of cut and fill slopes, sensitive design of roadway alignment and profile and design of roadside signage and lighting. Streetscape treatments within Kalispell and Whitefish will also add to the overall character of the corridor and strengthen the visual character of these communities.

2. Landscape enhancements will utilize only native materials (including trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers) that are appropriate for a particular site or area. **Care will be taken to avoid installation of species that are palatable to wildlife in areas immediately adjacent to the roadway**. Therefore, the objective of revegetation is to properly restore disturbed areas to appropriate native habitats and natural communities.

3. Slope cutting will be done in such a manner as to be compatible with the adjacent slope. This includes such techniques as:

   - Laying the slope back at draws.

   - Modifying slope ratios to reflect existing terrain characteristics.

   - Rounding at the top and bottom to present a softer transition.

4. Design and construction of roadside and median landscape treatments will not produce the desired affect if the maintenance of those features falls short of what is required. MDT **will** seek assistance from local communities in the maintenance of landscaping and streetscape features. This is especially important at the Kalispell and Whitefish gateway areas. Maintenance includes providing water for plant materials, pruning, mowing, weeding plant beds, and seasonal upkeep.

5. Open road segments in rural areas can be maintained through conventional roadside methods with seasonal mowing and trash pickup. Local groups can also be enlisted to maintain roadsides through the state programs.

6. **Special light fixtures will be used in sensitive areas to minimize stray light pollution.**

4.19 Energy

4.19.1 Impacts

Anticipated impacts related to energy consumption were assessed qualitatively based on predictions of future traffic operations, construction operations and requirements for ongoing maintenance. A significant impact will occur if an unusual amount of energy will need to be expended with no resulting decrease in energy related to use or maintenance.

Vehicular fuel consumption will continue to increase with the No-Build Alternative as traffic congestion increases. Also, this alternative is expected to result in ongoing and increased maintenance requirements, thus increasing maintenance energy consumption.

Vehicular fuel consumption will decrease with all of the build alternatives due to a decrease in traffic congestion.

Energy consumed for construction includes the fuel used by construction vehicles as well as the energy required to produce construction materials. Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) will require similar amounts of energy during construction, although Alternative A(MEDIAN) will have slightly higher consumption due to additional earthwork.

Energy costs associated with maintenance activities includes energy used to clear, de-ice, patch and otherwise provide a safe surface for transportation are included. The long term maintenance fuel consumption, will increase with either of the build alternatives due to greater area of roadway surface to clear and de-ice and otherwise maintain.

4.19.2 Mitigation

Procedures available to reduce energy consumption during construction include:

1. Maximum use of on-site material to reduce haulage of materials.
2. Design for repetitive dimensions to permit re-use of forms.
3. Adequate construction vehicle maintenance
4. Adequate construction phasing and detour plan.
5. Turning off equipment when not in use.
6. Design of construction access roads and staging areas to limit distances traveled.

4.20 Implementation

4.20.1 No-Build Alternative

There will be no design, funding or construction impacts associated with the No-Build Alternative.

The No-Build Alternative will result in increased maintenance requirements over time, as pavement conditions deteriorate.

The No-Build Alternative will not have short-term social or economic impacts. No local construction jobs will be created and local businesses will not benefit from purchases made by highway contractors and construction workers.

Construction activities will not create obstacles to customer access to local businesses and will not create interference with agricultural operations, commuter patterns or the lifestyles of persons living near construction sites.

4.20.2 Preconstruction Impacts

Engineering design activities will take more time with Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO), and will proceed more quickly with Alternative A(TURN-LANE). The reason for this is that MDT has already prepared design documents for a five-lane design. These documents do not, however, include Alternatives B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN-LANE) around Kalispell, nor do they include sections through Whitefish and to the west. In addition, design documents for all alternatives will need to be converted to metric units.

Another preconstruction activity which will take varying amounts of time is the right-of-way acquisition process. Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO), which require more right-of-way than Alternative A(TURN-LANE) will take generally more time in the right-of-way acquisition process (see Figures 4-13a, 4-13b, 4-13c and 4-13d).

Different access control alternatives will also require different amounts of time in the right-of-way acquisition process:

- No Access Control will require no additional amount of time beyond that to simply acquire the property.
- Restrictive Access Control may take eight months to as much as two years longer than that to simply acquire the property. This policy will also require a renegotiation of property already in MDT ownership.
- Situational Access Control may take six months to one year longer than that to simply acquire the property.

Right-of-way costs will also vary, depending on the access control policy. Restrictive Access Control will result in additional costs to property owners to compensate for restrictions in access. Generally, if property is agriculturally zoned, little to no additional cost would be needed to purchase access rights. If property is residentially zoned, there would be a cost, but it would not be very great. Commercially or industrially zoned property is the most expensive for purchasing access rights. Situational Access Control policies will also result in some additional costs, although these will be less than with Restrictive Access Control.

It is likely that the overall project will be broken into smaller segments for funding. Each of these segments needs to go through standard MDT processes for funding for design and construction.

SEGMENT: Somers to Ball's Crossing

Task	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Alternative A(COMBO)							
EIS							
Design							
Right-of-way							
Utilities							
Funding secured			*				
Construction				Construction dependent on funding availability			

Somers to Whitefish
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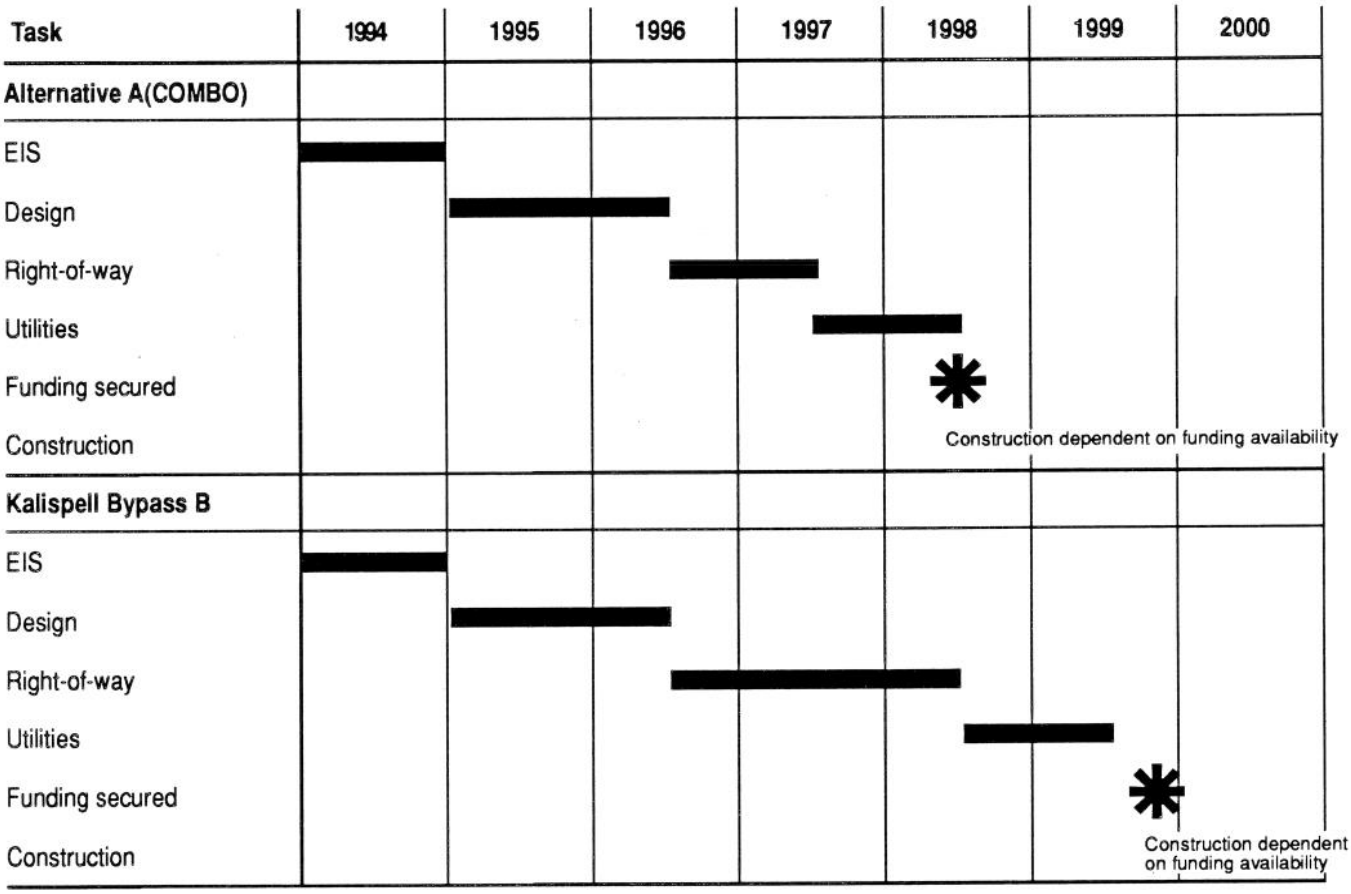
Figure 4-13a
Possible Implementation Schedule

SEGMENT: Ball's Crossing to the Courthouse (and around Kalispell)



Notes:

1. There will be considerable ROW required for all alternatives.
2. The bypass is likely to be built as staged construction, with only two lanes built at first. Right-of-way will likely be acquired for all four lanes, however.

Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 4-13b

Possible Implementation Schedule

SEGMENT: Reserve Dr. to MT 40

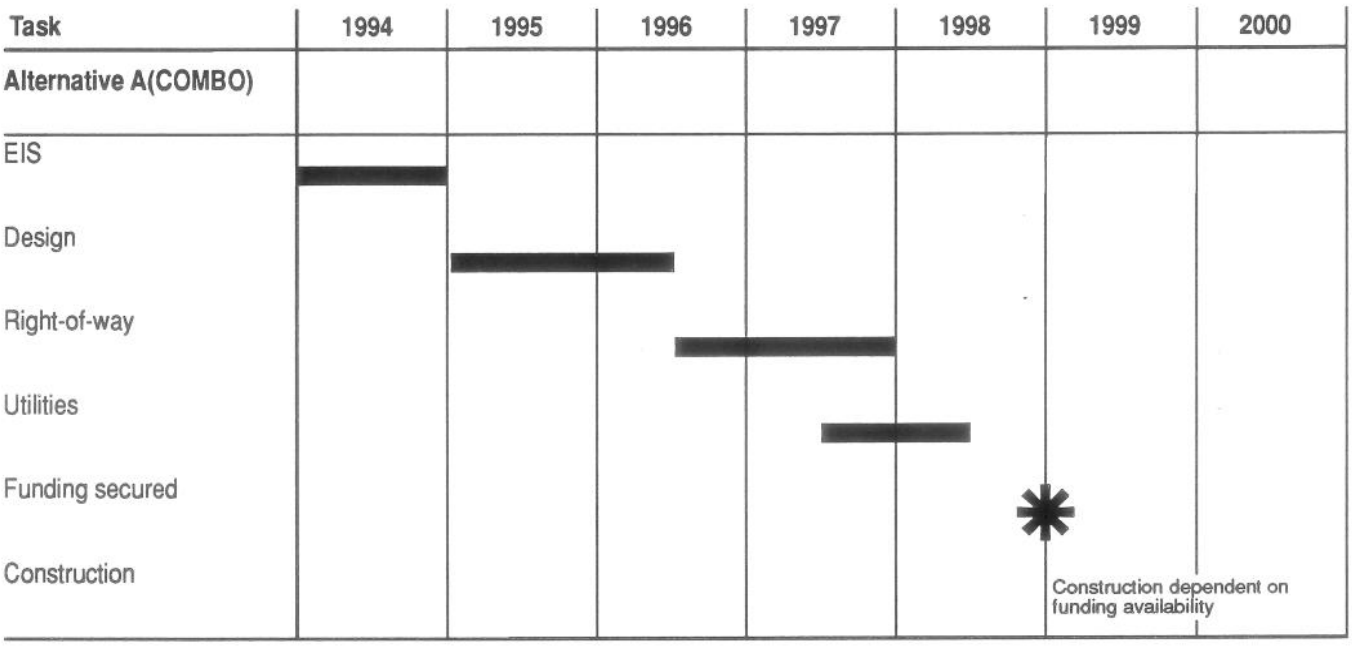

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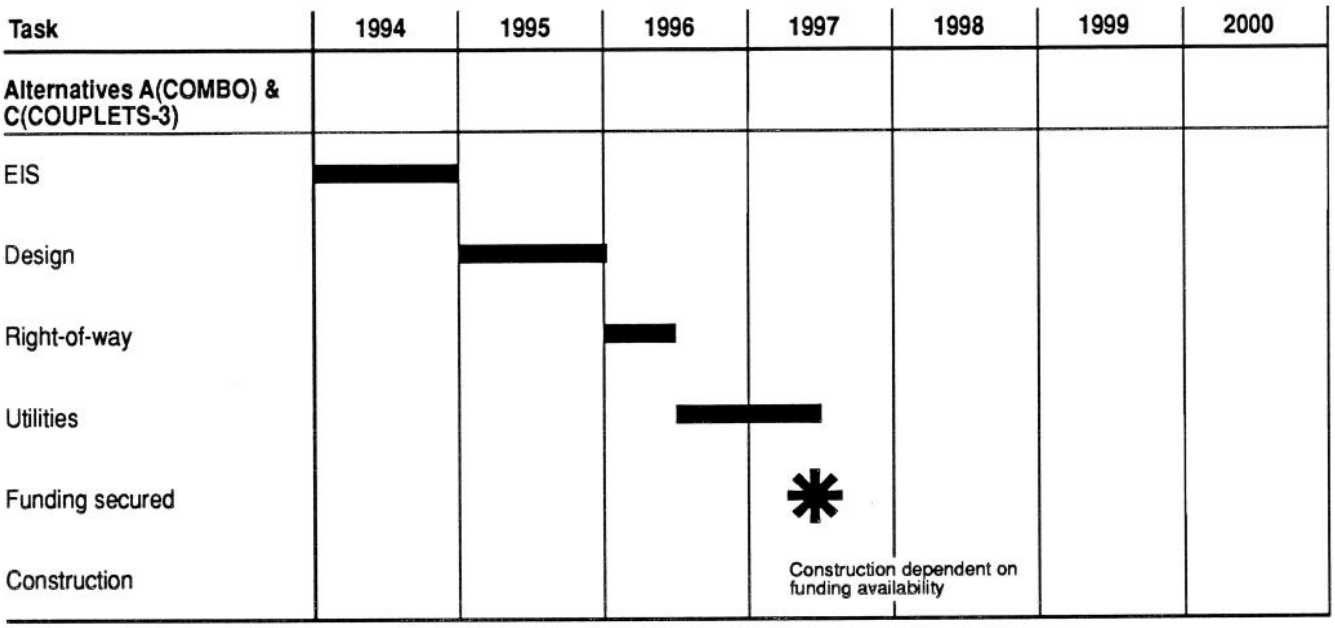
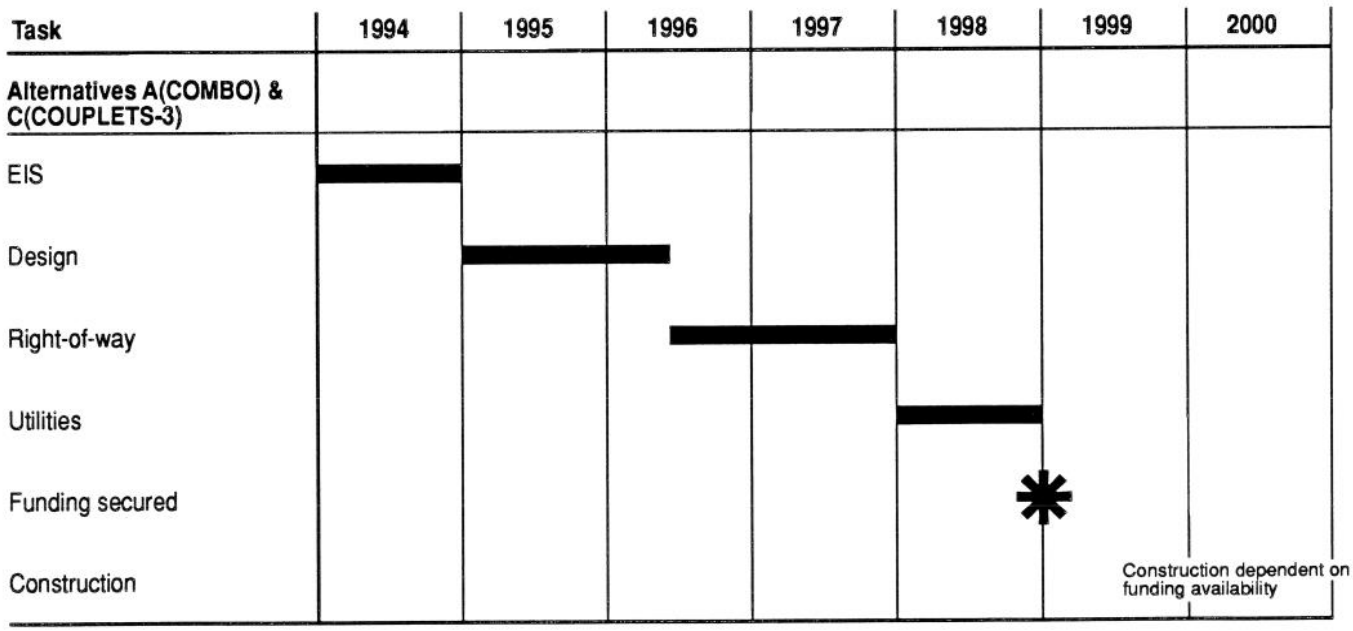
Figure 4-13c
Possible Implementation Schedule

SEGMENT: MT 40 to South River Crossing



SEGMENT: South River Crossing to West of Whitefish



Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 4-13d

Possible Implementation Schedule

Typically, the more costly a project, the more likely it is that the difficulty of securing funding will result in more construction phases. Since Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) are projected to be approximately 13 to 15 percent more costly than Alternative A(TURN-LANE), it is more likely that the availability of funding may result in more phases of construction. These alternatives will require a greater reallocation of funds from other projects in Montana to US 93.

Utility relocation is also a time consuming process. Alternative A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) have more utility relocations required, so will be anticipated to require more time for this activity.

4.20.3 Socioeconomic Construction Impacts

4.20.3.1 Economic Impacts

A firm date for initiating construction of US 93 improvements has not been established. For purposes of analyzing the short-term social and economic impacts of construction of highway improvements, it is assumed that road building activities will begin in the spring of 1996 and be completed in 2001. The project is likely to be built in segments, with each segment taking approximately two years to complete. Construction impacts are assumed to occur during an eight-month construction season, from April through November. The actual length of construction seasons will vary from year to year depending on weather.

It is assumed that employment of construction workers and contractor purchases of materials, supplies and services will occur evenly over the construction period. Actual employment levels and purchasing patterns will vary due to contractor scheduling preferences and weather conditions.

Construction of US 93 improvements will lower unemployment and reduce the incidence of poverty among Flathead County residents. Flathead County residents will be expected to fill most construction jobs and nearly all local jobs created through indirect and secondary economic effects, the county unemployment will be reduced by up to 0.5 percent (for up to six years). Because construction activities will be seasonal, project employment will provide little relief from the winter time peak in Flathead County unemployment.

4.20.3.2 Impacts on Employment and Earnings

Construction of improvements to US 93 will have positive short-term impacts on the Flathead County economy. Roadway construction will create jobs and income for local construction workers. In addition, local expenditures by highway contractors and construction workers will cause indirect and secondary economic effects in the local economy, creating additional jobs and income for Flathead County residents.

About 85 percent of jobs created directly by project construction jobs are predicted to be filled by local residents (Washington Corporation, 1993). In comparison to most Montana counties, Flathead County has a large and versatile labor force. In addition, Flathead County is classified as a "Labor Surplus Area" (an area with chronically high unemployment) by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, and local residents will be available to fill construction jobs, and nearly all the employment opportunities created by local purchases by contractors and construction workers.

An estimated 80 to 85 percent of the construction work force will be skilled laborers. Skilled worker will mainly be equipment operators, truck drivers, cement finishers, carpenters, and ironworkers. Unskilled workers will be

10 to 15 percent of the workers. Unskilled workers will mainly be manual laborers. Local residents will fill the majority of skilled jobs, and nearly all of the unskilled jobs. About five percent of the workforce will be management personnel, most of these people likely to be from outside of Flathead County (Washington Corporation, 1993) (Gilman Excavating Co., 1992).

An estimated 70 percent of contractor purchases will be made from local businesses (Washington Corporation, 1993). Local purchases will increase sales by Flathead County businesses and create additional jobs and earnings for county residents.

Expenditures by Flathead County construction workers will be similar to expenditures by other county residents. Purchases by non-local workers will mainly be for food and beverages, gasoline and convenience store goods, and lodging. Nearly all local jobs and earnings induced by construction worker expenditures will accrue to Flathead County residents.

Project construction will also create jobs and income elsewhere in Montana. Greatest impacts will occur in the home communities of the project's major contractor (or contractors), construction workers, and material suppliers.

Table 4-34
Estimated Earnings and Employment Impacts of Construction Alternatives*

	A (MEDIAN)	A (TURN-LANE)	A (COMBO)	B (MEDIAN)	B (TURN-LANE)	A(FOUR-LANE)	C (OFF-SET)	C (COUP-LET-1)	C (COUP-LET-2)	C (COUP-LET-3)	C (COUP-LET-4)
Part A: Total Earnings and Employment for Life of Construction											
Flathead County Residents											
Total Earnings (millions $)	$23.6	$21.4	$23.2	$6.5	$7.1	$0.7	$0.9	$0.8	$0.9	$1.0	$0.9
Construction Worker Earnings	11.5	10.4	11.3	3.2	3.5	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4
Indirect & Secondary Earnings	12.1	10.9	11.9	3.4	3.7	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total Employment	1,465	1,323	1,435	406	443	47	56	50	55	60	56
Construction Employment	597	539	585	165	181	20	23	20	22	25	23
Indirect & Secondary Employment	868	784	850	240	262	27	33	30	33	35	33
State of Montana Residents											
Total Earnings (millions $)	$30.1	$27.2	$29.4	$8.3	$9.1	$0.9	$1.1	$1.0	$1.2	$1.2	$1.1
Construction Worker Earnings	14.0	12.6	13.7	3.9	4.2	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5
Indirect & Secondary Earnings	16.1	14.5	15.7	4.5	4.9	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6
Total Employment	1,765	1,594	1,728	489	534	58	67	61	66	73	67
Construction Employment	724	654	709	201	219	23	27	25	27	30	27
Indirect & Secondary Employment	1,040	940	1,019	288	315	35	40	36	39	43	40
Part B: Average Annual Earnings and Employment While Alternative is Being Constructed											
Number of Construction Seasons Needed to Build Alternative	6	6	6	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Flathead County Residents											
Total Earnings (millions $)	$3.9	$3.6	$3.9	$1.1	$1.2	$0.1	$0.2	$0.1	$0.1	$0.2	$0.2
Construction Worker Earnings	1.9	1.7	1.9	0.5	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Indirect & Secondary Earnings	2.0	1.8	2.0	0.6	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Employment	244	221	239	68	74	7	9	8	9	10	9
Construction Employment	99	90	97	28	30	3	3	3	4	4	3
Indirect & Secondary Employment	145	131	142	40	44	4	6	5	5	6	6
State of Montana Residents											
Total Earnings (millions $)	$5.0	$4.5	$4.9	$1.4	$1.5	$0.2	$0.2	$0.2	$0.2	$0.2	$0.2
Construction Worker Earnings	2.3	2.1	2.3	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Indirect & Secondary Earnings	2.7	2.4	2.6	0.7	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Table 4-34
(continued)

	A (MEDIAN)	A (TURN-LANE)	A (COMBO)	B (MEDIAN)	B (TURN-LANE)	A(FOUR-LANE)	C (OFF-SET)	C (COUP-LET-1)	C (COUP-LET-2)	C (COUP-LET-3)	C (COUP-LET-4)
Total Employment	294	266	288	81	89	9	11	10	11	12	11
Construction Employment	121	109	118	33	37	4	4	4	5	5	4
Indirect & Secondary Employment	173	157	170	48	52	5	7	6	6	7	7

**Estimates are derived from engineering estimates of project costs for labor, equipment and materials. Secondary impacts are forecasted using economic base and input-output models of the Flathead County and Montana. Employment is presented as average jobs supported during a March-November construction season.*

4.20.3.3 Population Impacts

Construction activities will cause a small short-term increase in the Flathead County population. Most non-local workers households will reside in Flathead County only during the construction season (eight months from April through November) and will return to their home communities during the winter months. During mid-summer the presence of non-local construction workers will increase the Flathead County population by less than 0.5 percent.

4.20.3.4 Impacts Inside Cities

Highway frontage inside Kalispell and Whitefish contains the bulk of the business development along the US 93 corridor. Inside the two cities, traffic flow improvements will be achieved mainly through redesigning of traffic lanes, modifying key intersections, and enhancing crosswalk areas. Unfortunately, several sections of existing US 93 through Kalispell and Whitefish are in poor condition and will require extensive reconstruction. Rebuilding of these sections will eventually be necessary even if no changes are made in US 93's design and use.

Rebuilding of US 93 through Kalispell and Whitefish will involve major construction activities. Existing road will need to be dug up and removed and considerable ground work will be needed to compensate for less than ideal soil conditions. The in-town improvements will be accomplished in several short (e.g., five to six blocks) segments. The time required to construct individual segments will be influenced by weather conditions, contractor capability and starting dates. The segments are expected to average one construction season to complete. If road building conditions are unfavorable, reconstruction of individual segments could take more than one season.

During most of the reconstruction through Kalispell and Whitefish, two-directional traffic will be maintained by keeping at least one northbound and one southbound lane operational. At certain times it will be necessary to delay traffic near constricted construction sites. Occasionally detours will be used to route traffic around troublesome construction areas. During peak construction periods, knowledgeable local drivers are likely to drive alternative city streets to avoid construction. An attempt will be made to complete construction activities creating major traffic delays at night and in early mornings. The adverse impacts of construction will be greatest for businesses fronting road segments under construction.

Some sections of US 93 through Kalispell and Whitefish have already been rebuilt. Construction along these segments will mainly consist of resurfacing existing pavement and painting new lane designs. Resurfacing involves much less elaborate construction activities than reconstructing existing traffic lanes or building entirely new lanes. Resurfacing is expected to take about four months to complete. The resurfacing of city segments of US 93 will still cause short-term interference with normal patterns of commerce within the cities.

Development of Alternative B will bring construction activities within 30.5 meters (100 feet) of 7 rural residences, plus a higher density residential development on the north side of West Reserve Drive in Kalispell. Construction activities for Alternatives C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), and C(COUPLET-4) will be within 30.5 meters (100 feet) of an estimated 18 residences located along Baker Avenue in Whitefish. Alternative C(COUPLET-3) will bring construction within 30.5 meters (100 feet) of 8 residences.

Development of the Baker-Spokane Avenue alternatives in Whitefish will have short-term impacts on neighborhoods and commercial areas located along Baker Avenue. Construction of road improvements will expose persons living or working near the construction sites to noise and dust and inconveniences. The temporary rerouting of vehicles on to city side streets will increase trip times for travelers and expose residents of Whitefish residential streets areas to impacts from detoured traffic.

4.20.3.5 Impact Outside of Cities

Outside of cities, improvements to US 93 will involve major and lengthy construction activities. Some sections of highway may take up to two years to build. Where construction activities will block customer and employee access to businesses, alternative access will be provided. However, construction delays, noise, dust and the quality of temporary access roads may still create impediments to customer access, and may encourage customers to make purchases elsewhere in Flathead County. Detours and knowledge of potential construction delays also may cause customers use of alternative roads to avoid construction sites. Sales lost by businesses located along rural segments of US 93 are likely to accrue to businesses in Kalispell and Whitefish or elsewhere in Flathead County.

The timing of rural construction activities also will influence impacts to individual businesses. Retail and personal service-type businesses whose operations are disrupted during summers are likely to be more adversely affected than if construction major interference occurs in the spring and fall.

Business properties located on the side of the road where construction activities occur will be more obstructed than businesses abutting the functioning two lane segment. Quality of access to adjoining business properties will be determined on a case by case basis by local site conditions.

Construction activities in rural areas also will cause interference with nearby agricultural activities. Construction areas may extend into fields, temporarily displacing cropland or grazing land, and interfering with agricultural field operations and livestock grazing patterns. Inference with farming operations will be greatest for Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO).

Construction of Alternative B will cause interference with industrial and agricultural type land uses located along the bypass route. Impacts to agriculture will be greatest to farming operations on north side of US 2, where the highway route will bisect several fields. Road construction will interfere with lumber mill operations on the south side of US 2. Construction of the southwest segment of the bypass will affect operations of a salvage yard and livestock grazing.

4.20.3.6 Public and Private Service Impacts

The hiring of primarily local workers will serve to mitigate construction impacts on public and private services. In-migration of a small number of non-local construction workers and their families will create demand for between 10 and 20 housing units during the construction season. During the peak of the summer tourist season (late June through early September) non-local construction workers are likely to have difficulty in securing housing.

In-migration of a small number of construction worker households will not appreciably increase school enrollments or create burdensome demands on public and private utility services, or public health and safety services.

4.20.4 Other Construction Impacts

Exhaust emissions and particulate emissions (dust) will increase during project construction as a result of construction vehicle activity, lower traffic speed (start/stop driving), and earth excavation activities associated with construction.

Increased water turbidity and sediment loads will occur during bridge dismantling and construction activities, such as removal and disturbance of vegetation, construction of retaining walls, disturbance of the river bank, and placement of riprap. Effects of these impacts on benthic invertebrates and fish are expected to be short term, especially if activities near the river during critical periods of the year (e.g., during fish egg incubation and fry emergence) are minimized.

If spills of gas, oil, grease or chemicals occur during construction activities, they will pollute aquatic habitat and affect aquatic biota. The relative degree of impact will probably be greater for the more sensitive aquatic organisms and life stages.

Impacts associated with construction will occur periodically throughout the period of construction. Construction noise and dust will occur with the build alternatives. This will include any impacts associated with the hauling of materials for construction. These impacts will be localized and temporary. Detours and stopping of traffic during construction will delay and may even discourage recreational traffic from using this route.

Traffic will be most disrupted in the urban areas and in transition areas with all three design alternatives. Alternative A(MEDIAN) and A(COMBO) will have four more transition areas than Alternative A(TURN-LANE), so will likely result in more traffic disruptions in these locations. Detours will be required.

4.20.5 Maintenance

There are differences in the types of maintenance activities required for Alternative A(MEDIAN) compared to Alternative A(TURN-LANE).

Alternative A(MEDIAN) has fewer lane miles of pavement to be maintained, so there is less of a need for pavement overlays, sweeping and restriping. Alternative A(MEDIAN) requires maintenance of the center landscaped median, including grass cutting and litter removal. This median area can be used for snow storage.

Alternative A(TURN-LANE)has more lane miles of pavement, so there is more of a need for pavement overlays, sweeping and restriping. Snow plowing may be more difficult since a wide expanse of pavement needs to be cleared. Snow storage can occur temporarily in the center turn lane. Maintenance of striping is more important with this alternative because of the continuous turn lane which is restriped in shorter intervals.

4.20.6 Mitigation

The following mitigation will be implemented:

- Mitigation that will be implemented to minimize traffic disruption during construction is described in Section 4.1.9.2.
- Mitigation that will be implemented to minimize construction effects on river crossings is described in Section 4.10.2.
- MDT will develop agreements with **local jurisdictions** to maintain the landscaped median and roadside area in the urban areas.
- Low maintenance plant material will be used (in the median) for the rural areas. This will minimize the need for higher intensity maintenance.
- **A construction staging plan will be developed to minimize construction impacts to adjacent property owners. This will include specifications to address issues such as number of lanes open to traffic, traffic control, restrictions related to work hours or haul routes, pavement marking, flagging operations and area disturbed. Consideration will be given to providing incentives to contractors to minimize the construction disturbance.**
- **Construction involving discharges to streams shall not occur in spawning areas if practical alternatives exist. Construction will be timed to prevent disruptions to migration of aquatic species.**

4.21 Summary of Impacts

The following charts are a summary of impacts associated with all alternatives. This information is provided by segment.

Table 4-35
Summary of Impacts: Somers to Kalispell

Impact Category	No-Build	A(MEDIAN)	A(TURN-LANE)	A(COMBO) (preferred)
LOS	F	B	B	B
Traffic Operations	Increasing difficulty in overall accessibility.	Some out-of-direction travel for turning traffic.	Minimal out-of-direction travel anticipated.	Some out-of-direction travel for turning traffic.
Safety	Increasing accident rate and accident severity	Lower accident and severity rate for non-intersection related accidents; higher accident and severity rate at unsignalized intersections	Higher accident and severity rate at non-intersection related accidents; lower accident and severity rate at unsignalized intersections	Varies

Table 4-35
(continued)

Impact Category	No-Build	A(MEDIAN)	A(TURN-LANE)	A(COMBO) (preferred)
Parking	No effect.	No effect.	No effect.	No effect.
Land Use	Development may be more likely to occur in more agricultural areas.	Denser and more coordinated development may be encouraged.	Less dense and uneven extensions of commercial strips may be encouraged.	Varies
Prime Farmland Hectares (Acres)	0.0(0.0)	0.34 (0.83)	0.0 (0.0)	0.34 (0.83)
Social	Travel times will continue to increase.	Travel times will decrease; highway-related impacts may occur to residences within 15.25 meters (100 feet) of right-of-way.	Same as A(MEDIAN).	Same as A(MEDIAN).
Right-of-Way Hectares (Acres) Required	0.0 (0.0)	2.84 (7.01)	2.02 (5)	2.84 (7.01)
Number of Households Acquired	0	0	0	0
Number of Businesses Acquired	0	0	0	0
Economic	Economic conditions may deteriorate	Inconvenience of access may negatively affect some businesses.	Near-term advantage of left-turn accesses to some businesses; this may deteriorate over time.	Inconvenience of access may negatively affect some businesses.
Pedestrians and Bicyclists	Conditions will worsen.	Improved accommodations; median refuge area is an advantage.	Improved accommodations; no median refuge area is provided.	Improved accommodations; median refuge area is an advantage.
Air Quality	Increased VMT will increase PM10 emissions; increased congestion will increase CO emissions.	Increased VMT will increase PM10 emissions; decreased congestion will decrease CO emissions.	Increased VMT will increase PM10 emissions; decreased congestion will decrease CO emissions.	Increased VMT will increase PM10 emissions; decreased congestion will decrease CO emissions.
Noise	22 receptors impacted.	18 receptors impacted.	19 receptors impacted.	18 receptors impacted.
Water Resources New Impervious Surface: hectares (acres) New River Encroachment: cubic meters (cubic yards)	 0(0) 0(0)	 7.7 (19.0) 14,995 (49,000)	 9.0 (22.2) 8,967 (29,400)	 7.7 (19.0) 14,945 (49,000)
Wetlands: hectares (acres)	0(0)	0.52 (1.28)	0.32 (0.78)	0.46 (1.14)
Fisheries and Wildlife	0(0)	30.78 hectares (76 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.	17.01 hectares (42 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.	30.78 hectares (76 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.
Floodplains	0(0)	27.9 square meters (300 square feet) of floodplain encroachment.	13.02 square meters (140 square feet) of floodplain encroachment.	27.9 square meters (300 square feet) of floodplain encroachment
Threatened / Endangered Species	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.

Table 4-35
(continued)

Impact Category	No-Build	A(MEDIAN)	A(TURN-LANE)	A(COMBO) (preferred)
Cultural Resources	No effect.	Adverse effect to 2 farmhouses.	Adverse effect to 2 farmhouses.	Adverse effect to 2 farmhouses.
Parks and Recreation Sites	Increased noise and visual impacts to 2 properties.	Increased noise and visual impacts to 2 properties.	Increased noise and visual impacts to 2 properties.	Increased noise and visual impacts to 2 properties.
Hazardous Materials	No impact.	Possible concerns with 8 sites.	Possible concerns with 8 sites.	Possible concerns with 8 sites.
Visual	No major change.	Grassy median will help break up large expanse of pavement; strip development is less likely to occur. Special design concepts will improve visual quality.	Noticeable increase in pavement width; likely increase in strip development will decrease visual quality. Special design concepts will improve visual quality.	Grassy median will help break up large expanse of pavement; strip development is less likely to occur. Special design concepts will improve visual quality.
Energy	No energy to construct; greater energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.
Implementation	Not applicable.	Some right-of-way required; slightly more costly; likely more time to implement.	Less right-of-way required; slightly less costly; slightly less time to implement.	Some right-of-way required; slightly more costly; likely more time to implement.

Table 4-36
Summary of Impacts: Kalispell Area

Impact Category	No-Build	Alternative A	A + B(MEDIAN) (preferred)	A + B(TURN-LANE)
LOS at Main & Idaho / US 93 & Reserve	F/F	F/D	F/C	F/C
Traffic Operations	Severe degradation of traffic operations.	Operation somewhat improved over No-Build.	Operations most improved over No-Build; some out-of-direction travel.	Operations most improved over No-Build; minimal out-of-direction travel.
Safety	Increasing accident and severity rate.	Somewhat improved safety conditions.	Decrease in accident potential.	Decrease in accident potential.
Parking	No effect.	12 blocks of parking removed in downtown.	12 blocks of parking removed in downtown.	12 blocks of parking removed in downtown.
Land Use	Business development effects will be undermined by congestion and driver difficulty in making turns.	Relatively minor improvements to US 93 will support expansions of some businesses.	Development will be accelerated along the bypass. Median will inhibit new development along mid-block areas.	Development will be accelerated along the bypass. Uneven strips of development may occur.
Prime Farmland, hectares (acres)	0(0)	0(0)	16.43 (40.61)	16.43 (40.61)
Social	Travel times will continue to increase. Traffic likely to divert to neighborhood streets.	Traffic less likely to divert to neighborhood streets.	Traffic least likely to divert to neighborhood streets. Highway-related impacts will occur to residences along bypass corridor.	Traffic least likely to divert to neighborhood streets. Highway-related impacts will occur to residences along bypass corridor.

Table 4-36
(continued)

Impact Category	No-Build	Alternative A	A + B(MEDIAN) (preferred)	A + B(TURN-LANE)
Right-of-way, hectares (acres) required	0.0	6.8 (16.79)	44.34 (109.5)	44.34 (109.5)
Number of Households Acquired	0	2 + 1 outbuilding	5 + 2 outbuildings	5 + 2 outbuildings
Number of Businesses Acquired	0	3	6	6
Economic	Worsening congestion will severely limit ability of downtown businesses to grow.	Some adverse impacts due to parking removal; improvements to crosswalk areas will help business.	Some adverse impacts due to parking removal; some sales will be diverted away from US 93.	Some adverse impacts due to parking removal; some sales will be diverted away from US 93.
Pedestrians and Bicyclists	Conditions will worsen.	Improved accommodations.	Improved accommodations.	Improved accommodations.
Air Quality	Increased congestion will increase CO emissions. 2015 PM10 emissions: 50,070 lbs/day	2015 PM10 emissions: 50,070 lbs/day; meets emissions budget in SIP.	2015 PM10 emissions: 47,370 lbs/day; meets emissions budget in SIP.	2015 PM10 emissions: 47,370 lbs/day; meets emissions budget in SIP.
Noise	36 receptors impacted.	40 receptors impacted.	66 receptors impacted.	66 receptors impacted.
Water Resources				
New impervious surface: hectares (acres)	0(0)	0(0)	47.34 (117)	47.34 (117)
New river encroachment, cubic meters (cubic yards)	0(0)	0(0)	38,500 (50,400)	38,500 (50,400)
Wetlands, hectares (acres)	0(0)	0(0)	1.71 (4.25)	1.71 (4.25)
Fisheries and Wildlife	No impact.	9.72 hectares (24 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.	35.64 hectares (88 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.	32.81 hectares (81 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.
Floodplains	0 (0)	0 (0)	35,506 square meters (381,800 square feet) of floodplain encroachment.	35,506 square meters (381,800 square feet) of floodplain encroachment.
Threatened / Endangered Species	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.
Cultural Resources	No effect.	Adverse effect to Kalispell Courthouse District.	Adverse effect to railroad spur and Kalispell Courthouse District.	Adverse effect to railroad spur and Kalispell Courthouse District.
Park and Recreation Sites	Increased noise and visual impacts to 2 properties.	Increased noise and visual impacts to 2 properties.	Increase noise and visual impacts to 2 properties; direct impact to 1 property.	Increase noise and visual impacts to 2 properties; direct impact to 1 property.
Hazardous Materials	No impact.	No impact.	Possible concerns with 6 sites.	Possible concerns with 6 sites.
Visual	No major change.	No major change.	Roadway will be a new visual element visible to adjacent properties.	Roadway will be a new visual element visible to adjacent properties.

Table 4-36
(continued)

Impact Category	No-Build	Alternative A	A + B(MEDIAN) (preferred)	A + B(TURN-LANE)
Energy	No energy to construct; greater energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.
Implementation	Not applicable.	Construction in urban area lengthy and difficult.	Construction in urban area lengthy and difficult; substantial right-of-way required; more time to implement.	Construction in urban area lengthy and difficult; substantial right-of-way required; more time to implement.

Table 4-37
Summary of Impacts: Kalispell to Whitefish

Impact Category	No-Build	A(MEDIAN)	A(TURN-LANE)	A(COMBO) (preferred)
LOS	F	C	C	C
Traffic Operations	Increasing difficulty in overall accessibility.	Some out-of-direction travel for turning traffic.	Minimal out-of-direction travel anticipated.	Some out-of-direction travel for turning traffic.
Safety	Increasing accident rate and accident severity	Lower accident and severity rate for non-intersection related accidents; higher accident and severity rate at unsignalized intersections	Higher accident and severity rate at non-intersection related accidents; lower accident and severity rate at unsignalized intersections	Varies
Parking	No effect.	No effect.	No effect.	No effect.
Land Use	Development may be more likely to occur in more agricultural areas.	Denser and more coordinated development may be encouraged.	Less dense and uneven extensions of commercial strips may be encouraged.	Varies
Prime Farmland Hectares (Acres)	0.0(0.0)	8.86 (21.89)	0.0 (0.0)	7.45 (18.4)
Social	Travel times will continue to increase.	Travel times will decrease; highway-related impacts may occur to residences within 15.25 meters (100 feet) of right-of-way.	Same as A(MEDIAN).	Same as A(MEDIAN).
Right-of-Way Hectares (Acres) Required	0.0 (0.0)	19.31 (47.68)	0 (0)	19.31 (47.68)
Number of Households Acquired	0	3	0	3
Number of Businesses Acquired	0	1	1	1
Economic	Economic conditions may deteriorate	Inconvenience of access may negatively affect some businesses.	Near-term advantage of left-turn accesses to some businesses; this may deteriorate over time.	Inconvenience of access may negatively affect some businesses.

Table 4-37
(continued)

Impact Category	No-Build	A(MEDIAN)	A(TURN-LANE)	A(COMBO) (preferred)
Pedestrians and Bicyclists	Conditions will worsen.	Improved accommodations; median refuge area is an advantage.	Improved accommodations; no median refuge area is provided.	Improved accommodations; median refuge area is an advantage.
Air Quality	Increased VMT will increase PM10 emissions; increased congestion will increase CO emissions.	Increased VMT will increase PM10 emissions; decreased congestion will decrease CO emissions.	Increased VMT will increase PM10 emissions; decreased congestion will decrease CO emissions.	Increased VMT will increase PM10 emissions; decreased congestion will decrease CO emissions.
Noise	54 receptors impacted.	65 receptors impacted.	66 receptors impacted.	65 receptors impacted.
Water Resources New Impervious Surface: hectares (acres) New River Encroachment cubic meters (cubic yards)	0(0) 0(0)	19.28 (47.63) 42 (56)	22.15 (54.74) 42 (56)	20.29 (50.14) 42 (56)
Wetlands: hectares (acres)	0(0)	0.20 (0.49)	0.27 (0.67)	0.18 (0.46)
Fisheries and Wildlife	0(0)	49.42 hectares (122 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.	34.83 hectares (86 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.	49.42 hectares (122 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.
Floodplains	0(0)	9.3 square meters (100 square feet) of encroachment.	9.3 square meters (100 square feet) of encroachment.	9.3 square meters (100 square feet) of encroachment.
Threatened / Endangered Species	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.
Cultural Resources	No impact.	No adverse impact.	No adverse impact.	No adverse impact.
Parks and Recreation Sites	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.
Hazardous Materials	No impact.	Potential concerns with 11 sites.	Potential concerns with 10 sites.	Potential concern with 11 sites.
Visual	No major change.	Grassy median will help break up large expanse of pavement; strip development is less likely to occur. Special design concepts will improve visual quality.	Noticeable increase in pavement width; likely increase in strip development will decrease visual quality. Special design concepts will improve visual quality.	Grassy median will help break up large expanse of pavement; strip development is less likely to occur. Special design concepts will improve visual quality.
Energy	No energy to construct; greater energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.
Implementation	No applicable.	More right-of-way required; slightly more costly; likely more time to implement.	Less right-of-way required; slightly less costly; slightly less time to implement.	More right-of-way required; slightly more costly; likely more time to implement.

Table 4-38
Summary of Impacts: Whitefish Area

Impact Category	No-Build	A(FOUR-LANE)	C(OFF-SET)	C(COUPLET-1)	C(COUPLET-2)	C(COUPLET-3) (preferred)	C(COUPLET-4)
LOS at Spokane and Second / Baker and Second	D/F	C/B	C/B	C/C	C/C	B/C	C/C
Traffic Operations	Overall decrease in circulation.	Left-turn prohibitions may be required.	Some driver unfamiliarity with unbalanced lane configuration could result.	Creates out-of-direction travel.	Reduction in out-of-direction travel; 90-degree turns difficult for trucks.	Reduction in out-of-direction travel; 90-degree turns difficult for trucks.	Limited out-of-direction travel.
Safety	Increasing problems.	Improved conditions.	Improved conditions; although potential problems with driver unfamiliarity. Potential for increased problems on Baker.	Improved conditions. Potential for increased problems on Baker.	Improved conditions. Potential for increased problems on Baker.	Improved conditions. Potential for increased problems on Baker.	Improved conditions. Potential for increased problems on Baker.
Parking (spaces lost)	No effect.	170	215	115	115	115	115
Land Use	Worsening congestion will slow business development.	Conditions slightly improved.	Commercial development will be encouraged along Baker.	Commercial development will be encouraged along Baker.	Commercial development will be encouraged along Baker.	Commercial development will be encouraged along Baker.	Commercial development will be encouraged along Baker.
Prime Farmland, hectares (acres)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Social	Travel times will continue to increase.	Improved travel time.	Impacts to low intensity commercial and residential uses along Baker.	Impacts to low intensity commercial and residential uses along Baker.	Impacts to low intensity commercial and residential uses along Baker.	Impacts to low intensity commercial and residential uses along Baker.	Impacts to low intensity commercial and residential uses along Baker.
Right-of-Way Hectares (acres)	0	0.3 (0.6)	0.3 (0.6)	0(0)	1.5 (3.6)	0.17 (0.4)	1.2 (2.9)
Number of Households Acquired	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Businesses Acquired	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Economic	Worsening congestion will limit economic viability.	Some adverse impacts due to parking removal, improvements in capacity will help businesses.	Pedestrian improvements will enhance economic viability; upgrading of commercial properties on Baker is likely.	Pedestrian improvements will enhance economic viability; upgrading of commercial properties on Baker is likely.	Pedestrian improvements will enhance economic viability; upgrading of commercial properties on Baker is likely.	Pedestrian improvements will enhance economic viability; upgrading of commercial properties on Baker is likely.	Pedestrian improvements will enhance economic viability; upgrading of commercial properties on Baker is likely.
Pedestrians and Bicyclists	Conditions will worsen.	Conditions somewhat improved.	Conditions much improved.	Conditions much improved.	Conditions much improved.	Conditions much improved.	Conditions much improved.
Air Quality	2015 PM10 emissions: 22,140 lbs/day	2015 PM10 emissions: N/A	2015 PM10 emissions: N/A	2015 PM10 emissions: N/A	2015 PM10 emissions: N/A	2015 PM10 emissions: 22,870 lbs/day	2015 PM10 emissions: N/A
Noise	65 receptors impacted.	62 receptors impacted.	67 receptors impacted.	69 receptors impacted.	69 receptors impacted.	62 receptors impacted.	69 receptors impacted.
Water Resources New Impervious Surface, hectares (acres)	0(0)	0.97 (2.4)	2.65 (6.55)	0.68 (1.68)	0.98 (2.43)	0.62 (1.52)	1.12 (2.76)
New River Encroachment, cubic meters (cubic yards)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	14 (18)	32 (41)	32 (41)	14 (18)
Wetlands	0 (0)	0.04 (0.10)	0.04 (0.10)	0.04 (0.10)	0.04 (0.10)	0.04 (0.10)	0.04 (0.10)
Fisheries and Wildlife	0 (0)	6.48 hectares (16 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.	6.48 hectares (16 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.	6.48 hectares (16 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.	11.75 hectares (29 acres) wildlife habitat converted.	11.75 hectares (29 acres) wildlife habitat converted.	6.48 hectares (16 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.

Table 4-38
(continued)

Impact Category	No-Build	A(FOUR-LANE)	C(OFF-SET)	C(COUPLET-1)	C(COUPLET-2)	C(COUPLET-3) (preferred)	C(COUPLET-4)
Floodplains	0 (0)	4.65 square meters (50 square feet) of encroachment.	4.65 square meters (50 square feet) of encroachment.	4.65 square meters (50 square feet) of encroachment.	16.28 square meters (175 square feet) of encroachment.	16.28 square meters (175 square feet) of encroachment.	4.65 square meters (50 square feet) of encroachment.
Threatened / Endangered Species	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.
Cultural Resources	No impact.	No adverse impact.	No adverse impact.	No adverse impact.	No adverse impact.	No adverse impact.	No adverse impact.
Parks and Recreation	Increased noise and visual impacts at one park.	Increased noise and visual impacts at one park.	Some conversion of grass to pavement at one park.	Some conversion of grass to pavement at one park.	Some conversion of grass to pavement at one park.	Some conversion of grass to pavement at one park.	Some conversion of grass to pavement at one park.
Hazardous Materials	No impact.	Potential concerns with 2 sites.	Potential concerns with 2 sites.	Potential concerns with 2 sites.	Potential concerns with 2 sites.	Potential concerns with 2 sites.	Potential concerns with 2 sites.
Visual	No changes.	More lanes of traffic concentrated on US 93; special design concepts are an improvement.	Traffic split between two major streets; special design concepts an improvement.	Traffic split between two major streets; special design concepts an improvement.	Traffic split between two major streets; special design concepts an improvement.	Traffic split between two major streets; special design concepts an improvement.	Traffic split between two major streets; special design concepts an improvement.
Energy	No energy to construct; greater energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.
Implementation	Not applicable.	Construction in an urban area is time-consuming.	Construction in an urban area is time-consuming.	Construction in an urban area is time-consuming.	Construction in an urban area is time-consuming.	Construction in an urban area is time-consuming.	Construction in an urban area is time-consuming.

Table 4-39
Summary of Impacts: West of Whitefish

Note: Impacts are identical with the Alternative A alternatives except for the section between Karrow Avenue and Milepost 129.

Impact Category	No-Build	A(MEDIAN) (preferred)	A(TURN-LANE)
LOS	C	A	A
Traffic Operations	Increasing difficulty in overall accessibility.	Improved Operations	Improved Operations
Safety	Increasing accident rate and accident severity	Improved safety.	Improved safety.
Parking	No effect.	No effect.	No effect.
Land Use	Development may be more likely to occur in more agricultural areas.	Denser and more coordinated development may be encouraged.	Less dense and uneven extensions of commercial strips may be encouraged.
Prime Farmland Hectares (Acres)	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.
Social	Travel times will continue to increase.	Highway-related impacts will occur to residences adjacent to US 93.	Highway-related impacts will occur to residences adjacent to US 93.
Right-of-Way Hectares (Acres) Required	0.0 (0.0)	6.53 (16.1)	6.53 (16.1)
Number of Households Acquired	0	0	0
Number of Businesses Acquired	0	0	0

Table 4-39
(continued)

Note: Impacts are identical with the Alternative A alternatives except for the section between Karrow Avenue and Milepost 129.

Impact Category	No-Build	A(MEDIAN) (preferred)	A(TURN-LANE)
Economic	Economic conditions may deteriorate	Economic conditions generally improved.	Economic conditions generally improved.
Pedestrians and Bicyclists	Conditions will worsen.	Conditions are improved.	Conditions are improved.
Air Quality	Increased VMT and increased congestion will worsen PM10 and CO.	Increased VMT will increase PM10; decrease in congestion will decrease CO.	Increased VMT will increase PM10; decrease in congestion will decrease CO.
Noise	13 receptors impacted.	11 receptors impacted.	11 receptors impacted.
Water Resources New Impervious Surface: hectares (acres) New River Encroachment: cubic meters (cubic yards)	 0 (0) 0(0)	 3 (7.9) 14 (18)	 3 (7.9) 14 (18)
Wetlands hectares (acres)	0(0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Fisheries and Wildlife	0(0)	10.94 hectares (27 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.	10.94 hectares (27 acres) of wildlife habitat converted.
Floodplains	0(0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Threatened / Endangered Species	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.
Cultural Resources	No effect.	**Adverse effect to West Second Street properties.**	**Adverse effect to West Second Street properties.**
Parks and Recreation Sites	Increased noise and visual impacts to 3 properties.	Increased noise and visual impacts to 3 properties.	Increased noise and visual impacts to 3 properties.
Hazardous Materials	No impact.	Potential concerns with 2 sites.	Potential concerns with 2 sites.
Visual	No major change.	Grassy median will help break up large expanse of pavement; strip development is less likely to occur. Special design concepts will improve visual quality. Median area enhances gateway to Whitefish.	Noticeable increase in pavement width. Special design concepts will improve visual quality.
Energy	No energy to construct; greater energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.	Energy required to construct; less energy lost to congestion.
Implementation	Not applicable.	More right-of-way required; slightly more costly; likely more time to implement.	Less right-of-way required; slightly less costly; slightly less time to implement.

4.22 Permits Needed

The preferred alternative will require additional federal or state actions, including the following:

- Section 404 permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers for filling in wetlands or streams **and for discharge of dredged or fill material associated with bridge and pier construction or bank stabilization work.**

- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System stormwater discharge permit from the MDHES, Water Quality Bureau.
- Section 401 water quality certification (from **MDHES**, WQB) in support of a Section 404 permit.
- Approval of floodplain encroachments from FEMA and/or Flathead County.
- 124 Permit (as required under the Montana Stream Protection Act) from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.
- 310 Permit (as required under the Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act).
- Montana Land Use License or Easement on Navigable Waterways from the Department of State Lands.

No actions or permits will be required for the No-Build Alternative.

4.23 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are defined as impacts which "result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal undertakes such other actions."

Cumulative impacts for this project include:

- Indirect or secondary impacts, which are addressed in each section.
- Impacts associated with other projects, which are described in this section.

Known projects in this vicinity, with an assessment of probable cumulative impact, are:

- Big Mountain Expansion is a project planned by Winter Sports, Inc. to expand both the winter and summer activities and facilities available at Big Mountain Resort, located north of Whitefish. A Draft EIS was prepared in April 1993 by the US Forest Service. These expansion plans will result in increased use of US 93 to access Big Mountain. The 2015 traffic projections which are used as the basis for all analysis (such as traffic operations, air quality or noise) in this Final EIS assume the worst case or highest traffic volumes (for Alternatives C and D) used in the Draft EIS for the Big Mountain Expansion of Summer and Winter Activities, April 1993. Thus, the cumulative impacts of this action have been evaluated in the US 93 Final EIS. Improvements to US 93 model result in additional capacity and enhanced safety to better accommodate any increased traffic that will result from the expansion of Big Mountain.
- Improvements to Big Mountain Road have been planned and developed and are documented in an Environmental Assessment. These improvements will complement the US 93 improvements, but there is no direct or indirect effect on the US 93 project.
- Replacement of the Burlington Northern Overpass in Whitefish. This project **(which is under construction)** will include the construction of a new bridge and corresponding approaches to the existing roadway. The proposed project will improve the existing roadway and overpass to provide

for a 30 mph design speed. These improvements will complement the US 93 improvements, but there is no direct or indirect effect on the US 93 project.

- The Cooperative Planning Coalition is currently in the process of updating the Flathead County Master Plan. This effort will define desired future land use for Flathead County. The different location and design alternatives for US 93 will be more or less compatible with these future land use goals [Alternative A(TURN-LANE) is likely the least compatible since it may encourage strip development.] Coordination is continuing between the US 93 EIS and the Cooperative Planning Coalition study.

- A Preliminary Draft EIS has been prepared defining the impacts of various improvements to US 93 between Polson and Evaro. These improvements will increase traffic on US 93 in the Somers to Whitefish area, even though a distance of 69.19 kilometers (43 miles) separates the two projects. The Year 2015 traffic projections being used in the Final EIS for the Somers to Whitefish section are high enough to include any increased traffic resulting from the Evaro to Polson improvements.

- A Final EIS has been prepared for the reconstruction of Highway 2 between Columbia Falls and Hungry Horse, Montana. These improvements will complement the US 93 improvements, but there is no direct or indirect effect on the US 93 project.

Coordination between the US 93 (Somers to Whitefish) project and these other projects will continue.

4.24 Relationship Between Local Short-Term Uses of the Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

Local short-term uses of the environment which will occur are:

- Some loss of soils through erosion.
- Short-term disruptions in traffic and economic conditions.
- Some increases in turbidity during construction.
- Vegetation will be lost due to construction clearing.
- Wetlands will be filled for construction.
- Some wildlife will be displaced and/or will die during construction.
- Some fish or aquatic resource habitat will be temporarily destroyed.
- Temporary changes to visual quality will occur.

Long-term productivity that will be maintained or enhanced by this action include:

- Long-term improved safety.
- Long-term improved use of energy for vehicular fuel consumption.
- Long-term enhancement in traffic capacity.
- Long-term improvements in economic conditions.
- Long-term replacement of wetland values lost.

4.25 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Implementation of any build alternative will involve a commitment of a range of natural, physical, human and fiscal resources. Land that will be used in the construction of a build alternative will be considered an irreversible commitment during the time period that the land is used for a highway facility. However, if a greater need for use of the land were to arise or if the highway facility were no longer needed, the land will be converted to another use. At present, there is no reason to believe such a conversion will ever be necessary or desirable.

Considerable amounts of fossil fuels, labor and highway construction materials such as cement, aggregate and bituminous material will be expended in the construction of a build alternative. Additionally, large amounts of labor and natural resources will be used in the fabrication and preparation of construction materials. These materials are generally not retrievable. However, they are not in short supply and their use will not have an adverse effect on continued availability of these resources. Any construction will also require a substantial expenditure of both state and federal funds which are not retrievable and will require allocation of funds which could be used by other projects.

4.26 Summary of Mitigation

The following text summarizes the mitigation commitments. These will be implemented and monitored by the MDT Environmental Section in Helena.

4.26.1 Traffic Operations and Circulation Impacts Mitigation

Possible measures include the coordination of all traffic signals in the downtown Kalispell and in Whitefish which would include upgrade of the signal hardware in several locations. In addition, as side street traffic volumes increase in the suburban and rural areas in addition to the increasing through traffic along US93, signalization will need to be considered. Section 4.1.5.2 lists possible intersections where additional signalization could be required. Prior to installation of any traffic signal, traffic signal warrants shall be met in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The plan should include a progression analysis along the corridor to minimize the number of traffic signals and to properly space traffic signals to provide gaps in through traffic for intermediate unsignalized intersections.

In addition, new developments along the corridor should be encouraged to develop access to the local street network. Concentrated traffic volumes on designated intersecting streets may help warrant traffic signals. Also, local street networks should be developed to offer an alternative roadway system for local traffic.

Mitigation for Alternative A(MEDIAN):

1. Access design for existing and future development should follow the Restrictive **(with flexibility)** Access Control Guideline outlined in Table 2-2.

Mitigation for A(TURN-LANE):

1. No special mitigation will be required beyond appropriate pavement markings and signage consistent with the generally unrestricted access provisions of this alternative.

Mitigation for A(COMBO):

1. Some special access designs would be necessary depending on the extent of access control as described in the access control guideline alternatives presented in Table 2-2.

Mitigation for Alternative C(COUPLET-3):

1. Appropriate intersection construction/reconstruction will be necessary to accommodate large truck turns and the increased circulating traffic on cross-streets.

2. Reconstruct the segment of Baker Avenue south of the Whitefish River to improve vertical geometry and stopping sight distance.

3. Improve driveway access to the post office, medical center and credit union and construct new access where applicable to cross-streets or parallel streets to Baker Avenue.

4. Post one-way signs along Baker Avenue and Spokane Avenue.

5. Traffic signalization of the 7th/Spokane and 7th/Baker intersections would be desirable when traffic signal warrants are met.

4.26.2 Traffic Safety Mitigation

The following mitigation **will be implemented** to improve safety:

1. Reconstruct the segment of Baker Avenue south of the Whitefish River **(but north of Seventh Street)** to improve vertical geometry and stopping sight distance.

2. Construct sidewalks/bike paths along Baker Avenue.

3. Improve intersection and driveway sight distance by prohibiting parking near intersections and tree limb and foliage removal.

4. Install speed limit signs on Baker and Spokane appropriate for design speed **and monitored driver behavior after construction** of these downtown streets and install sufficient "One-Way", "Do Not Enter" and "Wrong Way" signing for one-way street operations.

5. Enforcement of posted speed limits.

6. Use larger-size traffic signs and wider pavement marking to accommodate **the elderly**.

7. Consider the use of a permanent marking tape for a longer life of pavement marking than paint.

8. Intense re-education program of correct use of features within a roadway design including deceleration lanes, two-way left-turn lanes, etc. **This will only work for drivers who live in the area and not for visitors to the area**.

9. Advance signage for street names at major intersections along the corridor.

4.26.3 Access Mitigation

1. Guidelines for the location of direct access points on US 93 have been developed on the basis of desired traffic operation on US 93 with consideration of land ownership patterns. Where there are numerous curb cuts along one or both sides of the roadway and a limited number of vehicles use any one driveway , the continuous two way left turn lane as in Alternative A(TURN-LANE) (or portions of Alternative A(COMBO)) is appropriate.

2. Consolidation of access points will improve traffic flow along the corridor and minimize the cost of improving all intersections. In addition, consolidation can concentrate traffic to certain driveways or minor road approaches to meet appropriate signal warrants when necessary.

3. Signals can be provided to improve overall access and circulation. Potential access points which might warrant additional traffic signals **in future years** might include:

   - US 93/Columbia Avenue
   - US 93/Willow Glen/Cemetery Road
   - US 93/Airport
   - US 93/Happy Valley
   - US 93/MT 40
   - US 93/MT 82
   - US 93/18th Street**/Greenwood Drive**
   - Alternative B/US 2
   - Alternative B/Two Mile Drive
   - Alternative B/Three Mile Drive
   - Alternative B/Four Mile Drive

   Intersections that potentially could be signalized were determined by identifying the location of existing operational problems, where operational problems could exist in the future or where forced gaps are needed to create gaps in traffic to allow side street traffic to access the highway. Prior to the installation of a traffic signal, traffic signal warrants set forth by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control* must be met. Examples of some types of these warrants include the investigation of the volume of intersecting traffic, traffic volume on a major street is so heavy that traffic on a minor street suffers excessive delay, high pedestrian usage, inadequate gaps for school children to cross, maintain proper grouping of vehicles and effectively regulate group speed, high accident experience, and a need to encourage concentration and organization of traffic flow. Once traffic signal warrants are met, the decision whether to install or not the traffic signal needs to be investigated to determine whether any other adverse conditions are created.

4. Consider construction of supplemental business/residential access to adjacent cross-street or parallel street.

5. Provide signage to alternative access and increase size of street name signs for better visibility by circulating traffic.

4.26.4 Construction Mitigation

MDT will require the contractor for the proposed action to schedule construction operations and provide traffic control in a manner that will assure:

1. Adequate safety and convenience to motorists and pedestrians, and the safety of construction workers at all times.

2. The progress of the project is advanced in a manner most beneficial to the public.

3. Traffic control for all construction activities within 9.15 meters (30 feet) of the existing road.

4. Traffic control conforms with all MDT specifications and plans and the Manual on Uniform Traffic control Devices (MUTCD).

5. Construction signing is removed or covered when the facility is returned to normal use.

6. Work zone signing conforms with that shown on construction plans.

The contractor will be required to submit detailed traffic control plans that designate how access will be maintained to abutting land uses, keeping a minimum of one lane open in each direction of travel at all times during construction. A public information plan will also be developed that warns motorists in advance of the construction activity that construction will be occurring. This will involve the use of the various communication media including radio and newspapers to inform motorists of the location of construction, advise alternate routes and the length of delay anticipated. Where plans will also restrict certain construction activities to the off-peak hours including some night time construction where traffic volumes are substantially less than between 7am and 7pm.

4.26.5 Farmland Mitigation

Mitigation will be addressed during the design of the roadway. Mitigation measures possible to lessen these types of impacts **to farmland** are; under or overpasses, median refuges, U-turn **accommodations** or widened shoulders.

4.26.6 Relocation Mitigation

In an effort to make property acquisition as equitable as possible, standards have been developed to ensure adequate consideration and compensation for persons whose property is required for public improvement projects.

Property which is required for construction of a federal highway will be subject to the provisions of the Public Law 91-646, as amended by Public Law 100-17. Public Law 91-646 is the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (as amended). This is a federal law. The Public Law 100-17 is

the Surface Transportation Act of 1987 which amended certain provisions of P.L. 91-646. It also is a federal law.

Provisions of the current Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) H.R.2950 have included all references to the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, and these provisions require compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (H.R.2950-34, Section 1017 Acquisition of Rights-of-Way).

It is the policy of the Montana Department of Transportation that no person will move from their dwelling until a comparable replacement dwelling has been made available to that person. A comparable replacement dwelling is safe, decent, and sanitary. The replacement housing must also be open to persons regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin.

Under most circumstances, persons residing in mobile homes will be eligible for relocation payments as will relocates who live in conventional dwellings. Relocates will be eligible to receive referrals of available replace properties, assistance in filing claims and other reasonable assistance necessary to assure successful relocation. Comparability will be based primarily on functional rather than physical similarity. Occupants of residents and businesses are entitled to receive reasonable and necessary moving costs and related expenses in relocating their personal property, provided the established procedural requirements of the Montana Department Transportation are followed.

Right-of-way needed from the Burlington Northern (BN) rail line for Alternative B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) will need to follow a process initiated by BN through the Public Service Commission and Interstate Commerce Commission to seek approval for abandonment of the rail line. **If shippers are still being served by rail at the time right-of-way is needed, this FEIS assumes either the shippers would be purchased or their shipping rights would be compensated by MDT since this is right-of-way required to build the bypass.**

4.26.7 Pedestrian and Bicyclist Mitigation

The following mitigation will be implemented:

1. Continued coordination with Flathead County bicycle groups to determine the best location and design of bicycle facilities.

4.26.8 Air Quality Mitigation

The following **design features have been committed to in writing by MDT (see Volume II). These features, which are applicable between MT 40 and Lion Mountain Road, have been shown to reduce PM_{10} levels in Whitefish to below No-Build levels by reducing carry-on dust.**

1. **Surfacing of gravel and dirt shoulders.**

2. **Construction of curb and gutter.**

The following mitigation will be considered during construction of the US 93 project:

1. Daily street sweeping (when needed and necessary) on both ends of the project during the construction phase. This will reduce the major carry-on of dirt from the project onto the paved streets within the nonattainment boundaries.

2. If any detours are unpaved, they should be watered and/or chemically stabilized so that the emissions are less than 20 percent opacity.

3. Any slash being burned due to right-of-way clearing should be stacked with a brush blade and cured. Open burning restrictions must be followed, and a major open burning permit and fee may be required from the county.

4. Asphalt plants and gravel crushers in the immediate vicinity are also substantial contributors to the PM10 emissions from highway construction. An air quality permit must be obtained from **MAQD** to operate crushers and asphalt plants in Montana.

4.26.9 Noise Mitigation

Title 23 CFR 772 requires that noise abatement measures be considered if a traffic noise impact is identified. An analysis of reasonableness of providing noise abatement has been prepared for this project.

Noise barriers do not appear to be reasonable for receptors located along the existing US-93 alignment. This is because almost all of these receptors have direct access to and from the highway and the constant breaks that will be required in order to accommodate this access will severely compromise the effectiveness of a noise barrier. In addition, noise barriers in these locations will block views from residential areas.

Changes in the horizontal and/or vertical alignment of the road can be effective in reducing noise. In particular, lowering the profile of the road in residential areas can effectively reduce noise by taking advantage of natural topography to screen noise. This mitigation measure can be considered in more detail after a preferred alternative has been selected and during final design of the project.

The provision of interior noise insulation is an acceptable noise abatement measure to reduce interior noise levels in public buildings only. Since none of the sensitive receptors of concern is a public building, this will not be an appropriate mitigation measure.

No abnormal construction noise impacts are anticipated with this project. The major construction tasks are expected to be earth moving and removal, hauling, grading, and paving. If noise problems due to construction activities are identified, the most effective means to control the noise is by limiting the hours of construction activities to daytime hours (7:00 AM to 5:00 PM). Other measures to be considered are noise shields (temporary barriers) and to plan detours which do not create additional noise impacts for sensitive receptors.

4.26.10 Water Resources and Quality Mitigation

Although there are no significant impacts associated or predicted for this project, conformance to MDHES stormwater management guidelines is recommended for the implementation of any of the alternatives. Throughout the construction phase of any alternative, the use of procedures described in the MDT Highway Construction Standard Erosion Control Work Plan will be considered. Some of these acceptable mitigation measures include:

1. The use of vegetative cover and long flow distances in all waterways conveying stormwater away from roadways and into water features to optimize percolation and provide additional water quality protection.

2. Use of a design that conveys stormwater into appropriate stormwater facilities where possible in urban areas.

3. The use of appropriately designed and located silt fences (during construction) to strain excessive sediment from runoff before entering a water features.

4. The use of temporary and permanent retention ponds (during construction) to optimize settling time for sediment laden runoff before entering a water features.

5. The express use of settling ponds for the effluent of dewatering operations, if needed.

6. Minimization of vegetation disturbance and rapid revegetation of areas of disturbance.

7. Restriction of movements of construction vehicles on unpaved areas where possible.

8. **Preparation of a stormwater pollution prevention plan in the construction specifications which will be implemented by the contractor.**

4.26.11 Wetland Mitigation

The US 93 roadway has been designed to avoid if possible, then to minimize disturbance and impacts to identified wetlands. However, since some wetlands are immediately adjacent to the existing roadway or the Kalispell railroad right-of-way, complete avoidance of wetlands is not possible. MDT policy states that when avoidance is not possible, on-site mitigation will be given priority. In the event that replacement or enhancement is not possible due to construction, maintenance, safety, or other constraints, off-site mitigation will be considered.

Permits for placing fill in wetlands must be obtained from the US Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act, amended.

The overall mitigation goal must be no net loss in wetland area or quality. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 CFR 1508.20) provides regulations for sequencing of mitigation, in the following order of priority:

- Avoidance of Wetlands. Avoiding the impacts altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.

- Minimization of Impacts. Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.

- Repair, Rehabilitation, Restoration. Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.

- Preservation and Maintenance. Reducing or elimination the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.

- Replacement. Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resource or environments.

Additional minimization of wetland impacts as a result of implementation of one of the Build alternatives can occur through use of retaining wall or slope steeping adjacent to wetlands. This effort to minimize wetland impacts will be conducted during the final design process for this project.

Replacement wetlands (either created or restored) can only be used if there is no practical alternative to the discharge of dredged or fill material in a wetland which will have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem and without other significant adverse environmental consequences that do not involve discharges into Waters of the United States.

The goal of mitigation is to replace the functions and values of the unavoidably lost wetlands, in areas adjacent to or as close as possible to the area of wetland loss.

A wetland mitigation plan has been discussed with the resource agencies. It consists of the following three elements:

A. Replacement or enhancement of wetlands at two or three "on-site locations," adjacent to the area of impact. These will likely be on parcels acquired by MDT. Locations for these will be determined during the final design process.

B. Enhancement of 3.3 hectares (8.2 acres) of wetlands in the Waterfowl Production Area on the north end of Flathead Lake. As shown on Figure 4-5, activities to take place in this location include removal of logs and debris and construction of a berm with a headgate to control water flow.

C. Replacement at Lawrence Park (see Figure 4-6).

4.26.11.1 Description of Waterfowl Production Area Enhancement

The proposed wetland enhancement project would included three basic activities:

a. Remove the woody debris in the existing wetland.

b. Prevent the woody debris from being redistributed into the wetland by construction of a short earthen berm.

c. Achieve water control capability on the wetland to prevent its annual dewatering by construction of a water control structure at the wetland opening to the lake.

The berm with the water control structure would allow manipulation of water levels in the wetland while simultaneously preventing additional woody debris from being redistributed into the wetland from the lake.

Ongoing management of this wetland enhancement project will be undertaken by the Refuges And Wildlife Division of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

4.26.11.2 Description of Lawrence Park Wetland Mitigation

The proposed wetland mitigation area is currently vacant, with fill dirt in areas. It is an old oxbow area. It is adjacent to and within the floodplain for the Flathead River, with riparian vegetation in the vicinity.

Approximately 2.43 hectares (six acres) could be made available for wetland mitigation. The general plan calls for:

- **Creation of a deep water pond with shallow, vegetated edges.**
- **Islands to serve as wildlife habitat.**
- **Interpretive signage and a boardwalk.**

Due to the presence of visible surface water in the general area, there appears to be sufficient water available to support a new wetland; however, data from groundwater monitoring is not yet available to support this premise. The site is located adjacent to a vegetated ditch to the west, high quality wetlands to the south and the Stillwater River floodplain to the east.

Functions planned at this wetland are:

- **Flood storage**
- **Wildlife habitat**
- **Food chain**

In order to protect the value of this new wetland as wildlife habitat, the following control could be implemented:

- **Control of human access. The planned boardwalk is well away from the eastern edge of the new wetland. Signage and enforcement will be used to prevent human access into the wetland itself.**
- **Implementation and enforcement of the city's pet control ordinance.**
- **Implementation of a buffer area to further protect the wetland area from access by humans or pets.**

This detailed mitigation plan will be developed in close coordination with the USCOE, EPA and USFWS. The mitigation plan will follow the USCOE *Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Proposal Guidelines* and will be finalized prior to the issuance of the 404 permit. **MDT is the responsible entity for funding and implementing the mitigation plan.**

Success criteria for wetlands mitigation will consider the following:

a. Percent vegetative cover within the mitigation wetlands should be equal to or greater than the percent vegetative cover of the lost wetlands within a five-year period.

b. Vegetative species composition and diversity should closely approximate the composition and diversity of lost wetlands. One method for doing this could be by comparison of plant numbers and vegetative species lists at the lost wetlands and the mitigated wetlands.

Corrective action will be taken if criteria established for wetland mitigation success at the time of Section 404 permit application are not being met.

4.26.11.3 Minimization During Design and Construction

Where wetland losses are unavoidable, wetland losses will be minimized by implementing conservation measures in highway design and construction.

These conservation measures will include:

- removal of vegetation will be kept to the minimum necessary for completion of the project;
- all exposed areas will be revegetated according to MDT standards and specifications to reduce potential erosion and sedimentation, provide desirable ground cover, to inhibit the invasion of noxious weeds, and for aesthetic purposes;
- perennial stream crossing mitigation measures will be addressed in the Montana Stream Protection Act permit;
- mulching, reseeding, netting, plantings, and other bank stabilization and erosion-control measures will be considered;
- placement of siltation fences along the Flathead River crossing may be used to minimize sedimentation;
- noxious weed control, revegetation seeding, and fertilizing will be coordinated with the county weed district in accordance with MDT standard procedures; and
- flagging or fencing of wetland areas during construction to avoid unnecessary disturbance due to construction activities.

4.26.12 Fisheries and Wildlife Mitigation

Mitigation measures that will be implemented to minimize impact to fishery and wildlife resources include:

1. Proper erosion control techniques will be utilized during construction, including the use of soil retention blankets, silt fences and hay bales where needed. Areas disturbed during construction will

be revegetated. All construction equipment will be serviced away from any stream crossings preventing the accidental spill of petroleum products into waterways.

2. Bridge structures or underpasses will be **sized to accommodate wildlife if possible.** Crossing of major watercourses will be done in a perpendicular manner as much as possible.

3. Loss of trees will be avoided wherever possible.

4.26.13 Floodplains Mitigation

Mitigation that will be provided to minimize impact to floodplains includes:

1. Use of standard MDT erosion control techniques to minimize impact to natural and beneficial floodplain values during construction.

2. Coordination with Flathead County related to any floodplain encroachment.

4.26.14 Cultural Resources Mitigation

At 24FH350 (the railroad spur) on Alternative B, the MDT proposes to install a historic marker describing the history and significance of the Somers Branch of the Great Northern Railway. The market text will be identical to that determined suitable as part of the Somers to Kalispell segment of this project.

For the Whitefish Residential Historic District, the MDT proposes to conduct additional survey work and prepare the nomination of the district to the National Register of Historic Places. When the nomination has been completed and accepted by the NRHP, the MDT will then prepare a NRHP sign to the local historical society describing the Whitefish Residential Historic District and its significance to the history of the community.

The MDT will conduct monitoring at the Altenburg and McCormack farms to assess the visual and audible impacts to the site before, during and after construction. The results of the monitoring will be provided to SHPO and the ACHP within 18 months of the completion of construction.

If construction in the Kalispell Courthouse Historic District results in the removal of any trees, they will be replaced in kind by the Department.

Other mitigation includes:

- Continued communication with the Flathead Culture Committee regarding cultural materials of concern to the Committee.

Copies of coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office are in Volume II.

4.26.15 Parks and Recreation Mitigation

Ashley Creek Recreation Trail

This mitigation is described in Section 5.4.1.

Daley / Bert Holler Ballfields

The east access along US 93 will be eliminated entirely in conjunction with improvements of US 93. In order to mitigate the loss of this highway access the gravel drive along the eastern edge of the park and in front of the ballfields, will be extended to the south to create a new access at the southern end of the park. This will then be used as a one-way drive.

Lion's Park / Haven Field

The landscaped drainage area along the park's western edge will be maintained during and subsequent to construction of any proposed improvement to the adjacent highway. Utility poles located adjacent to the highway on the park's west edge may need to be relocated prior to construction.

Riverside Park

The bridge over the Whitefish River will be designed to accommodate a future pedestrian or bike path along the river.

Whitefish Golf Course

Landscape buffers **are planned in raised medians to** reduce the visual impact of the increased street width.

4.26.16 Hazardous Materials Mitigation

Detailed hazardous materials analyses, including sampling and testing of questionable soils or water will be conducted during the design of the preferred alternative.

Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) located adjacent to the highway on Sites 2, 3, 5, 28, 45, 50, and 59 will be located prior to construction so that potential contact with the fuel tanks can be avoided during construction. Before roadway construction occurs on these sites, soil located adjacent to the roadway on these sites should be analyzed to determine if existing petroleum levels are higher than those accepted by the MDHES for this type of project. If so, mitigation possibilities include excavation of contaminated soil, or landfarming (spreading contaminated soils over an evenly-distributed area and providing the area with nutrients and vegetation). For the Burlington Northern trackbed located between Somers and Snowline Road, the right-of-way purchase agreement between MDT and railroad representatives requires specific pre-construction mitigation responsibilities of both parties involved in the property transaction. Upon completion of the remedial action mandated by this purchase agreement, no subsequent mitigation will be necessary for this site.

For Site B6, excavation and /or landfarming of potentially-contaminated soils are possible mitigation measures and will be implemented (if necessary) in concert with roadway construction. For the railroad track along Alternative B, removal of all track materials and surrounding surface soils **is recommended** before it is converted to new public right-of-way.

4.26.17 Visual Mitigation

A number of different mitigation techniques are planned to minimize the visual impact of the proposed project. These include:

1. Final design will be done in such a manner as to best fit the new highway within the existing topography. This includes contour grading of cut and fill slopes, sensitive design of roadway alignment and profile and design of roadside signage and lighting. Streetscape treatments within Kalispell and Whitefish will also add to the overall character of the corridor and strengthen the visual character of these communities.

2. Landscape enhancements will utilize only native materials (including trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers) that are appropriate for a particular site or area. **Care will be taken to avoid installation of species that are palatable to wildlife in areas immediately adjacent to the roadway**. Therefore, the objective of revegetation is to properly restore disturbed areas to appropriate native habitats and natural communities.

3. Slope cutting will be done in such a manner as to be compatible with the adjacent slope. This includes such techniques as:

   - Laying the slope back at draws.

   - Modifying slope ratios to reflect existing terrain characteristics.

   - Rounding at the top and bottom to present a softer transition.

4. Design and construction of roadside and median landscape treatments will not produce the desired affect if the maintenance of those features falls short of what is required. MDT **will** seek assistance from local communities in the maintenance of landscaping and streetscape features. This is especially important at the Kalispell and Whitefish gateway areas. Maintenance includes providing water for plant materials, pruning, mowing, weeding plant beds, and seasonal upkeep.

5. Open road segments in rural areas can be maintained through conventional roadside methods with seasonal mowing and trash pickup. Local groups can also be enlisted to maintain roadsides through the state programs.

6. **Special light fixtures will be used in sensitive areas to minimize stray light pollution.**

4.26.18 Energy Mitigation

Procedures available to reduce energy consumption during construction include:

1. Maximum use of on-site material to reduce haulage of materials.
2. Design for repetitive dimensions to permit re-use of forms.
3. Adequate construction vehicle maintenance
4. Adequate construction phasing and detour plan.
5. Turning off equipment when not in use.
6. Design of construction access roads and staging areas to limit distances traveled.

4.26.19 Implementation Mitigation

The following mitigation will be implemented:

- Mitigation that will be implemented to minimize traffic disruption during construction is described in Section 4.1.9.2.
- Mitigation that will be implemented to minimize construction effects on river crossings is described in Section 4.10.2.
- MDT will develop agreements with **local jurisdictions** to maintain the landscaped median and roadside area in the urban areas.
- Low maintenance plant material will be used (in the median) for the rural areas. This will minimize the need for higher intensity maintenance.
- **A construction staging plan will be developed to minimize construction impacts to adjacent property owners. This will include specifications to address issues such as number of lanes open to traffic, traffic control, restrictions related to work hours or haul routes, pavement marking, flagging operations and area disturbed. Consideration will be given to providing incentives to contractors to minimize the construction disturbance.**
- **Construction involving discharges to streams shall not occur in spawning areas if practical alternatives exist. Construction will be timed to prevent disruptions to migration of aquatic species.**

4.26.20 Section 4(f) Mitigation

4.26.20.1 Ashley Creek Recreation Trail

Numerous discussions have been held with Flathead County Parks representatives and Rails-to-Trails of Northwest Montana representatives. Agreement has been reached to provide the following mitigation:

- **Purchase property for approximately 625 meters (2,050 feet) of relocated trail.**

- **Build approximately 625 meters (2,050 feet) of new trail generally south of Ashley Creek, just south of US 2.**
- **Provide for an at-grade signalized intersection across Alternative B at US 2.**
- **Provide for a grade-separated bikepath crossing adjacent to and on the south side of Ashley Creek under Alternative B. Usage by equestrians will be provided for if possible.**
- **Connect the Ashley Creek trail with the new bike lane along Alternative B.**
- **Provide approximately 2.11 hectares (5.22 acres) of property to Flathead County Parks. This is planned for at least partial use as parking and a trailhead facility, to compensate for the approximately 0.10 hectare (0.25 acre) of Section 6(f) land converted from a recreation use. If the appraised value of the replacement land is less than the appraised value of the impacted property, additional property (to make up the difference) will be provided to Flathead County Parks as 6(f) replacement property.**

Chapter Five

Final Section 4(f) Analysis

Chapter 5.0 Final Section 4(f) Analysis

Title 49 USC 303 (also 23 USC 138) states that **"The Secretary may approve a transportation program or project (other than any project for a park road or parkway under Section 204 of title 23) requiring the use of publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, State, or local significance, or land of an historic site of national, State, or local significance (as determined by the Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction over the park area, refuge, or site) only if –**

(1) there is no prudent and feasible alternative to using that land; and

(2) the program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from the use."

This chapter describes Section 4(f) resources in the study area, direct and constructive uses that will occur to these resources, alternatives that were considered to avoid using land from these resources and the actions taken to minimize harm to these resources.

The following discussion refers only to those particular properties, inside the study area, that may incur direct conversion of use or constructive conversion of use as a result of the implementation of one or any of the alternatives. The first portion of this section provides a short description of the parks and historic properties adjacent to the alternative alignments, followed by a description of direct or constructive use conversions to these properties. Section 5.3 discusses Avoidance Alternatives, Section 5.4 provides measures to minimize harm, **and Sections 5.5 and 5.6 discuss coordination and the final Section 4(f) conclusion**.

5.1 Section 4(f) Properties

5.1.1 Parks and Recreation Areas

Properties Adjacent to Alternatives

There are a total of nine publicly owned, recreationally used, Section 4(f) properties located adjacent to one or more of the alternatives. Table 5-1 lists these properties and indicates whether or not a direct conversion of use will occur.

Table 5-1
Park and Recreation Properties

Section 4(f) Property	Direct Conversion of Use
Daley / Bert Holler Fields	No
Lion's Park / Haven Field	No
Ashley Creek Recreation Trail	Yes
Depot Park	No
Buffalo Hill Golf Course	No
Riverside Park	No
Whitefish Lake Golf Club	No
Whitefish Tennis Courts / Soccer Fields	No
Skyles Lake Access	No

Careful analysis of right-of-way ownership concluded that only the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail property was subject to direct conversion of use of a Section 4(f) property. This is because the existing MDT right-of-way adjacent to the other eight properties is sufficiently wide such that the proposed improvements will fit within this right-of-way. These other eight adjacent properties will incur minor indirect impacts related to access and visual criteria but are located completely outside of the existing transportation right-of-way. There will be no purchase or direct conversion of use for these properties. For a detailed discussion relating to the impacts on parks and recreation properties refer to Chapter 4 of this document.

Ashley Creek Recreation Trail / Rails to Trails

The Ashley Creek Recreation Trail is located approximately 0.40 kilometer (0.25 mile) west of South Meridian Road along the former Great Northern Railway Track bed (see Figure 5-1). The developed 4.05-hectare (10-acre) portion of the site is a level, gravel path, approximately 30.5 meters (100 feet) wide, extending west from the neighboring commercial distributor along the historic track bed for approximately 1.61 kilometer (one mile). The trail is owned and managed by the Flathead County Parks and Recreation. Current facilities include signage at both of the two access points. Future plans for the site include extending the developed recreation corridor from its existing eastern extent along the tracks to Meridian Road. These development plans will include trail improvements and additional signage. They are scheduled to take place in 1994 under the direction of Rails to Trails of Northwest Montana with funding from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). Existing available activities include pedestrian and bicycle use and cross-country skiing. The area has one access from US 2 on the east developed by agreement along a shared private drive, and another direct access to US 2 at the west end of the trail.

An unusual feature of this trail is that the entire site from US 2 on the west to Meridian Road on the east, was purchased through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, so it is protected by Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF).

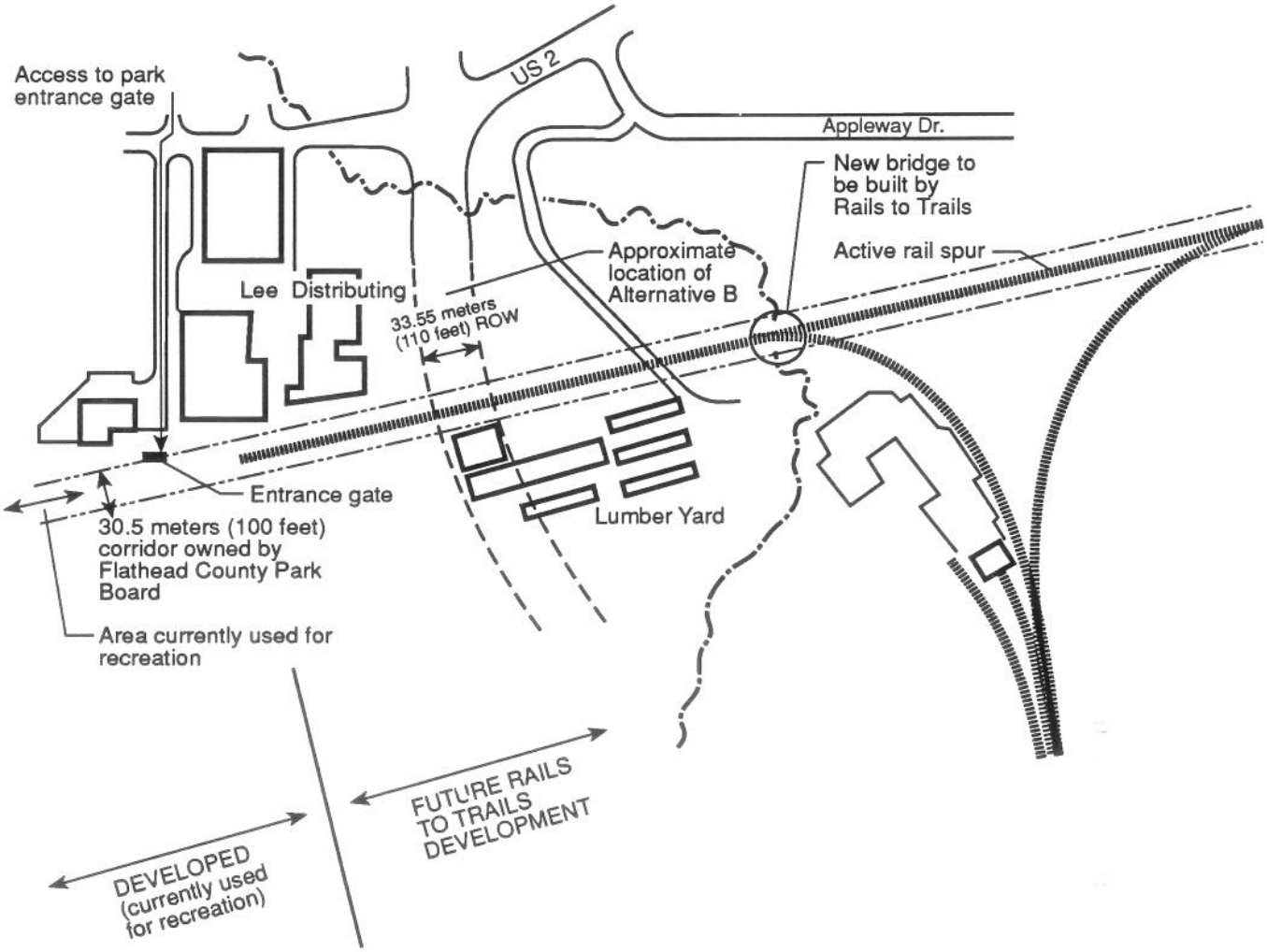
The Flathead County Parks and Recreation also owns an additional 30.5 meters (100 feet) of right-of-way along the remaining portion of track extending to the east to Meridian Road. Burlington Northern Railroad still operates on this section of track, and will continue to do so along the planned extension of the recreation trail east to Meridian Road.

5.1.2 Historic Properties

The following is a list and description of historic properties that are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) **and have impacts that would substantially impair the historic integrity of the site or district**.

1. Kalispell-Somers Railroad Spur (24FH350)

   Figure 5-2 shows US 93 in relationship to the Kalispell-Somers Railroad Spur (spur). The spur is parallel to the highway for 6.49 kilometers (four miles) from the south terminus to the point where US 93 crosses the spur. The site is 14.48 kilometers (nine miles) long and has a track bed of about 6.1 meters (20 feet) in width. The spur then continues to the northwest while the highway swings to the north. The portion of the



LEGEND

Corridor boundary

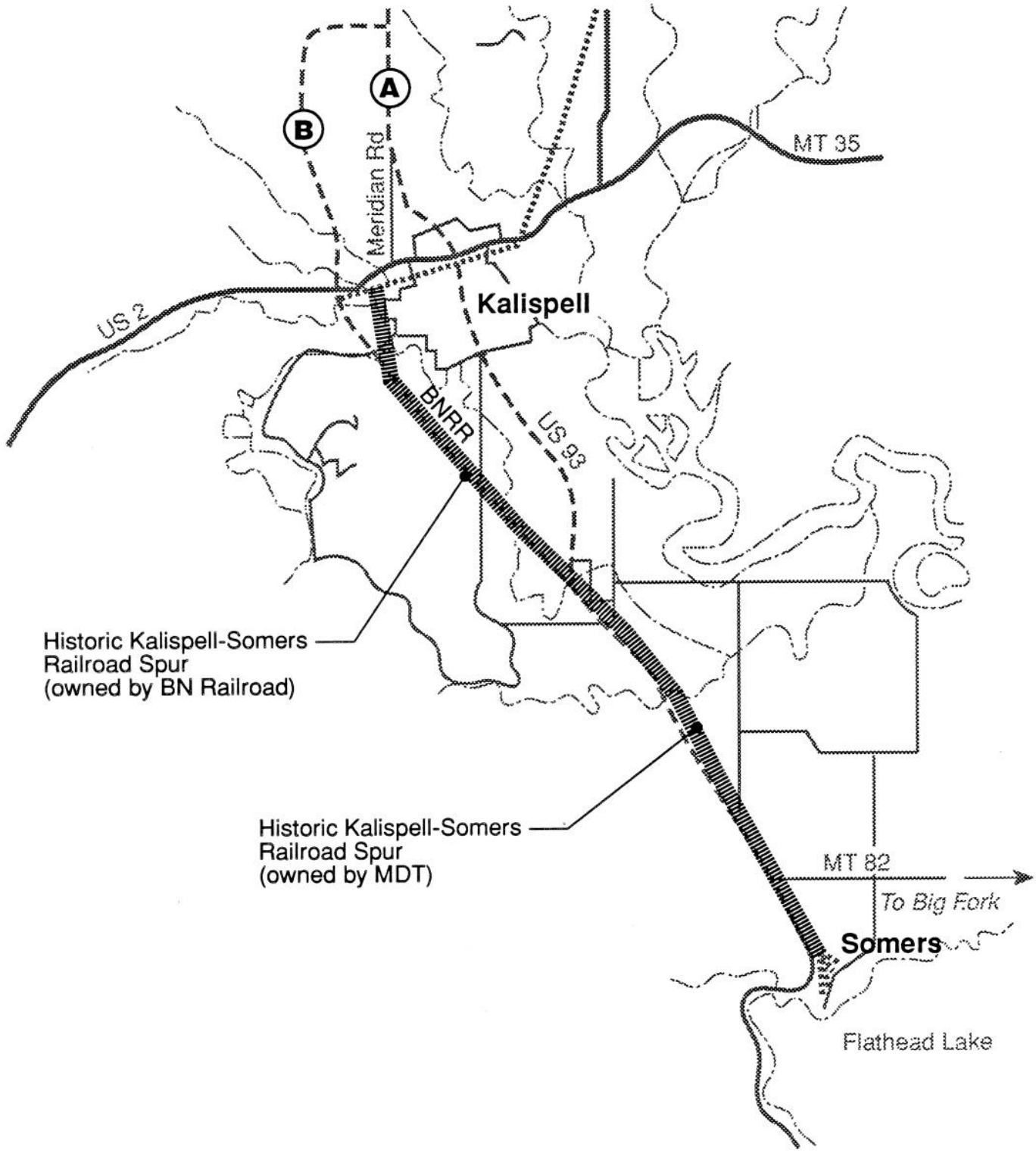
Railroad

NORTH

Approximate Scale
1" = 400'

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 5-1
Ashley Creek Recreation Trail



Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 5-2
Kalispell-Somers Railroad Spur

spur northwest of the crossing makes up the right-of-way for Alternative B. Total involvement of the spur line with US 93 and Alternative B is 11 kilometers (6.83 miles). MDT owns the spur south of the point where it crosses US 93. Burlington Northern Railroad owns the spur from that point to the northwest. The track is generally at ground level or slightly above with ballast built-up to provide a level grade. South of Ball's Crossing, the tracks have been removed by Burlington Northern. There are no unusual characteristics that reduce or enhance value of property.

The Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has determined that the site is eligible for the NRHP because of its importance to the history of transportation in the upper Flathead Valley, the Somers Mill and the town of Somers. It qualifies for its association with an agreement between John O'Brien and James J. Hill. It qualifies as an example of a technology because it was an integral part of the planning and construction of the Somers Mill.

2. Kalispell Courthouse Historic District

The Courthouse Historic District (see Figure 5-3) includes five blocks of a residential and commercial neighborhood in Kalispell, Montana. The district contains 26 extant buildings and one site, Courthouse Park. The focal point of the district is the Flathead County courthouse, jail, and park, located in the center of Main Street on the south end of the district. The courthouse and jail were completed in 1903, but the blocks to the north fronting Main Street were not developed until the late 1920 and 1930s. Contributing buildings in the district include the courthouse complex, two large churches, a parsonage, a funeral home, a medical clinic, an apartment building, and a number of residences.

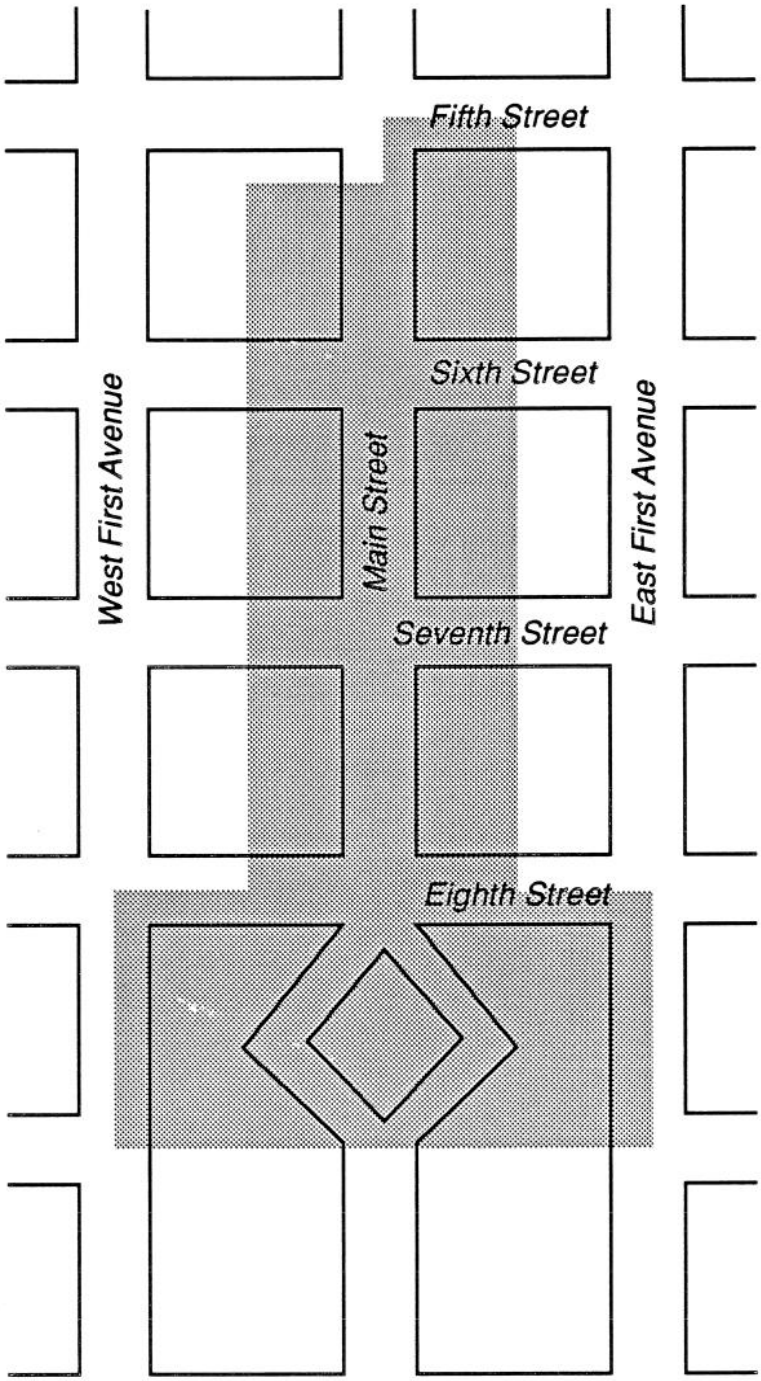
The district is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and B for its reflection of the patterns of development of the community and for the architectural significance of some of the buildings. Unlike the rest of Kalispell, most of the district was developed as an early community improvement project organized by the City of Kalispell in the late 1920s. The district also reflects Kalispell's role as the county seat, the development of funerary practices in the region, and the influence of architect Fred Brinkman on the physical appearance of Kalispell. The courthouse and jail are Kalispell's only Chateauesque-style buildings.

5. West Second Street Properties

Illustrated on Figure 5-4 are the location of significant properties on West Second Street.

West 2nd Street was developed primarily in the 1920s and early 1930s with a small amount of residential infill in the late 1930s and early 1940s. West 2nd Street has seen relatively little commercialism other than an Exxon Station (originally a Circle K) and a historic grocery (now the Hair Connection at 144 West 2nd). At the west end of the road segment examined for this project is the Whitefish Country Club (24FH573). Relatively intact historic residential development flank West 2nd Street primarily on the south but with some development on the north. As a result the highway route cuts through the middle of the western section of the Whitefish Historic Residential District.

Because most of the dwellings are within the larger Whitefish Historic Residential District (WHRD), they have been evaluated in terms of their contribution to the District. The Hennessy Log Bungalow (24FH569), Harlow House (24FH570) and Midby Bungalow (24FH571) are located



Somers to Whitefish
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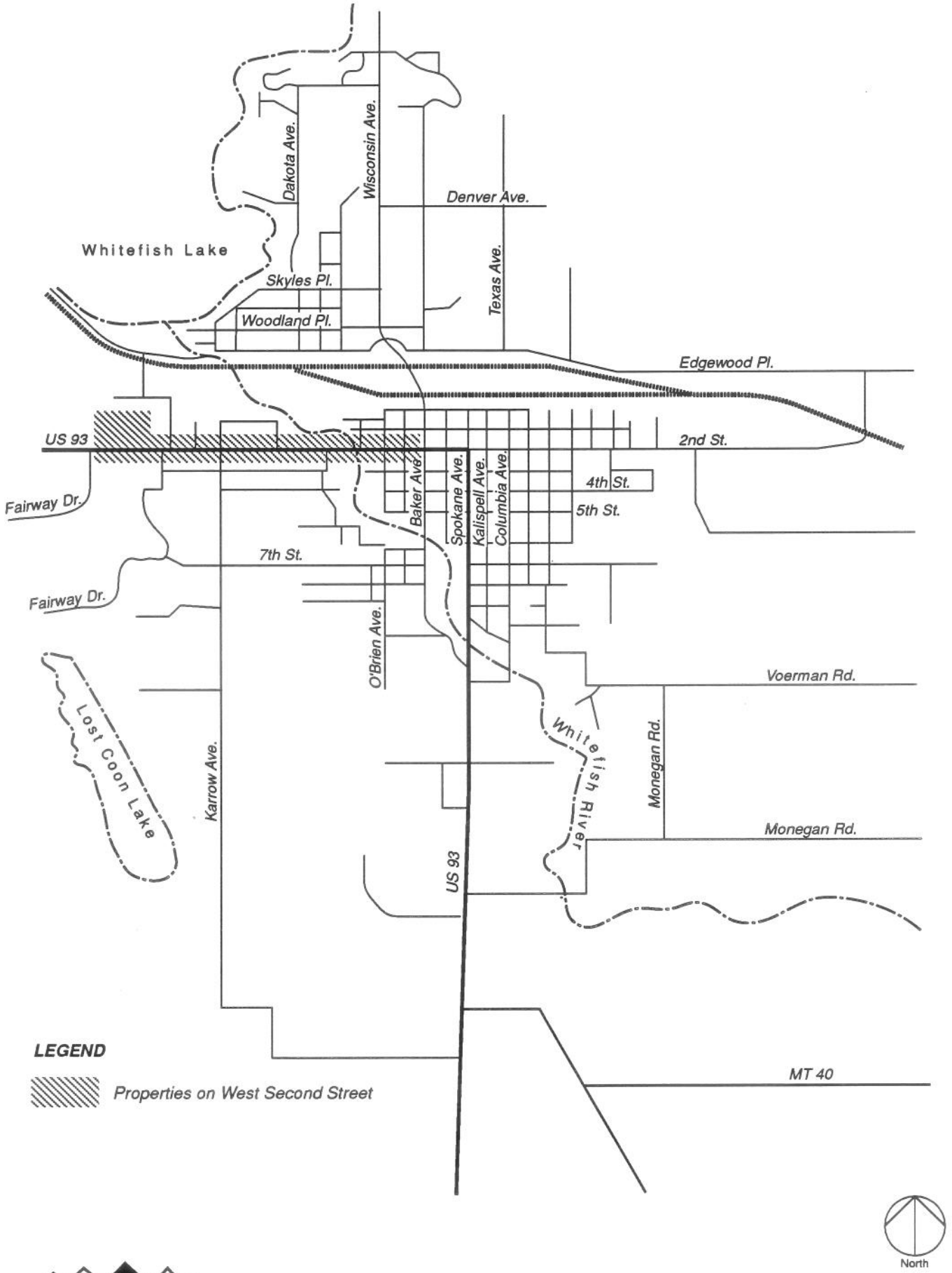
Figure 5-3
Kalispell Courthouse Historic District



Somers to Whitefish
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Figure 5-4
Properties on West Second Street

within the WRHD, but have significance beyond that of the Historic District and so were also evaluated in terms of the general NRHP criteria. The Northern Silver Fox Farm at 205 Parkhill Avenue and the Whitefish Country Club were not related to the residential development, were beyond the boundaries of the WHRD and so were evaluated individually in terms of the NRHP.

The dwellings on West 2nd Street between the Whitefish River Bridge and the 700 block were developed as housing for the expanded operations of the Great Northern Railroad (GNRR) and nearly all have had railroad workers as occupants at one time or another. The commercial development in this area has been limited to one historic combination dwelling/grocery and one convenience store. Few non-historic dwellings were observed in the historic neighborhood. On the west end of the historic neighborhood, the Northern Silver Fox Farm (24FH572) at 205 Parkhill Avenue is an example of the fur farm industry of the 1930s, unfortunately, little remains of the historic fur farm. West of the Fox Farm, West 2nd Street has seen modern development of suburbs and commercial buildings that have strong connections with the Country Club.

Because the study corridor is in a densely populated suburban neighborhood with a well documented development, subsurface excavation would be inappropriate and would reveal little if any significant historical information (Criterion D). Sites along the West 2nd Street segment were evaluated in regard to NRHP Criteria A, B and C. This area includes 27 properties recommended to be contributing to the Whitefish Historic Residential District, three properties recommended to be eligible to the NRHP and one property recommended to be eligible to the NRHP and also contributing to the District.

5.2 Uses of Section 4 (f) Properties

Direct conversion of use on a Section 4(f) property results from the purchase, lease, easement or agreement to change the use of all or a portion of the property. Direct conversion of use is one way a Section 4(f) may be changed. The other is through constructive use. A constructive use would result from any action that would "substantially impair" a current and protected use related to a 4(f) property. This can occur from noise impacts, visual impacts, major access restrictions, vibration impacts or ecological intrusion. A constructive use does not occur when these impacts are minor or are mitigated.

Specific analysis of noise, visual, access, vibration and ecological impacts has been made to determine if this action will substantially impact the use of the Section 4(f) properties. It has been determined that this will not occur and thus, there are no constructive uses of Section 4(f) properties as a result of implementation of this project.

Chapter 5 is limited to a discussion of direct or constructive use conversions. For a more complete explanation and description of other impacts refer to Chapter 4 of this document.

A summary of Section 4(f) impacts is included in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2
Summary of Section 4(f) Impacts

Name of Property	Type of Use	Alternatives Involved	Mitigation Proposed
Ashley Creek Recreation Trail	Direct (conversion of trail to roadway)	B in Kalispell	Reconstruction of a portion of the trail under the new roadway.
Kalispell-Somers Railroad Spur	Direct (conversion of right-of-way)	A(COMBO) (preferred; A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE)	Placement of an interpretive historic marker.
Kalispell Courthouse Historic District	Direct (removal of trees)	All build	Replacement of trees.
West Second Street Properties	Constructive (addition of sidewalks; no conversion of right-of-way)	All build	Preparation of nomination of District to National Register; preparation of sign for District.

5.2.1 Uses of Ashley Creek Recreation Trail / Rails to Trails

The No-Build Alternative will have no impact on this section of public property.

The centerline of Alternative B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) crosses approximately 213.5 meters (700 feet) east of the portion of the property currently used for recreation. Although Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) actually bisect the property east of the developed portion, the entire length from US 2 on the west and Meridian Road on the east is owned by Flathead County Parks and Recreation and was purchased with LWCF assistance. Additionally this area is slated for future improvements. Even though the railroad corridor is currently used by freight rail traffic to service Lee Distributing, this location is classified as primarily recreational in use because it is connecting two points on an existing recreation trail network. Both Alternative B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) will convert 0.1 hectare (0.25 acres) of Ashley Creek Trail to transportation uses.

Any purchase of right-of-way or other acquisition related to this property will have to be approved by the US Department of the Interior, since **Land and Water Conservation Funds were used to purchase a portion of this property**.

5.2.2 Impacts to Historic Properties

5.2.2.1 Kalispell-Somers Railroad Spur (24FH350)

This spur will be directly impacted by the US 93 project. The spur north of where it crosses US 93 will be purchased and used as the right of way for Alternative B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN LANE). In addition, Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) and A(COMBO) use the spur from the crossing point south to

MT 82. The spur will be used for approximately 11.87 kilometers (7.38 miles) of its length from MT 82 to just south of Foy's Lake Rd.

5.2.2.2 Kalispell Courthouse Historic District

Between Ninth and Twelfth Streets, improvements to Main Street would occur within the limits of the existing pavement. Parking will be eliminated to provide for four 3.66-meter (12-foot) lanes. Trees will remain along the street and should not be affected by the replacement of curb and gutter or sidewalk. The new sidewalk will be placed at a higher grade to protect tree roots. Three trees will have to be removed to widen at the beginning of the couplet around the courthouse. The widening will take place on the side of the street away from the Courthouse.

5.2.2.3 West Second Street

West Second Street consists of 30 NRHP-eligible residences and one eligible golf course clubhouse located along US Highway 93 west of the Whitefish River bridge. Proposed construction activities would include widening the existing two-lane, 14-meter (46-foot) wide paved roadway to a 18.3-meter (60-foot) roadway consisting of three 3.66-meter (12-foot) lanes, two 14.27-meter (14-foot) "clear" areas and two 1.53-meter (five-foot) sidewalks. All construction, however, would be confined to the existing right-of-way. No trees would be removed. Although the existing buildings would remain intact and their historic significance perpetuated, the addition of sidewalks where none currently exist would constitute an Adverse Effect to the setting of the historic neighborhood.

5.3 Avoidance Alternatives

Alternatives that will avoid the use of Section 4(f) properties have been identified and evaluated to satisfy Part 23 CFR 771.135 (i).

5.3.1 Location Alternatives Considered

The location of Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) was established in part by the use of an existing abandoned railroad right-of-way. The use of this corridor will have present and future impacts relating to the completion or extension of the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail toward Kalispell and the Kalispell-Somers Railroad Spur historic sites. Offsetting these park and historic site impacts is the capacity for this alignment, along the railroad right-of-way, to leave undisturbed all other public and private properties along this passage.

Shifts of alignment west to avoid the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail, or the Kalispell-Somers Railroad Spur would create:

- Greater private property involvement: six or more residential or agricultural displacements would be required.
- Greater wetland involvement: crossing Ashley Creek farther west would destroy more and higher quality wetlands. Alternatives B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) cross Ashley Creek at an industrial site where the creek has been previously disturbed and has lesser wetland value.

- Possible direct and indirect impact to the Lone Pine State Preserve (a Section 4(f) property).
- Greater impact to the portion of the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail property that is more actively used currently for recreation.
- Greater direct impact to McDonnell Place, an eligible property.

Shifts in alignment to the east to avoid the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail or the Kalispell-Somers Railroad Spur would create:

- Considerable increases in the impact of Ashley Creek itself and its associated wetlands as the creek runs north / south and the alignment would thus be adjacent to or over the creek for prolonged distances. A likely increase in impact from 2.43 hectares (six acres) of previously disturbed wetland with Alternative B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) to 4.25 hectares (10.5 acres) of higher grade undisturbed wetland with a shift to the east.
- **Greater impact to existing residential areas.**

Other locational avoidance alternatives which were considered to avoid the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail and the Kalispell-Somers Railroad Spur are discussed in greater detail in the discussion of Kalispell bypass alternatives. For specific description and maps of these alternatives refer to Section 2.3.2 of this document. Summarizing Section 2.3.2, these bypass alternatives were considered but dropped for the following reasons:

- Kalispell Bypass Alternative A - This alternative was not considered reasonable, since not enough traffic would use this bypass to relieve traffic on US 93.
- Kalispell Bypass Modified B and F - This alternative would pass through Ashley Creek Trail in the same location as B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE)
- Kalispell Bypass Alternative C1 and C2 - This alternative was not considered because it had substantial socioeconomic, wetland, floodplain and Section 4 (f) impacts.
- Kalispell Bypass Alternative D - This alternative was not considered feasible because it did not meet the purpose and need and would have great environmental impacts on wetlands, floodplain and endangered species.

The use of the existing US 93 corridor (Alternative A) through Kalispell, without implementation of Alternatives B(MEDIAN) or B(TURN-LANE), would avoid use of two of the Section 4(f) properties. This alternative was fully evaluated in **the DEIS. It is not considered a feasible or prudent alternative to the use of the Section 4(f) properties because it would result in the following:**

- **Substantial increases in congestion through the central area of Kalispell.**
- **Increases in PM_{10} and carbon monoxide pollution.**
- **Substantial disruption to residential and commercial areas (including the Kalispell Historic District and Courthouse Historic District) as a result of diversion of traffic from US 93.**

- **Likely increases in noise and decreases in property value on residential streets which would receive diverted traffic.**
- **Noticeable economic impact to Kalispell commercial area as a result of decreased accessibility.**
- **Substantial increases in congestion on east-west streets that would need to cross US 93.**

5.3.2 Consideration of a Reduced Facility

A reduced facility is one means by which the impact on Section 4(f) properties could be lessened. A reduced facility requires that the cross sectional width of some or each or the cross sectional elements will be reduced. In the case of Alternative B, a reduced facility will only provide a small reduction of direct impact to the Kalispell-Somers Railroad Spur. Although the physical area of encroachment will be slightly less, the future use of the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail will still be bisected. No matter how narrow the cross-section, trail users will continue to be restricted or prevented from crossing the roadway, causing a direct impact requiring mitigation. **A reduced facility could reduce the removal of trees south of the courthouse or eliminate the addition of sidewalks along West Second Street**.

Design standards for this road with its projected traffic volumes are not met by a reduced facility. A reduced facility will not provide the level of service acceptable for this corridor and will thus not meet purpose and need. **In addition, critical safety improvements would not be met if the trees south of the courthouse were removed or if sidewalks were not added to the residential area west of Whitefish.** In addition, a reduced facility at the Alternative B location would not provide sufficient capacity to adequately relieve congestion and related air quality issues in Kalispell.

5.3.3 Other Alternatives Considered

The No-Build Alternative would avoid any use of the Section 4(f) properties. Although it is fully evaluated in this document, it does not meet the purpose and need as defined in Chapter One.

Alternative designs relating to above ground (bridging over) or under ground (tunneling under) facilities would be prohibitively expensive.

Chapter Two of this document also documents other alternatives considered.

5.4 Measures to Minimize Harm

5.4.1 Ashley Creek Recreation Trail

Numerous discussions have been held with Flathead County Parks representatives and Rails-to-Trails of Northwest Montana representatives. Agreement has been reached to provide the following mitigation:

- **Purchase property for approximately 625 meters (2,050 feet) of relocated trail.**
- **Build approximately 625 meters (2,050 feet) of new trail generally south of Ashley Creek, just south of US 2.**
- **Provide for an at-grade signalized intersection across Alternative B at US 2.**
- **Provide for a grade-separated bikepath crossing adjacent to and on the south side of Ashley Creek under Alternative B. Usage by equestrians will be provided for if possible.**
- **Connect the Ashley Creek trail with the new bike lane along Alternative B.**
- **Provide approximately 2.11 hectares (5.22 acres) of property to Flathead County Parks. This is planned for at least partial use as parking and a trailhead facility, to compensate for the approximately 0.10 hectare (0.25 acre) of Section 6(f) land converted from a recreation use. If the appraised value of the replacement land is less than the appraised value of the impacted property, additional property (to make up the difference) will be provided to Flathead County Parks as 6(f) replacement property.**

5.4.2 Historic Properties

At 24FH350 (the railroad spur) on Alternative B, the MDT proposes to install a historic marker describing the history and significance of the Kalispell-Somers Railroad spur. The market text will be identical to that determined suitable as part of the Somers to Kalispell segment of this project.

For the Whitefish Residential Historic District, the MDT proposes to conduct additional survey work and prepare the nomination of the district to the National Register of Historic Places. When the nomination has been completed and accepted by the NRHP, the MDT will then prepare a NRHP sign to the local historical society describing the Whitefish Residential Historic District and its significance to the history of the community.

If construction in the Kalispell Courthouse Historic District results in the removal of any trees, they will be replaced in kind by the Department.

5.5 Coordination Process

Coordination on park and recreation areas that has occurred with the agencies having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) properties is documented in Volume II. It includes:

- Consultation on primary data gathering with Flathead County Parks and Recreation included correspondence relaying locational and operational information. An aerial photo (1" = 200') of the Ashley Creek Trail site with the approximate location of Alternative B(MEDIAN) and B(TURN-LANE) was sent to the Director of Flathead County Parks and Recreation for review on November 8, 1993. At that same time a request was made to return the photo with any pertinent locational data marked and identified; a plat map of the property and a copy of the quitclaim deed. All of the above were returned and used in the preparation of this document.

- Additional coordination with the Director of Flathead County Parks and Recreation has involved several telephone conversations (11-2-93, 11-30-93, 12-28-93) regarding current and primary use of each portion of the park, significance, developed facilities and additional information about future development.

- Additional data was provided by phone and pamphlet from City of Whitefish Parks and Recreation and City of Kalispell Parks and Recreation.

- **A meeting was held on March 23, 1994 with Flathead County Parks to discuss mitigation possibilities.**

- **Written correspondence was provided to Flathead County Parks on April 5, 1994 which presented two options for mitigation for Ashley Creek.**

- **Two meetings were held on April 12, 1994 to discuss mitigation for Ashley Creek with Rails-to-Trails representatives.**

- **A presentation was made on April 14, 1994 to the Flathead County Parks Board.**

- **Written correspondence was received on April 25, 1994 from Rails-to-Trails of Northwest Montana agreeing with the mitigation as described in Section 5.4.1.**

- **Written correspondence was received on May 12, 1994 from Flathead County Parks and Recreation agreeing with the mitigation as described in Section 5.4.1.**

- **Written correspondence was received on June 6, 1994 from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, indicating compliance with Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.**

Coordination on historic properties:

- **SHPO concurrence with the Determination of Eligibility was received on June 22, 1994.**

- **SHPO concurrence with the Determination of Effect was received on July 15, 1994.**

- **SHPO and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation concurrence with mitigation was agreed to in the MOA which was signed on September 1, 1994.**

5.6 Conclusion

Based upon the above considerations, there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land from the Section 4(f) properties and the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) properties resulting from such use.

Chapter Six

Comments and Coordination

Chapter 6.0: Comments and Coordination

6.1 Mission and Objectives

A critical element in the Somers to Whitefish EIS process is an extensive public and agency involvement program.

The overall mission of the public involvement program is to create openness, trust and participation such that participants in the program are able to work together to identify and deal with controversial issues, contradictions, opportunities and obstacles. The process has been open, participatory and responsive.

The specific objectives of the public involvement program are to:

- Establish and maintain the credibility of the EIS process and of the EIS team.
- Identify and try to actively include all people, groups and agencies that may be affected by the project.
- Provide timely opportunities throughout the process for all interests to express their views, ideas and concerns.
- Ensure that the information to be communicated is understandable, clear and concise.
- Provide a mechanism for public feedback so that questions are answered and concerns acknowledged.
- Make it evident to the public that their opinions, values and ideas have been incorporated into the development of design alternatives.

6.2 Elements of the Public Involvement Program

6.2.1 Notice of Intent

This was published in the Federal Register on January 27, 1993.

6.2.2 Mailing List Development

A mailing list of over 2,000 individuals and groups has been compiled. This is used for the distribution of newsletters.

6.2.3 Advisory Committee

The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to provide advice to the EIS team. The broad-based committee (of 16 members) has provided direction at the following key points in the process:

- First Advisory Committee Meeting (held on April 15, 1993): Introduce team, review public involvement plan, obtain scoping input, describe scoping meetings.

- Second (Informal) Advisory Committee Meeting (held on May 11, 1993): Provide input to design concepts.

- Third Advisory Committee Meeting (held on May 26, 1993): Discuss input received from scoping process, confirm and verify project goals, review initial concepts.

- Fourth Advisory Committee Meeting (held on July 20, 1993): Review analysis of concepts, focusing on the parallel corridor concepts.

- Fifth Advisory Committee meeting (held on September 15, 1993): Review design concepts for US 93; review environmental analysis findings.

- Sixth Advisory Committee Meeting (held on October 20, 1993): Review access control, safety and cost issues.

- Seventh **and later** Advisory Committee Meetings: Recommend a locally preferred alternative **(see Section 6.5 for information about meetings subsequent to the publication of the Draft EIS)**.

6.2.4 General Public Workshops

The purpose of the general public workshops is to provide information to the general public and to obtain their input. Public workshops (in three locations) have been or will be held at the following key points in the process:

- First Public Workshops (held April 20, 21 and 22, 1993): Introduce team, describe process, obtain scoping input.

- Second Public Workshops (held June 8, 9 and 10, 1993): Discuss and obtain input to project goals and objectives and initial concepts; respond to issues.

- Third Public Workshops (held September 28, 29 and 30, 1993): Discuss and obtain input to refined set of alternatives and preliminary environmental analysis; respond to issues.

- Whitefish Workshop (held November 9, 1993): Discuss Whitefish issues.

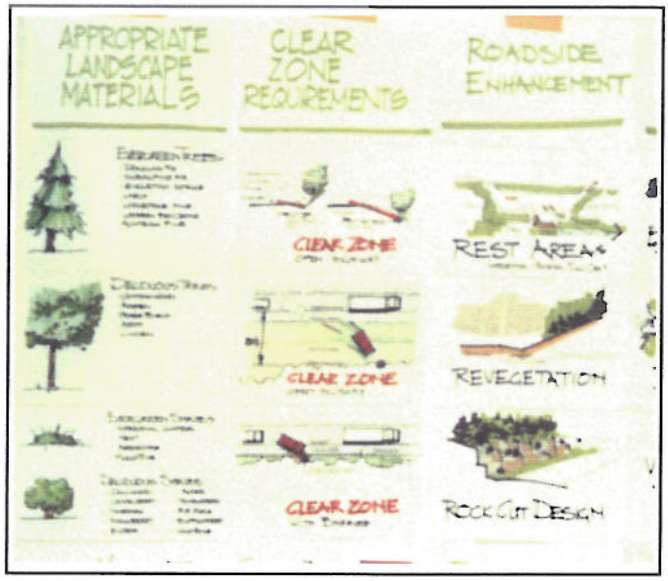
- Public Hearings (**held March 22, 23 and 24, 1994**): Receive comments on DEIS, discuss selection of preferred alternative.

Over 500 people have participated in these public workshops.

Figure 6-1 includes photographs from these workshops.

Project Office

Public Workshop



Workshop Graphics

Public Workshop

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Figure 6-1
Public Involvement Program

6.2.5 Small Group/Key Individual Meetings

These meetings have been held with groups or key individuals. Over **200** contacts with groups or individuals were made. A partial list of groups who were either contacted by telephone or with whom a meeting was held were:

- Citizens for a Better Flathead - Transportation Committee.
- Rails to Trails of NW Montana.
- Flathead Business and Industry Association.
- Whitefish Chamber Transportation Committee.
- Flathead Safety Council.
- Nature Conservancy.
- Kalispell Development Corporation.
- Flathead Economic Development Corporation representative.
- Flathead County Safety Council representative.
- Glacier Park International Airport representative.
- Kalispell Chamber Transportation Committee.
- Flathead Land Trust.
- Somers Community Association representative.
- Cooperative Planning Coalition.
- Scenic America.
- Whitefish Community Development Corporation.
- Flathead Valley Bicycle Club.
- **US 93 Property Owners**.

Meeting minutes or contact forms are on file in the Carter & Burgess offices or at the office of the Federal Highway Administration.

6.2.6 Interdisciplinary (ID) Team Meetings

ID Team meetings (of key resource agencies) are being held at key points in the process. The purpose of the ID Team is to provide technical direction to the Carter & Burgess team regarding such issues as wetlands,

wildlife and historic or archaeological properties. ID Team members are Montana Department of Transportation, Soil Conservation Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Environmental Protection Agency, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Flathead Basin Commission, Montana Department of Health and Environmental Science (Air Quality Bureau) State Historic Preservation Office and Flathead County.

- Verify jurisdictional requirements (meeting held April 22, 1993) -- make sure needs of agencies are being met.
- Obtain scoping input (meeting held April 22, 1993).
- Discuss alternatives and affected environment (meeting held June 9, 1993).
- Discuss preliminary environmental analysis results (meeting held September 30, 1993).
- Discuss mitigation plans (**meeting** held March 24, 1994).

6.2.7 Land Use Subcommittee

Two land use subcommittees (one each for the Kalispell area and the Whitefish area) were formed to provide technical input to the land use and zoning implications of the various alternatives. The subcommittees met three times (in May, June and September).

6.2.8 Newsletters

A project newsletter has been developed and will be used to provide project information to a larger audience than those who may attend public workshops. The following newsletters have been sent out to a mailing list of over 2,000 people:

- #1: Announce project, announce project office and hot line, announce scoping meetings.
- #2: Announce second general public workshops, provide summary of scoping, provide project goals and objectives, discuss initial concepts.
- #3: Announce third general public workshops, discuss refined alternatives and initial analysis of alternatives.
- #4: Announce upcoming Whitefish meeting.
- #5: Present refinements to reasonable alternatives, provide preliminary environmental analysis.
- #6: Announce Public Hearing.
- #7: Present **preliminary recommendation for** preferred alternative.
- **#8: Present preferred alternative as adopted by the Highway Commission.**

6.2.9 Project Office

A project office was opened in Whitefish (at the Mountain Mall) for a period of six months. This was staffed by the project team during key public involvement time periods to provide an opportunity for the public to discuss issues one-on-one with project personnel and review information about the project. Approximately two to three people per week visited this office.

6.2.10 Election Day Survey

A Flathead County citizen's survey for US 93 transportation issues was conducted at county polling places on June 8, 1993. Over 5,400 surveys were completed. They reflect opinions obtained from Flathead County voters and are not necessarily representative of the overall population of Flathead County.

Some of the notable findings of the survey were:

- Nearly all of the responding voters traveled on US 93 on a daily basis.
- 85 percent reported driving alone for their out-of-home work and school trips.
- 93 percent reported these trips to be 30 minutes or less. (This is important because persons with work trips of over 30 minutes are the most likely to participate in ridesharing programs).
- 40 percent indicated their trip to work as ten minutes or less. (These are distances suitable for walking or bicycling).
- 34 percent indicated driving on other roads to avoid US 93 on a daily basis.
- 73 percent indicated that there are serious problems with traffic conditions on US 93.
- 51 percent supported adding traffic signals; 53 percent supported developing better bicycle facilities.
- The most promising alternative transportation modes are: bicycling, walking and carpooling or vanpooling with each over 20 percent of respondents indicating they would choose this mode over cars three to five days per week. Only seven percent would ride a bus instead of using their car three to five days per week.

6.2.11 Radio Talk Shows/Press Releases

Radio talk shows/press releases/press meetings were conducted periodically.

6.2.12 Project Hot Line

A project hot line (406/862-1388) has been established for the public to receive information about the project.

6.2.13 Project Displays/Open Houses

Displays of project information and periodic open houses with project personnel have also been held in areas along the corridor other than Whitefish, the location of the project office. Project displays were set up at the Somers Volunteer Fire Hall and the Gateway Mall in Kalispell. A total of six open houses were held.

6.2.14 Letters

Written communication in the form of letters or comment sheets were received throughout the project. As of **September 1**, 1994, a total of approximately **350** letters have been received.

The majority of these letters were written to express a preference for one design alternative over another or to express opposition to one or more of the Whitefish bypass alternatives. A few of the letters requested consideration of issues such as wildlife protection, farmland protection, visual impact or safety. **A few of the letters also requested specific design or right-of-way information for a particular parcel.**

These are on file with FHWA or in the Carter & Burgess offices.

6.3 Agency Contacts

The following agencies were formally contacted by letter to obtain specific information and to identify any issues which should be addressed in the EIS:

- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Soil Conservation Service
- Flathead County
- City of Whitefish
- City of Kalispell
- Montana Department of Transportation

In addition, meetings and/or telephone conversations were held with the following agencies:

- Federal Agency Contacts

  - US Forest Service (Forest Service issues)
  - Federal Transit Administration (transit issues)
  - US Army Corps of Engineers (wetlands, stream filling)
  - US Fish and Wildlife Service (threatened or endangered plants or animals, wetlands)
  - US Soil Conservation Service (prime or unique farmlands)
  - US Environmental Protection Agency (air quality, wetlands, hazardous materials)

- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (historic properties)
- National Park Service (GNP issues)

- State Agency Contacts

  - Montana Department of Transportation (transportation and environmental issues)
  - Montana Department of Health and Environmental Science, Air Quality Bureau (air quality impacts)
  - Montana Department of Health and Environmental Science, Water Quality Bureau (stormwater runoff, groundwater discharge)
  - Montana State Historic Preservation Office (effects to historic or archaeological properties)
  - Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (wetlands, natural resources)

- Regional/Local Agency Contacts

  - Flathead County (planning, road and bridge, parks)
  - City of Whitefish
  - City of Kalispell
  - Flathead Basin Commission
  - Somers Water and Sewer District
  - Flathead Regional Development Office

6.4 Input Obtained

A great variety of input has been obtained from the public and agency involvement program activities.

Generally, almost all participants in the program agree that there is a need for improving US 93 from Somers to Whitefish. The current highway is perceived as being dangerous, with inadequate capacity, not supportive of modal interrelationships and not accommodating of future population and employment growth needs.

There is a wide variety of opinion about concepts which should be considered for providing for the transportation need in the corridor. Concepts which were suggested are listed here in no priority order:

- Adding passing and turning lanes only.
- Adding frontage roads.
- Improving other corridors instead of US 93.
- Bypassing Kalispell.
- Bypassing Whitefish.
- Proceeding with the original five-lane design.
- Widening with a median for access control.
- Improving bus service.
- Adding pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Concerns were expressed during the public and agency involvement program about every impact category that is addressed by the FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A. Issues that were communicated most frequently by the public were:

- Impact to future land use.
- Impacts on future safety.

- Accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Minimizing right-of-way.
- Minimizing economic impacts.
- Maintaining wildlife in the area.
- Enhancing visual quality.
- Minimizing construction impacts.

Key technical issues that were communicated by the agencies were:

- Need to demonstrate that the (preferred) alternative is the least damaging to Section 404 protected resources (wetlands, rivers).

- Need to minimize air quality impacts to the Kalispell and Whitefish non-attainment areas (for PM_{10}).

- Need to minimize impact to historic resources.

6.5 Coordination Subsequent to Release of Draft EIS

An extensive amount of public and agency coordination has occurred subsequent to release of the Draft EIS. This section summarizes the type of coordination which has occurred. The next section (Section 6.6) summarizes comments and provides responses to these comments. Volume II contains copies of letters and records of telephone calls.

6.5.1 Federal Register Announcements

An announcement was placed in the Federal Register on February 25, 1994, which announced the availability of the Draft EIS and indicated the end of the comment period as May 2, 1994. A second announcement was placed in the Federal Register on May 6, 1994 which extended the public comment period to May 16, 1994. Copies of these announcements are in Volume II of this Final EIS.

6.5.2 Public Notices

Public notices were placed in the newspapers of general circulation in the study area. These notices indicated where the DEIS was available for public review, the three public hearing dates and times, and other opportunities for commenting. Dates of the public notices were:

- **Daily Interlake: Sunday, March 16, 1994.**
- **Whitefish Pilot: Thursday, March 3, 1994**

6.5.3 Public Hearings

Three public hearings were held in the study area on March 22, 23 and 24, 1994. Approximately 180 people attended the three hearings. Transcripts of these hearings are included in Volume II.

Each hearing was held from 6:00 p.m. to approximately 9:00 p.m. The first hour was an open-house type format with stations showing graphics of the various alternatives and illustrations of impacts of the alternatives. A handout was also available for attendees. A presentation of approximately one-half hour in length occurred from 7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The presentation generally described the alternatives, the major findings of the DEIS and the process. Public hearing attendees had six methods of comment on the project at the hearing:

1. By asking a question subsequent to the formal presentation.
2. By talking to one of the consultant, agency or Advisory Committee members at the hearing.
3. By writing their comments on one of the comment cards.
4. By writing their comments on one of the comment sheets and then placing them in the "Comment" box.
5. By dictating their comments to the registered reporter at the hearing.
6. By submitting written comments or calling the "hotline" number subsequent to the hearing.

6.5.4 Advisory Committee Meetings

The Somers to Whitefish West Advisory Committee met five times subsequent to publication of the Draft EIS. These meetings were:

- March 16, 1994, to discuss the public hearing and Advisory Committee issues and concerns about the DEIS.
- March 26, 1994, to tour the study area.
- April 12, 1994, to discuss input received to-date and any areas of agreement.
- April 23, 1994, to discuss preliminary recommendations.
- May 17, 1994, to finalize preliminary recommendations.

6.5.5 Meetings with Groups or Individuals

Approximately 120 meetings were held with groups or individuals. Most of these were with individual property owners along US 93 or with groups of US 93 property owners.

6.5.6 Agency Meetings

The following agency meetings or telephone conference calls were held:

- March 24, 1994: ID Team meeting.
- April 12, 1994: Meeting with Rails-to-Trails Board
- April 14, 1994: Meeting with Flathead County Parks Board
- May 11, 1994: Meeting with wetland agencies (US Army Corps of Engineers, US EPA) and MDT
- May 16, 1994: Conference call to discuss air quality analysis with MDHES, EPA and MDT.
- May 17, 1994: Field review meeting to discuss wetland mitigation with USFWS and Kalispell Parks.
- June 17, 1994: Conference call to discuss wetland mitigation with EPA, USFWS, US Army Corps of Engineers, Kalispell Parks and MDT.
- August 25, 1994: Meeting with the Montana Highway Commission to discuss the preferred alternative.

6.5.7 Telephone Conversation Comments

Approximately 170 comments were received on the Whitefish hotline number, or in other telephone conversations between February 24 and September 1, 1994.

6.5.8 Written Public Comments

Approximately 165 written comments were received from members of the general public between February 24 and September 1, 1994.

6.6 Comments and Responses

The following section provides a summary of comments made regarding the DEIS and responses.

6.6.1 Public Hearing Comments

Approximately 280 comments were received during the public hearing process. Copies of comments received are in Volume II, Chapter Two.

Public hearing comments were reviewed and analyzed to identify similar questions, concerns and opinions. A summary of similar comments, together with responses, is presented in the following pages.

6.6.1.1 Support for A(MEDIAN) or A(COMBO) Alternative (45 Comments)

Opinions were expressed in support of the A(MEDIAN) or A(COMBO) alternatives. The primary advantages of these alternatives were felt to be aesthetic, reduction in construction disruption, its longer service over time, less of an inclination to encourage strip development, safety, snow removal, socioeconomic advantages of retaining a "sense of place," indirect effects of loss of farmland and agricultural land. Response: The A(MEDIAN) alternative has noticeable advantages in the visual area, as described in Section 4.18. Differences in construction disruption occur in the areas where the A(MEDIAN) alternative is located to the side of the existing roadway, except in transition areas. Generally, alternatives with medians provide better traffic service for the through traveler, especially in locations of higher traffic volumes. The A(MEDIAN) alternative will be less inclined to encourage commercial strip development and thus will likely have less of an effect on conversions of agricultural property to residential or commercial development, at least in the short-term. Safety advantages (as described in Section 4.1.3) are not clear: the A(MEDIAN) alternative has a lower accident rate at non-intersection related accidents but a higher accident rate at unsignalized intersections. Although snow storage may be easier with the A(MEDIAN) alternative, other maintenance requirements may offset this. MDT maintenance personnel believe that neither alternative is inherently easier or cheaper to maintain than the other. The social costs of a loss of "sense of place" for a community are more fully described in Section 4.4.

The preferred alternative [the A(COMBO)] attempts to balance the advantages and disadvantages of each of the two basic alternatives and recommends particular locations to minimize impacts and costs of one alternative and to gain the benefits of another alternative.

6.6.1.2 Support for A(TURN-LANE) Alternative (46 Comments)

Opinions were expressed in support of the A(TURN-LANE) alternative. The primary advantages of this alternative were felt to be its fewer right-of-way requirements, lower construction cost, effect to access, safety, maintenance and control of drifting snow. Response: As described in the DEIS, the A(TURN-LANE) alternative has fewer additional right-of-way requirements and lower construction costs. It generally does not allow for unlimited, full-turning movement access to a particular property, resulting in out-of-direction travel and U-turns for those properties not provided with a median break for their property. These impacts are documented in Section 4.1.2 and 4.4.1 of the Draft and Final EISs. The safety analysis of the various alternatives are documented in Section 4.1.3 of the Draft and Final EIS. The A(TURN-LANE) alternative tends to result in a lower accident rate at unsignalized intersections but a higher accident rate at non-intersection related accidents. Maintenance implications of the two basic alternatives are described in Section 4.20. Discussions with MDT maintenance personnel indicate that although different types of maintenance activities are required, neither is inherently easier or cheaper to maintain than the other. Similarly, drifting of snow has not been shown to be exacerbated by the presence of medians.

The preferred alternative [the A(COMBO)] attempts to balance the advantages and disadvantages of each of the two basic alternatives and recommends particular locations to minimize impacts and costs of one alternative and to gain the benefits of another alternative.

6.6.1.3 Suggestions for Intersection Modifications (36 Comments)

Numerous suggestions were made about specific intersection details, including additions of more turn lanes, adding new intersections or combining intersections. Response: The intersection details shown at the public hearings and in the EIS are based on a conceptual level of design. These will be refined during the final design process and consideration will be given to suggestions made for modifications at that time.

6.6.1.4 Support for Kalispell Bypass Alternative (15 Comments)

Support was expressed for a bypass of the Kalispell central city area. The primary advantages of the bypass were felt to be its relief of congestion on Main Street through town. Response: The primary advantage of the Kalispell bypass are described in Section 5.3.1 of the Final EIS. This has been included as a part of the preferred alternative.

6.6.1.5 Support for Separated Bikepath (16 Comments)

Support was expressed for a separated bikepath. Response: A separated bikepath (where possible) has been included as a part of the preferred alternative.

6.6.1.6 Request to Move an Intersection to Hodgson Road (11 Comments)

Several requests were made to move a median break [with the A(MEDIAN) alternative] to Hodgson Road. A median break was not shown at Hodgson Road on the Public Hearing drawings nor in the Draft EIS. Response: The drawings prepared were at a conceptual design level of detail. Information developed since that time now includes a median break at Hodgson Road.

6.6.1.7 Comments about Whitefish Alternatives

The following comments were made about the Whitefish alternatives. Information regarding the analysis of alternatives and the reason for the recommendation for the preferred alternative is in Chapter Two of the Final EIS.

- **Support for three lanes west of Whitefish (one comment).**
- **Support for four lanes west of Whitefish (one comment).**
- **Opposition to C(OFF-SET) (four comments).**
- **Support for C(OFF-SET) (two comments).**
- **Opposition to A(FOUR-LANE) (five comments).**
- **Support for A(FOUR-LANE) (one comment).**

- Support for any of the couplet alternatives (one comment).
- Opposition to any of the couplet alternatives (three comments).
- Support for Seventh Street bridge (14 comments).
- Opposition to Seventh Street bridge (7 comments).
- Support for COUPLET-2 (two comments).
- Support for COUPLET-4 (one comment).
- Opposition to COUPLET-4 (one comment).

6.6.1.8 Support Restrictive Access Control Alternative (Five Comments)

Support was expressed for the restrictive access control alternative. Response: The restrictive access control policy (with flexibility) has been included as a part of the preferred alternative.

6.6.1.9 Add Frontage Roads (Six Comments)

Requests were made to add frontage roads in certain locations, to provide adequate access to properties, if the A(MEDIAN) alternative is recommended. Response: More detailed information has been developed since the Draft EIS which shows median breaks more often than those shown in the Draft EIS. These are now documented in Appendix A of the Final EIS. Additional frontage roads have been added in one location between Kalispell and Whitefish.

6.6.1.10 Concern About Construction Impacts (Four Comments)

Concerns were expressed about impacts during construction. Response: These impacts are described in Section 4.20 of the Final EIS.

6.6.1.11 Opposition to Kalispell Bypass (Five Comments)

Opposition was expressed to the Kalispell bypass. Response: The primary reasons for selection of the Kalispell bypass are described in Chapter Two and in Section 5.3.1 of the Final EIS.

6.6.1.12 Support for Special Design Concepts (Nine Comments)

Support was expressed for the special design concepts, including the scenic turn-out south of Somers and the other enhancement features. Response: Most of these have been included as a part of the preferred alternative. The exceptions are:

- The Four Corners visitor center has been removed, since it is generally a duplication of the site already at Lions Park.

- The split alignments have been removed because of right-of-way and cost impacts.

- **The bridge over the Whitefish River for Spokane Avenue has not been included because of cost concerns.**

6.6.1.13 Opposition to Split Alignments (Three Comments)

Opposition was expressed to the two split alignment options which were shown in the Draft EIS. Response: These have not been included as a part of the preferred alternative.

6.6.1.14 Recommendations for Alignment Modifications (Four Comments)

Requests were made for alignment refinements in certain locations. Response: During the final design process, slightly different alignments to avoid right-of-way impacts will explored.

6.6.1.15 Request for Underpass for Farm Equipment (Three Comments)

Concern was expressed about effect to livestock and farm equipment moving across US 93 on various properties. Response: Meetings with property owners will be held again during the final design process to work out details for livestock and farm equipment crossings of US 93.

6.6.1.16 Request for Reconsideration of Whitefish Bypass (Three Comments)

Questions were asked about the status of the Whitefish bypasses. Response: As documented in Chapter 2, none of the Whitefish bypass alternatives were found to meet project purpose and need. These alternatives are being studied in the Whitefish Traffic Operations Study, specifically to be designated as a bypass truck route.

6.6.1.17 Concerns about More Traffic on Baker Street (Three Comments)

Concerns were expressed about the impacts of trucks, noise and extra traffic into the neighborhood. Concerns were also expressed about impacts of the Seventh Street bridge. Response: These impacts are addressed in Sections 4.4.1 (Social), 4.1 (Transportation) and 4.9.1 (Noise) of the Final EIS. Many of these impacts will occur as a result of the Baker Street extension project, which is a City of Whitefish project. Traffic on Baker will only increase by approximately 12 percent per day, when compared to the No-Build Alternative, which includes the Baker Street extension. The Seventh Street extension will tend to relieve traffic on Second Street. Alternatives to route trucks around Whitefish are continuing to be explored during the Whitefish Traffic Operations Study.

6.6.1.18 Other Concerns or Questions

- **Recommend grade separated pedestrian crossing at Happy Valley. Response: In order for a grade-separated pedestrian crossing to be effective, there must be accompanying physical prohibitions (such as fencing on both sides of US 93) to prevent an at-grade**

crossing. Grade separations are also costly. For these reasons, a grade separation at Happy Valley has not been recommended, but other accommodations for pedestrians will be included, such as a pedestrian-activated signal if warranted.

- The EIS did not consider the impacts of a median on emergency vehicle access. Response: The impacts of a median on emergency vehicle access were addressed in Section 4.4.1.3 of the Draft EIS.

- Agreements need to be reached to maintain landscaping in the median. Response: These agreements have been agreed to in principle for the urban areas. MDT will maintain the grassy medians in the rural areas.

- What are the noise impacts noted on the public hearing drawings? Response: This information is an indication of where in the Year 2015 noise levels are likely to be at or above 67 decibels, which is a level for indicating that mitigation should be considered. Many of these locations will receive these noise levels regardless of the alternative that is chosen (including the No-Build).

6.6.2 Advisory Committee Comments

The following comments were of primary concern to the Advisory Committee in their discussions about issues and the preferred alternative. Meeting minutes from Advisory Committee meetings held subsequent to publication of the Draft EIS are in Volume II, Chapter Three.

6.6.2.1 Landscape Maintenance Tasks and Responsibilities

There was a question about who was responsible for maintaining landscaped areas and what were the tasks associated with the maintenance. Response: This information was provided and discussed in detail with Advisory Committee members at their April 12 meeting. Tasks include mowing, fertilization and weed control of grassy areas; litter pick-up; irrigation system monitoring and repair; weeding, fertilization, mulching and trimming of shrub beds; fertilization, pruning and spraying of trees and provision of cost and water supply for irrigation. Sample maintenance agreements were provided to the Advisory Committee.

Entities other than MDT have responsibility for maintaining landscaped areas in urban sections.

6.6.2.2 Economic Impact

There was a concern identified that the DEIS did not adequately address the economic impacts to the community due to the loss of open space. Response: Additional analysis was done and discussed with the Advisory Committee at their April 12 and 23, 1994 meetings. Additional analysis included:

- Impacts of strip development.
- Impact during construction.
- Costs of sprawl.

This information is included in this Final EIS.

6.6.2.3 Safety

It was felt that the DEIS did not adequately address the effects of weather on the various alternatives, such as poor visibility of lane striping. Response: Additional analysis was done and provided to the Advisory Committee at the April 12, 1994 meeting. The problems related to weather were defined in more detail and additional research from the Transportation Research Board was provided and discussed with the Committee.

This additional information is included in this Final EIS.

6.6.2.4 Right-of-Way Needed

Clarification was requested about additional right-of-way needed for a separated bikepath and for other features, such as frontage roads or truck turn-arounds. Response: Additional analysis was done and provided to the Advisory Committee at their April 12, 1994 meeting. Analysis provided indicated that:

- **Additional right-of-way would be needed for a separated bikepath.**
- **Additional right-of-way is needed for frontage roads and intersection improvements.**
- **Refinements to Tables 4-7 and 4-8 were provided to the Committee.**

Final right-of-way information is included in this Final EIS.

6.6.2.5 Construction Staging

Additional concerns were expressed about the impacts during construction. Response: Information was provided to the Advisory Committee which described specifications which could be covered in a construction staging plan, including possible incentives to contractors, restrictions related to working hours, traffic control plans and other items. Additional information was also provided about the construction staging impacts in Whitefish which would occur if the culverts under US 93 for the Whitefish River were replaced with a bridge.

This additional information is included in this Final EIS.

6.6.2.6 Funding/Scheduling

Concerns were expressed that information about the funding and scheduling implications of the various alternatives be discussed with the Advisory Committee. Response: Special analysis of funding available, other priorities in District 1, total construction cost for all other priorities and the amount available for construction was conducted and provided to the Advisory Committee on April 12, 1994. It was also discussed in detail with the Committee.

6.6.2.7 Other Issues

Other issues such as access impact, analysis of turning traffic and analysis of alternatives in Whitefish were discussed with the Advisory Committee.

6.6.3 Comments from Meetings with Groups or Individuals

Comments from meetings with groups or individuals were reviewed and analyzed to determine similar interests or concerns. A summary of the meetings held is in Volume II, Chapter Four. Full meeting minutes with handouts are on file with FHWA in Helena. A summary of these follows:

6.6.3.1 Support for A(TURN-LANE) Alternative (Approximately 168 People)

Opinions were expressed in support of the A(TURN-LANE) alternative. The primary advantages of this alternative were felt to be its fewer right-of-way requirements, lower construction cost, effect to access, safety, maintenance and control of drifting snow. Response: As described in the DEIS, the A(TURN-LANE) alternative has fewer additional right-of-way requirements and lower construction costs. It generally does not allow for unlimited, full-turning movement access to a particular property, resulting in out-of-direction travel and U-turns for those properties not provided with a median break for their property. These impacts are documented in Section 4.1.2 and 4.4.1 of the Draft and Final EISs. The safety analysis of the various alternatives are documented in Section 4.1.3 of the Draft and Final EIS. The A(TURN-LANE) alternative tends to result in a lower accident rate at unsignalized intersections but a higher accident rate at non-intersection related accidents. Maintenance implications of the two basic alternatives are described in Section 4.20. Discussions with MDT maintenance personnel indicate that although different types of maintenance activities are required, neither is inherently easier or cheaper to maintain than the other. Similarly, drifting of snow has not been shown to be exacerbated by the presence of medians.

The preferred alternative [the A(COMBO)] attempts to balance the advantages and disadvantages of each of the two basic alternatives and recommends particular locations to minimize impacts and costs of one alternative and to gain the benefits of another alternative.

6.6.3.2 Support for C(COUPLET-2) or C(COUPLET-3) Because of the Seventh Street Bridge (13 People)

Support was expressed for the Whitefish couplet alternatives that included the Seventh Street Bridge, because it minimizes the out-of-direction travel. Response: No response is needed, since this is the preferred alternative.

6.6.3.3 Support for Special Design Concepts (19 People)

Support was expressed for the enhancement features of bridges to accommodate pedestrian facilities, community gateways and landscaping. Response: See response for Section 6.6.1.12.

6.6.3.4 Capacity of New Intersections in Whitefish (Ten People)

Concern was expressed about whether or not the intersections in Whitefish could be adequately designed to accommodate trucks and heavy volumes of traffic. Response: A special analysis has been prepared of intersections in Whitefish. It is summarized in Section 4.1.

6.6.3.4 Design Between the River and Karrow

Concern was expressed about whether or not a four-lane design is needed west of Whitefish between the river and Karrow. Response: We have reanalyzed this area. The preferred alternative now is for a three-lane section with attached sidewalks. This is fully described in Chapter Two.

6.6.3.5 Support for A(MEDIAN) or A(COMBO) Alternatives (12 People)

Opinions were expressed in support of the A(MEDIAN) or A(COMBO) alternatives. The primary advantages of these alternatives were felt to be aesthetic, reduction in construction disruption, its longer service over time, less of an inclination to encourage strip development, safety, snow removal, socioeconomic advantages of retaining a "sense of place," indirect effects of loss of farmland and agricultural land. Response: The A(MEDIAN) alternative has noticeable advantages in the visual area, as described in Section 4.18. Differences in construction disruption occur in the areas where the A(MEDIAN) alternative is located to the side of the existing roadway, except in transition areas. Generally, alternatives with medians provide better traffic service for the through traveler, especially in locations of higher traffic volumes. The A(MEDIAN) alternative will be less inclined to encourage commercial strip development and thus will likely have less of an effect on conversions of agricultural property to residential or commercial development, at least in the short-term. Safety advantages (as described in Section 4.1.3) are not clear: the A(MEDIAN) alternative has a lower accident rate at non-intersection related accidents but a higher accident rate at unsignalized intersections. Although snow storage may be easier with the A(MEDIAN) alternative, other maintenance requirements may offset this. MDT maintenance personnel believe that neither alternative is inherently easier or cheaper to maintain than the other. The social costs of a loss of "sense of place" for a community are more fully described in Section 4.4.

The preferred alternative [the A(COMBO)] attempts to balance the advantages and disadvantages of each of the two basic alternatives and recommends particular locations to minimize impacts and costs of one alternative and to gain the benefits of another alternative.

6.6.3.6 Construction Staging and Phasing Plan (One Person)

A request was made for a construction staging and phasing plan (one person). Response: As stated in Section 4.20 of the FEIS, a detailed construction staging plan will be developed prior to construction.

6.6.4 Agency Comments

The following comments are recorded by agency, with responses made individually. Agency letters and other coordination documents are in Volume II, Chapter Five.

6.6.4.1 US Army Corps of Engineers: May 27, 1994

- **Section 4.11.1.2: Recommend incorporating avoidance of Wetland 1 into the design if it is practical. Response: A sentence has been added which states "this will be incorporated into the design if at all possible."**

- **The statement is made that impacts are not different, however, a description of the impacts is not provided. Response: A chart showing wetland impact by wetland is now in Section 4.11.**

- **It should be made clear that Section 404 permits are needed for any discharge of dredged or fill material associated with bridge and pier construction or bank stabilization work. Response: The sentence referring to this permit has now been modified to indicate this.**

- **Appendix A: Need to clarify whether or not the wetlands shown are existing or proposed wetlands. Response: This will be added to the maps (they are existing wetlands).**

- **Potential mitigation sites with development plans should be identified. Response: Several agencies specifically requested that specific wetland mitigation sites that are privately owned not be included in the Draft EIS. This was discussed with the Omaha District of the Corps. Our most recent discussions indicate that Lawrence Park, a publicly-owned facility, is a finalist for wetland mitigation. Details about this will be in the Final EIS. Approval of these plans would be needed before a Section 404 permit could be approved.**

- **Mitigation funding sources should be identified. Response: A sentence has been added to Section 4.11.3 stating: "MDT is the responsible entity for funding and implementing the mitigation plan."**

- **An on-site field trip to review the mitigation site should be completed prior to the release of the FEIS. Response: A field trip was held with the USFWS on May 17, 1994. A second trip will be planned later.**

6.6.4.2 US Army Corps of Engineers: July 22, 1994

- **Concur with the wetland mitigation strategy. Response: No response is needed.**
- **Documentation will be needed that unavoidable wetland losses will occur. Response: This will be provided at the time of Section 404 permit application.**
- **All mitigation measures are subject to final approval/rejection pending review of final plans and evaluation of wetland functions and values. Response: This is assumed to occur at the time of Section 404 permit review.**

6.6.4.3 US Army Corps of Engineers: August 4, 1994

- **Need more information about wetland impact by wetland. Response: A new chart has been added which defines wetland impact for each wetland.**
- **The source of funding for wetland mitigation needs to be defined. Response: This has been added to Section 4.11.3.3. Wetland mitigation is part of the project cost.**
- **The "wetland" maps in Appendix A are being updated. They illustrate existing wetlands, not proposed wetlands.**

6.6.4.4 US Environmental Protection Agency: April 28, 1994

- **It is not clear why the Lawrence Park wetland mitigation site is favored over the other sites. It also seems premature to proceed with wetland mitigation at Lawrence Park when a preferred alternative has not been selected and the magnitude of wetland impact is unknown. Response: A the wetland meeting on May 11, 1994 (subsequent to this letter), more detailed information was provided about the likely preferred alternative, wetland impact, function of the impacted wetlands and the Lawrence Park mitigation site. A more detailed discussion of wetland mitigation was held with EPA, USFWS and the Corps on June 17, 1994.**
- **The goal of mitigation should be to replace the functions and values of the wetlands impacts. Response: A sentence to this effect has been added to Section 4.11.3.**
- **It is difficult to identify and quantify the impacts of the individual wetlands. Response: A table has been added which quantifies impact by wetland.**
- **Assessment of the success of mitigation wetlands should include certain criteria, defined in the April 28, 1994 letter. Response: These have been added to Section 4.11.3.**
- **A commitment is needed to take corrective action if wetland mitigation criteria are not met. Response: This commitment has been added.**

6.6.4.5 US Environmental Protection Agency: May 2, 1994

- The project's compliance with the emissions budgets in the Kalispell SIP is largely due to the use of more recent, lower emission factors, permitted under EPA's rule. Response: No response is necessary, since use of these lower emission factors was agreed to with all agencies and is permitted by EPA.

- The final EIS must identify a specific mitigation strategy, quantify its emissions benefits, include written commitments to carry out the mitigation measures and include a schedule for doing this. Response: The Final EIS has provided this information.

- Street sweeping is recommended as a more effective mitigation strategy than park-n-ride and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Response: This was considered earlier but is now not needed to show conformity.

- The Kalispell analysis should be added to the Final EIS. Response: This has been added.

- Bridges at the crossings of Ashley Creek and the Whitefish and Stillwater Rivers are supported to minimize disturbance of riparian habitat and reduce river encroachment and provide for sediment and bedload transport. Response: Bridges are still planned for the crossing of Ashley Creek and the Stillwater River. However, an alternative has been chosen at the Whitefish River which is to leave the culverts in place.

- Section 3.10 needs to identify wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas in reasonable proximity to the alignments and bypass routes. Response: A paragraph has been added to Section 3.10 generally addressing these.

- An improved analysis of indirect effects of induced land use and population growth changes is needed for Alternative B. Response: A bypass of the Kalispell area is anticipated to accelerate growth in the general vicinity, but this is growth that will occur regardless of implementation of a bypass. Effects of this on wetlands will be controlled through the Section 404 permit process.

- It is difficult to identify impacts to individual wetlands. Response: A table has been added which quantifies wetland loss by wetland.

- Page B-8: The wording for item c is incorrect. Response: This has been changed.

- The wetland fills for Bypass B are not included on page B-12. Response: This table was incorrectly labeled so that Alternative A(FOUR-LANE) and C(OFF-SET) should have referred to Alternative B. A corrected table was provided to all agency personnel on March 30 and is now included in the Final EIS.

- Page B-14 needs to have a stronger statement about avoidance of construction during migration or spawning periods. Response: The Final EIS includes such a statement.

- Page B-25 needs to have correct information about wetland impact. Response: The Final EIS will include correct information about wetland impact for the preferred alternative.

- **Alternative A through Kalispell is the environmentally preferred alternative. Response: Alternative A through Kalispell has not been selected as the preferred alternative for the following reasons:**

  - **Substantial increases in congestion through the central area of Kalispell.**
  - **Increases in PM10 and carbon monoxide pollution.**
  - **Substantial disruption to residential and commercial areas as a result of diversion of traffic from US 93.**
  - **Likely increases in noise and decreases in property value on residential streets which would receive diverted traffic.**
  - **Noticeable economic impact to Kalispell commercial area as a result of decreased accessibility.**
  - **Substantial increases in congestion on east-west streets that would need to cross US 93.**

- **The Situational Access Control alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative. Response: The access control alternative which is preferred is Restrictive Access Control (with flexibility), which is more restrictive than the situational alternative and should be thus more environmentally acceptable.**

- **The median or the combo alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative. Response: The A(COMBO) alternative has been selected as the preferred alternative.**

6.6.4.6 US Environmental Protection Agency: May 16, 1994

- **There are concerns about mitigating the loss of wetland functions and values with the construction of one 6-acre wetland pond at Lawrence Park. Response: As discussed at the May 11, 1994 meeting, the preferred wetland mitigation plan is to construct the Lawrence Park mitigation as well as one or two other sites in the highway right-of-way.**

- **There is concern that construction activities at Lawrence Park will disturb the already established wetland habitat. Response: We believe that this concern comes from incorrect information about the exact location of the planned wetland mitigation. The construction of the new wetland can take place without disturbing existing wetlands.**

- **More details about the Lawrence Park wetland mitigation site need to be provided. Response: We have since met with USFWS personnel on site and discussed more detailed plans for Lawrence Park with EPA, USFWS and the Corps on June 17, 1994.**

6.6.4.7 US Environmental Protection Agency: July 21, 1994

- **The statement on page 4-54 that emissions from the preferred alternative are less than one percent higher than the no-build alternative is incorrect. Response: This statement has been omitted.**

- **The FEIS must include written commitments to carry out the specific mitigation measures and include a schedule for implementation of mitigation measures. Response: The FEIS provides this information.**

6.6.4.8 US Environmental Protection Agency: July 22, 1994

- **We recommend that the project currently underway at Ashley Creek be included in the wetland mitigation package. Response: This project will be mentioned.**

- **We believe this collection of wetland mitigation efforts will adequately compensate for the lost wetlands. Response: No response is needed.**

6.6.4.9 US Environmental Protection Agency: August 3, 1994

- **Previous comments were made regarding wetlands and air quality issues. Response: Responses to these comments are noted in Sections 6.6.4.7 and 6.6.4.8.**

- **Section 4.20 should indicate that discharges in streams supporting aquatic life shall not occur in spawning areas. Response: Section 4.20 contains this information.**

- **Additional information is needed about the indirect land use effects of the Kalispell bypass and impacts on other natural resources. Response: This information was provided on August 12, 1994 to EPA (included in Volume II) and is now in the FEIS.**

6.6.4.10 US Environmental Protection Agency: August 18, 1994

- **The August 12 letter to EPA is acceptable to EPA. Response: No response is needed.**

6.6.4.11 US Department of the Interior: May 11, 1994

- **We cannot support the selection of Alternative B in Kalispell, which impacts three Section 4(f) properties, since no information is provided to substantiate that the selection of Alternative A is not feasible or prudent. Response: Information to support this determination is now provided in the Final Section 4(f) Statement. Response is summarized in Section 6.6.4.5, paragraph 13.**

6.6.4.12 US Department of the Interior: August 3, 1994

- **We concur that there are no feasible or prudent alternatives to the proposed use of Section 4(f) properties discussed in the revised document. We also concur with the measures to minimize harm. Response: No response is necessary.**

6.6.4.13 Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: July 11, 1994

- **The Council concurs with your finding of adverse effect and elects to participate in the consultation process. Response: Information was provided to the Council in July for their review.**

6.6.4.14 US Fish and Wildlife Service: July 17, 1994

- **We have no additional comments beyond which we have previously made to you through the coordination and planning of this project. Response: No response is needed.**

6.6.4.15 US Fish and Wildlife Service: August 8, 1994

- **Based on our review of the FEIS and wetland mitigation plan, the Service believes that your proposed wetland mitigation plan will adequately compensate for unavoidable wetland losses associated with any of the build alternatives. Response: No response is needed.**

6.6.4.16 Montana Department of State Lands: April 27, 1994

- **We prefer an alternative that can be executed within the existing highway right-of-way (between Grandview and Reserve). Response: The alternative that has been chosen in this section is the one that needs the least right-of-way.**

- **Because safety is important to us, we would prefer to see a divided highway. Response: A divided highway is not necessarily safer, as discussed in Section 4.1 of the Final EIS.**

- **If a divided highway is selected adjacent to our property, we need a turning bay. Response: A divided highway was not selected at this location.**

- **We strongly support providing bicycle lanes. Response: The preferred alternative is to provide a separated bikepath where feasible.**

- **We support the concept of a pedestrian tunnel at FVCC. Response: A pedestrian tunnel can be accommodated in the future, but is not planned to be implemented as a part of the preferred alternative, primarily because of cost considerations.**

6.6.4.17 Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, Air Quality Bureau: May 17, 1994

- **Page 5-4: Need to add mitigation in Whitefish as a major unresolved issue and transportation conformity as another "Other Federal Action Required." Response: The bullet saying "final air quality mitigation has not been resolved" was intended to address mitigation needed for conformity in Whitefish. Transportation conformity (which is needed**

by the time the Final EIS is published) has been added as one of the "Other Federal Actions Required."

- Page 1-4: Request to remove the sentence that carbon monoxide will decrease. Response: This has been done.

- Page 1-16: The second bullet does not necessarily hold true for PM10. Response: This statement has been modified to address CO only.

- Page 2-3: Change Montana Air Quality Board to Montana Air Quality Bureau. Response: This has been done.

- Figures 2-2 and 2-3: Add that the areas are non-attainment for PM_{10}. Response: This has been added to these figures.

- Section 2.4.3: Recommend that limited accesses are paved. Response: MDT will commit to paving all regularly used approaches to the right-of-way line. Seldom used approaches, such as fields to access farms are only paved for 12 feet.

- Page 4-54: Any TSM measures included as a part of air quality should be enforceable. Any mitigation necessary should also be quantified in order to demonstrate conformity. Response: The Final EIS includes written commitments to the air quality mitigation needed for conformity.

- Page 4-55: Air quality mitigation during construction needs to be committed to. Response: The Final EIS provides this commitment.

- An annual emissions analysis is no longer needed. Response: This information has been removed from Section 4.8.

6.6.4.18 Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, Air Quality Bureau, August 8, 1994

- The Air Quality Bureau is now known as the Air Quality Division. Response: This change will be made.

- Figures 2-2 and 2-3: Air quality was not mentioned in the constraints. Response: It has now been added.

- Page 2-40: Should the alternatives change, AQD would need to reserve its comments until a review of a revised regional emissions analysis is complete. Response: No response is needed.

- Page 3-38: need to add a third control strategy for Kalispell. Response: This has been added.

- Page 3-38: Need to add an additional control strategy for Whitefish. Response: This has been added.

- **Page 4-45: Need to change the statement that emissions from the preferred alternative are less than one percent higher. Response: This has been done.**

6.6.4.19 Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, Water Quality Bureau: May 31, 1994

- **Comments are similar to EPA April 28 comments. Response: See Section 6.6.4.4 for a response to these comments.**

- **Recommend consideration of a wetland site in Kalispell (details were provided in the letter). Response: This site will be considered for wetland mitigation.**

6.6.4.20 Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks: June 6, 1994

- **Support expressed for Rails-to-Trails Mitigation Plan. Response: This has been committed to as described in Chapter Five.**

- **Need to assure that the replacement property is appraised as being of at least equal value. Response: The appraisal process will take place after completion of the Final EIS. The mitigation plan will commit to additional property if needed to assure replacement of equal value.**

6.6.4.21 Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks: June 21, 1994

- **Consider this a letter of concurrence with Section 6(f) mitigation as proposed. Response: No response is needed.**

6.6.4.22 Montana State Historic Preservation Office: June 22, 1994

- **Concurrence with determinations of eligibility as modified in the June 22 letter. Response: These changes have been made in the FEIS.**

6.6.4.23 Montana State Historic Preservation Office: July 15, 1994 (Concurrence on MDT letter of June 28, 1994).

- **Concurrence with determination of effect. Response: This determination of effect is now documented in the FEIS.**

6.6.4.24 City of Kalispell: May 23, 1994

- **Preference was expressed for the underpass alternative of the realignment of the Rails-to-Trails trail. Response: This alternative has been chosen as documented in Chapter 5.**

- **Preference was expressed for the original bypass alignment at US 2, west of the beer distributors. Response: The alignment shown in the Draft and Final EIS was derived based on numerous discussions with the property owner in that area. It also has less of an impact to the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail, a Section 4(f) property, more closely follows the railroad right-of-way and has less right-of-way impact on other properties. For these reasons, it has remained the preferred alignment as documented in the Draft EIS.**

- **Preference was expressed for the western realignment in the vicinity of the Greenbriar development. Response: This realignment is recommended, as described in Chapter Two and illustrated in Appendix A.**

- **Recommend the inclusion of sheltered left-turn bays in town at Oregon, California, Nevada and Wyoming. Response: These have been included as part of the preferred alternative, as described in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS and in Appendix A.**

6.6.4.25 City of Kalispell: July 13, 1994

- **It is necessary to merge this agreement with the original "Highway 93" beautification commitment. Response: The commitment to construction of gateway areas that is documented in the FEIS takes the place of commitments that were made previously.**

- **The City of Kalispell will be responsive to a maintenance agreement covering beautification landscaping. Response: This commitment has been included in the FEIS.**

- **The City would like to see trees designed into the gateway landscape and medians. Response: Trees have been assumed in the gateway areas. Trees can be included in median areas as space allows and as long as sight distance requirements are met.**

- **It is essential that the City have review authority. Response: The City will be involved in review of landscaped areas for which the City will be assuming maintenance responsibility.**

6.6.4.26 City of Whitefish (Parks and Recreation Department): April 14, 1994

- **Preference was expressed for a median at the entrances to the cities. Response: The preferred alternative recommended by the Advisory Committee includes medians at the entrances to Whitefish, but not at the entrances to Kalispell.**

- **Preference expressed for a new bridge over the Whitefish River to accommodate bikes and pedestrians. Response: The bridge over the River has not been included as a part of the preferred alternative for cost reasons.**

6.6.4.27 City of Whitefish: June 28, 1994

- **The City is willing to enter into an agreement with MDT to maintain landscaped areas between MT 40 and the Whitefish River and along Second Avenue to west of Lion Mountain Road. Response: This has now been included in the FEIS.**

6.6.4.28 City of Whitefish: August 9, 1994

- **The Whitefish City Council supports a design between the Whitefish River and Karrow Avenue which includes a separated walk. Response: This is now included as a part of the preferred alternative.**

6.6.4.29 City of Whitefish (City Council): May 6, 1994

- **Preference expressed for C(COUPLET-3). Response: This alternative has been recommended as the preferred alternative.**

- **Recommend consideration of one southbound lane on Spokane to carry truck traffic. Response: A concept was explored for a raised median for Spokane separating a single southbound lane (for US 93 truck traffic) from two northbound lanes, all within the existing curb-to-curb width. This alternative would have many of the impacts of the four-lane alternative in that no provision would be made for left-turning traffic at intersecting streets, requiring traffic to stop in through traffic lanes, no provision for parking or bike lanes, and impacts to trees along the road due to tall trucks in the curb lane. It is not a part of the preferred alternative.**

- **Recommend the replacement of the Spokane Avenue culverts with a bridge. Response: This is not a part of the preferred alternative for cost reasons.**

6.6.4.30 Flathead County Parks: May 12, 1994

- **Support expressed for Rails-to-Trails Mitigation Plan. Response: This has been committed to as described in Chapter Five.**

6.6.4.31 Rails-to-Trails of NW Montana: April 25, 1994

- **Support expressed for underpass mitigation option for Rails-to-Trails mitigation plan. Response: This has been committed to as described in Chapter Five.**

6.6.4.32 The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation: February 10, 1994

- **Request a site visit of Alternative B. Response: Site visits were held on March 24 and April 12. Areas of concern include earth moving or excavation activities on previously undisturbed land. This concern has now been included in the Final EIS.**

6.6.5 Comments from Telephone Conversations

Comments from telephone conversations were analyzed and categorized into similar comments. These are recorded in Volume II, Chapter Six. These are:

6.6.5.1 Support for A(MEDIAN) (83 Conversations)

Opinions were expressed in support of the A(MEDIAN) or A(COMBO) alternatives. The primary advantages of these alternatives were felt to be aesthetic, reduction in construction disruption, its longer service over time, less of an inclination to encourage strip development, safety, snow removal, socioeconomic advantages of retaining a "sense of place," indirect effects of loss of farmland and agricultural land. Response: The A(MEDIAN) alternative has noticeable advantages in the visual area, as described in Section 4.18. Differences in construction disruption occur in the areas where the A(MEDIAN) alternative is located to the side of the existing roadway, except in transition areas. Generally, alternatives with medians provide better traffic service for the through traveler, especially in locations of higher traffic volumes. The A(MEDIAN) alternative will be less inclined to encourage commercial strip development and thus will likely have less of an effect on conversions of agricultural property to residential or commercial development, at least in the short-term. Safety advantages (as described in Section 4.1.3) are not clear: the A(MEDIAN) alternative has a lower accident rate at non-intersection related accidents but a higher accident rate at unsignalized intersections. Although snow storage may be easier with the A(MEDIAN) alternative, other maintenance requirements may offset this. MDT maintenance personnel believe that neither alternative is inherently easier or cheaper to maintain than the other. The social costs of a loss of "sense of place" for a community are more fully described in Section 4.4.

The preferred alternative [the A(COMBO)] attempts to balance the advantages and disadvantages of each of the two basic alternatives and recommends particular locations to minimize impacts and costs of one alternative and to gain the benefits of another alternative.

6.6.5.2 Support for A(TURN-LANE) (37 Conversations)

Opinions were expressed in support of the A(TURN-LANE) alternative. The primary advantages of this alternative were felt to be its fewer right-of-way requirements, lower construction cost, effect to access, safety, maintenance and control of drifting snow. Response: As described in the DEIS, the A(TURN-LANE) alternative has fewer additional right-of-way requirements and lower construction costs. It generally does not allow for unlimited, full-turning movement access to a particular property, resulting in out-of-direction travel and U-turns for those properties not provided with a median break for their property. These impacts are documented in Section 4.1.2 and 4.4.1 of the

Draft and Final EISs. The safety analysis of the various alternatives are documented in Section 4.1.3 of the Draft and Final EIS. The A(TURN-LANE) alternative tends to result in a lower accident rate at unsignalized intersections but a higher accident rate at non-intersection related accidents. Maintenance implications of the two basic alternatives are described in Section 4.20. Discussions with MDT maintenance personnel indicate that although different types of maintenance activities are required, neither is inherently easier or cheaper to maintain than the other. Similarly, drifting of snow has not been shown to be exacerbated by the presence of medians.

The preferred alternative [the A(COMBO)] attempts to balance the advantages and disadvantages of each of the two basic alternatives and recommends particular locations to minimize impacts and costs of one alternative and to gain the benefits of another alternative.

6.6.5.3 Status of Whitefish Bypass (One Comment)

One question was asked about the status of the Whitefish bypasses. Response: As documented in Chapter 2, none of the Whitefish bypass alternatives were found to meet project purpose and need. These alternatives are being studied in the Whitefish Traffic Operations Study, specifically to be designated as a bypass truck route.

6.6.5.4 Support for Kalispell Bypass (Two Comments)

Support for Kalispell bypass B was mentioned by two people. Response: This alternative has been included as a part of the preferred alternative.

6.6.5.5 Support for Separated Bikepath (Four Comments)

Support was expressed for a separated bikepath. Response: This has been included as a part of the preferred alternative in the locations where it is feasible to include one.

6.6.5.6 Impact in the Spencer Lake Area (One Comment)

There was a question about the impact in the Spencer Lake turn-off area. Response: This has been more specifically documented in Chapters Two and Four of the Final EIS.

6.6.5.7 Safety of the Five-Lane (One Comment)

One comment was made that the EIS should make it clear that accident severity is increased with the five-lane alternative. Response: Additional safety information is contained in Section 4.1 of the FEIS; however, numerous research findings all concur that accident severity does not conclusively increase with a five-lane in all situations. The five-lane tends to have accident severity which is higher at non-intersection related accidents but lower for unsignalized intersections.

6.6.5.8 Questions About Access (Six Comments)

Several property owners called requesting specific information about access. Response: Access to individual properties has been shown in the FEIS at a conceptual level; however, individual accesses will not be finally determined until the final design and right-of-way acquisition process.

6.6.5.9 Concerns About Seventh Street Bridge (Three Comments)

Concerns were expressed about the safety and cost of the Seventh Street bridge in Whitefish. Response: Additional analysis has been done of intersections associated with the Seventh Street bridge in Whitefish. This is summarized in Section 4.1 of the Final EIS.

6.6.5.10 Concern About Parking Impact in Whitefish (One Comment)

A concern was expressed about the impact to on-street parking in Whitefish. Response: Additional information about the parking impact is provided in Section 4.1 of the Final EIS.

6.6.5.11 Noise Barriers (One Comment)

A request was made to consider the installation of noise barriers in the segment between MT 40 and Whitefish. Response: Noise barriers were considered for properties along US 93, as described in Section 4.9.2. Noise barriers are not considered reasonable because of the density of direct access along US 93, which means that there would need to be constant breaks in a noise wall. Its effectiveness would be severely compromised.

6.6.6 Written Public Comments

Written comments received from members of the general public or public groups were categorized into similar comments. Written public comments are included in Volume II, Chapter Seven. These are:

6.6.6.1 Support for A(MEDIAN) (107 Letters)

Opinions were expressed in support of the A(MEDIAN) or A(COMBO) alternatives. Response: See response in Section 6.6.1.1.

6.6.6.2 Support for A(TURN-LANE) (26 letters)*

Opinions were expressed in support of the A(TURN-LANE) alternative. Response: See response in Section 6.6.1.2.

Three of these letters were signed by multiple parties. A total of 92 signatures were received.

6.6.6.3 Support for Alternative C-2 or C-3 in Whitefish (Five Letters)

Support expressed for Alternative C-3 in Whitefish was primarily because of the better circulation the Seventh Street bridge provides. Response: This alternative is the preferred alternative.

6.6.6.4 Support for A(COMBO) (Three Letters)

Several letters were written with specific recommendations about a combination alternative that utilized both a median and a center turn lane. Response: This alternative is the preferred alternative.

6.6.6.5 Support for Separated Bikepath (15 Letters)

Approximately 15 letters or comment sheets were received which expressed support for a separated bikepath facility. Response: This facility has been included in all feasible locations.

6.6.6.6 Opposition to a Baker Avenue Couplet (One Letter and a Petition with 135 Signatures)

A petition was received which expressed opposition to the designation of Baker Avenue as part of a US 93 couplet. Concerns expressed in the petition were the impacts of trucks, noise and extra traffic into the neighborhood. Concerns were also expressed about impacts of the Seventh Street bridge. Response: See response in Section 6.6.1.17.

6.6.6.7 Support for Kalispell Bypass (Two Letters)

Two letters were written specifically to express support for a bypass of the Kalispell area. Response: This has been included as a part of the preferred alternative.

6.6.6.8 Concerns About Effects to Individual Properties (Seven Letters)

These letters are answered individually:

- **From North Valley Refuse: April 19, 1994. Recommend either a five-lane alternative in the section of highway between Happy Valley and MT 40 or more frequent access points and truck turn-arounds. Response: The segment of US 93 from Milepost 122.7 to MT 40 is recommended to be a five-lane design, which will adequately provide for access needs and will preserve the trees along North Valley Refuse. The median design in the vicinity of Happy Valley has been modified to minimize out-of-direction travel needed. Antelope Trail Road will continue to provide secondary access to residences and businesses located between US 93 and this roadway. There will be some increases in traffic, as described in**

Section 4.4.1.3, but the traffic will be primarily associated with the residences and businesses in this area.

- From Gary Vallieres: May 10, 1994. Recommend not designating Antelope Trail as a frontage road because of impacts of noise and safety to residences living along Antelope Trail. Response: The median design in the vicinity of Happy Valley has been modified to minimize out-of-direction travel needed. Antelope Trail Road will continue to provide secondary access to residences and businesses located between US 93 and this roadway. There will be some increases in traffic, as described in Section 4.4.1.3, but the traffic will be primarily associated with the residences and businesses in this area.

- From Charlene O'Neil: April 14, 1994. Recommend the latest alignment for Alternative B as it passes through the O'Neil property south of US 2. Also object to the labeling of their property as a hazardous material site. Response: The latest alignment for Alternative B has not changed on the O'Neil property, and remains as it was shown in the Draft EIS. Hazardous material sites were obtained from the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Services and the Environmental Protection Agency.

- From Robert Hurly: March 31, 1994. Questions the effects to three of his properties. Response: A response was mailed directly to Robert Hurly. None of the alternatives propose acquisition of right-of-way from these properties.

- From Terry Eaton: May 9, 1994. Recommend a slightly different alignment to avoid taking property and trees along the property at 105 Welf Lane. Response: During the final design process, slightly different alignments to avoid right-of-way impacts will explored.

- From Richard and Robert Altenburg: May 8, 1994. Concerned about effect to livestock and farm equipment moving across US 93 on their property near Somers. Response: Meetings with property owners will be held again during the final design process to work out details for livestock and farm equipment crossings of US 93.

- From Jeff Fleming: July 15 and July 28, 1994: Concerned about effect of the frontage roads. Response: Continued coordination with Mr. Fleming will occur during the design process.

6.6.6.9 Effect to Kalispell Street Trees (Petition with Six Signatures)

Opposition was expressed to any alternatives which would have a negative impact on trees south of the courthouse. Response: An alternative has been recommended which minimizes right-of-way impact on the segment and will likely only affect a few trees at the northern end.

6.6.6.10 Letter from Jim Dedman, Flathead County Safety Council

- Recommend additional information on highway programming budgeting and scheduling. Response: More detailed information about this is found in the Final EIS.

- **Support Kalispell Alternative B, restrictive access control, A(MEDIAN), pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Response: These items are all a part of the preferred alternative.**

- **Opposition to frequent shifts from one alternative to another. Response: The preferred alternative, which includes a mix of median and center turn lane as well as urban and rural sections, will be designed to minimize safety problems associated with frequent transitions.**

- **Recommend obtaining support from others for maintenance of "beautification" area. Response: Both the cities of Kalispell and Whitefish have agreed to maintain the beautification areas within the city limits.**

6.6.6.11 Letter from H. Kusumoto

- **Mitigation statements need to be made as commitments. Response: The Final EIS has done this.**

- **Table 5-1 should be labeled "Park and Recreation Areas" not Section 4(f) properties. Response: This change has been made.**

- **Chapter 5 should include a summary of all meetings and correspondence, including that with the SHPO and the ACHP. Response: Chapter 5 of the Final EIS includes this information.**

- **Recipients of DEIS should not include MDT or FHWA. Response: The new list in the Final EIS does not.**

- **It is difficult to determine whether a satisfactory response was made to a comment. Response: This section of Chapter Six is intended to provide this documentation.**

- **Page 6-7: Should the Federal Transit Administration really be UMTA? Response: The name of UMTA was changed to FTA several years ago.**

- **The description for the Kalispell-Somers track spur should indicate the tracks were removed by BN. Response: This is correct south of Ball's Crossing. This information has been added to Chapter Five.**

- **If MDT is listed as a cooperating agency, why did they sign-off on the document? Response: Their agreement with the final decision (made by the lead federal agency) is needed because they will ultimately need to fund the construction. In addition, their signature is included to assure compliance with MEPA.**

- **In the section from Airport Road to Ninth Street, recommend 12' lanes. What is the standard bike lane width? Response: Our new section for this area uses 12' lanes. The clear preference for bike facilities is a separated bikepath, so this has been provided where feasible at a width of eight feet. In constrained urban areas, this width varies, depending on the existing right-of-way or other constraints.**

- Don't forget the elderly and handicapped. Response: All facilities will be designed to meet the Americans With Disabilities Act requirements.

- Pavement type is not discussed, but PCC should be considered in the Whitefish downtown area. Response: Pavement type will be determined during the final design process.

- Page 4-17: Suggest changing the C(OFF-SET) alternative to one lane each direction in the winter. Response: This alternative is not the preferred alternative, so no further analysis has been done.

- Is there enough room for SB right turns from Second to Baker for the large logging trucks: Response: Additional detailed analysis has been done of intersections and is summarized in Section 4.1 of the EIS.

6.6.6.12 Letter from Flathead Valley Community College

- Grandview to Reserve Street is incorrectly placed as rural. Response: The design for this segment is now planned as urban.

- Sidewalks are needed from Grandview north. Response: Sidewalks are planned in this area, as described in Chapter Two.

- We would like you to consider a raised median and median plantings. Response: Both the Advisory committee and the Highway Commission agreed on a five-lane alternative in this segment. Right-of-way is sufficient, however, to add a raised median in the future.

- A transportation transfer terminal building is needed. Response: This has not been included as a part of the preferred alternative. MDT's analysis of TSM and transit measures, which included input from FTA and input from a general public survey, concluded that a park-n-ride facility, which could be used by carpoolers or bus patrons, is the most cost-effective strategy for the US 93 corridor.

Chapter Seven

List of Preparers

Chapter 7.0: List of Preparers

The Federal Highway Administration is responsible for the preparation of this Final EIS. The primary consultant for this project is Carter & Burgess, Inc. Carter & Burgess used several subcontractors to provide technical expertise on various portions of this EIS. These subcontractors included:

- Greystone, Inc.: wetlands and biological analysis.
- GCM Services: historic and archaeological analysis.
- Kathy Bramer: public meeting facilitation.
- WGM group: aerial photography, public involvement
- Jim Boyer: land use and socioeconomic analysis

Table 7-1 lists representatives of the agencies and firms responsible for preparation of this Final EIS, with their project responsibility, education and experience.

Table 7-1
List of Preparers

Name, Title and Project Responsibility	Education	Experience
US Department of Transportation, FHWA		
Dale W. Paulson, Environmental Coordinator, FHWA Project Manager	BS, Civil Engineering, Professional Engineer	Twenty-six years of experience in highway design, construction and environmental coordination.
Montana Department of Transportation		
Gordon Stockstad, Acting Chief, Environmental and Hazardous Waste Bureau, MDT EIS Reviewer	BS, Industrial Arts Education	Twenty-four years of experience in traffic engineering, highway design and environmental analysis and coordination.
Thomas J. Barnard, Administrator, Highways Division	BS, Civil Engineering, Registered Professional Engineer	Twenty-seven years of experience in highway design, construction and administration.
Carter & Burgess and Subconsultants		
Gina McAfee, Project Manager, Carter & Burgess	BS, Landscape Architecture, Certified Planner	Eighteen years of experience in environmental analysis.
Jeanette Lostracco, Assistant Project Manager, Carter & Burgess	BA, Geography; Master of Business Administration; Certified Planner	Fourteen years of experience in environmental analysis.
Nanette Neelan, Traffic Analysis, Conceptual Design, Carter & Burgess	BS, Civil Engineering, Registered Professional Engineer	Thirteen years of experience in traffic, highway planning and design.
Joe Hart, Transportation Analysis, Carter & Burgess	BS, Civil Engineering; MS, Civil Engineering, Registered Professional Engineer.	Eighteen years of experience in conceptual design, traffic engineering, transportation planning and transit analysis.
Richard Hain, Conceptual Design, Carter & Burgess	BS, Civil Engineering, Registered Professional Engineer	Thirty years of experience in highway planning and design.

Dean Bradley, Roadway Design, Carter & Burgess	BS, Civil Engineering, Registered Professional Engineer	Twelve years of experience in highway planning, design and construction.
Michael Worrall, Conceptual Design, Carter & Burgess	BS, Civil Engineering, Registered Professional Engineer	Eleven years of experience in highway planning and design.
Lee Cryer, Noise and Air Quality, Carter & Burgess	BS, Economics; MA, Regional Science.	Seven years of experience in transportation planning.
Kathy Bramer, Meeting Facilitation	BS, Natural Resources	Twenty years of experience in facilitation, group dynamics, public involvement and group crisis intervention.
Jan McKee, Greystone, Wetlands	BS, Botany; MS, Plant Ecology	Eight years of experience in vegetation and wetland evaluation, and impact analysis.
Dave Cameron, Greystone, Wildlife	BS, Biology; MS, Animal Ecology	Fourteen years of experience in environmental analysis.
Mike Bonar, Greystone, Wildlife	BS, Environmental Biology	Five years of experience in wildlife impact analysis.
James Boyer, Social and Economics	BA, History; BAA, Marketing; MS, Planning and Economics	Eighteen years of experience in socioeconomic analysis in Montana.
Nick Kaufman, WGM group, public involvement assistance	BA, Economics; MS, Rural, Town and Regional	Fifteen years of experience in planning.
Lynn Fredlund, GCM, Cultural	PhD., Archaeology; MA, Anthropology; BS, Anthropology	Twenty years of experience in cultural resource inventories and assessments.
Dale Gray, GCM, Cultural	BA, History; MA, History	Four years of experience in cultural resource inventories and assessments in Montana.
Scott Richman, Environmental Analysis, Carter & Burgess	Bachelors, Environmental Design	Three years of experience in planning.
Michael Tupa, Visual Analysis, Carter & Burgess	BS, Landscape Design; MS, Landscape Architecture	Twenty one years of experience in visual analysis and landscape architecture.
Matthew Redmond, Environmental Analysis	BS, Geology; MS, Urban Regional Planning; MS, Landscape Architecture	Three years of experience in environmental analysis.
Mary Hopkins, Graphic Artist, Carter & Burgess	BS, Recreation	Fourteen years of experience in graphics and public involvement.
Misty McCoy, Word Processing, Carter & Burgess		Fourteen years of experience in word processing.
Judith Bergquist, Graphics, , Carter & Burgess	BFA, Design and Technical Theater; MA, Landscape Architecture	Three years of experience in visual analysis, landscape architecture, graphics and public involvement.
Kathy McKay, Cultural Resource Analysis	MA, American History	Five years of experience in cultural resource inventories and assessments.

Chapter Eight

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Appendix A

Aerial Photo Drawings

This appendix includes:

- Aerial photos of preferred alternative along US 93 — Exhibits 1-29
- Aerial photos of Kalispell bypass — Exhibits 1-9
- Intersection layouts — Exhibits 10-20

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

GENERAL NOTES:

Frontage roads, truck U -turn accommodations, right-of-way requirements, consolidation of access recommendations for a given segment, and intermediate driveway access to US 93 will be determined during the final design process, consistent with the US 93 Access Control Guidelines.

No truck U - turns or frontage roads are needed for 5-lane sections.

Intersection geometrics will be refined during the design process

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES:

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities along a separate 2.44m (8ft) pedestrian & bicycle lane unless noted.

CENTERLINE LOCATION:

- Somers to Rocky Cliff Rd.; east offset.
- Rocky Cliff Rd. to MP 117; centered.
- MP 117 to Schrade Road; west offset.
- Schrade Road to KM Road; east offset.
- KM Road through & west of Whitefish; centered location.

NOTE: All dimensions are in meters(feet).

LEGEND :

EXISTING WETLANDS

PARKS

POSSIBLE DISPLACEMENT OF BUSINESS / RESIDENCE

HISTORIC DISTRICT

EXISTING ROW (black)

PROPOSED EDGE OF PAVEMENT (red)

PROPOSED PAVEMENT (yellow)

PROPOSED TURN LANES (yellow)/ MEDIAN (green)

PROPOSED PAVEMENT (yellow)

PROPOSED EDGE OF PAVEMENT (red)

EXISTING ROW (black)

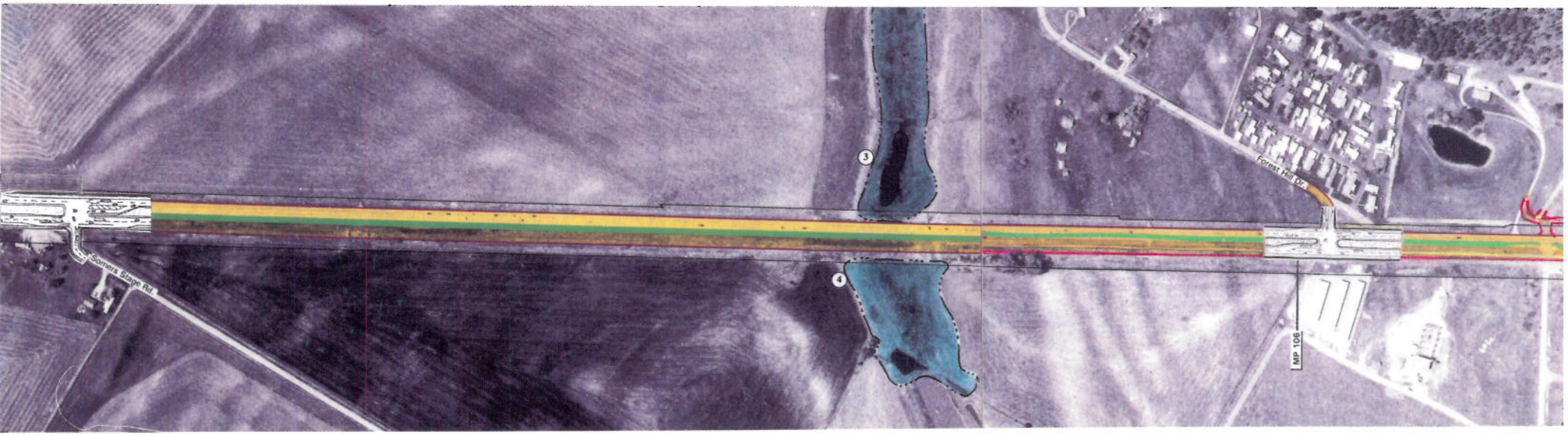
PROPOSED ROW (dotted)

- Special Design Concept: See figure following page.
- South of MT 82 to Rocky Cliff Rd.: Median divided highway.
- South of MT 82: Transition from Two to Four Lanes.
- New signal at MT 82 intersection when warranted.
- One acre park-n-ride at MT 82 location & design to be determined.
- Alignment is offset to the east of existing centerline: Somers to Rocky Cliff Rd.
- Access for agricultural properties including possible livestock underpass.
- Separated bike path & 2.4m (8ft) shoulders.
- Improvements for MT 82 intersection shown on exhibit following these aerial photos.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 1 of 29

200 100 0 200

NORTH

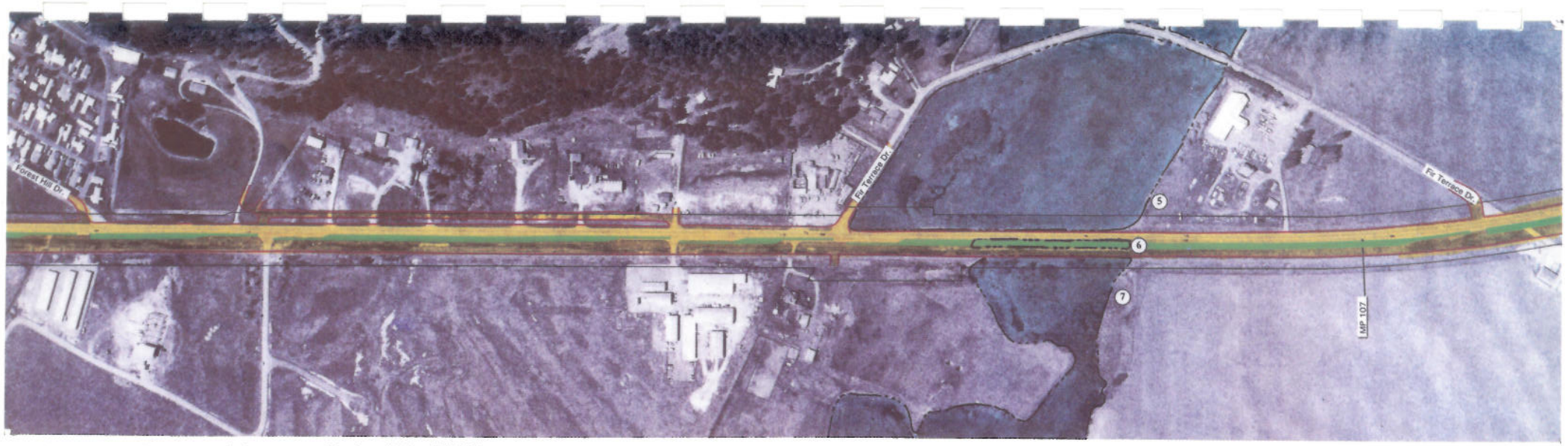


- Access for agricultural properties including possible livestock underpass.
- Separated bike path & 2.4m (8ft) shoulders.
- Alignment is offset to the east of existing centerline.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 2 of 29

200 100 0 200

NORTH

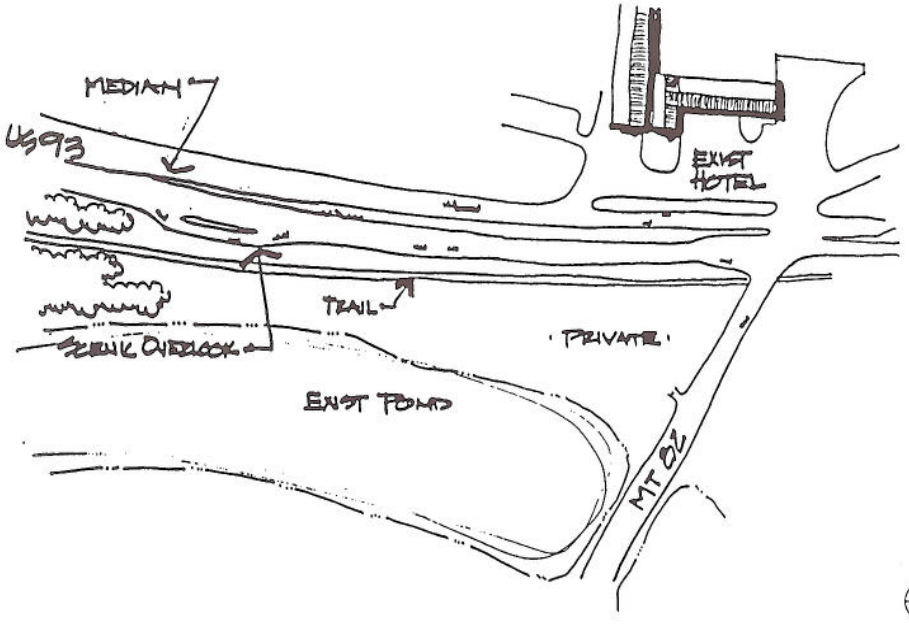


- Provide new frontage road along west side from152m (500ft) north of Forest Hill Dr. to 183m (600ft) south of Fir Terrace Rd.
- Access for agricultural properties.
- Separated bike path & 2.4m (8ft) shoulders.
- Alignment is offset to the east of existing centerline.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 3 of 29

NORTH

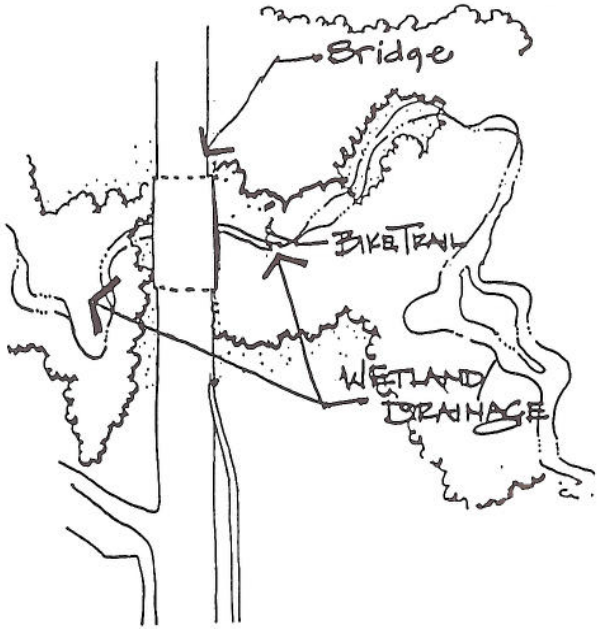
200 100 0 200



Somers to Whitefish Environmental Impact Statement

Special Design Concept: View Area

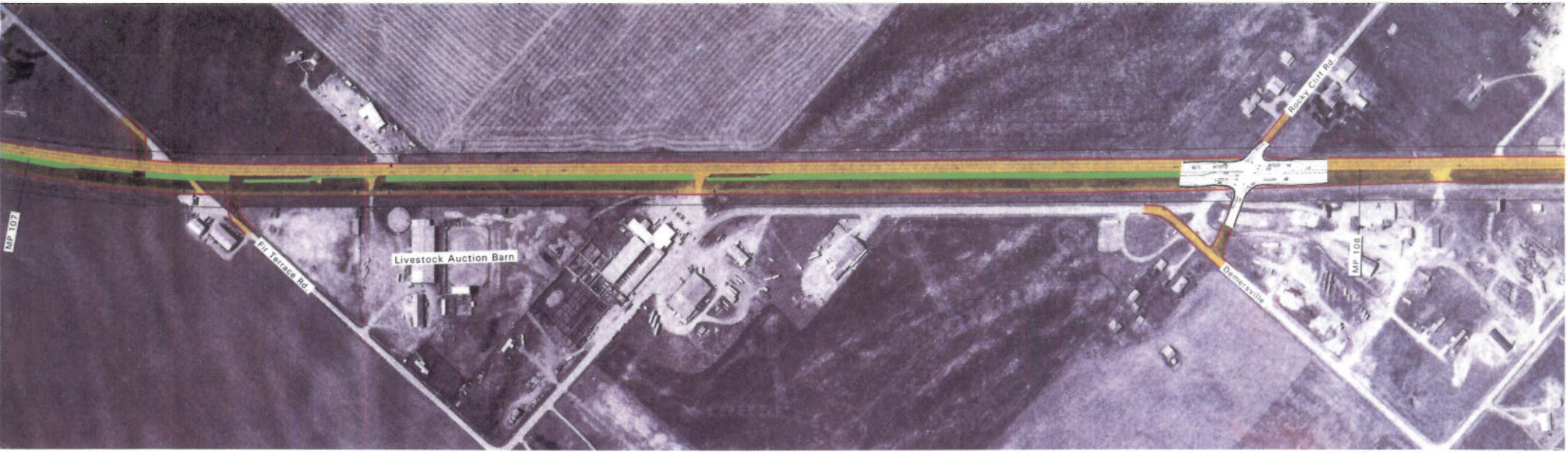
- Special Design Concept: For location see preceding page. Preferred Alternative exhibit 1 of 29



Somers to Whitefish Environmental Impact Statement

Special Design Concept: Ashley Creek Bridge

- Special Design Concept: For location see following page. Preferred Alternative exhibit 5 of 29



- Alignment is offset to the east of existing centerline.
- Transition at Rocky Cliff Rd. from 4 lane to 5 lane.
- Access for agricultural properties.
- Separated bike path & 2.4m (8ft) shoulders.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 4 of 29

NORTH

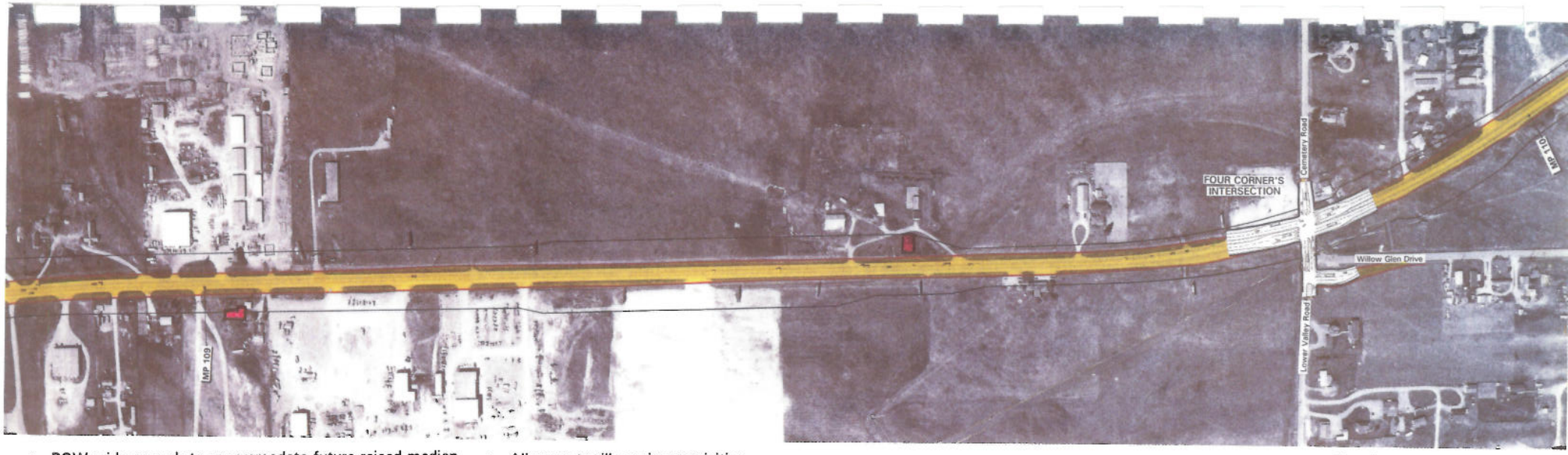
200 100 0 200

- Between Rocky Cliff Rd. and Airport Road: Five-lane.
- ROW wide enough to accommodate future raised median.
- Roadside landscaping.
- Separated bike-path where feasible.
- Alignment is centered on existing centerline from Rocky Cliff Rd. to north of Kalispell.
- Provisions for (future) bicycle and pedestrian underpass crossing at Ashley Creek.
- Ashley Creek bridge will be designed to accommodate a future bike path along shoulder.
- Improvements for Bypass/US 93 intersection shown on exhibit following these aerial photos.
- Special Design Concept: See figure preceding page.
- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of business.
- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of residence.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 5 of 29

NORTH

200 100 0 200

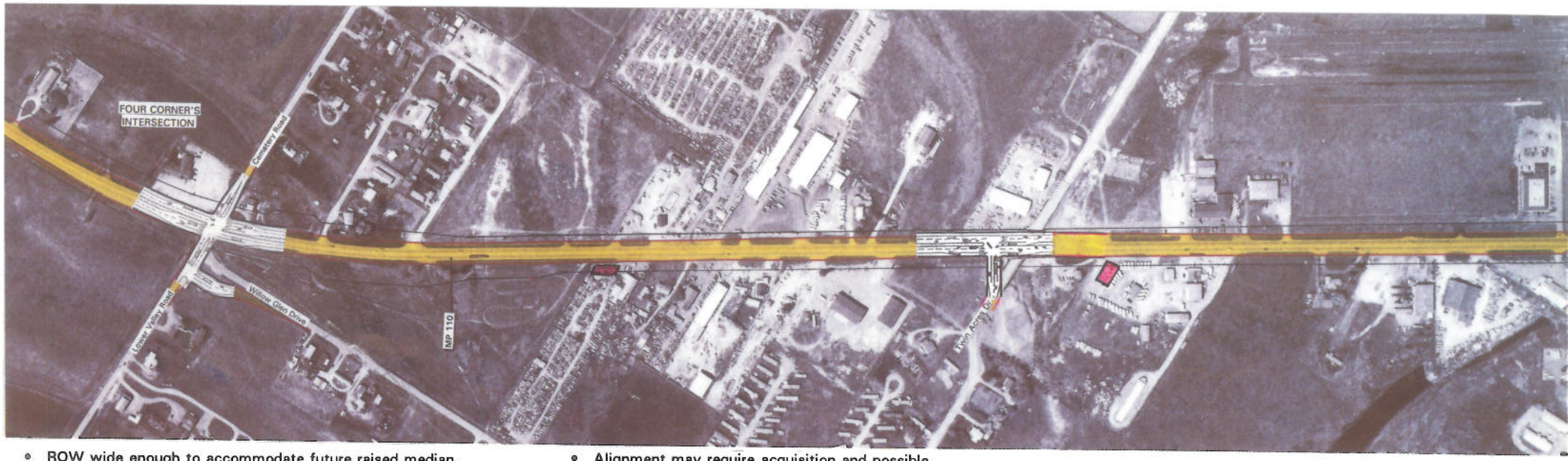


- ROW wide enough to accommodate future raised median.
- Roadside landscaping.
- Separated bike-path where feasible.
- Alignment is centered on existing centerline from Rocky Cliff Rd. MP 117.
- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of residence.
- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of residence.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 6 of 29

200 100 0 200

NORTH

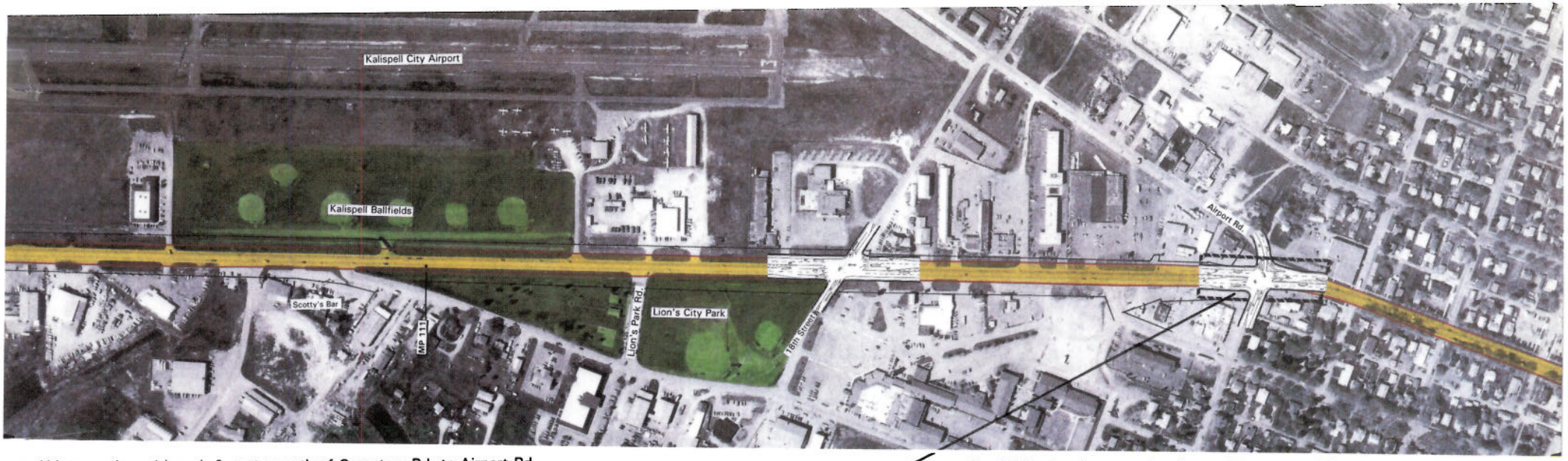


- ROW wide enough to accommodate future raised median.
- Roadside landscaping.
- Separated bike-path where feasible.
- Alignment is centered on existing centerline.
- Urban section with curb & gutter north of Cemetery Rd. to Airport Rd.
- Alignment may require acquisition and possible displacement of structure.
- Alignment may require acquisition and possible displacement of structure.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 7 of 29

200 100 0 200

NORTH



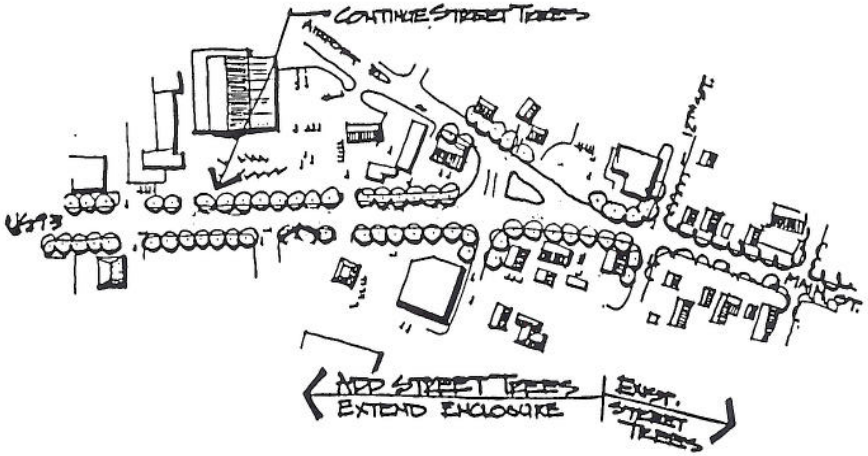
- Urban section with curb & gutter north of Cemetery Rd. to Airport Rd. Alignment is centered on existing centerline.
- Pedestrian crossing (flashing beacons) at ball fields.
- Reconstruct signal at 18th Street.
- New signal at Airport/13th Street when warranted.
- From Airport Rd. to Ninth Street, four 3.66m (12ft) through lanes are proposed.

- Special Design Concept: See figure this page.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 8 of 29

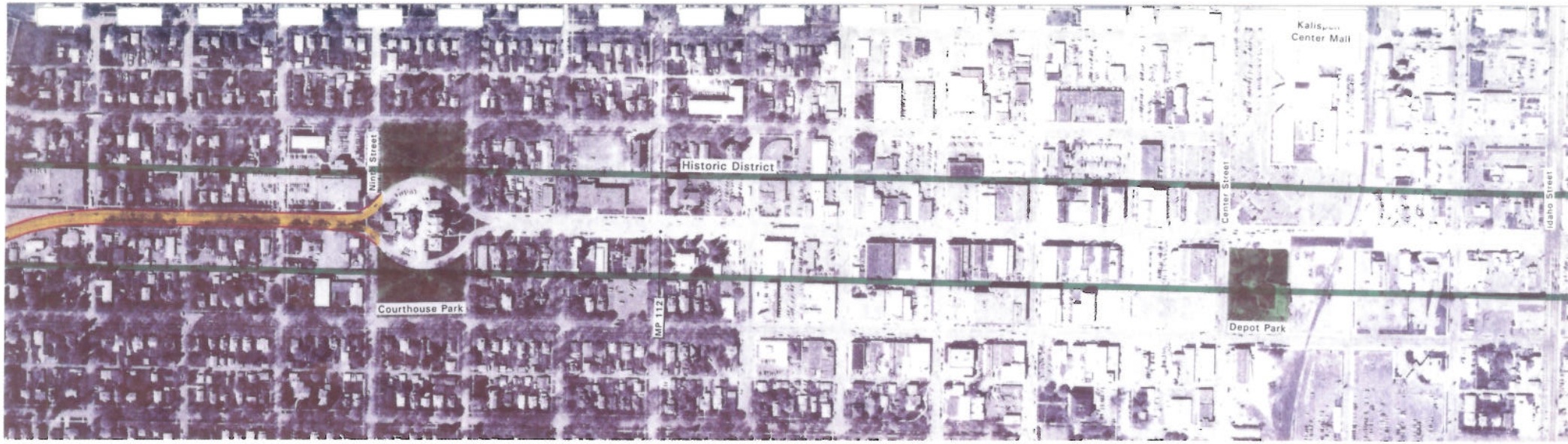
NORTH

200 100 0 200



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Special Design Concept: South Entry to Kalispell



- From Airport Rd. to Ninth Street, four 3.66m (12ft) through lanes.
- On street parking would be removed for three blocks south of Ninth Street.
- Two northbound through lanes & two southbound through lanes around courthouse.
- From Center St. to Idaho St., MDT plans improvement: not a part of this project.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 9 of 29

200 100 0 200

NORTH

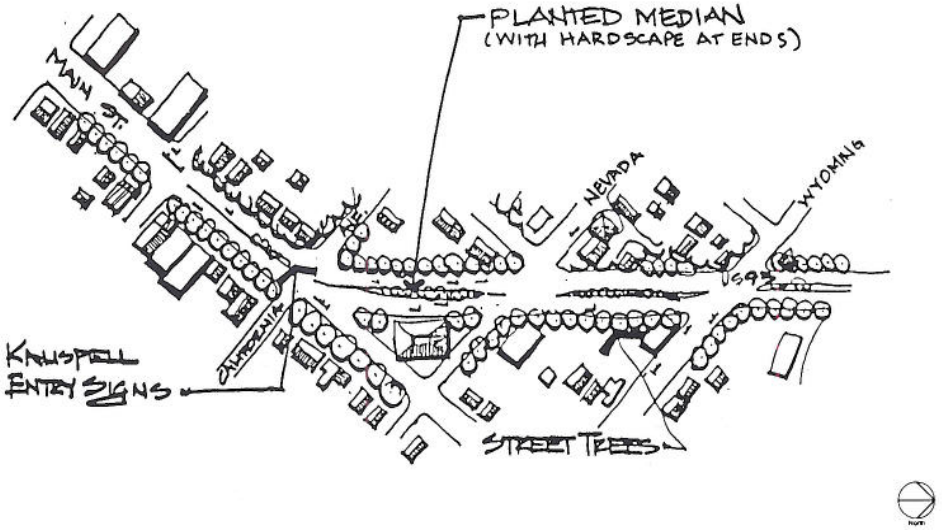
- From Idaho to Wyoming Street, reconstruct raised median to develop left-turn lanes.
- Parking will be eliminated to develop the new median.
- Pedestrian crossing north of Idaho to Wyoming at signals.

- Typical Median Reconstruction Idaho to Wyoming: See figure following page.
- Special Design Concept: see figure following page.
- No improvements recommended between Wyoming St. & Grandview.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 10 of 29

200 100 0 200

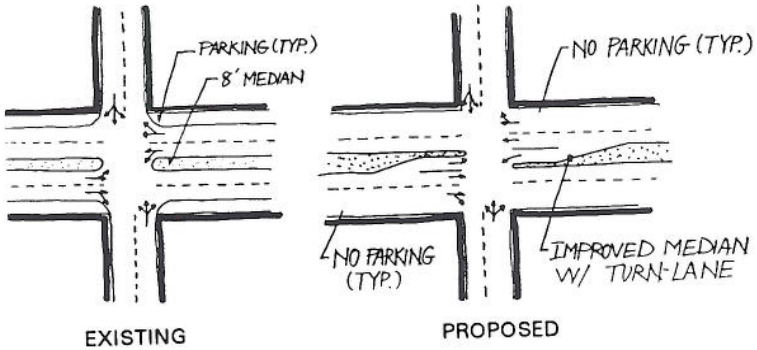
NORTH



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Special Design Concept: North Entry to Kalispell

- Special Design Concept: For location see preceding page.
  Preferred Alternative exhibit 10 of 29



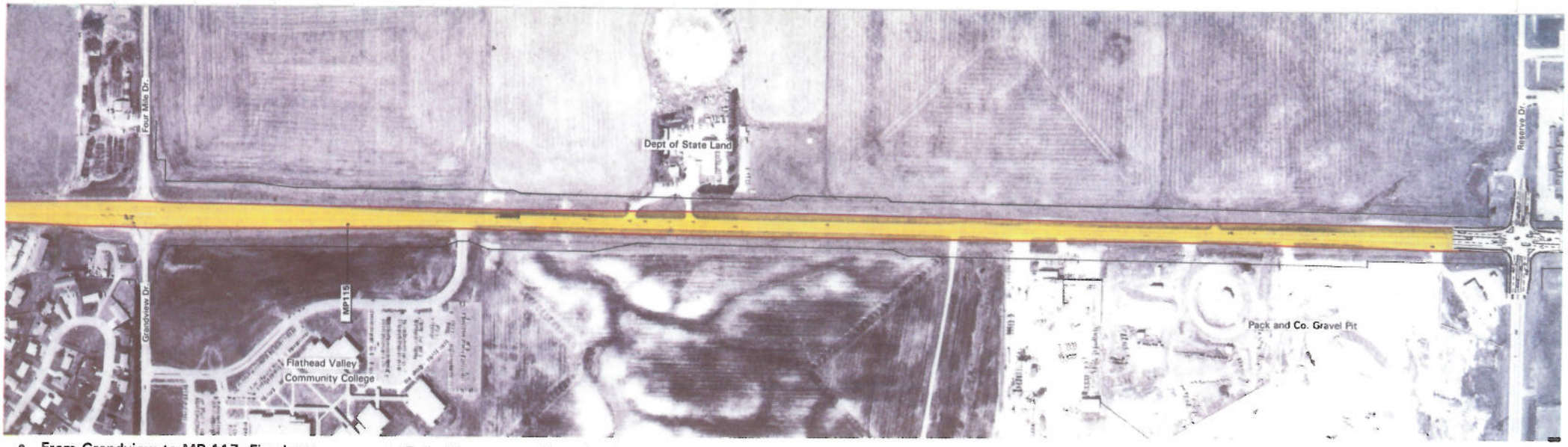
- Typical Median Reconstruction Idaho to Wyoming:
  For location see preceding page.
  Preferred Alternative exhibit 10 of 29

- No roadway improvements recommended between Wyoming St. & Grandview.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 11 of 29

NORTH

200 100 0 200



- From Grandview to MP 117: Five-lane.
- Alignment is centered on existing centerline from Grandview to MP 117.
- ROW wide enough to accommodate future raised median south of Reserve Dr.
- Roadside landscaping.
- Separated bike path where feasible.
- Pedestrian crosswalk at signal at FVCC.
- Future pedestrian underpass potential at FVCC.
- Park-n-Ride in the vicinity of FVCC.
- Improvements for Reserve Dr. intersection shown on exhibits following these aerial photos.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 12 of 29

NORTH

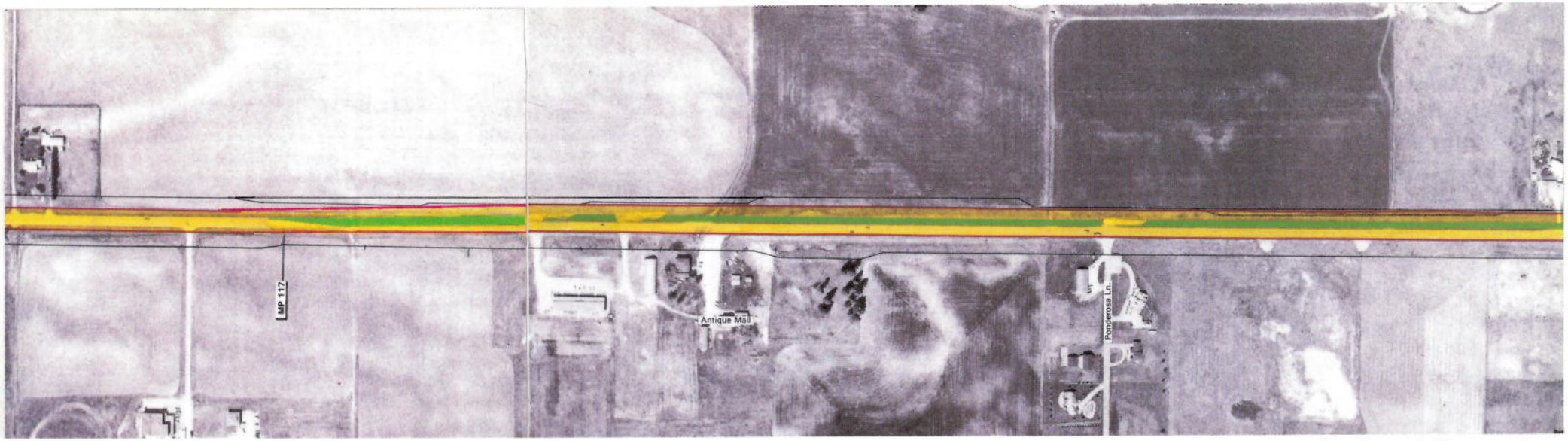
200 100 0 200

- Alignment is centered on existing centerline.
- Roadside landscaping.
- Separated bike path where feasible.
  Attached pedestrian sidewalk north of Stillwater River, separated bike-path may not be feasible.
- Provide a new bridge over the Stillwater River.
- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of residence.
- Improvements for Reserve Dr. intersection shown on exhibits following these aerial photos.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 13 of 29

NORTH

200 100 0 200



- Transition at MP 117 from 5-lane to 4-lane
- Alignment is offset to west of existing centerline: MP 117 to Schrade Rd.
- Retain existing access as much as possible.
- Accommodation of farm equipment needs.
- Separated bike path where feasible.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 14 of 29

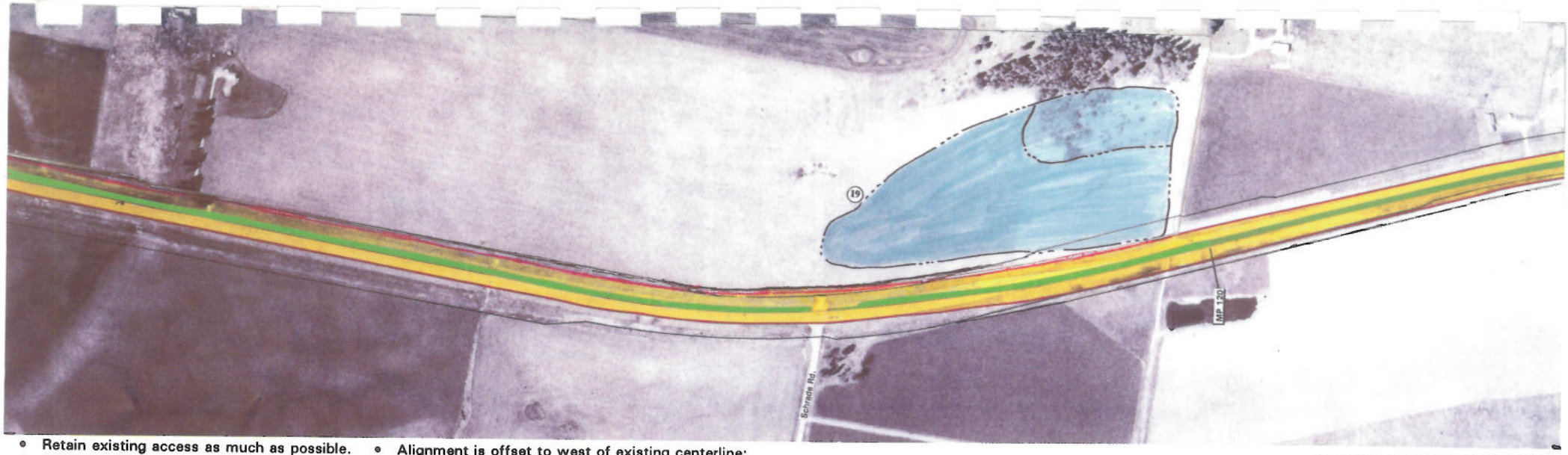
200 100 0 200

- Alignment is offset to west of existing centerline.
- Retain existing access as much as possible.
- Accommodation of farm equipment needs.
- Separated bike path where feasible.
- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of Residence

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 15 of 29

NORTH

200 100 0 200

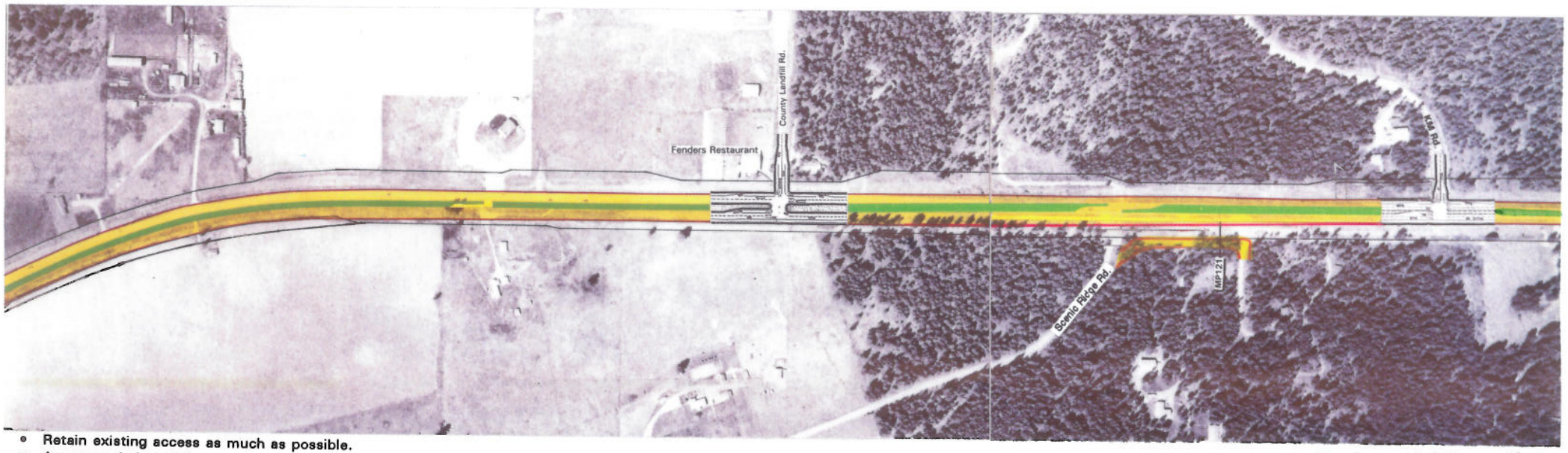


- Retain existing access as much as possible.
- Accommodation of farm equipment needs.
- Separated bike path where feasible.
- Alignment is offset to west of existing centerline: south of Schrade Rd.
- Alignment is offset to east of existing centerline: north of Schrade Rd to MP 124.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 16 of 29

NORTH

200 100 0 200

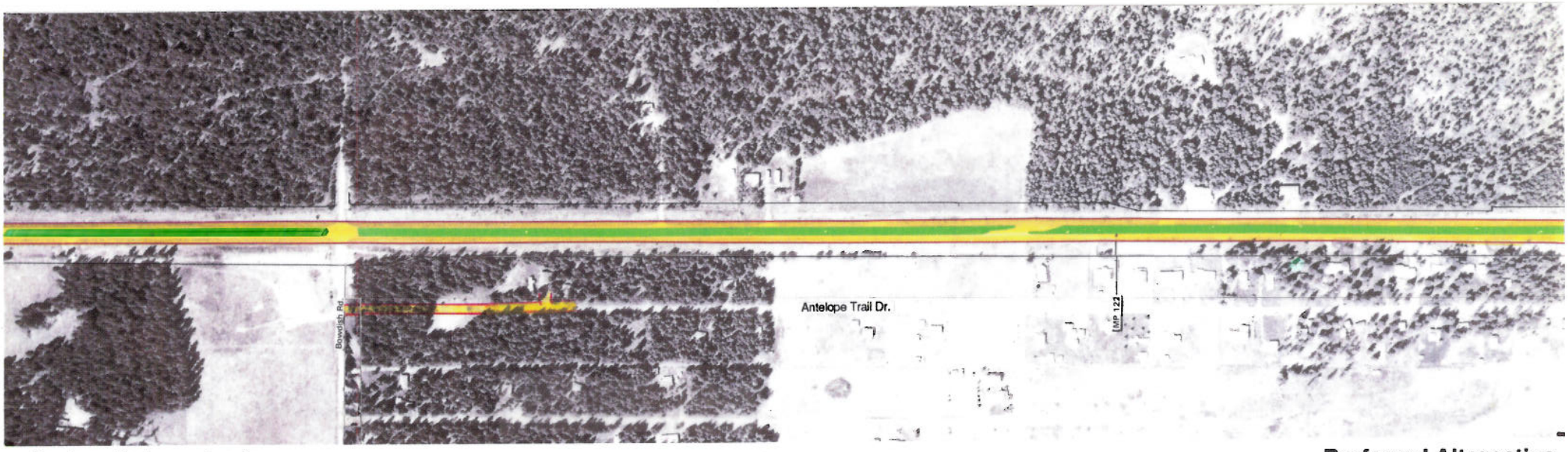


- Retain existing access as much as possible.
- Accommodation of farm equipment needs.
- Roadside landscaping.
- Separated bike path where feasible.
- Alignment is offset to the east from Schrade Road to KM Road.
- Transition at MP 121.2 from 4 lane to 5 lane.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 17 of 29

NORTH

200 100 0 200



- Four-lane with depressed median
- Extend Antelope Trail Rd. south to Bowdish Road.
- Use of Antelope Trail Rd. from Bowdish Road to Hodgson Road for local access & circulation
- Alignment is centered from KM Road to MP 123.5

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 18 of 29

NORTH

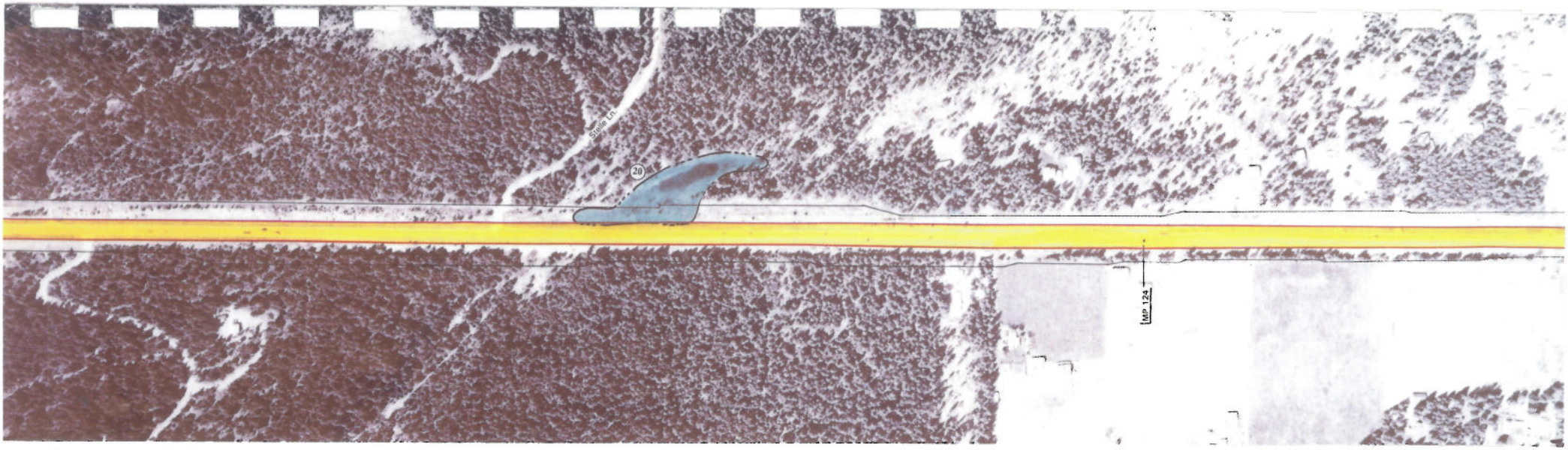
200 100 0 200

- Retain existing access as much as possible.
- Separated bike path where feasible.
- Alignment is centered from KM Road to MP 123.5
- Use of Antelope Trail Rd. from Bowdish Road to Hodgson Road for local access & circulation
- In Happy Valley area, potential pedestrian activated signal with crosswalks
- Possible location for future raised median if needed for pedestrian crossing

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 19 of 29

NORTH

200 100 0 200

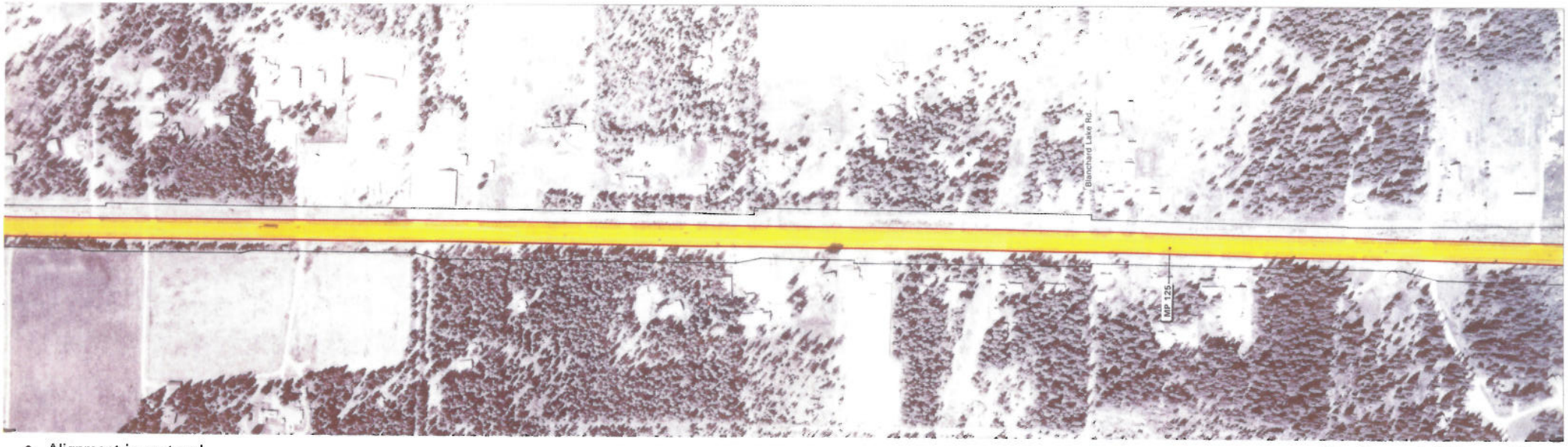


- From Milepost 122.7 to MT 40, Five-lane with some driveway consolidation. Alignment is centered from MP 124 to end of project MP 133.
- Separated bike path where feasible.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 20 of 29

200 100 0 200

NORTH



- Alignment is centered.
- Separated bike path where feasible.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 21 of 29

200 100 0 200

NORTH

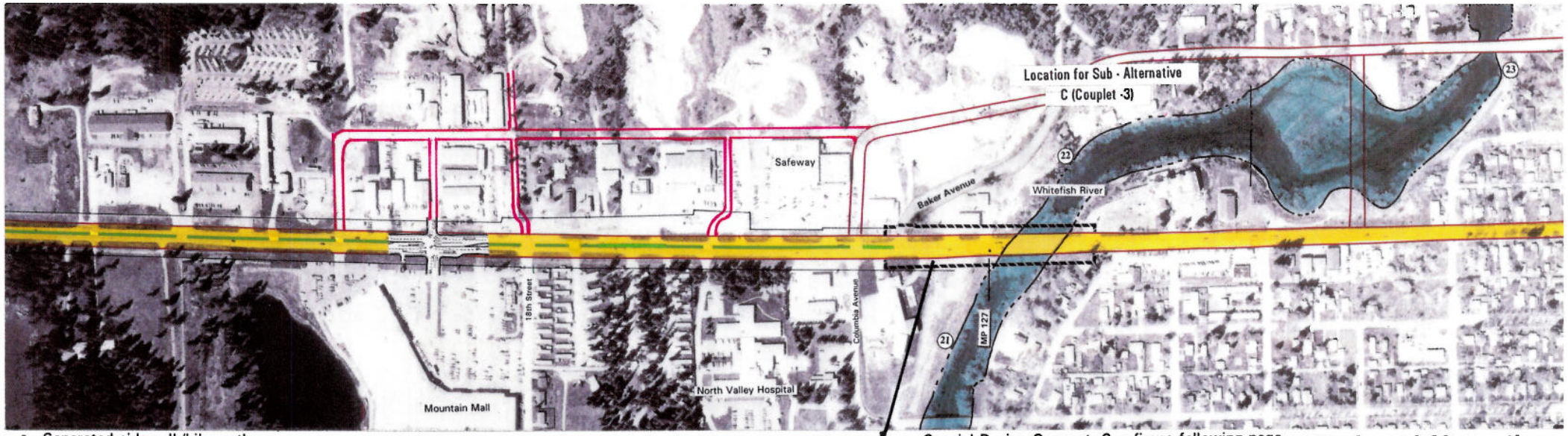
- MT 40 to Whitefish River; Median divided highway - when traffic volumes warrant
- Transition at MT 40 from 5 lane to 4 lane
- Alignment is centered
- Separated sidewalk/bike path
- Roadside landscaping

- Park-n-Ride in the vicinity of MT 40
- Median openings to accommodate existing accesses as appropriate.
- Improvements for MT 40 intersection shown on exhibit following these aerial photos.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 22 of 29

200 100 0 200

NORTH



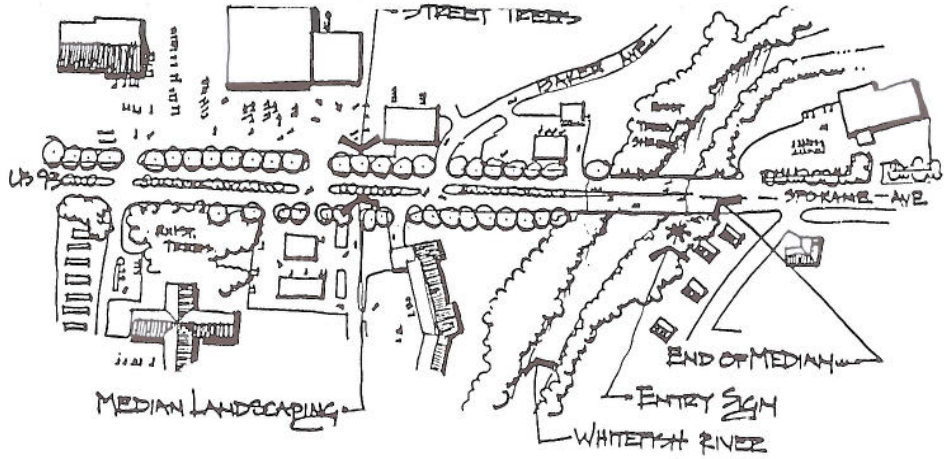
- Separated sidewalk/bike path.
- Roadside landscaping
- Provisions for (future) bicycle and pedestrian underpass at Whitefish River.
- Pedestrian activated crossing at future Mountain Mall & Columbia Ave. signals.
- Median openings to accommodate existing access as appropriate.

- Special Design Concept: See figure following page.
- Possible relocated signal at 18th St. intersection.
- New signal at Columbia intersection.
- For Whitefish area improvements between US 93 & Columbia to Second St. & Baker Ave. refer to Exh. C (Couplet-3).
- Improvements for 18th Street intersection shown on exhibit following these aerial photos.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 23 of 29

200 100 0 200

NORTH



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Special Design Concept: South Entry to Whitefish

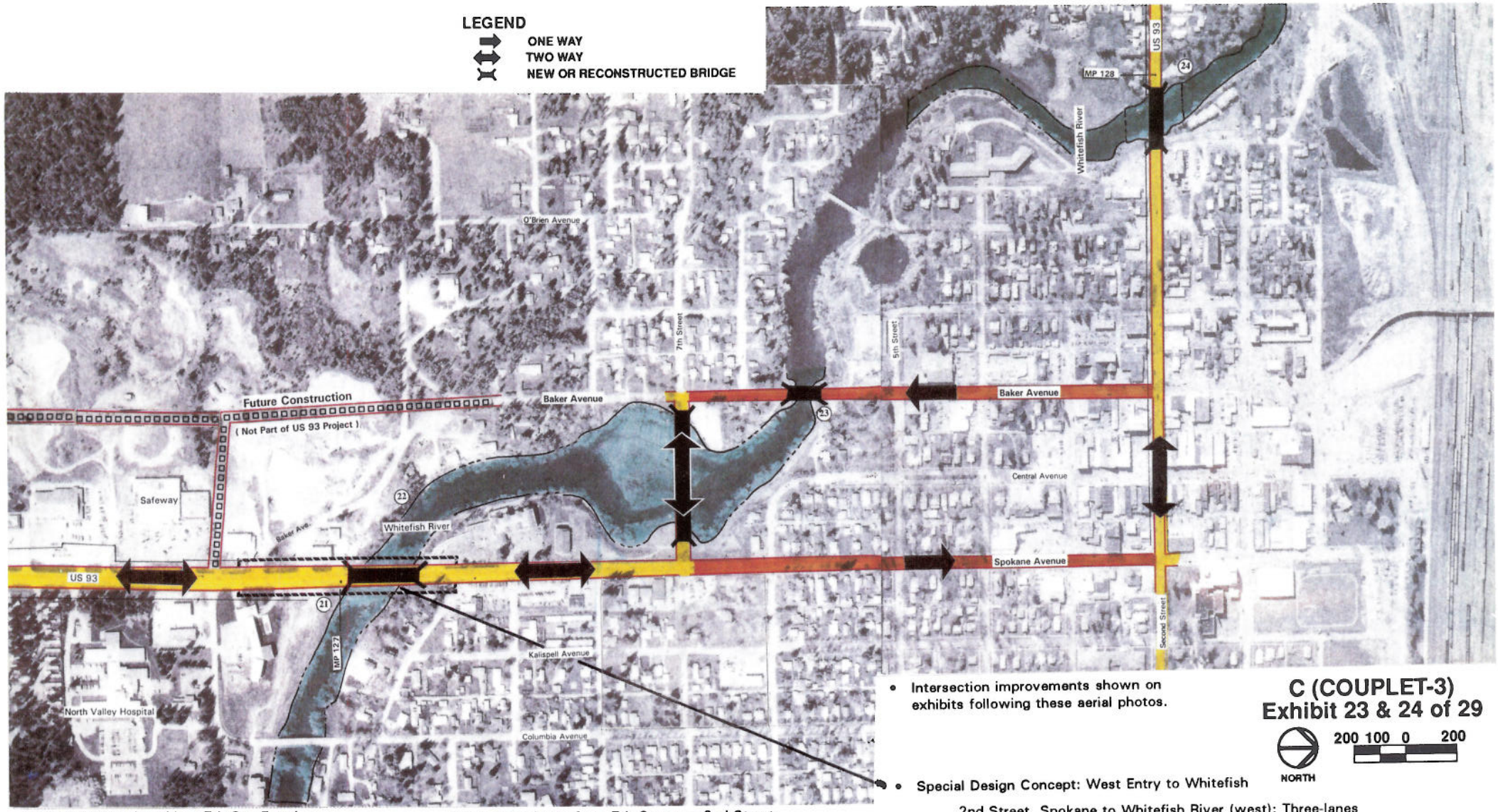
- Special Design Concept: For location see preceding page. Preferred Alternative Exhibit 23 of 29.

- Urban section curb and gutter.
- Pedestrian crossings at all intersections in downtown area.
- Karrow Avenue to approximately MP 129 typical section includes two through lanes plus an 2.44m (8ft) shoulder separated by a raised median.
- Adequate left-turn pockets
- Separated sidewalk.
- Between the Whitefish River & Karrow Ave. typical section includes 3-lanes, curb & gutter, detached sidewalk & roadside landscaping.
- For Whitefish area improvements between US 93 & Columbia to Second St. & Baker Ave. refer to Exh. C (Couplet-3).

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 24 of 29

NORTH

200 100 0 200



- Intersection improvements shown on exhibits following these aerial photos.

C (COUPLET-3)
Exhibit 23 & 24 of 29

- Special Design Concept: West Entry to Whitefish

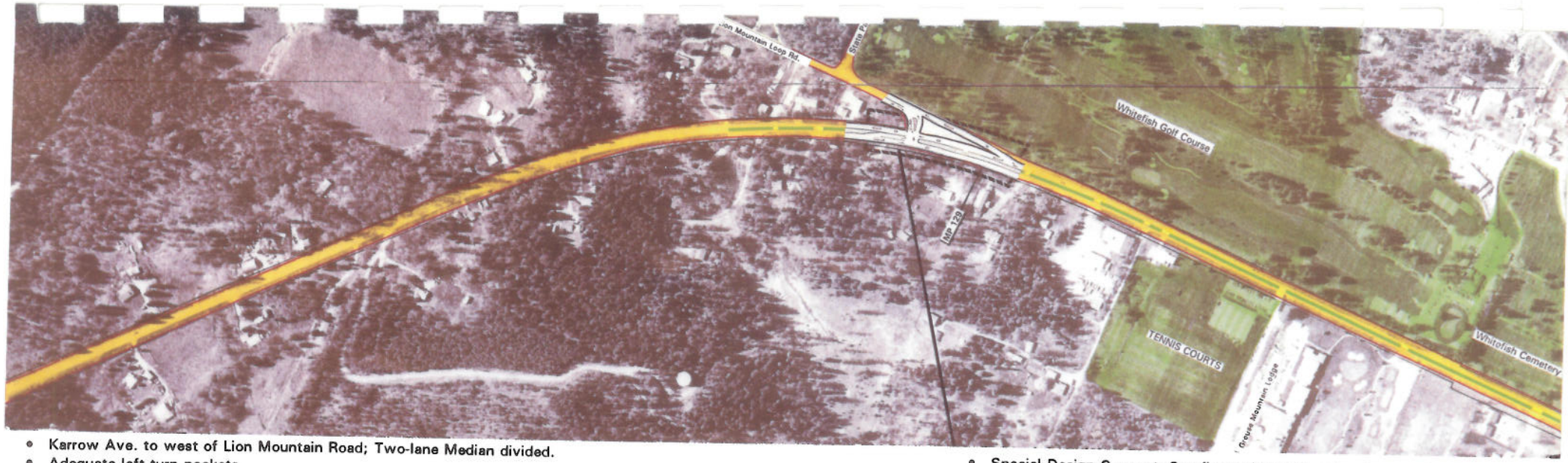
Whitefish River (south) to 7th St.; Four-lanes
- On-street parking removed.
- Attached sidewalk.
  Urban section curb and gutter.
- No new ROW required.
- Special Design Concept: South Entry to Whitefish.

7th Street Bridge, Spokane to Baker; Three-Lanes
- Two lanes eastbound (US 93 southbound)
  One lane westbound (local traffic)
- Sidewalk on one side only.
  Urban section curb and gutter.
- New signal at 7th Street and Spokane when warranted.
- New signal at 7th Street and Baker when warranted.

Baker & Spokane, from 7th Street to 2nd Street;
Alternative C(Couplet-3), Two-Lanes.
- Mitigation for Baker Street residences to control truck usage on Baker, such as signage to encourage truck diversion at Twin Bridges.
- Requires the construction of a new bridge on 7th Avenue across the Whitefish River and adjacent wetland between Baker and Spokane.
- Requires additional right-of-way at the intersection of Baker & 7th St.
- Upgrade pavement sections and vertical profile on Baker St.
  Urban section curb and gutter.

2nd Street, Spokane to Whitefish River (west); Three-lanes
- Spokane to Baker: two lanes westbound, one lane eastbound, on-street parking on south side of 2nd where appropriate.
- Baker to Whitefish River (west): one lane eastbound, one lane westbound, center turn lane, some on street parking on both sides of 2nd St.
- Additional right-of-way at the intersection of 2nd & Baker
  Urban section curb and gutter.
- Upgraded signal at 2nd Street and Spokane.
- Upgraded signal at 2nd Street and Baker.

Whitefish River (west) to Karrow Avenue: Three-lanes
- Urban section curb and gutter.
- Detached sidewalk (within existing ROW).
- Roadside landscaping where possible.
- No additional ROW required.



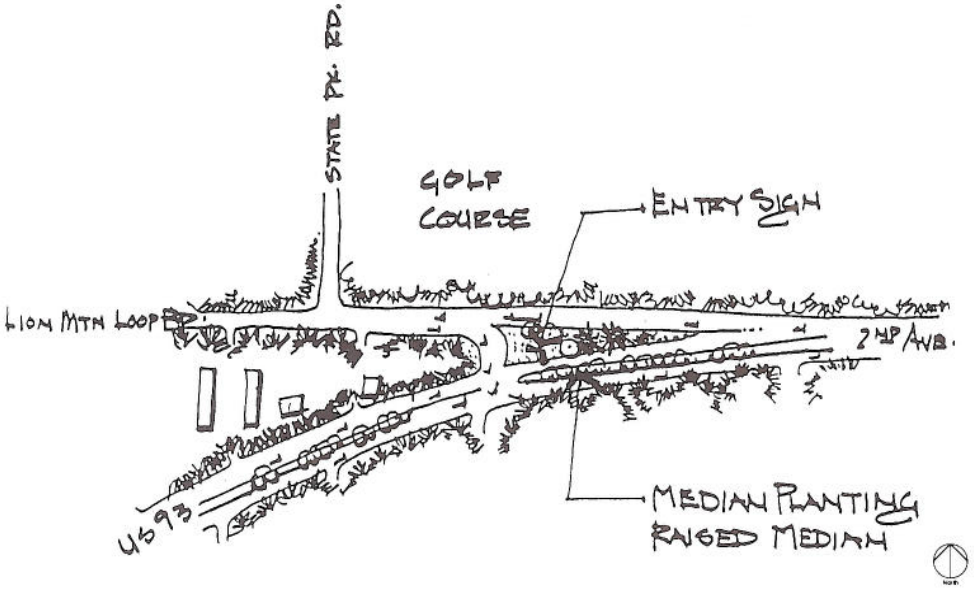
- Karrow Ave. to west of Lion Mountain Road; Two-lane Median divided.
- Adequate left-turn pockets
- Separated sidewalk east of Lion Mtn. Loop Rd.
- Truck climbing lanes are provided for westbound traffic from MP 129.0 to MP 129.9 with 2.44m (8ft) shoulders.
- Separated bike path where possible.
- Alignment is centered on existing centerline from Karrow Ave. to end of project MP 133.

- Special Design Concept: See figure this page.
- Extend existing Pedestrian crossing underpass at Whitefish Golf Course.
- Karrow Avenue to approximately MP 129 typical section includes two through lanes plus an 2.44m (8ft) shoulder separated by a raised median.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 25 of 29

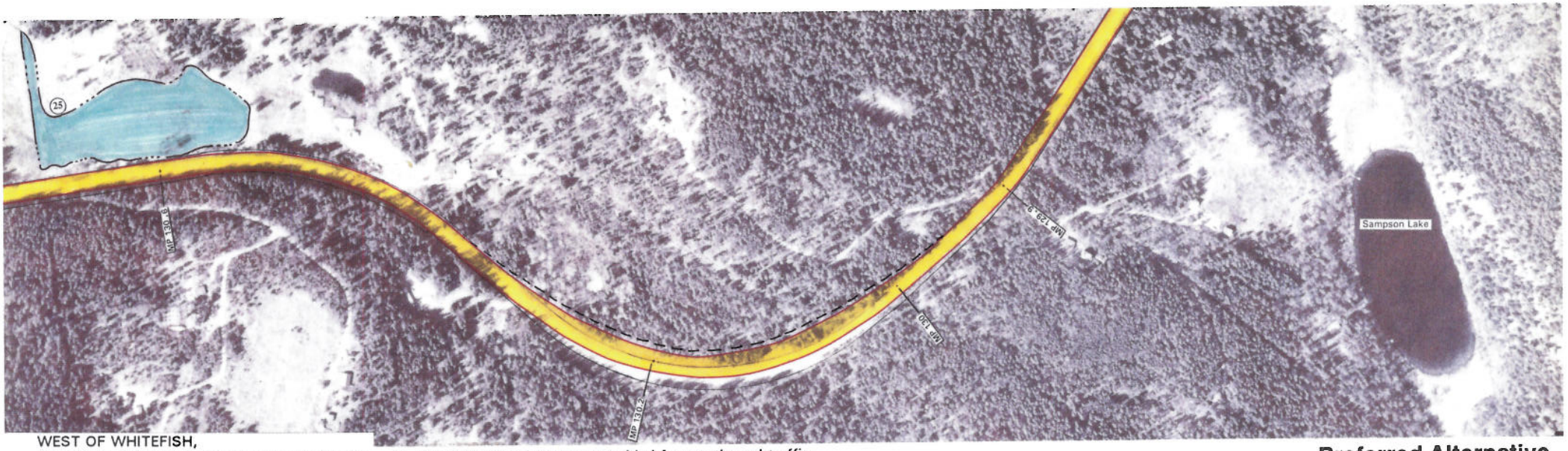
NORTH

200 100 0 200



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Special Design Concept: West Entry to Whitefish



WEST OF WHITEFISH,
from Karrow Avenue to the west project limits.

- Alignment is centered on existing centerline.
- Separated bike path where possible
- Truck climbing lanes are provided for westbound traffic from MP 129.0 to MP 129.9 with 2.44m (8ft) shoulders.
- Truck climbing lanes are provided for eastbound traffic from MP 130.6 to MP 130.2 with 2.44m (8ft) shoulders.
- The curves at MP 130.2 have been flattened to improve the design speed.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 26 of 29

NORTH

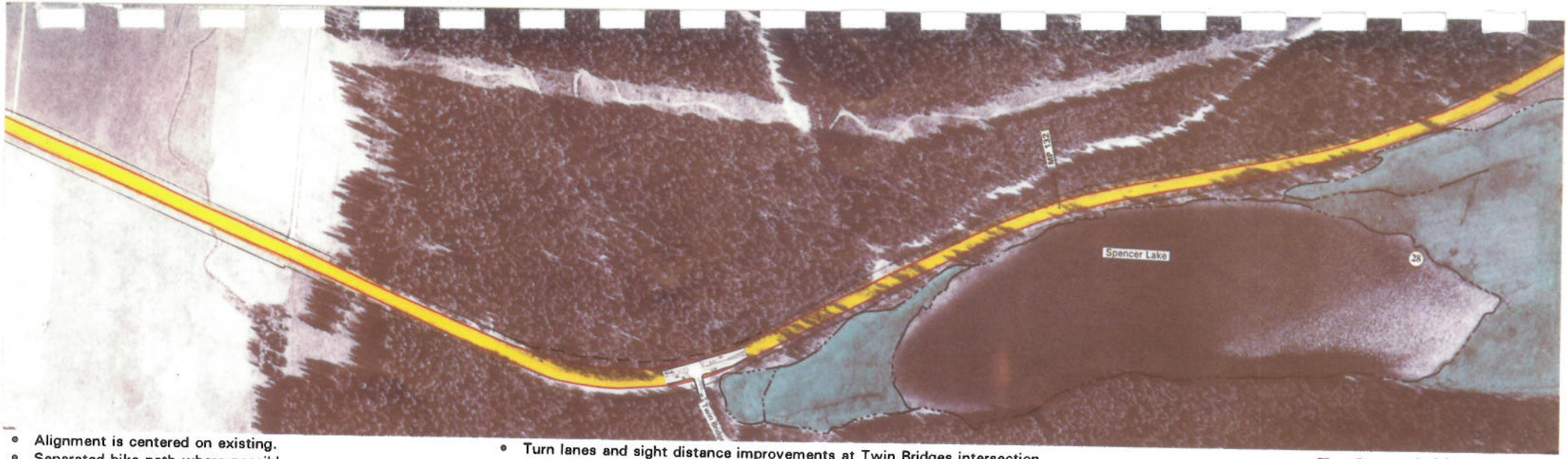
200 100 0 200

- MP 130.6 to MP 133; Two-lane with 2.44m (8ft) shoulders.
- Alignment is centered.
- Separated bike path where possible.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 27 of 29

NORTH

200 100 0 200

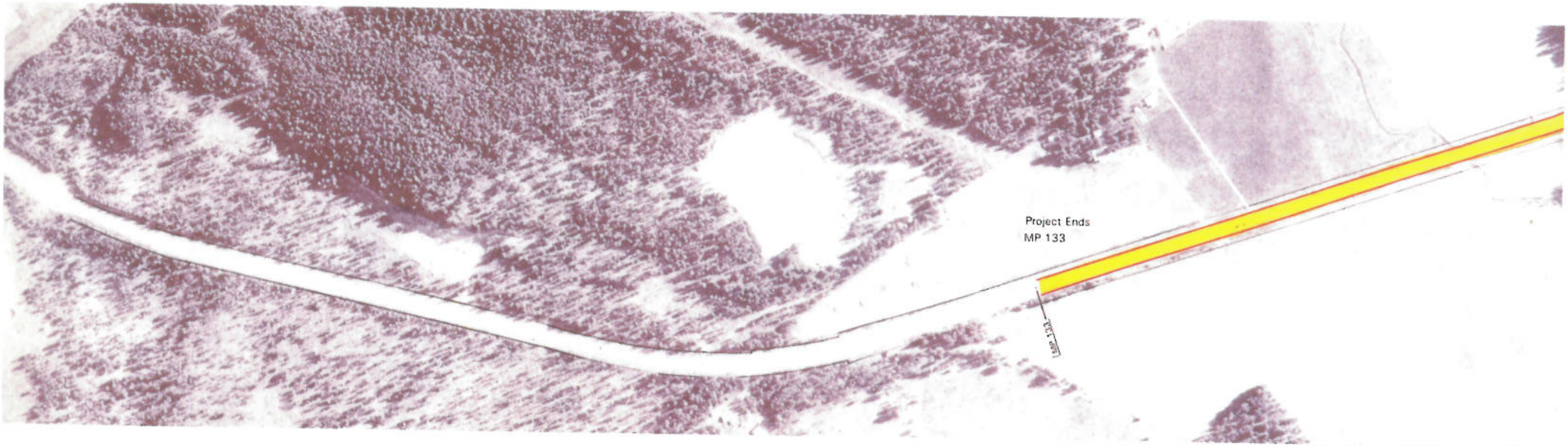


- Alignment is centered on existing.
- Separated bike path where possible.
- MP 130.6 to MP 133; Two-lane with 2.44m (8ft) shoulders.
- The curves at MP 132.2 has been flattened to improve the design speed.
- Additional Right-of-Way required.
- Turn lanes and sight distance improvements at Twin Bridges intersection.
- Just east of the Twin Bridges Turn-off vertical alignment improvements planned.
- Shoulder and clear zone variations near Spencer Lake.
- Realignment of Antler Ridge Road is likely.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 28 of 29

NORTH

200 100 0 200



- MP 130.6 to MP 133; Two-lane with 2.44m (8ft) shoulders.
- Alignment is centered on existing centerline from Karrow Ave. to end of project MP 133.

Preferred Alternative
Exhibit 29 of 29

NORTH

200 100 0 200

KALISPELL BYPASS

GENERAL NOTES:

These drawings (exhibits 1 of 9 thr 9 of 9) show right-of-way needed for possible future depressed median.

An Alternative location is shown which was considered and is not being advanced.

Route signing indicating the new roadway as "Alternative Route US 93".

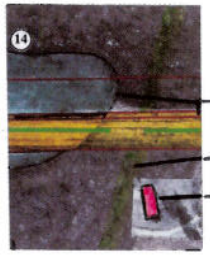
Dashed lines for the median indicates the location of a possible future depressed median and or turn-lane.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES:

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities along a separate 2.44m (8ft) pedestrian & bicycle lane unless noted.

NOTE: All dimensions are in meters(feet).

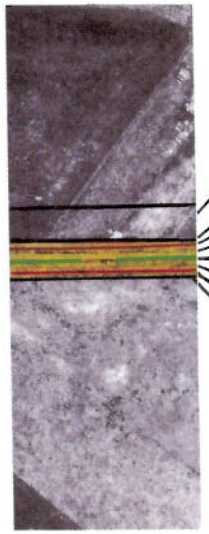
LEGEND :



EXISTING WETLANDS

PARKS

POSSIBLE DISPLACEMENT OF BUSINESS / RESIDENCE



ALTERNATIVE LOCATION

PROPOSED ROW (black)

PROPOSED EDGE OF PAVEMENT (red)

PROPOSED PAVEMENT (yellow)

POSSIBLE Future Depressed MEDIAN/ & or TURN-LANE (dashed green)

PROPOSED PAVEMENT (yellow)

PROPOSED EDGE OF PAVEMENT (red)

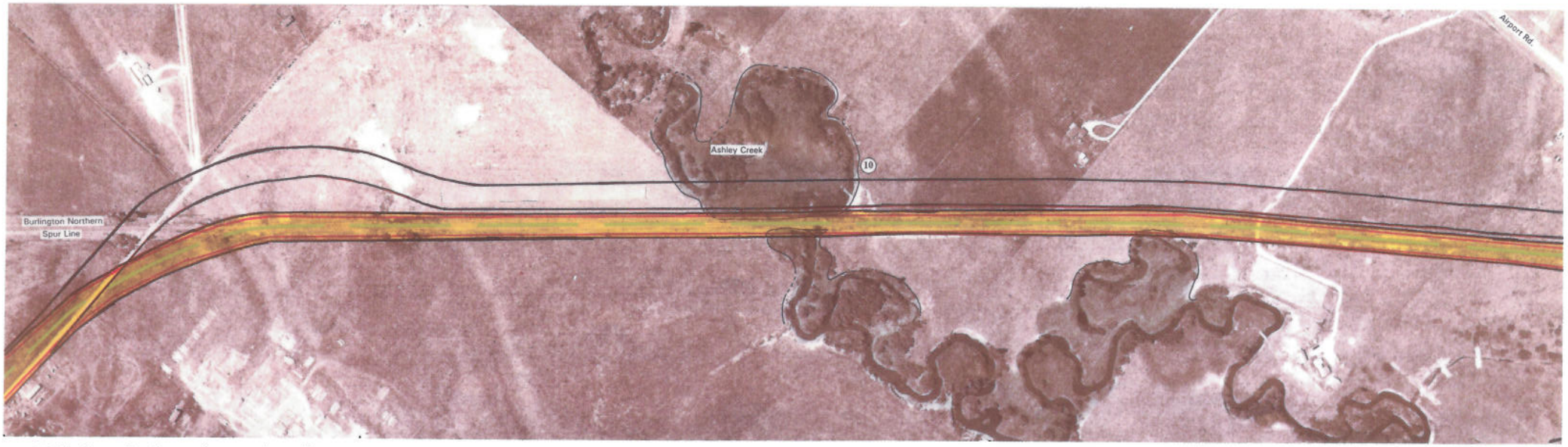
PROPOSED ROW (black)

- South Kalispell Bypass intersection located south of Snowline Rd.
- New signal at South Kalispell Bypass intersection.
- ROW allows for future depressed median.
- Construction of four lanes only (no median) south of US 2 with center turn lane at major intersections.
- Separate bike path.
- Proposed Bypass/US 93 intersection shown on exhibit following these aerial photos.

Kalispell Bypass
Exhibit 1of 9

NORTH

200 100 0 200

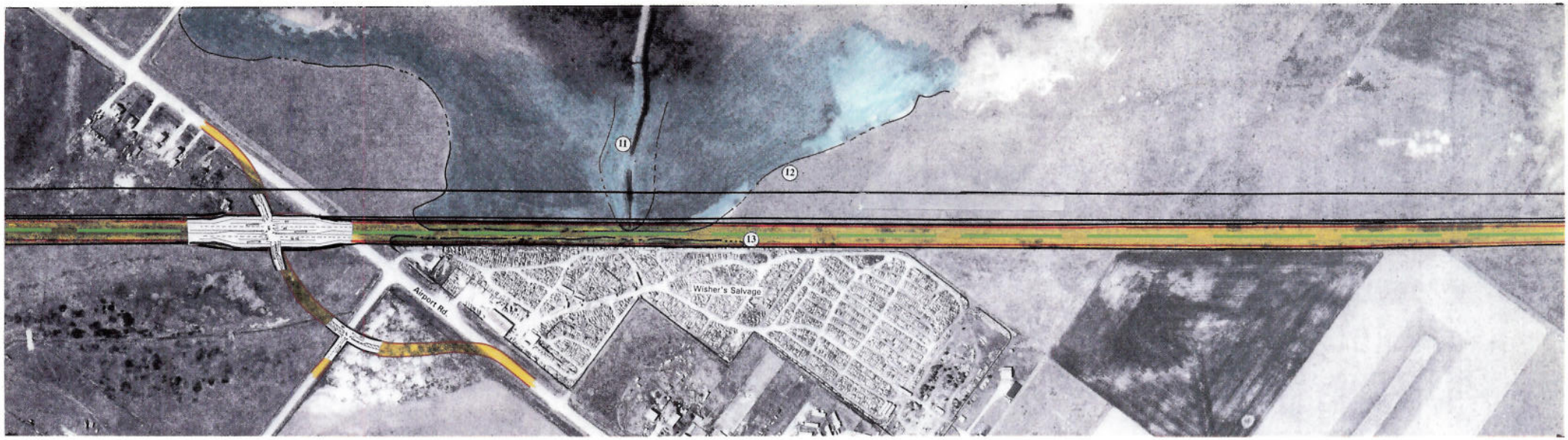


- ROW allows for future depressed median.
- Construction of four lanes only (no median) south of US 2 with center turn lane at major intersections.
- Separate bike path.

Kalispell Bypass
Exhibit 2 of 9

NORTH

200 100 0 200

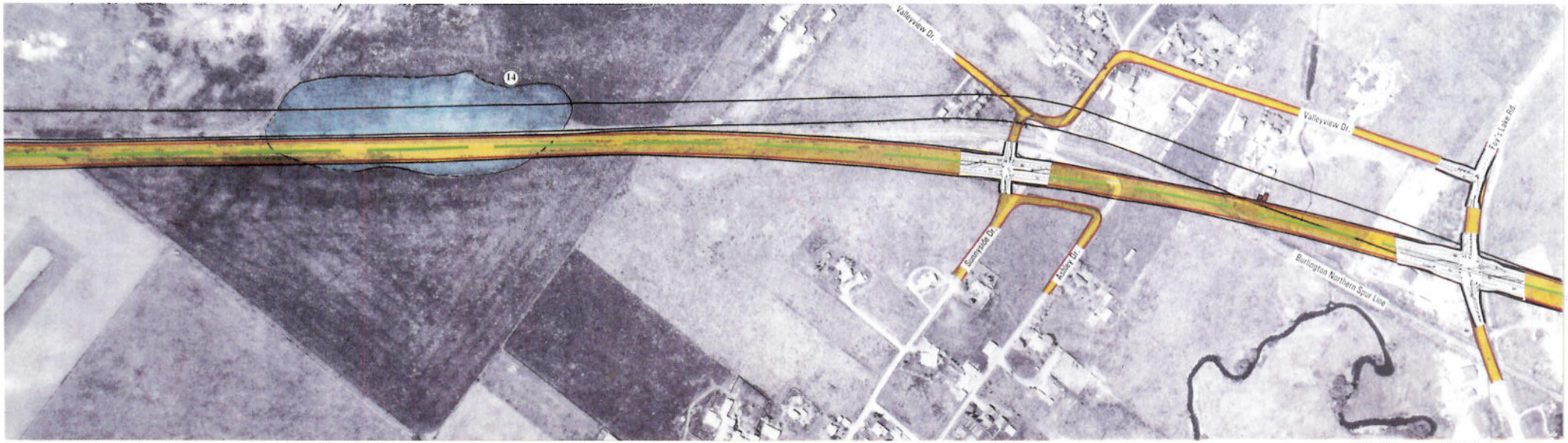


- Airport Road will have major cross-street realignment.
- ROW allows for future depressed median.
- Construction of four lanes only (no median) south of US 2 with center turn lane at major intersections.
- Separate bike path.

Kalispell Bypass
Exhibit 3 of 9

NORTH

200 100 0 200



- Sunnyside Drive will have major cross-street realignment.
- ROW allows for future depressed median.
- Construction of four lanes only (no median) south of US 2 with center turn lane at major intersections.
- Separate bike path.

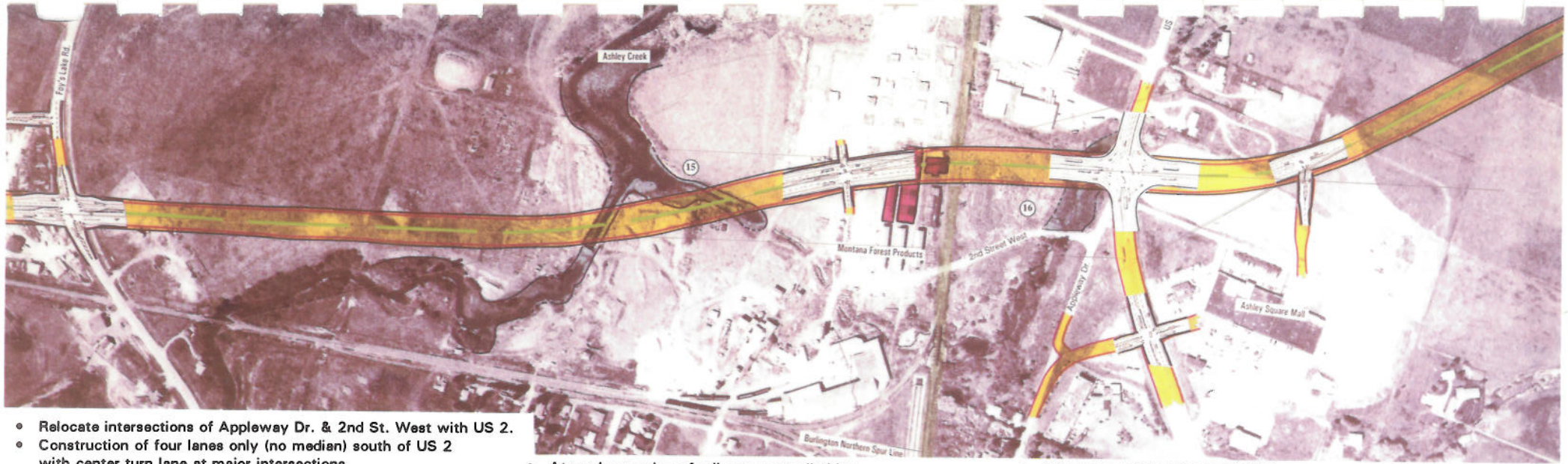
- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of business.
  Note: This is located under intersection improvement.
- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of business.
  Note this is located under intersection improvement.

- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of structures.

Kalispell Bypass
Exhibit 4 of 9

NORTH

200 100 0 200



- Relocate intersections of Appleway Dr. & 2nd St. West with US 2.
- Construction of four lanes only (no median) south of US 2 with center turn lane at major intersections.
- New signal at US 2 intersection when warranted.
- Separate bike path.
- North of US 2, either turn-lane or median, but ROW allows for future depressed median.

- At-grade crossing of rail spur controlled by flashing signal lights.
- Bikepath on railroad to be aligned along the south side of creek.
- Bikepath to be grade separated under Bypass on south side of US 2 intersection.

- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of structures.
- Improvements to US 2 intersection shown on exhibit following these aerial photos.

Kalispell Bypass
Exhibit 5 of 9

NORTH

200 100 0 200

- North of US 2, either turn-lane or median, but ROW allows for future depressed median.
- Separate bike path.

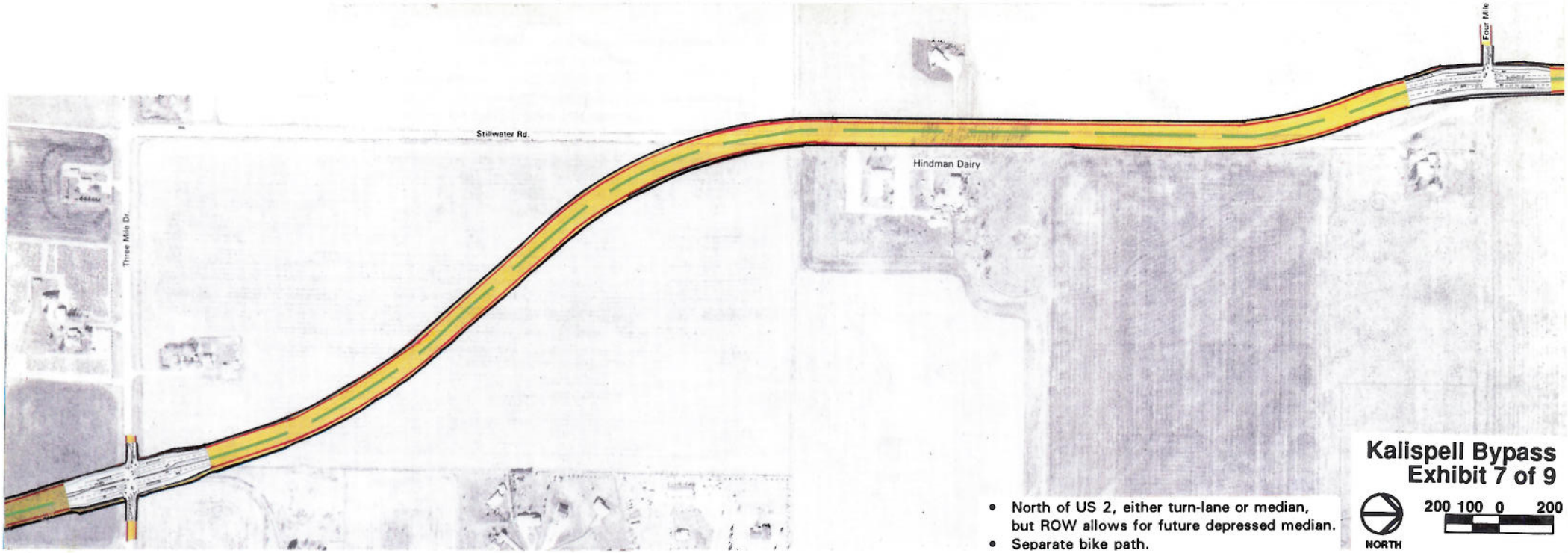
- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of residence.
  Note: This is located under intersection improvement.
- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of residence.
  Note: This is located under intersection improvement.

- Alignment will require acquisition and likely displacement of structure.

Kalispell Bypass
Exhibit 6 of 9

NORTH

200 100 0 200

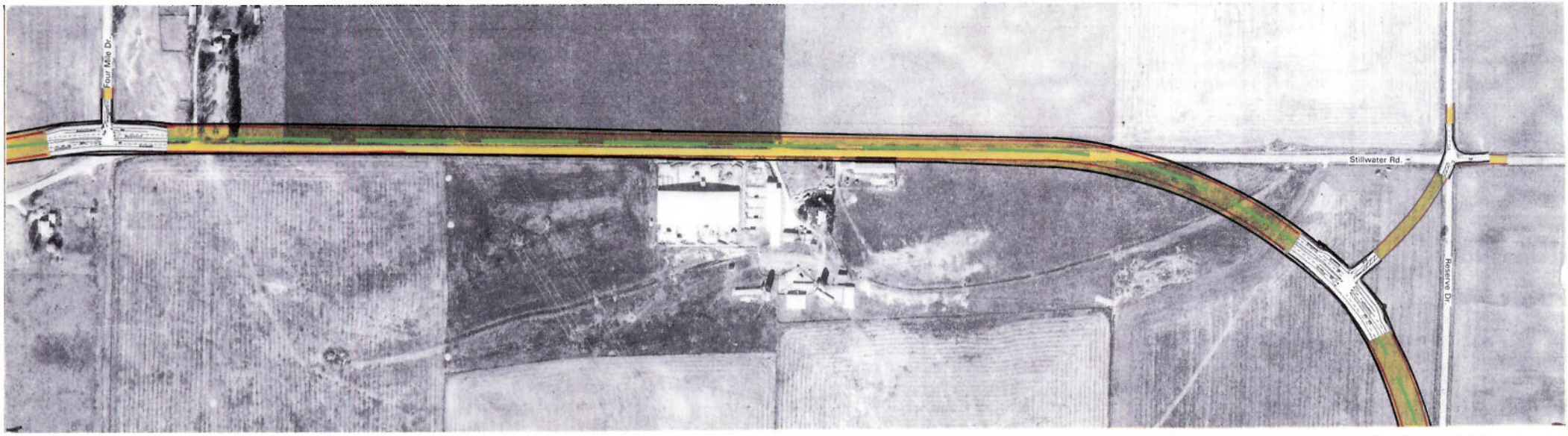


- North of US 2, either turn-lane or median, but ROW allows for future depressed median.
- Separate bike path.

Kalispell Bypass
Exhibit 7 of 9

NORTH

200 100 0 200

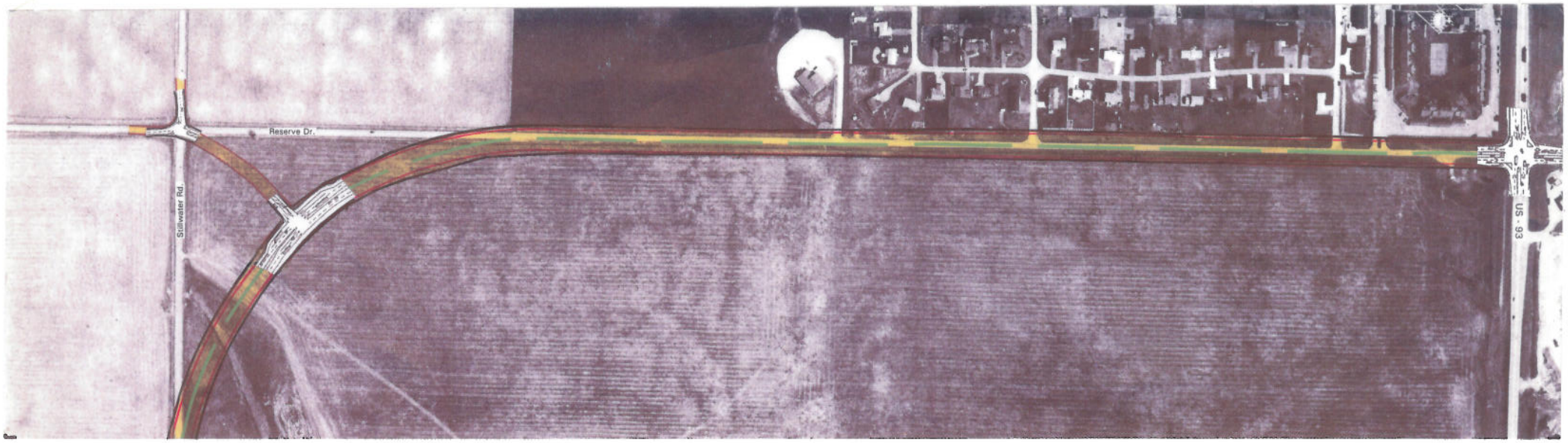


- Reserve Drive and Stillwater Road will have major cross-street realignment.
- North of US 2, either turn-lane or median, but ROW allows for future depressed median.
- Separate bike path.

Kalispell Bypass
Exhibit 8 of 9

NORTH

200 100 0 200

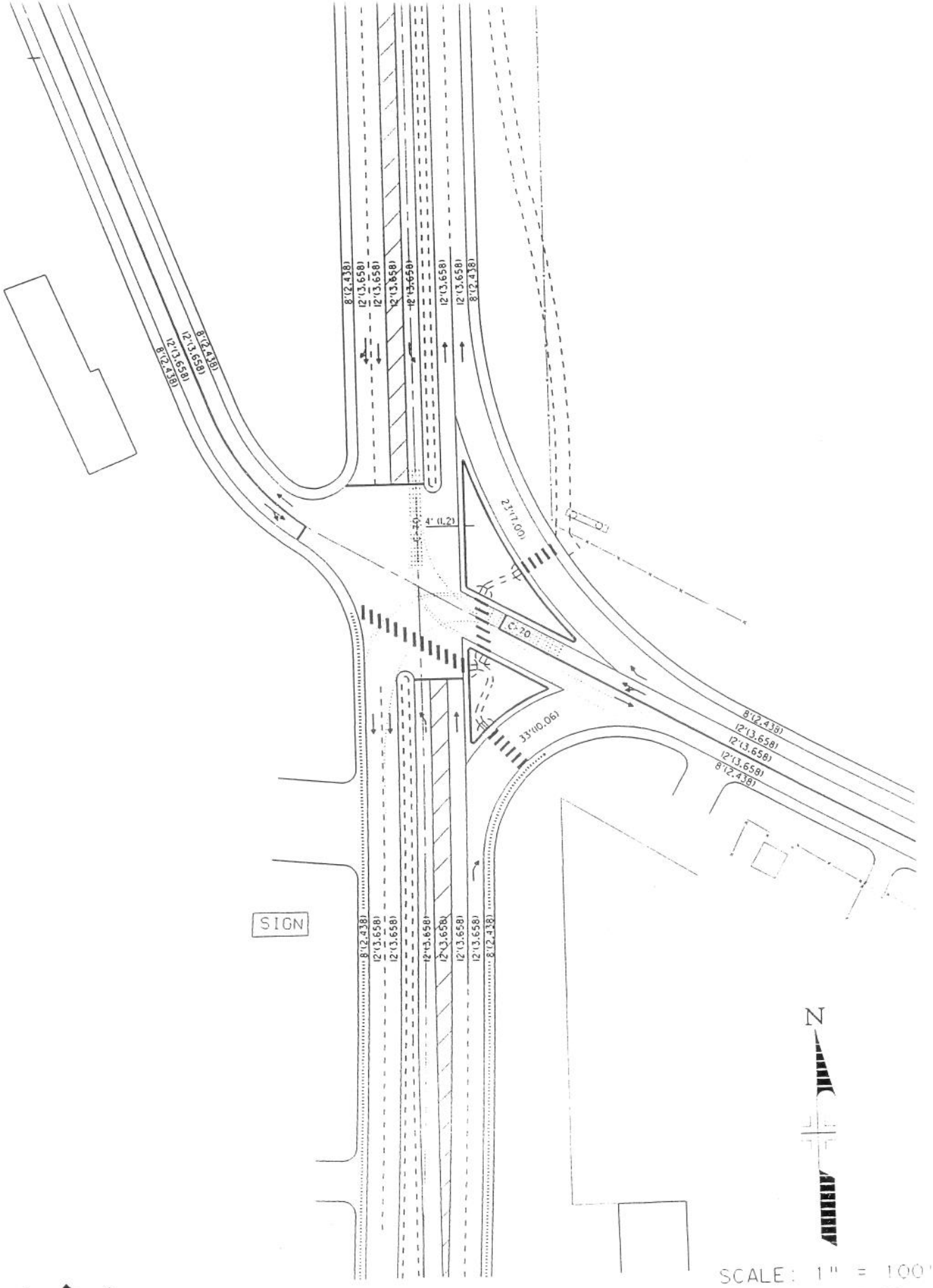


- Reserve Drive and Stillwater Road will have major cross-street realignment.
- North of US 2, either turn-lane or median, but ROW allows for future depressed median.
- Separate bike path.

Kalispell Bypass
Exhibit 9 of 9

NORTH

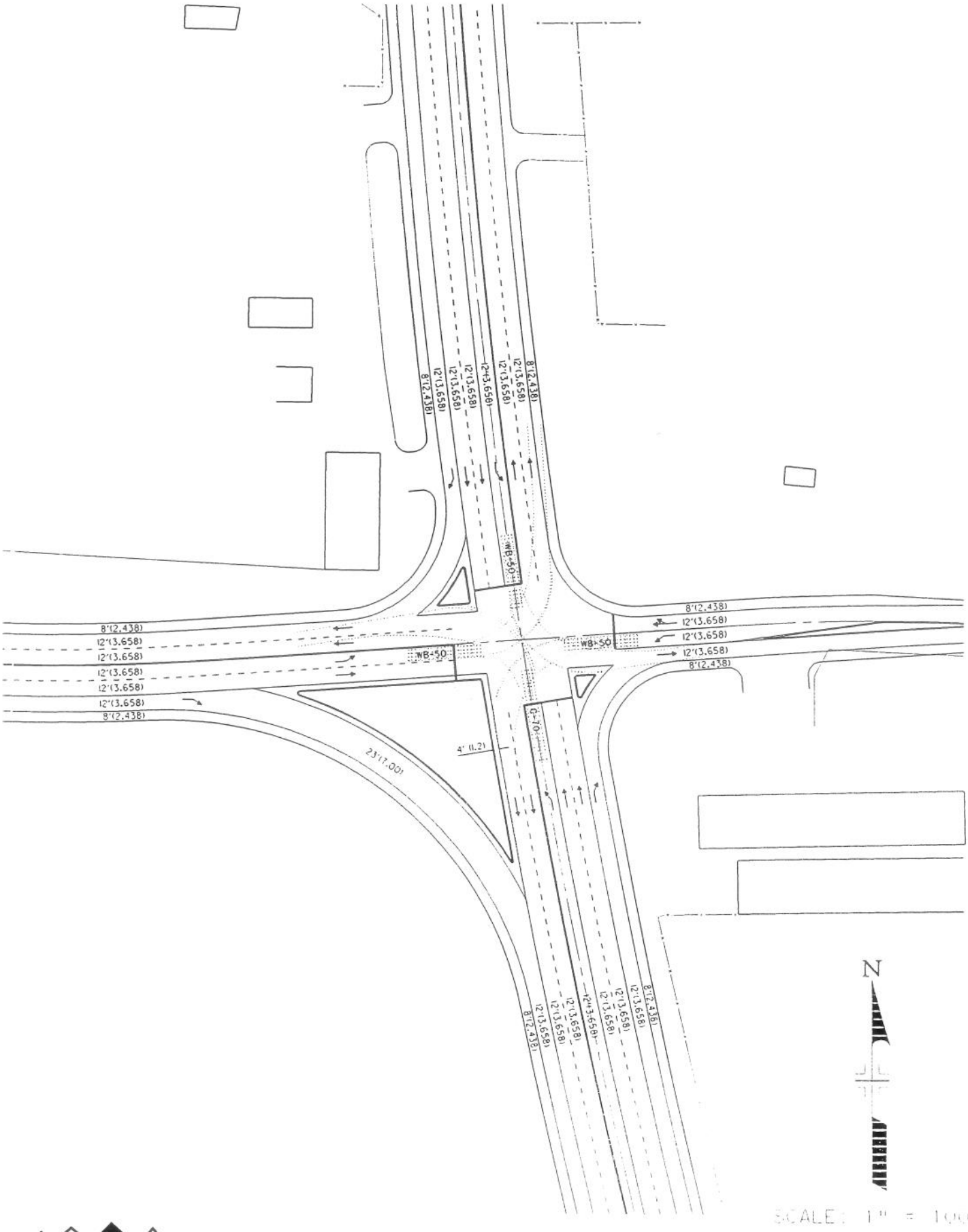
200 100 0 200



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Exhibit 10

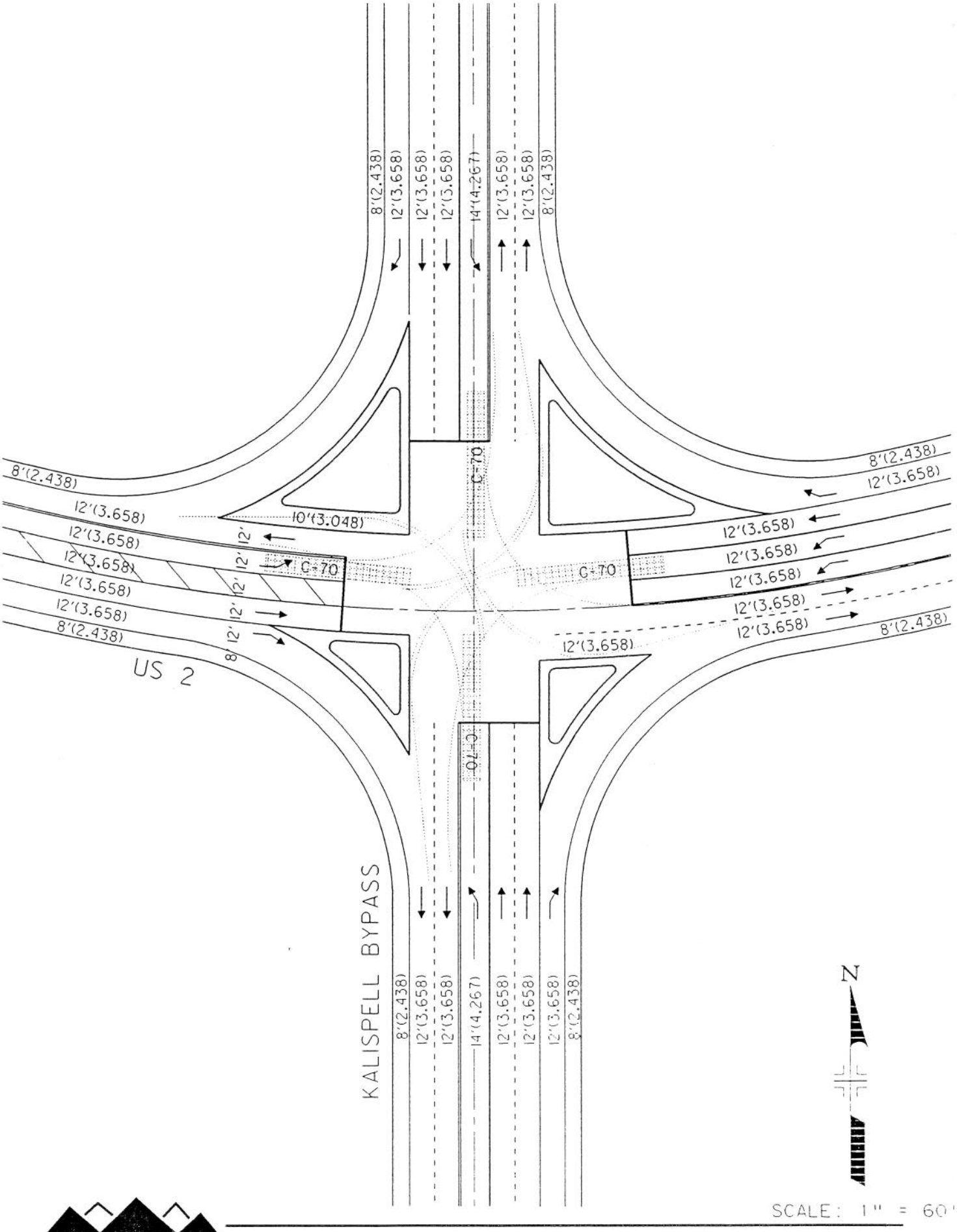
MT 82 / US 93



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Exhibit 11

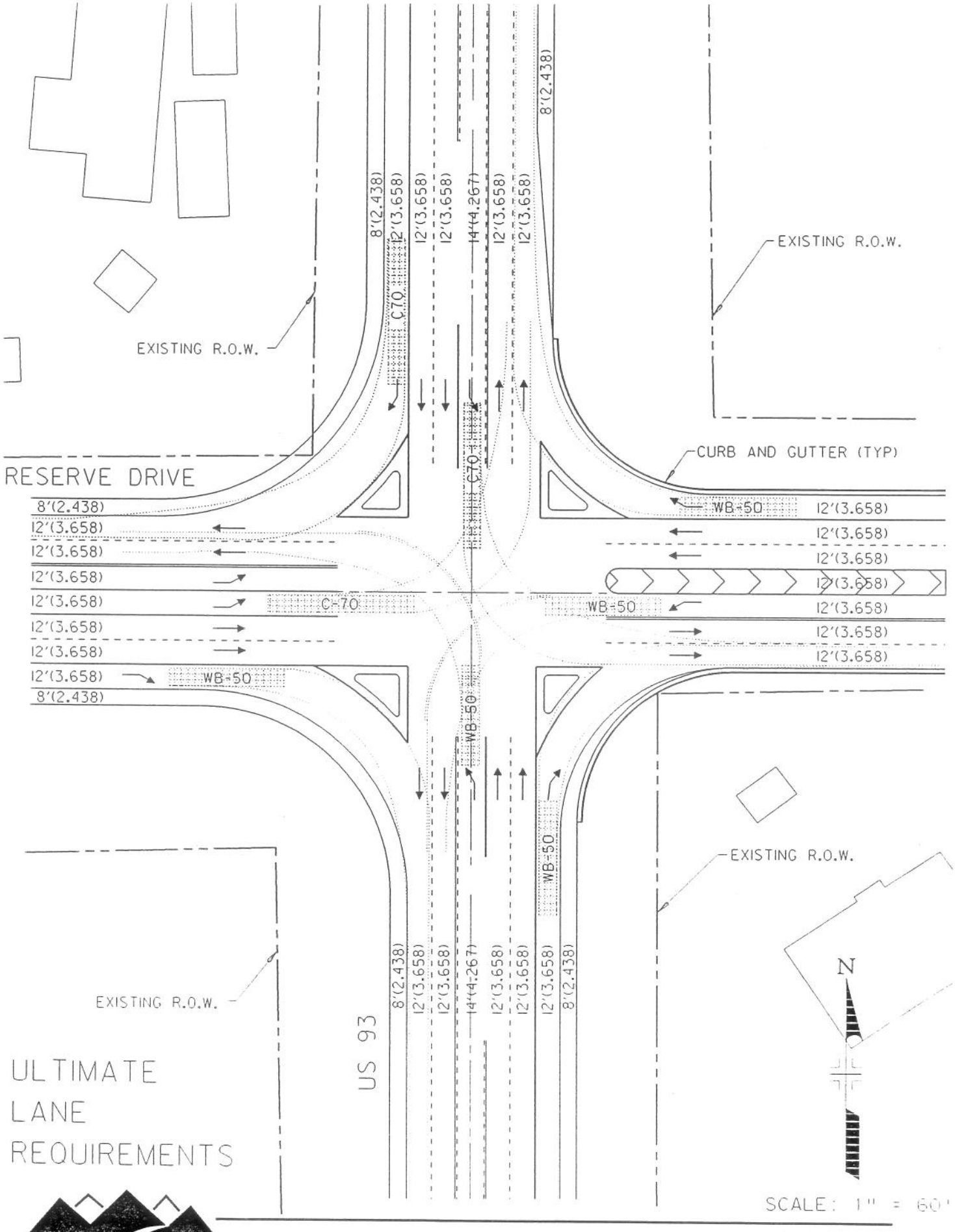
South Bypass Intersection / US 93



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

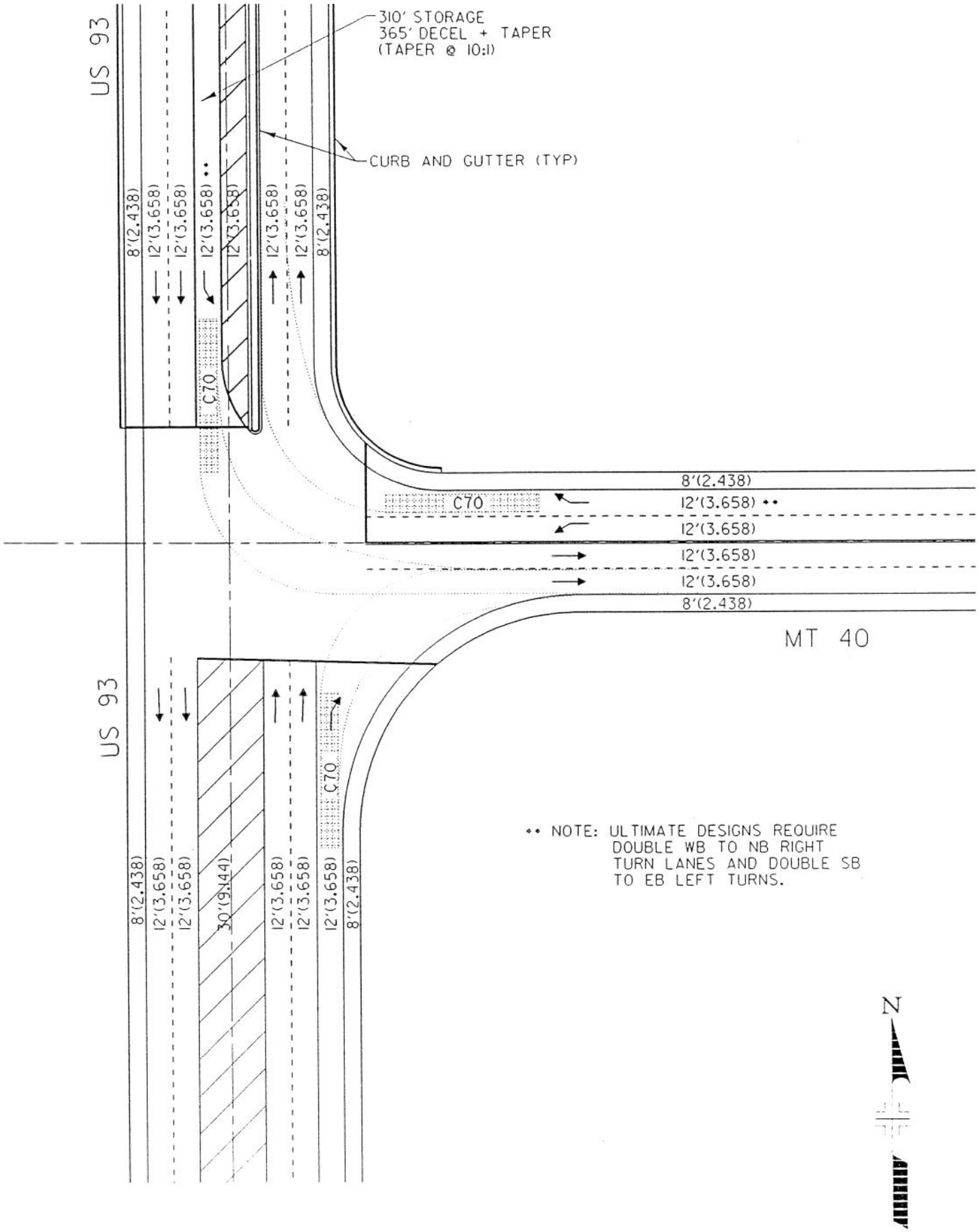
Exhibit 12

Kalispell Bypass / US 2



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Exhibit 13
Reserve Drive / US 93



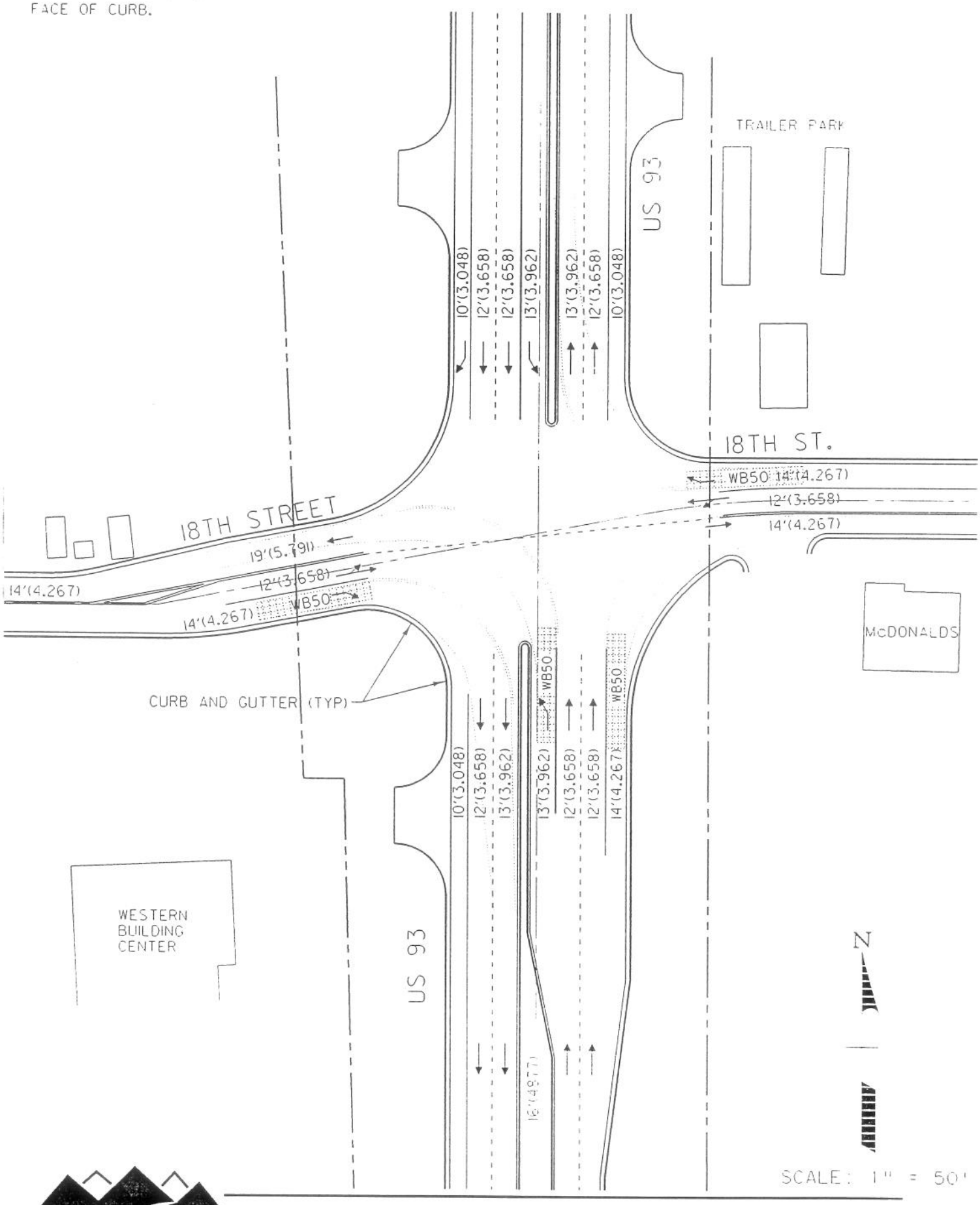
SCALE: 1" = 50'

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Exhibit 14

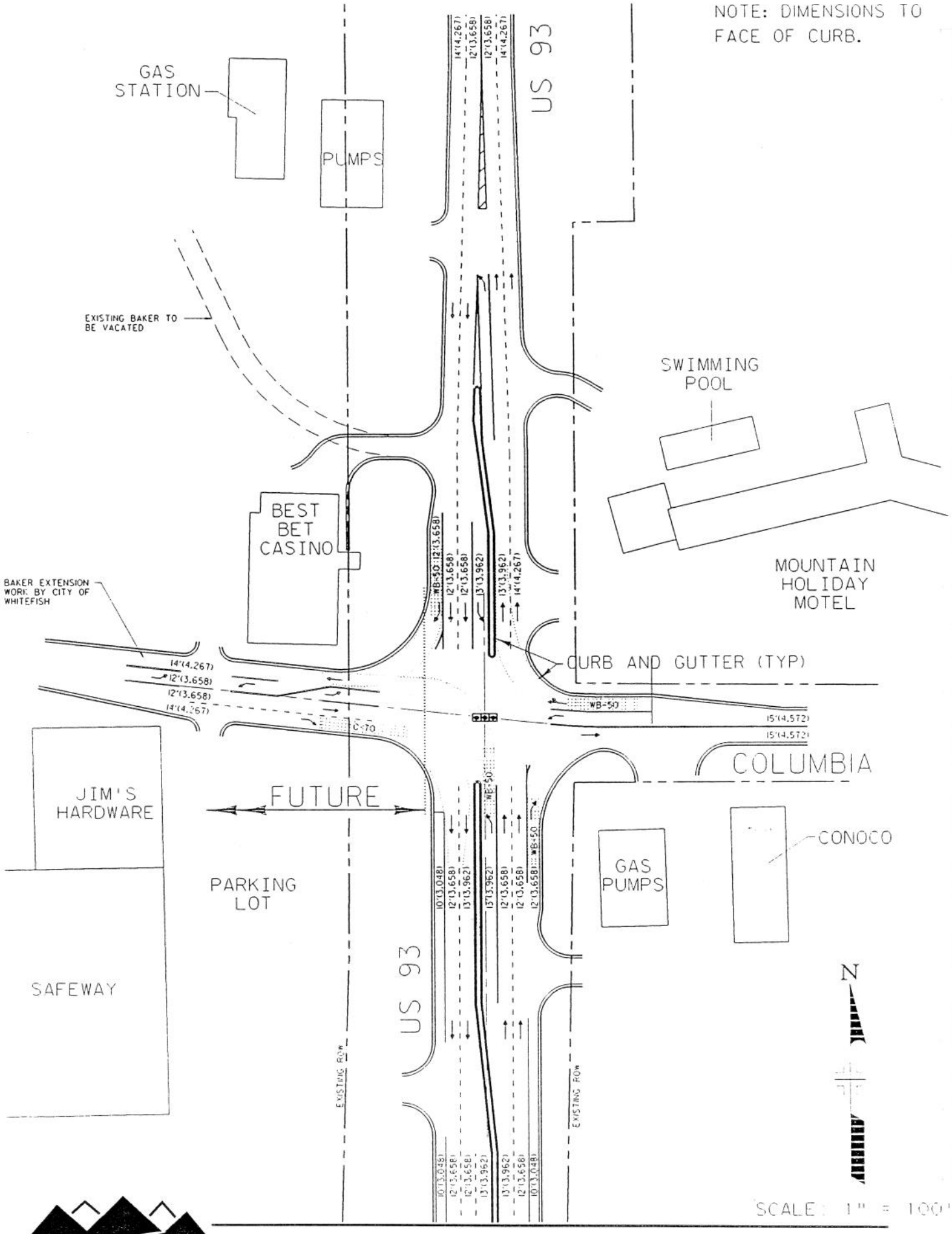
MT 40 / US 93

NOTE: DIMENSIONS TO
FACE OF CURB.



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

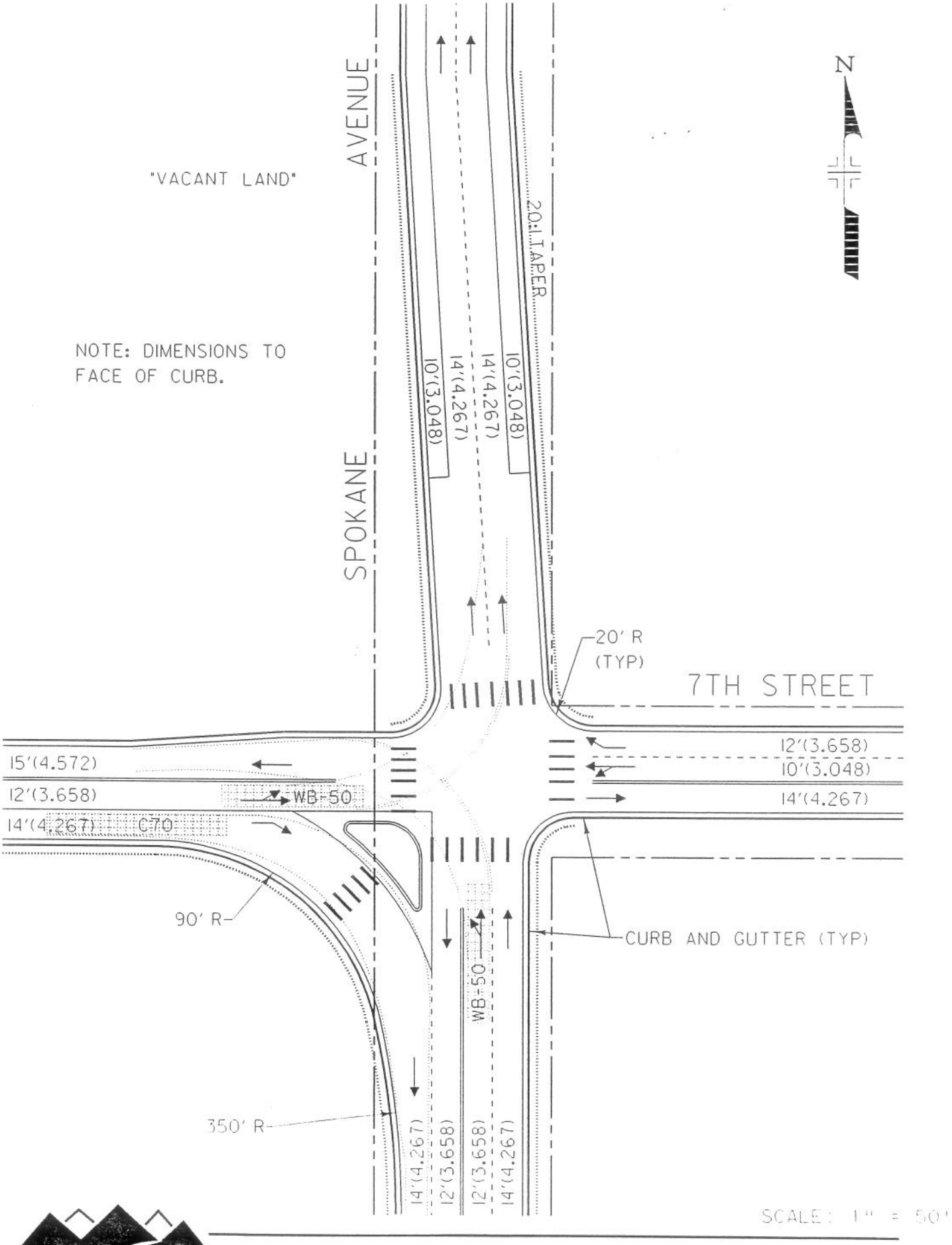
Exhibit 15
18th Street / US 93



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Exhibit 16

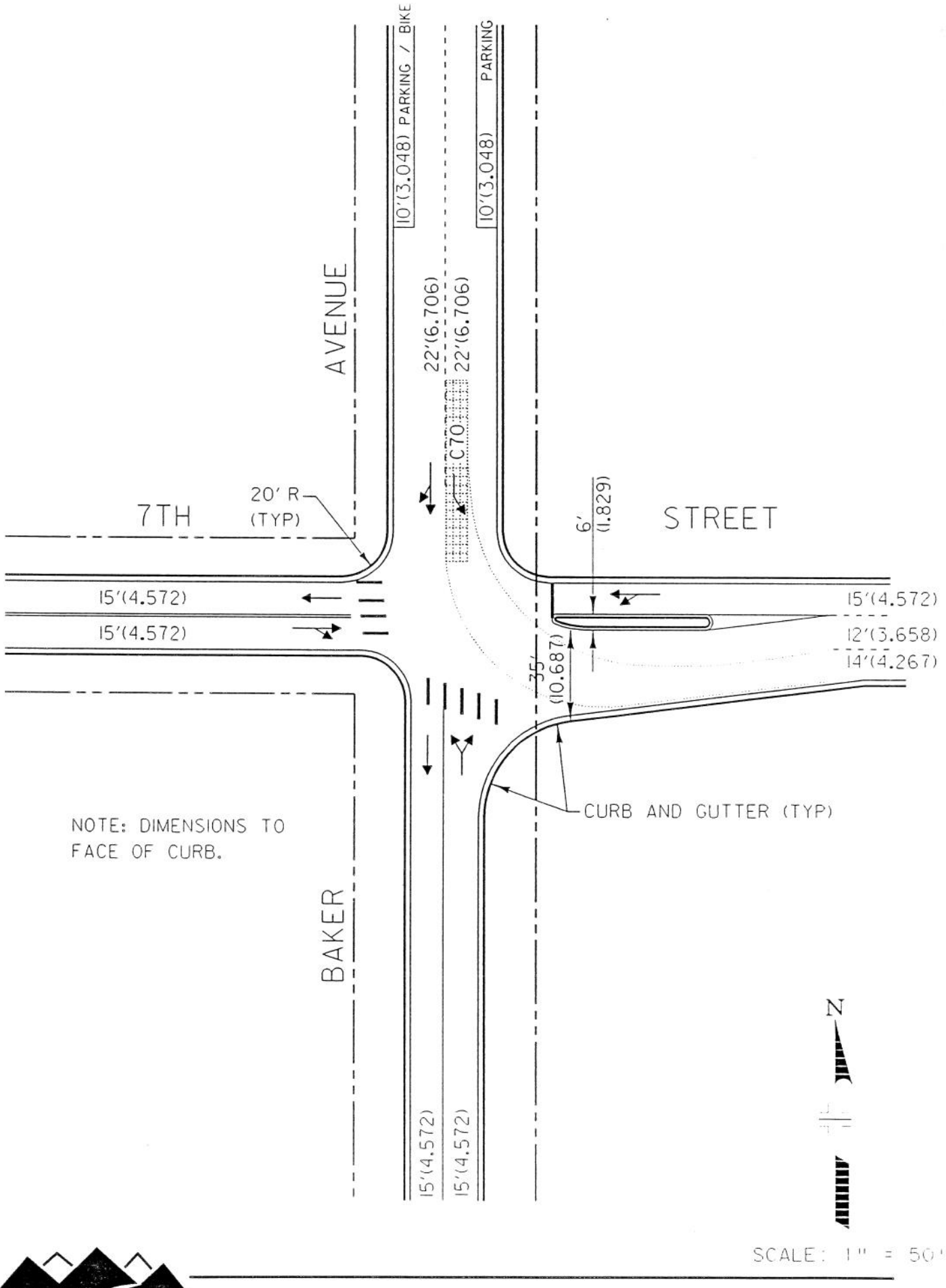
Columbia / US 93



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Exhibit 17

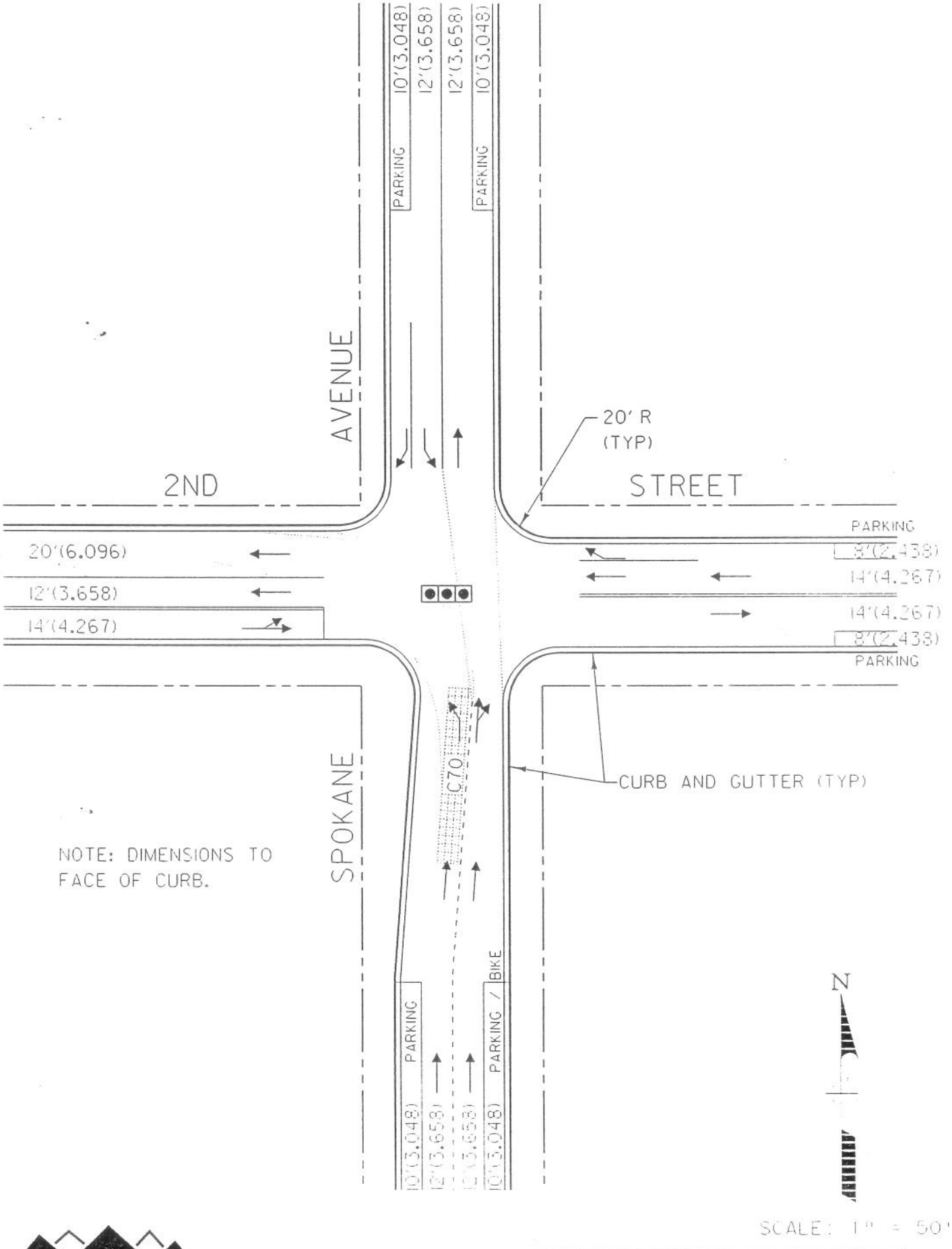
7th Street / Spokane Avenue



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Exhibit 18

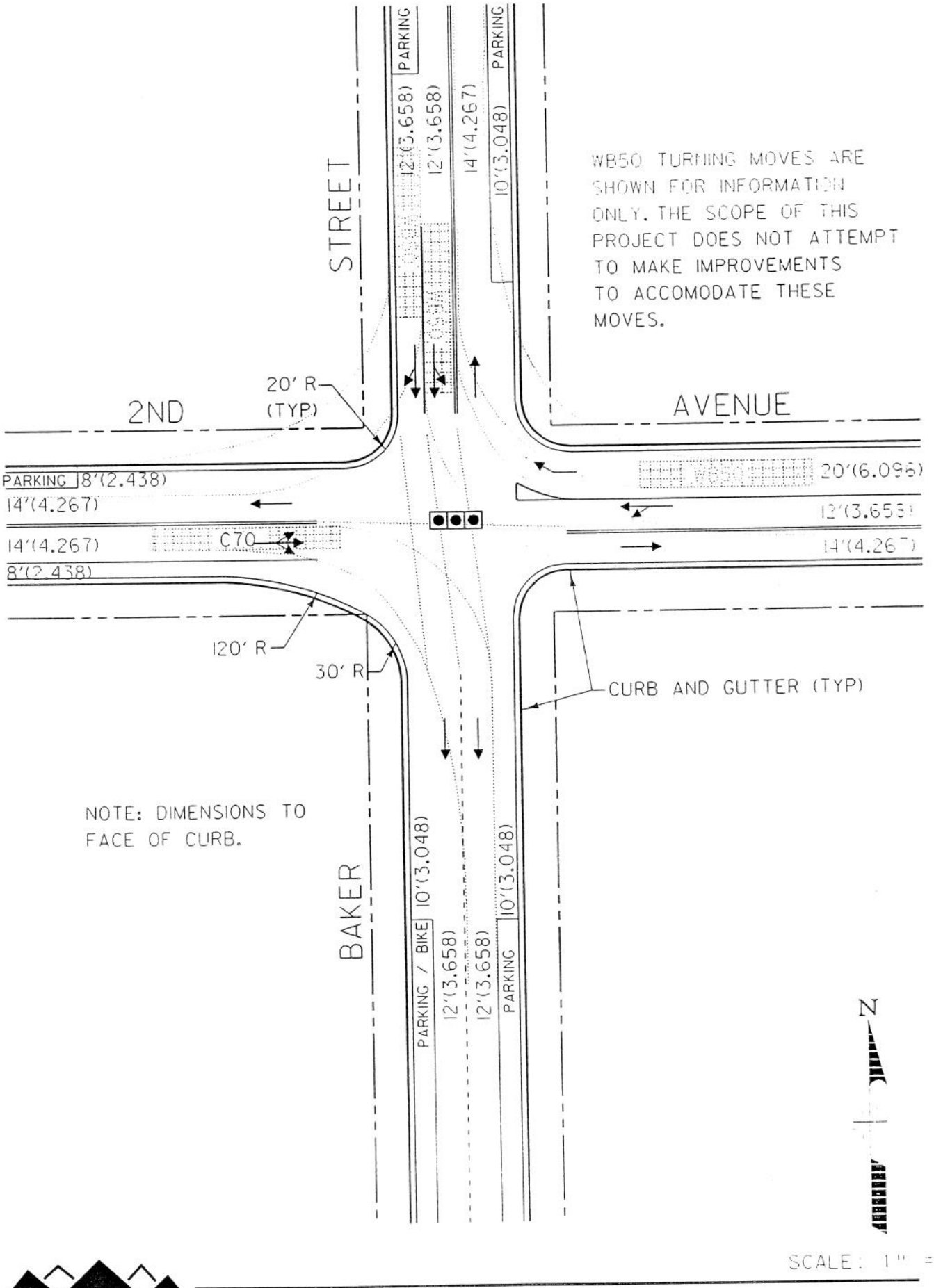
7th Street / Baker Avenue



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Exhibit 19

Second Street / Spokane Avenue



Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

Exhibit 20

2nd Street / Baker Avenue

Appendix B

Wetland Information

This Appendix includes:

- Wetland Functional Assessment Parameters
- Summary of Wetland Classes
- Species of Plants Occurring in Wetlands
- Draft Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation

Wetland Functional Assessment Parameters

1. Relative flood storage is ranked from 1 (low) to 3 (high), based on a subjective evaluation of the site characteristics. Factors affecting relative flood storage include inundation frequency (temporary surface water, intermittently flooded, and semi-permanently or permanently flooded) and water flow (water flows through wetland in distinct channels, water flows in channels but sheet flow also present, and no channels with water flowing uniformly through the wetland).

2. Site sediment retention potential is rated from 1 (low) to 3 (high), based on the presence or evidence of sediment deposition in the site, sediment sources contiguous to or which drain into the site, and the physical potential of the site to retain sediment and prevent downstream impacts. Factors affecting the retention potential are size, volume, flow characteristics (sheet flow versus channelized flow), and vegetative type (rooted emergents with a high cover density provide maximum retention).

3. Nutrient retention capability is rated from 1 (low) to 3 (high) based on an evaluation of the presence of organic matter and contiguousness of the wetland. Noncontiguous wetlands with little accumulation of organic matter rate a 1. Contiguous wetlands with organic matter accumulation rate a 3.

4. Food chain support is ranked low, moderate or high (1-3). A variety of factors is considered in rating food chain support, including the probability of export to other habitats, especially downstream. The relative rate of total biomass production and specific forage values as compared to the surrounding habitats should be considered in ranking food chain support.

5. Wildlife habitat values are ranked from 1 to 3 for nine classes of wildlife (waterfowl, upland game birds, songbirds, raptors, furbearers, non-furbearing small mammals, large ungulates, large carnivores, and threatened or endangered species). Assigned ratings are based on an integration of other wetland functional characteristics, evidence of use obtained by on-site observations, and information obtained from local biologists who may be familiar with the area. Functional value rankings indicated low (1), moderate (2), or high (3) site values. A zero indicates no value. Wildlife habitat values are based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Wildlife Habit Value
Use by wildlife group is significant in that loss or reduction of the wildlife use would have an adverse effect on the population of the species or wildlife in the general area (township)	3
Use by wildlife group is evident or probable and loss or reduction of the wildlife use would have an adverse effect on the population in the local area.	2
Use by wildlife group is low or incidental in that loss or reduction of the wildlife use would have a negligible effect on the local wildlife population.	1
Use by wildlife group is nonexistent at any time during the year.	0

6. Fisheries value are ranked 1 to 3 (low to high) for three classes of fish (salmonid, non-salmonid game fish, and non-game or rough fish) using the criteria described above for wildlife.

Summary of Classes of Wetlands Identified Along the U.S. Highway 93 Corridor

Montana Department of Transportation
Wetland Hydrologic Category and Vegetative Type
System of Classification

1. Hydrologic Category: Sites with permanent shallow water (6.6 feet depth or less).

   Vegetative Type
   - A. Floating
   - B. Rooted submerged
   - C. Rooted floating-submerged
   - D. Rooted emergent

2. Hydrologic Category: Sites with seasonal or permanent high water tables, but WITHOUT permanent standing water.

   Vegetative Type
   - A. Herbaceous
   - B. Shrub
   - C. Forested
   - D. Unvegetated

3. Hydrologic Category: Riparian sites adjacent to streams or rivers with seasonally saturated soil conditions.

   Vegetative Type
   - A. Herbaceous
   - B. Shrub
   - C. Forested
   - D. Unvegetated

Sites may have more than one hydrologic category and vegetative type present.

National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Classification

NWI is a program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Classification of wetlands on NWI maps depict a general description of hydrologic and geologic characteristics of areas supporting wetlands. The NWI classification system is based upon the concepts and definitions presented in Cowardin et al. 1979.

NWI designators for wetlands surveyed along the proposed Highway 93 corridors.

PABF - Palustrine Aquatic Bed Semipermanently Flooded - Nontidal wetlands and deepwater habitats dominated by plants that grow principally on or below the surface of the water for most of the growing season in most years. Surface water persists throughout the growing season in most years. When surface water is absent, the water table is often near the land surface.

PABFx - Palustrine Aquatic Bed Semipermanently Flooded (excavated) - Nontidal wetlands and deepwater habitats dominated by plants that grow principally on or below the surface of the water for most of the growing season in most years. Surface water persists throughout the growing season in most years. When surface water is absent, the water table is often near the land surface. Additionally, the wetland lies in a basin or channel excavated by man.

PEMC - Palustrine Emergent Seasonally Flooded - Nontidal wetlands characterized by erect, rooted, herbaceous hydrophytes, excluding mosses and lichens. The vegetation is present for most of the growing season in most years and is dominated by perennial plants. Surface water is present for extended periods, especially early in the growing season, but is absent by the end of the season in most years. When surface water is absent, the water table is often near the land surface.

PEMCx - Palustrine Emergent Seasonally Flooded (excavated) - Nontidal wetlands characterized by erect, rooted, herbaceous hydrophytes, excluding mosses and lichens. The vegetation is present for most of the growing season in most years and is dominated by perennial plants. Surface water persists throughout the growing season in most years. When surface water is absent, the water table is often near the land surface. Additionally, the wetland lies in a basin or channel excavated by man.

PEMF - Palustrine Emergent Semipermanently Flooded - Nontidal wetlands characterized by erect, rooted, herbaceous hydrophytes, excluding mosses and lichens. The vegetation is present for most of the growing season in most years and is dominated by perennial plants. Surface water persists throughout the growing season in most years. When surface water is absent, the water table is often near the land surface.

PFOA - Palustrine Forested Temporarily Flooded- Nontidal wetlands characterized by woody vegetation that is 6 m (20 ft) tall or taller. Vegetation typically consists of an overstory of trees, an understory of shrubs or young trees, and a herbaceous layer. Surface water is present for brief periods during the growing season, but the water table usually lies well below the soil surface for most of the season. Plants that grow both in uplands and wetlands are characteristic of the temporarily-flooded regime.

PSSA - Palustrine Scrub-Shrub Temporarily Flooded - Nontidal wetlands dominated by woody vegetation less than 6 m (20 ft) tall. Species of plants include true shrubs, young trees, and tree or shrubs that are small or stunted because of environmental conditions. Surface water is present for brief periods during the growing season, but the water table usually lies well below the soil surface for most of the season. Plants that grow both in uplands and wetlands are characteristic of the temporarily-flooded regime.

PSSC - Palustrine Scrub-Shrub Seasonally Flooded - Nontidal wetlands dominated by woody vegetation less than 6 m (20 ft) tall. Species of plants include true shrubs, young trees, and tree or shrubs that are small or stunted because of environmental conditions. Surface water is present for extended periods, especially early in the growing season, but is absent by the end of the season in most years. When surface water is absent, the water table is often near the land surface.

PUSA - Palustrine Unconsolidated Shore Temporarily Flooded - Nontidal wetlands with three characteristics: (1) unconsolidated substrates with less than 75 percent areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock; (2) less than 30 percent areal cover of vegetation other than pioneering plants; and (3) any water regime except intermittent or intertidal channels of the Riverine System. Surface water is present for brief periods during the growing season, but the water table usually lies well below the soil surface for most of the season. Plants that grow both in uplands and wetlands are characteristic of the temporarily-flooded regime.

PUSC - Palustrine Unconsolidated Shore Seasonally Flooded - Nontidal wetlands with shores that have three characteristics: (1) unconsolidated substrates with less than 75 percent areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock; (2) less than 30 percent areal cover of vegetation other than pioneering plants; and (3) any water regime except intermittent or intertidal channels of the Riverine System. Surface water is present for extended periods, especially early in the growing season, but is absent by the end of the season in most years. When surface water is absent, the water table is often near the land surface.

R2USC - Riverine Lower Perennial Unconsolidated Shore Seasonally Flooded - Wetlands and deepwater habitats contained within a channel that has a low gradient, slow velocity of water, and a substrate consisting mainly of sand and mud. The shores have unconsolidated substrates with less than 75 percent areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock and less than 30 percent areal cover of vegetation other than pioneering plants. Surface water is present for extended periods, especially early in the growing season, but is absent by the end of the season in most years. When surface water is absent, the water table is often near the land surface.

R3UBH - Riverine Upper Perennial Unconsolidated Bottom Permanently Flooded - Wetlands and deepwater habitats contained within a channel that as a high gradient, fast velocity of water, and a substrate consisting of rock, cobbles, or gravel with occasional patches of sand. The bottoms of these wetlands have at least 25 percent cover of particles smaller than stones and a vegetative cover less than 30 percent. Surface water is present for extended periods, especially early in the growing season, but is absent by the end of the season in most years. When surface water is absent, the water table is often near the land surface. Water covers the land surface throughout the year in all years. Vegetation is composed of obligate hydrophytes.

R3USC - Riverine Upper Perennial Unconsolidated Shore Seasonally Flooded - Wetlands and deepwater habitats contained within a channel that as a high gradient, fast velocity of water, and a substrate consisting of rock, cobbles, or gravel with occasional patches of sand. The shores have unconsolidated substrates with less than 75 percent areal cover of stones, boulders, or bedrock and less than 30 percent areal cover of vegetation other than pioneering plants. Surface water is present for extended periods, especially early in the growing season, but is absent by the end of the season in most years. When surface water is absent, the water table is often near the land surface.

R4SBF - Riverine Intermittent Streambed Semipermanently Flooded - Wetlands and deepwater habitats contained within a channel where water flows for only part of the year. When water is not flowing, it may remain in isolated pools or surface water may be absent. Surface water persists throughout the growing season in most years. When surface water is absent, the water table is often near the land surface.

Species of Plants Occurring in Wetlands Located Along the U.S. Highway 93 Corridor

Genus/species	Common Name	Indicator Status1
Acer glabrum	Rocky Mountain maple	FAC
Acer negundo	Boxelder	FAC+
Acer platanoides	Norway maple	- -
Achillea millefoilum	Yarrow	FACU
Agropyron repens	Quackgrass	FACU
Agrostis alba	Redtop	FACW
Agrostis idahoensis	Idaho bentgrass	FAC+
Agrostis tenuis	Common bentgrass	- -
Alnus incana	Thin-leaved alder	FACW
Alnus sinuata	Sitka alder	FACW
Amelanchier alnifolia	Serviceberry	FACU
Anthemis cotula	Mayweed	FACU
Apocynum canabinum	Common dogbane	FAC+
Arctium minus	Common burdock	- -
Artemisia ludoviciana	Gray sagwort	- -
Betula occidentalis	River birch	FACW
Bromus inermis	Smooth brome	- -
Carex interior	Inland sedge	FACW
Carex lanuginosa	Wooly sedge	OBL
Carex microptera	Small-winged sedge	FAC
Carex retrorsa	Retrose sedge	FAC
Carex rostrata	Beaked sedge	OBL
Centaurea maculosa	Spotted knapweed	- -
Cirsium arvense	Canada thistle	FACU+
Clematis ligusticifolia	White virgin's bower	FACU
Cornus stolonifera	Red osier dogwood	FACW
Crataegus columbiana	Columbia hawthorn	- -
Crataegus douglasii	River hawthorn	FAC
Cynoglossum officinale	Hound's tooth	- -
Dactylis glomerata	Orchard grass	FACU
Eleagnus commutata	Silverberry	- -
Eleocharis palustris	Common spikerush	OBL
Elymus cinereus	Great Basin wild rye	FAC-?
Epilobium ciliatum	Willow herb	FACW-
Equisetum arvense	Common horsetail	FAC
Equisetum fluviale	Water horsetail	OBL
Equisetum hyemale	Common scouring rush	FACW
Festuca arundinacea	Tall fescue	FACU-
Festuca rubra	Red fescue	FAC
Festuca pratensis	Meadow fescue	FACU+
Fragaria virginiana	Virginia strawberry	- -
Fraxinus pennsylvanica	Green ash	FAC
Galium aparine	Cleavers	FACU
Galium boreale	Northern bedstraw	FACU
Galium triflorum	Fragrant bedstraw	FACI
Glyceria borealis	Northern mannagrass	OBL
Glyceria striata	Fowl mannagrass	OBL
Glycyrrhiza lepidota	Licorice root	FAC+
Hesperis matronalis	Dame's violet	- -
Hordeum jubatum	Foxtail barley	FAC+
Juncus tenuis	Slender rush	FAC
Juniperus scopulorum	Rocky Mountain juniper	- -
Lathyrus latifolius	Everlasting peavine	- -
Lemna minor	Duckweed	OBL
Lemna trisulca	Star duckweed	OBL

Lonicera utahensis	Red twinberry	FACU +
Marrubium vulgare	Horehound	FACU +
Medicago lupulina	Black medic	FAC
Melilotus alba	White sweet clover	FACU
Melilotus officinalis	Yellow sweet clover	FACU
Mentha arvensis	Field mint	FAC
Myositis scorpioides	Forget-me-not	FACW
Nuphar luteum	Yellow pond lily	OBL
Parthenocissus quinquefolia	Virginia creeper	NI
Phalaris arundinacea	Reed canary grass	FACW
Phleum pratense	Timothy	FACU
Picea pungens	Colorado blue spruce	FAC-
Plantago major	Common plantain	FAC +
Poa palustris	Fowl bluegrass	FAC
Pos pratensis	Kentucky bluegrass	FACU +
Polygonum hydropiperoides	Waterpepper smartweed	OBL
Populus tremuloides	Quaking aspen	FAC +
Populus trichocarpa	Black cottonwood	- -
Potamogeton filiformis	Slender-leaved pondweed	OBL
Potentilla palustris	Marsh cinquefoil	OBL
Prunella vulgaris	Self-heal	FACU +
Prunus virginiana	Chokecherry	FACU
Rosa acicularis	Prickly rose	FACU
Rosa woodsii	Wood's rose	FACU
Rubus idaeus	Raspberry	FACU
Rumex crispus	Curly dock	FACW
Rumex salicifolius	Narrow-leaved dock	FACW
Salix alba	Yellow-twigged willow	FACW
Salix amygdaloides	Peach-leaf willow	FACW
Salix bebbiana	Bebb willow	FACW
Salix bebbiana	Bebb willow	FACW
Salix exigua	Sandbar willow	OBL
Salix lasiandra	Pacific willow	FACW +
Scirpus validus	Softstem bullrush	OBL
Scutellaria galericulata	Skullcap	OBL
Smilacina stellata	Starry false Solomon's seal	FAC-
Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet nightshade	FAC
Solidago canadensis	Canada goldenrod	FACU
Sonchus asper	Prickly sow-thistle	FAC-
Sorbus scopulina	Cascade Mountain ash	NI
Symphoricarpos albus	Common snowberry	FACU
Tragapogon dubius	Yellow salsify	- -
Trifolium pratense	Red clover	FACU
Trifolium repens	White clover	FACU +
Triglochin palustre	Marsh arrow-grass	OBL
Typha latifolia	Broad-leaf cattail	OBL
Urtica dioica	Stinging nettle	FAC +
Utricularia vulgaris	Common bladderwort	OBL
Viburnum opulus	High-bush cranberry	- -

Notes:

1. *OBL = Obligate Wetland - Occur almost always (estimated probability > 99 percent) under natural conditions in wetlands.*
   FACW = Facultative Wetland - Usually occur in wetlands (estimated probability 67-99 percent), but occasionally found in nonwetlands.
   FAC - Facultative - Equally likely to occur in wetlands or nonwetlands (estimated probability 34-66 percent).
   FACU = Facultative Upland - Usually occur in nonwetlands (estimated probability 67-99 percent), but occasionally found in wetlands (estimated probability 1-33 percent).
   + = More frequently found in wetlands.
   - = Less frequently found in wetlands.

Draft Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation

Applicant: Federal Highway Administration
Application Number: _____
Project: Somers-Whitefish (US 93 Reconstruction)
Flathead County, Montana
Project FHWA-MT-EIS-94-01-0

I. Introduction

The 404(b)(1) guidelines, found in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 230, are the substantive criteria used in evaluating discharges of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and are applicable to all 404 permit decisions. Fundamental to these Guidelines is the precept that dredged or fill material should not be discharged into the aquatic ecosystem unless it can be demonstrated that such discharges would not have unacceptable adverse impacts either individually or in combination with known and/or probable impacts of other activities affecting the ecosystems of concern.

Subpart B of the guidelines establishes four conditions which must be satisfied to make a finding that the proposed discharge complies with the guidelines. Paragraph 230.10 provides that:

a. Except as provided under Section 404(b)(2), no discharge of dredged material shall be permitted if there is a practicable alternative to the proposed discharge which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, so long as the alternative does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences;

b. No discharge of dredged or fill material shall be permitted if it violates state water quality standards, Section 307 of the Clean Water Act, or the Endangered Species Act of 1973;

c. No discharge shall be permitted if it causes **or contributes to significant degradation of the Waters of the United States**; and

d. Except as provided under Section 404(b)(2), no discharge shall be permitted unless appropriate and practicable steps have been taken which will minimize potential adverse impacts of the discharge on the aquatic ecosystem.

Mitigation to offset significant and insignificant adverse impacts may be developed which could result in bringing a project into compliance with the guidelines. Impacts must be avoided to the maximum extent practicable and remaining unavoidable impacts will then be mitigated to the extent appropriate and practicable by requiring steps to minimize impacts and, finally by compensation for loss of aquatic resource values.

Section 230.11 sets forth the factual determinations which are to be considered in determining whether a discharge satisfies the four conditions of compliance. These determinations are contained in the following evaluation.

Section 230.12 identifies the findings of compliance or non-compliance with the restrictions on discharge. These findings are contained in Part IV of this evaluation.

II. Project Description

A. Location of the Proposed Action

US 93 is a north-south principal arterial that extends along the western portion of the State of Montana. The segment under consideration is a 46.18-kilometer (28.7-mile) segment from Somers to west of Whitefish. Figure 1-1 in the Final EIS shows the location of this segment.

B. General Description

The Draft EIS evaluates three reasonable location Alternatives A, B and C, and five reasonable design Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO), A(FOUR-LANE), C(OFF-SET). Alternative A involves improving Highway 93 along its existing alignment. Alternative B involves constructing a bypass west of Kalispell. Alternatives C involve a highway route modifications through Whitefish. Alternative A(MEDIAN) provides for a four-lane divided highway, with maximum highway corridor width. Alternative A(TURN-LANE) provides for a five-lane highway with minimum highway corridor width. Alternatives A(COMBO), A(FOUR-LANE), C(OFF-SET) combine cross-sections and features from design Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE) depending upon the characteristics of a particular segment. Chapter 2 of the Final EIS provides a complete description of the alternatives**, with a description of the preferred alternative**.

C. Authority and Purpose

The primary purpose and need for improvements to US 93 is to reduce congestion on the existing facility, provide for planned growth and development, improve safety, provide for improved intermodal facility connections and provide for enhanced scenic values.

D. General Description of the Dredged or Fill Material

1. General Characteristics of Material

No recent or comprehensive soil borings have been taken related to the U.S. 93 Somers to Whitefish project. In the absence of specific boring data, short general descriptions of the soils associations underlain by the proposed alternatives are provided. These descriptions are taken from the Upper Flathead Valley Soil Survey 1960, by USDA Soil Conservation Service.

Five separate soil associations underlie the proposed alternatives in large continuous segments.

Whitefish Association:

> Located between the northern project extent to milepost 129, and milepost 126.5 to milepost 121. Whitefish soils cover most of this association. They are deep, well drained, light gray, loamy soils that have developed in glacial till under heavy forest cover. Slopes in this association vary from moderate to very steep.

Halfmoon - Depew - Stryker Association:

Located between milepost 129 and 126.5. The soils in this association are deep, light - gray, and loamy to somewhat clayey. They have developed in alluvial material under heavy forest. They range from well drained to poorly drained. The Half Moon and Depew soils occur on higher, well drained sites; Stryker soils are on the low moderately well drained sites and the Radnor soils are on poorly drained soils.

Kalispell-Tally - Blanchard, and Flathead Association:

Located between milepost 121 and milepost 111 along the U.S. 93 corridor and from Ashley Creek north along the Kalispell Bypass alternatives. This association consists of deep, dark brown, well drained loamy and moderately sandy soils and moderately deep gravely soils. These soils have developed in outwash and terrace alluvium under a moderate to heavy cover of grass.

Kalispell - Somers - Demers Association:

Located from milepost 111 to the southern extent of project. This association contains mostly deep, dark brown, well drained and moderately well drained, loamy to clayey soils. These soils have developed in terrace alluvium under moderate to heavy cover of grass. The Kalispell soils are in well drained sites; the Somers in moderately well drained sites.

Prospect - Yeoman Moderately deep over sand Association:

Located in random lenses along the Kalispell Bypass B alternatives. This association may contain many boulders throughout. It consists mainly of deep, dark brown and nearly black, well drained, stoney loamy soils that developed in till under a moderate to heavy cover of grass. The Yeoman soils are moderately deep over sand and the Prospect soils are on steeper slopes.

Local variability exists along the proposed corridors.

Since the project lies mostly within the valley bottom, little or no involvement with bedrock or parent material is expected along the alternatives. Also, resulting from the shallow to moderate relief/slope along the alternatives, there is expected to be less potential for erosion of exposed substrate.

2. Quantity of Material

Material quantities relating to encroachment and/or wetland fill are limited. The geometric relationship at crossings between susceptible areas, such as rivers and streams, and the proposed alternatives is very nearly perpendicular in all instances. There are no long adjacencies of susceptible areas requiring linear parallel encroachments.

Encroachments for all of the possible alternatives are limited to bridge abutments, piers and pier footings for those crossings designated for bridge treatment; and box culverts and required grading necessary at minor crossings.

Non-riparian wetland fill areas occur in very small localities along the proposed alternatives. These may be affected by minor fill in places were necessary to bring the roadway profile up to standards.

The following Tables B1-1 and B1-2 describe riparian and non-riparian Section 404 sites respectively. These descriptions of sites along the alternative corridors include the type of site, type of involvement and approximate quantity of fill materials necessary at that site.

Area calculations in hectares were used to calculate quantities of isolated wetland areas that will be covered by fill adjacent to the alternatives. Volume calculations were used in cubic meters for riparian areas. These volumes represent quantities below the **ordinary** high water mark.

Table B1 - 1
Section 404 Riparian Sites and Potential Fill Quantities in Cubic Meters (cu. yds.)
Alternatives A(MEDIAN), A(TURN-LANE), A(COMBO), A(FOUR-LANE), C(OFF-SET), B(MEDIAN), B(TURN-LANE)

Site No.	Site Location	Site Type	Existing Involve-ment	Proposed Involve-ment	No Build	A(MEDIAN)	A(TURN-LANE)	A(COMBO)	A(FOUR-LANE)	C(OFF-SET)	B(MEDIAN)	B(TURN-LANE)
5	Patrick Creek	Riparian	Culvert	Culvert								
6	Patrick Creek	Riparian	Culvert	Culvert	0.0	57 (74)	11 (15)	57 (74)				
7	Patrick Creek	Riparian	Culvert	Culvert								
8	Ashley Creek	Riparian	Culvert	Bridge Encroach-ment/culvert	0.0	28 (37)	28 (37)	28 (37)				
9	Ashley Creek	Riparian	None	No Involve-ment	0.0						0.0	0.0
10	Ashley Creek	Riparian	None	Culvert	0.0						7300 (9600)	7300 (9600)
15	Ashley Creek	Riparian	None	Culvert	0.0						20000 (26200)	20000 (26200)
16	Ashley Ck. Trib.	Riparian	None	Culvert	0.0						2600 (3400)	2600 (3400)
17	West Spring Creek	Riparian	None	Culvert	0.0						8600 (11200)	8600 (11200)
18	Stillwater River	Riparian	Bridge	Bridge Encroachment	0.0	42 (56)	42 (56)	42 (56)				
21	Whitefish South *	Riparian	Culvert	Bridge Encroachment	0.0				*-17750 (-23,170)	*-17750 (-23,170)		
24	Whitefish North	Riparian	Bridge	Bridge Encroachment	0.0	14 (18)	14 (18)	14 (18)				

* A negative value is used here due to the specific circumstance at this site. The existing crossing uses three large culverts with necessary fill. **One** of the alternatives for this project proposes to remove all fill and culvert and replace with a bridge structure. **The preferred alternative is to leave the existing culverts in place**.

Table B1 - 1 (Cont.)
Section 404 Riparian Sites and Potential Fill Quantities in Cubic Meters (cu. yds.)
Alternatives C(COUPLET-1), C(COUPLET-2), C(COUPLET-3), C(COUPLET-4)

Site No.	Site Location	Site Type	Existing Involve-ment	Type of Involvement	No Build	C(COUPLET-1)	C(COUPLET-2)	C(COUPLET-3)	C(COUPLET-4)
22	Whitefish 7th St.	Riparian	None	Bridge Encroachment	0.0	0.0	18 (23)	18 (23)	0.0
23	Whitefish Baker St.	Riparian	Bridge	Bridge Encroachment	0.0	14 (18)	14 (18)	14 (18)	14 (18)

Table B1 - 2
Total Wetland Loss by Wetland
Hectares (Acres)

Wetland Impacted	Impact Hectares (Acres)	Functions, Overall Ranking	
1	0.012 (0.03)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention.	9.5
2	0.036 (0.09)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	12
6	0.20 (0.5)	Major functions: nutrient retention.	9.5
7	0.12 (0.3)	Major functions: nutrient retention, food chain, wildlife habitat.	13
8	0.09 (0.22)	Major functions: flood storage.	12
9	0.11 (0.27)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	14.5
10	0.3 (0.75)	Major functions: flood storage, food chain.	11.5
11	0.05 (0.13)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	12.5
12	0.53 (1.32)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	12.5
13	0.37 (0.92)	Major functions: flood storage, food chain.	10
14	0.04 (0.11)	Major functions: flood storage, food chain.	11.5
15	0.06 (0.14)	Major functions: flood storage.	12
16	0.17 (0.41)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	12.5
17	0.08 (0.20)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	12.5
18	0.17 (0.43)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	14.5
19	0(0)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	10.5
20	0.012 (0.03)	Major functions: flood storage, food chain	12
21-24	0.04 (0.10)	Major functions: flood storage, nutrient retention, food chain.	14-17
25-28	0(0)	Major functions: flood storage, wildlife habitat	
Total	2.4 (5.95)		

At the current stage of design it is expected that all riparian wetlands and areas below ordinary high water marks will be avoided by bridge abutments, and that the only encroachment in these areas will be related to piers and or pier structures. The volume calculations for bridge type involvements above reflect only these substructure volumes.

Additionally, it is expected that all isolated wetland fills will be contained within the existing or proposed right-of-way. There will not be any need for slope easements outside of these areas.

The above calculations are based on a worst case scenario whereby all of the wetland within the right-of-way will be filled. This is not however, the expected outcome of final design. The figures are representative of the eventual wetland area fill quantities.

3. Sources of Fill Material

Native materials generated through excavation for the roadway could be processed with on-site crushing equipment and used if the material meets specifications. Another option is to import granular backfill material to the project area.

Material used for fill is expected to be taken from the closest possible on-site location and will therefore be similar to the in situ substrate.

No other specific locations of fill resource have been identified to date. First priority is to locate any that are within the project area. If sufficient embankment material is not generated from excavation on the project site, a local source of fill material would be used. It is expected that particle size and shape as well as other characteristics would be similar to that at the discharge sites, although density of the fill material may be greater after road bed compaction.

Fill would not be taken from any environmentally sensitive areas.

E. Description of the Proposed Discharge Sites

1. Location of Sites

All of the proposed alternatives intersect with or involve riparian wetland features within the Upper Flathead River Drainage. These sites are described in Figure 3-10 of the Final EIS. The main corridor along U.S. 93, Alternative A, intersects with three major water features within the valley which are Ashley Creek, the Stillwater River, and the Whitefish River (twice). There are also minor crossings of tributaries of these streams. The Kalispell bypass Alternative B also crosses two riparian water features; Ashley Creek (3 times) and West Spring Creek.

Additionally, there are 14 non-riparian or isolated wetland sites randomly located adjacent to one or more of the proposed alternatives. These are also shown in Figure 3-10 in the Final EIS.

2. Size of Sites

The size of Section 404 sites vary widely within the project area. They range from 0.081 hectares to 13.77 hectares (0.2 acres to 34 acres) in size. Table 3-20 in the FEIS describes the total area of each site and the total area within an assumed corridor.

These calculations are based on the assumption that the corridor is 30.5 meters (100 feet) wide on either side of the existing roadway or on either side of the proposed centerline in areas where no roadway exists.

3. Types of Sites Affected

Three types of discharge sites would be affected including wetlands, rivers and creeks.

Sites designated in Table B1-1 and B1-2 as "Isolated" are wetland areas that are not associated with fluvial environment. They are usually topographically low spots that are fed by ground water or seasonal precipitation regimes. Some are partially inundated all year and others are not. They are classified and described in section II.E.4. below. These types of wetland areas will be affected by roadway fill placed partially or completely within their boundaries. This is necessary to provide a roadway profile that meets safety standards.

Sites designated in Table B1-1 and B1-2 as "Culvert" are areas directly related to minor tributaries within the project drainage. These are small channels either natural or man-made that will be crossed by means of a culvert. The culvert will be sized and placed so as not to impede normal flows or flood events. Riparian

wetland areas located on either side of the culverts at these sites will be filled to meet grade. The roadway will then pass over the structure.

Finally, sites designated as "Bridge Encroachment" in Table B1-1 and B1-2 are areas that involve significant streams or rivers. At these locations bridge structures **are planned for the crossing, although this will be finally determined during the final design process**. These bridge structures require fill as part of the abutments on either side of the crossing. In this project all of the abutment fills are expected to be placed outside the ordinary high water mark and outside the 100 year flood elevation. These sites will also require pier construction. A number of piers and footings will be placed within the channel to support the bridge structure. Although construction of piers will require excavation below the existing channel bottom, it is expected that the existing cross section of each channel will be preserved by backing filling the footing to previous configurations. Excavation for footings then will not be calculated as a permanent displacement within the ordinary high water mark. Riprap armoring of the abutments will be necessary under the proposed conceptual designs. These "fills" will follow guidelines provided by both the FHWA and MDT. It is intended that there will be no volume increase below the **ordinary** high water line. Existing substrate will be removed as necessary to provide room for riprap, thus retaining essential hydraulic characteristics of the channel.

4. Types of Wetland Habitat Affected

The types of habitat existing at wetlands affected by the proposed alternatives is summarized in Table 3-21 of the Final DEIS. These classifications are derived using the United States Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) criteria, and MDT classifications.

An explanation of the NWI and MDT classifications and additional information about affected wetlands, a detailed description of wetland habitat types and a description of the wetland resources as they relate to vegetation, hydrology and function can be found in Section 3.10 and Appendix B of the Final EIS.

5. Timing and Duration of Discharge

Construction timing has several alternatives as described in Section 4.20 of the Final EIS. Duration of discharge will vary depending on the type of construction (bridge, widening or new road construction) that is undertaken in any specific location. Detailed phasing plans will be prepared during final design. This information is necessary to determine turbidity, due to seasonal fluctuations in base flow of the water feature. **Section 404 program requirements are that stream discharges shall not disrupt the migration or other movement of those species of aquatic life inhabiting the water body and shall not occur in spawning areas if a practical alternative exists.**

F. Description of Disposal Method

The following sections describe the general construction methods that would be employed to build the new road and bridge in the vicinity of surface waters and wetlands.

Encroachments - Cofferdams must be placed in the river along the riverbank area where the construction of the proposed abutments or walls would encounter water. After the cofferdams are placed, river water trapped behind the temporary dams would be pumped out to expose the river bed and facilitate the excavation activities necessary to construct the lower portion of the retaining wall. Excavated materials and water confined in the

cofferdams would be transferred to a temporary settling ponds to remove sediments. The retained sediment would be disposed of in locations which would prevent its reintroduction to surface waters. No locations for a temporary settling pond have been investigated for the Final EIS. However, the location for such a facility would be identified before construction permits are obtained.

Placement of Fill in Wetlands -- Fill materials would be placed in isolated wetlands by large earthmoving and shaping equipment. Excess materials from adjacent areas of the project would be transported to sites where additional fill is needed to elevate the subgrade of the roadway.

Construction of Bridge Piers -- New bridge construction over riparian wetlands, would require that the streambed be excavated to construct footings and piers for the structure. The contractor for the bridge would most likely build one pier at a time to an elevation that is above the water level in the river. Typically, sheet pile cofferdams would be driven around the location of each pier and the area of streambed enclosed by the cofferdams would be excavated. Steel piles would be driven at the footing location and a concrete seal some 1.22 to 1.525 meters (4 to 5 feet) thick would be poured underwater to provide a base upon which the footing would be constructed.

After the concrete seal is in place, the area confined by the cofferdams would be dewatered. Forms and reinforcing steel for the footing and pier would be placed. Concrete for the footing and piers would then be poured in sequence and allowed to cure as required.

Temporary work bridges and scaffolding would be required for equipment and workers to use during construction.

Material excavated for the pier footings and water from the enclosed cofferdams would be transported to predetermined settling ponds to remove sediments.

III. Factual Determinations (Section 230.11)

Potential impacts of the discharge of fill material into the various river systems and wetlands affected by the project are evaluated below.

A. Physical Substrate Determinations

The materials contained in the substrate of project area streams are dependent on the velocity of flows. Fine sediments are usually deposited in pools and along calm riverbank areas, while gravel and cobbles are usually present beneath smooth flowing sections of a river.

1. Substrate Elevation and Slope

The elevation and slope of any of the streambeds within the U.S. 93 Somers to Whitefish project area would not be adversely affected by any of the proposed alternatives. Although the design intent is to preserve the existing channel characteristics, the placement of fill materials along the banks of the river may cause minor, localized changes to the elevation and slope of the stream bottom. Overall stream gradients and flow regimes will not be affected.

2. Compare Fill Material and Substrate at Discharge Sites

Encroachments -- The substrate in the vicinity of the proposed discharge sites is expected to consist of smooth cobbles, gravel and fine sediments along the river or creek banks. The fill used would be select granular backfill.

Isolated Wetlands -- Substrates in wetland areas affected by the project would consist of fine sediments transported by feeder streams and by runoff during precipitation events and snow melt. The material placed in isolated wetlands affected by the project would be embankment materials generated through excavation of areas near each wetland. These materials would be expected to be of the same parent constituents as substrate materials.

3. Dredged/Fill Material Movement

The fill materials used in the encroachments would consist of materials that are not prone to movement by water action.

The fill materials placed in wetlands would not be expected to move since the affected sites are isolated, and contained areas predominantly fed by surface water runoff.

4. Physical Effects on Benthos, Invertebrates, Vertebrates

a. Physical Effects on Benthos

The highway project would destroy benthic organisms along riverbanks or in inundated wetland areas where fill materials would be placed. The fill material would also eliminate a minor amount of bottom habitat available to organisms through a slight decrease in the width of the river channel.

b. Physical Effects on Invertebrates

The primary effect to aquatic invertebrates expected to result from highway construction is that aquatic insects located along the river bank or in wetlands would be buried by the placement of fill materials. Construction activities in the rivers could dislodge insects from existing habitat and cause them to be transported downriver by water currents. There is a potential that short-term, localized increases in suspended sediments from fill material placed in surface water. This could adversely affect aquatic insects that rely upon sight to find food.

c. Physical Effects on Vertebrates

Adverse impacts to fish could potentially result from the project if substantial amounts of sediments from the erosion of disturbed areas are transported into the river system. These sediments could adversely affect stream habitat for fish by increasing silt in spawning gravel and rearing habitat, suffocating eggs or fry, or by affecting the aquatic organisms that fish rely upon as a major food source. Measures incorporated into the project would minimize the likelihood that such potentially significant adverse impacts would occur in the project area.

Fish could also be adversely affected through the introduction of toxic materials to the water through highway runoff or through accidental spills. The potential for a toxic spill exists in several sections of the project area due to the proximity of the existing and new highway to rivers and the fact that vehicles transport a variety of hazardous materials over US 93.

As indicated in Section 4.10 of the Final EIS, analyses indicate that pollutants associated with highway runoff and snowplowing or deicing would have minor effects on the quality of waters in project area rivers. This conclusion also suggests that the effects of such pollutants on fish would be minor.

The effects of the project on other vertebrates found in the project area are described in Section 4.12 of the Final EIS.

5. Erosion and Accretion Patterns

None of the proposed alternatives would alter erosion or accretion processes associated with the specific water courses.

6. Actions Taken to Minimize Impacts (Subpart H)

The project would include several measures designed to minimize impacts to substrates at the site of each encroachment. These measures will include:

- Confining the discharge to the smallest area possible to minimize the number of benthic organisms that are destroyed or displaced;
- Using fill materials that are similar to the substrate whenever possible; and
- Timing the necessary work in wetlands or below the ordinary high water mark to minimize impacts.

Additionally, MDT's newly developed *Highway Construction Standard Erosion Control Workplan* will be used by highway designers to identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) for erosion control that are specific to the project. The identified BMPs will be based on the proximity to surface waters and other sensitive resources. The contractor for the project will be required to follow the recommended BMPs during the construction of this project. The intent of this effort is to identify measures that will limit or prevent erosion of disturbed areas of the project and minimize the potential for sediments to be transported into surface waters during and after construction.

B. Water Circulation, Fluctuation, and Salinity Determinations

1. Water

Discussions about the existing water chemistry, water circulation characteristics, and water fluctuations for waters in the project area are contained in Section 3.9 of the Final EIS. The sections below focus on the project's effects on these aspects of local water quality.

a. Salinity

The project would not substantially alter the salinity of waters in the various river systems.

b. Water Chemistry

The project would not cause changes in the water chemistry or pH levels in the various river systems, nor would the project discharge mineral constituents to surface waters in concentrations that would substantially change the alkalinity or hardness of surface waters.

c. Suspended Sediments

The project could cause temporary and minor increases in suspended sediments during construction activities in or near surface waters as fines present in fill are transported from disposal sites by water currents.

d. Clarity (Turbidity)

The placement of fill materials may cause minor and temporary increases in turbidity during activities associated with the construction of the encroachments.

e. Color

The deposition of fill materials into rivers would disrupt the substrate and could temporarily increase sediment concentrations for short periods during construction. An increase in suspended sediments may alter the color of waters in the vicinity of the discharge sites for short periods immediately following the deposition of fill. This change in color would be more apparent if the discharge occurred during base flow conditions rather than during the spring runoff when high concentrations of sediments are present giving the river a milky color.

f. Odor

The project would not contribute odor-causing materials to waters in the project area.

g. Taste

The project is not likely to introduce substances to the waters of the river systems that would impart objectionable tastes to the water.

h. Dissolved Gas Levels

The project would not cause notable increases in the turbulence of flows in the river systems and is unlikely to cause changes in the level of dissolved oxygen present in the water.

i. Nutrients

The project is not expected to add substantial concentrations of nutrients to surface waters in the river systems.

j. Eutrophication

The project would not contribute quantities of sediments or nutrients to the Flathead River system sufficient to accelerate the natural process of eutrophication presently occurring in Flathead Lake or Whitefish Lake.

k. Water Temperature

The project would not significantly increase the temperature of flowing waters in the river systems or in isolated wetlands.

2. Current Patterns and Circulation

a. Current Patterns, Drainage Patterns, Normal and Low Flows

The project would not alter localized drainage patterns or affect the total flow of water in the river systems.

b. Velocity

The construction of new bridges, or modifications of existing bridges is not expected to cause substantial changes to the velocity of existing flows in the rivers.

c. Stratification

The project would not be expected to contribute to the stratification of waters in any rivers.

d. Hydrologic Regime

The project would not affect the hydrologic regime present in any river system.

e. Aquifer Recharge

The project would not adversely affect aquifer recharge areas.

3. Normal Water Level Fluctuations

The project would not change normal water level fluctuations in any river system.

4. Salinity Gradients

Salinity gradients form where salt water from the ocean meets and mixes with fresh water from the land. This situation does not occur within the project area.

5. Actions That Will Be Taken to Minimize Impacts

An Erosion Control Plan for the final design of the project will be completed to identify best management practices (BMPs) for the control of erosion and sedimentation. The BMPs will be implemented during and after construction to minimize the potential for water quality degradation from sediments transported to receiving waters from disturbed areas and the roadway.

C. Suspended Particulate/Turbidity Determinations

1. Expected Changes in Suspended Particulates and Turbidity Levels At or Near the Disposal Sites

The placement of fill may introduce amounts of fine materials to surface waters causing temporary increases in the level of suspended sediments following deposition. During construction in or along rivers, some bottom sediments would likely be resuspended due to turbulence caused deposition activities. Turbidity levels in the vicinity of river encroachments or affected wetlands may be elevated for short periods during and after deposition of fill.

The potential for runoff from areas adjacent to rivers and wetlands to transport sediments to surface waters causing increases in turbidity also exists. The potential for introducing sediments to surface waters would be highest during construction activities when vegetation over large areas of the corridor has been removed exposing erodible soil materials.

2. Effects on Chemical and Physical Properties of the Water Column

a. Light Penetration

Light penetration may be affected by disturbances to the substrate and with the introduction of minor amounts of new materials associated with the discharge that may be suspended in the water. These impacts would be short-term and occur only during the construction of encroachments.

b. Dissolved Oxygen

Concentrations of suspended particulates may be elevated for short periods during construction activities, however, turbid conditions would not persist long enough to increase water temperatures or substantially lower the rate of photosynthesis and primary productivity.

c. Toxic Metals and Organics

The fill materials used for construction of the project would be locally obtained. Water quality data for river systems in the project area does not suggest that soils constituents in the project area are a source of toxic metals or organics. There is no reason to indicate that fill materials used for this project would contain concentrations of toxic metals or organics at higher levels than those that naturally occur in the area, except for one documented site containing heavy metals as described in Part III.D.1.c of this evaluation. This site will not be used for fill materials for construction of the project.

d. Pathogens

The proposed fill materials would not be expected to introduce pathogens to surface waters. Potential sources of viruses or pathogenic organisms are not known to exist in the project area.

e. Aesthetics

The project could produce localized adverse effects on the aesthetics of the water during the placement of fill materials if water turbidity levels are elevated for short periods during construction activities and following the deposition of fill in wetlands. The fill activities associated with the project would not be expected to produce suspended particulates in quantities that would create turbid plumes in the river.

3. Effects on Biota

a. Primary Production, Photosynthesis

As indicated in 2b above, turbid water conditions would not be expected to persist long enough to substantially lower the rate of photosynthesis and primary productivity. Turbidity increases would be localized to the area where the bridges would be constructed and where material is placed in wetlands.

b. Suspension/Filter Feeders

Collectors and filter feeders capture and use organic particles suspended in the current. Suspension and filter feeders (like net-spinning caddis larvae and burrowing mayfly nymphs) in waters of the project area would be destroyed if their habitat is located in areas where fill materials would be deposited. Other short-term impacts may occur if suspended fines from the fill materials alter or reduce the amount of organic particles available to these organisms. Such impacts would persist only for short periods during construction activities.

c. Sight Feeders

Long-term adverse impacts on sight feeders in the Flathead drainage (like stonefly nymphs) are not likely because the level of particulates suspended in the water volume would be elevated for only short periods immediately following deposition of fill materials.

4. Actions Taken to Minimize Impacts

An Erosion Control Plan for the final design of the proposed action will be completed to identify best management practices (BMPs) for the control of erosion and sedimentation. This list of BMPs was identified based on the procedures outlined in MDT's *Highway Construction Erosion Control Workplan*.

The BMPs identified generally include measures for erosion control on roadside slopes (like run on control, slope roughening, temporary seeding, and the use of erosion control blankets) and sediment retention measures (like using straw bale barriers, silt fences, and dugout ditch basins).

D. Contaminant Determinations

1. Evaluation of the Biological Availability of Pollutants in Dredged or Fill Material

a. Physical Characteristics of Fill or Dredge Materials

The primary material to be used as fill would be generated through excavation within the project area. Embankment materials would not be imported to the project area unless sufficient quantities are unavailable. A localized source for fill would be used if additional material is needed for the project. Local sources of fill material would be expected to consist of particle sizes and constituents similar to those of the project area. Any fill material used would be clean fill, and not leaking any hazardous or toxic pollutants.

b. Hydrography in Relation to Known or Anticipated Sources of Contamination

The location of US 93 crossing several rivers presents a situation in which contaminants from highway runoff or accidental spills could directly enter the river system. Highway runoff or an accidental spill on the bridges could introduce contaminants directly into the rivers.

The no-build alternative would not be expected to reduce accidents. Any of the build alternatives are expected to reduce the number of overall accidents on US 93. This expected accident reduction will also apply to vehicles transporting toxic or hazardous materials. Thus, the build alternatives are expected to reduce the potential for toxic or hazardous materials to enter into the aquatic environment.

Stormwater detention areas constructed for this project will also be available to detain hazardous or toxic materials spills. Spill materials which are detained will not directly enter the river system.

c. Results from Previous Testing of the Material or Similar Material in the Vicinity of the Project

A 2.03 hectares (5 acre) site, located along Alternative B at the southwest corner of Foy's Lake Road and the Burlington Northern Railroad track, is the former refinery. This site was inspected under Superfund in 1988 and reports indicated slightly elevated levels of lead and zinc and traces of cadmium and thallium. According to the reports, soil covering the entire site could be contaminated by heavy metals and should be avoided or removed. No other testing of materials in the project area has been done to determine if contaminants are present.

d. Known, Significant Sources of Persistent Pesticides from Land Runoff or Percolation

There are no known significant sources of pesticides present in the project area.

e. Spill Records for Petroleum Products or Designated (Section 311 of CWA) Hazardous Substances

In 1988, 37.8 liters (ten gallons) of oil was reported spilled on the east edge of US 93 south of Kalispell at Milepost 110.1. In 1992, an unknown quantity of gasoline was dumped down a storm drain at Milepost 111.3.

f. Other Public Records of Significant Introduction of Contaminants from Industries, Municipalities, or Other Sources

Other public records do not disclose any significant introduction of contaminants from industries, municipalities or other sources.

g. Known Existence of Substantial Material Deposits of Substances Which Could be Released in Harmful Quantities to the Aquatic Environment by Man-Induced Discharge Activities

There are no substantial material deposits of substances which could be harmful if released into the aquatic environment through discharge activities known to exist in the project area.

h. Other Sources of Contaminants

Other sources of contaminants that may be present in the project area are described in the following paragraphs.

Road Salts/Deicing Chemicals -- The project area is subject to winter weather that often produces snow-covered or icy road conditions on US 93. Maintenance activities during periods when such road conditions persist include the application of sand, salt or other deicing chemicals. In portions of the corridor where the road exists adjacent to rivers, these materials may be directly transported to receiving waters by subsequent snow plowing or by runoff from the highway generated by melting snow and ice. Analyses completed for the Draft EIS indicate that such substances are not likely to be introduced into rivers in concentrations that would substantially degrade water quality.

Dust Suppressants -- The Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences Air Quality Bureau has expressed concerns about the generation of particulate matter within the corridor during and following construction of the highway. The agency recommended that water and/or chemical dust suppressants be used to minimize road dust. In the absence of erosion control measures, surface runoff from the construction zone and roadway could transport chemicals from dust suppressants to receiving waters affecting water quality.

2. Contaminant Determination

An evaluation of the information presented in 1a. through 1h. above indicates that there is no reason at this time to believe the proposed fill material is a carrier of contaminants. Therefore, the material would be expected to meet the testing exclusion criteria.

E. Aquatic ecosystem and Organism Determinations

1. Effects on Plankton

For highway reconstruction projects, changes to water transparency due to suspended sediments and pollutants from surface runoff, are the primary concerns. The proposed reconstruction of US 93 is expected to cause only short-term changes in water clarity during the placement of fill materials, installation of coffer dams, or dewatering activities.

2. Effects on Benthos

The project's potential effects on benthos were generally described in III.A of this evaluation. Physical Substrate Determination presented earlier in this 404(b)(1) evaluation.

3. Effects on Nekton

Nekton are actively swimming aquatic organisms (like fish) able to navigate independently of water currents. The proposed action's potential impacts on nekton were generally described in Part III.A of this evaluation. Physical Substrate Determination presented earlier in this 404(b)(1) evaluation. Section 4.12 of the Draft EIS also contains a discussion of the impacts on fish that may potentially occur from the project.

4. Effects on Aquatic Food Web

The discharge activities associated with the proposed action would not cause long-term disruptions to or adversely impact the aquatic food web that exists in the river systems.

5. Effects on Special Aquatic Sites

Special aquatic sites are geographic sites possessing special ecological characteristics of productivity, habitat, wildlife protection, or other important and easily disrupted ecological values. These areas are generally recognized as significantly influencing or positively contributing to the overall environmental health or vitality of the entire ecosystem within a region. The following items a. through e. describe the special aquatic sites associated with the project, and project effects on those sites:

a. Sanctuaries and Refuges

There are several areas within the project area that have been designated as wildlife or waterfowl sanctuaries or refuges by State, Federal or local agencies. These are:

1. Kuhns Wildlife Management Area

2. Flathead Waterfowl Production Area

3. Batavia Waterfowl Production Area

The project would not impact any of these wildlife refuges.

b. Wetlands

Wetlands affected by the project consist of isolated wetlands and riparian wetlands associated with rivers. A total of 13.2 hectares (32.5 acres) of jurisdictional wetlands for Section 404 purposes exist within a corridor width of 30.5 meters (100 feet) on either side of the roadway or proposed centerline or proposed centerline for the proposed highway reconstruction. **Approximately 2.4 hectares (5.95 acres)** of these jurisdictional wetlands would be disturbed by construction.

c. Mud Flats

Mud flats are broad flat areas along seacoasts or inland lakes, ponds or rivers. They are usually vegetated. There are no mud flats within the limits of this project. The project would not create new mud flats.

d. Vegetated Shallows

Vegetated shallows are permanently inundated areas that under normal circumstances support communities of rooted aquatic vegetation like cattails and sedges. Wetlands locations are depicted in Figure 3-10 of the Final EIS. Wetlands which are considered vegetated shallows include wetland numbers 1-8, 11, 12, 16, 20, 22, 23, 25 and 28.

e. Riffle and Pool Complexes

Due to the low, to extremely low, gradient of the streams associated with this project there are no riffle and pool complexes at or near disturbance areas.

6. Effects on Threatened/Endangered Species and Their Habitat

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) indicates the bald eagle is present in the general vicinity. The peregrine falcon is a seasonal migrant to the area. Occurrence of the Water Howellia within the general project area has not been documented, nor is it expected. A Biological Assessment has been prepared for these species. **The USFWS has concurred in the finding of "No Adverse Effect."**

7. Effects on Other Wildlife, Mammals, Birds, Herpetiles, Fish, Invertebrates, Candidate Endangered Species, State Endangered Species, and Species of Special Interest or Concern and their Habitat.

The impacts of the proposed action on wildlife, birds, herpetiles, fish and other species of special interest or concern is discussed in Section 4.12 of the Draft EIS.

8. Actions Taken to Avoid and Minimize Impacts

Impact Avoidance

In accordance with Executive Order 11990, "Protection of Wetlands"; Section 404(b)(1) guidelines and the Interagency Memorandum of Understanding: Management and Mitigation of Highway Construction Impacts to Wetlands in the State of Montana (Montana Interagency Wetlands Group 1992) options to avoid wetlands were examined. Alignment alternatives were examined in Chapter 2 and in Chapter 4 of the Final EIS. Generally, routes to avoid wetlands were eliminated from consideration because they would produce environmental impacts equal to or greater than those associated with the proposed action. Several minor alignment shifts to minimize impacts to wetlands have been incorporated into project design. Additional alignment shifts are possible but they would still impact wetlands. Building a lesser facility would not avoid impacts to wetlands.

Impact Minimization

Because wetlands impacts resulting from the proposed highway reconstruction project can not be totally avoided, the following measures to minimize impacts on wetlands will be implemented with the project:

- Highway designer will use MDT's *Highway Construction Standard Erosion Control Workplan* to identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) for control of erosion and sediment transport. The selection of BMPs will be based on the distance to surface water or wetlands, precipitation intensity, soil properties, slopes, and the presence of critical resources (like threatened or endangered species habitat, prime fisheries, cultural sites, and hazardous materials/wastes).

- A Storm Water Erosion Control Plan, incorporating appropriate BMPs for the proposed construction project, will be developed and approved prior to the construction of the proposed project. The primary objective of the Storm Water Erosion Control Plan will be to minimize the erosion of disturbed areas and prevent the transport of sediments to wetlands or surface waters during the construction and post construction phases of the project.

- All disturbed areas not occupied by project facilities will be promptly revegetated to stabilize soils, minimize erosion, and improve the visual aspects of the project. Interim use of mulch or other erosion control practices may be necessary or recommended at certain locations along the project, such as at new bridge locations.

Measures to minimize other environmental impacts of the proposed action are generally discussed in Chapter 4 of the Final EIS.

9. Compensatory Actions Taken to Mitigate Impacts

Appropriate and practicable compensatory mitigation is required for unavoidable adverse impacts which remain after all appropriate and practicable minimization has been required. The *Memorandum of Agreement Between the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Army Concerning the Determination of Mitigation Under the Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines* dated February 6, 1990 indicates that first priority be given to compensatory actions (e.g., restoration of existing degraded wetlands or creation of man-made

wetlands) in areas adjacent or contiguous to the discharge site. If on-site compensatory mitigation was not practicable, off-site compensatory mitigation within the general project area should be pursued.

Compensatory Mitigation Within the Highway Right-of-Way

Because impacts to wetlands are unavoidable, measures to provide compensatory mitigation within the right-of-way were examined for the proposed project.

Several sites were identified. These will be explored in more detail in the final design process.

Compensatory Mitigation Outside the Right-of-Way

Wetland mitigation will be done to compensate for all direct wetland impacts. This will be done as close to on-site as possible and will be done to compensate for the lost wetland functions as much as possible. Sites outside the right-of-way which can be considered for wetland mitigation are described in **Section 4.11.3 of the Final EIS**.

10. Monitoring of Mitigative Actions

Standard specifications for wetlands designed as mitigation for impacts due to highway construction call for inspections to occur before, during, and after the replacement wetland is built by the project manager, MDT's wetland biologist, and/or MDT's agronomist. MDT will inspect wetlands constructed as mitigation for impacts during:

- a plan-in-hand visit prior to initiating development of the wetland;
- a visit made prior to the final grading for the wetland;
- the period when the wetland is planted;
- the first full summer after completion of wetland construction to determine the preliminary success of the project; and
- a final inspection in the second full summer following completion of the wetland construction, or other inspection schedules depending on whether the site is a created or enhanced wetland.

Agency reviews required prior to obtaining construction permits will also ensure that any discharges, pumping, or dewatering during construction activities do not degrade surface waters or wetlands.

F. Proposed Disposal Site Determinations

1. Mixing Zone Determination

a. Depth of Water at the Disposal Site

Depth of water within the 28 sites associated with this project varies considerably from 0.0 depth of ephemeral isolated wetlands to +/- 3 meters (10 feet) for the Stillwater and Whitefish Rivers at flowline.

b. Current Velocity, Direction, and Variability at Disposal Sites

Currents and water circulation are discussed in Part III.B.1 of this Evaluation.

c. Degree of Turbulence

Turbulent conditions created by the discharge of fill materials would be minor and occur only during the construction of the project.

d. Water Column Stratification

The project is not likely to introduce sediments into the water that would release contaminants to the water column in sufficient concentrations to produce a degradation of water quality.

e. Discharge Vessell and Speed

This consideration is not applicable to this project.

f. Rate of Discharge

This consideration is not applicable to this project.

g. Ambient Concentration of Constituents of Interest

This consideration is not applicable to this project.

h. Dredged or Fill Material Characteristics

The characteristics of the proposed fill materials are discussed in Part III.D.1. of this Evaluation.

i. Number of Discharges Per Unit of Time

This consideration is not applicable to this project.

j. Other Factors Affecting Rates and Patterns of Mixing

No unusual factors or consequences are expected at any disposal site.

2. An Evaluation of the Appropriate Factors in F(1) Above

The evaluation of the appropriate factors above indicate that the disposal sites and the size of the mixing zones are acceptable.

3. Actions to Minimize Adverse Discharge Effects

All appropriate and practicable steps have been taken, through application of recommendation of Section 230.70-230.77 to ensure minimal adverse effects of the proposed discharge. These measures are listed elsewhere in this Evaluation and in Chapter 4 of the Final EIS.

4. Determination of Compliance with Applicable Water Quality Standards

The following section identifies applicable federal water quality standards and indicates whether or not the project would comply with these standards. Compliance with applicable state water quality standards is addressed in IV.C of this evaluation.

Clean Water Act, as amended, (Federal Water Pollution Control Act) 33 USC 1251 et seq. - In compliance. Although Section 404 permit processing has not been initiated, FHWA has already coordinated with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

These coordination efforts identified the need for an individual 404 permit for discharge activities associated with the project.

Coastal Zone Management Act, as amended, 16 USC 1531, et seq. -- This Act is not applicable because the project area does not involve a coastal zone.

Estuary Protection Act, 16 USC 1221, et seq. -- This Act is not applicable because the project does not involve an estuary.

Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as amended, 16 USC 460-1(12) et seq. -- This act is not applicable because the project is not considered to be a water project.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended, 16 USC 661, et seq. -- In compliance. These Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the US Fish and Wildlife Service were coordinated with and their comments are incorporated into the Final EIS.

Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act, 33 USC, 1401, et seq. -- This Act is not applicable because the project does not involve the discharge of materials into the ocean.

Rivers and Harbors Act, 33 USC, 401, et seq. -- This Act is not applicable because the project would not place obstructions in a navigable waterway.

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, 16 USC 1101, et seq. -- This act is not applicable because the project does not involve the construction of dams in an upstream watershed.

The portion of the Flathead River system affected by the project is not on the National Inventory of Rivers potentially eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The project does not foreclose the opportunity for additional portions of the Flathead River in the project area to be potentially eligible for future inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Floodplain Management (Executive Order 11988) -- In compliance. The project would not have significant effects on the floodplain.

Protection of Wetlands (Executive Order 11990) -- In compliance. The project must involve work below the ordinary high water line to accomplish its purpose.

A discussion of the project's compliance with state water quality standards is presented later in this evaluation.

5. Potential Effects on Human Use Characteristics

a. *Municipal, Private and Potential Water Supply*

Municipal Water Supplies -- Neither the quantity or quality of waters for these municipal water sources would be affected by the project.

Private Water Supply -- Private wells are used for domestic and agricultural purposes throughout and serve the remainder of the residents within the project area. The project would not affect the quality or productivity of these water supplies.

b. *Recreational and Commercial Fisheries*

The project area does not contain rivers and lakes that support commercial fishing activities, but they do offer some sport fishing. The most common fish species in the project area are west slope cutthroat trout and bull trout, rainbow trout, lake trout and northern pike.

The project could temporarily disrupt habitat used by fish or cause short-term displacements of some fish species, however, no long-lasting adverse impacts on the quality of the project area's recreational fishery are anticipated. Section 4.12, Fisheries and Wildlife of the Final EIS discusses and describes impacts upon fish species and their habitat.

c. Water-Related Recreation

Canoeing is a popular water-related sport, taking place primarily on the Whitefish and Flathead Rivers within the project area. The project would temporarily disrupt some water-related recreational activities requiring some necessary detours during bridge construction.

d. Aesthetics of the Aquatic Ecosystem

The proposed discharges of fill material associated with the highway reconstruction project would not destroy vital elements of the landscape that contribute to the visual distinctiveness and diversity of the area. Therefore, the aesthetics of the aquatic ecosystem will not be adversely affected by the discharge of fill material associated with the project.

e. Parks, National and Historical Monuments, National Seashores, Wilderness Areas, Research Sites, Refuges/Sanctuaries and Similar Preserves

The impacts of the project and measures proposed as mitigation for the effects on the parks and historic sites are fully discussed in the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation attached to the Final EIS.

G. Determination of Cumulative Effects on the Aquatic Ecosystem

Cumulative effects are the changes in the aquatic ecosystem that are attributable to the collective effects of a number of individual discharges of fill material. Although the impact of a particular discharge may be a minor change in itself, the cumulative effect of many such changes can result in a major impairment of the water resources and interfere with the productivity and water quality of existing aquatic ecosystems.

According to MDT's records of wetland impacts for Basin I, Northwest Region 4, the following past, present and projected wetland impacts were reported:

Past and present:	0.31 hectares (.78 acres)
Projected:	10.8 hectares (26.69 acres)

It should be noted that Basin I, Northwest Region 4 is a geographic area larger than the project area, however, no data specific to the project area are available. Also, wetlands impacts from this project are not included in the projections since no preferred alternative has been selected.

The effects of the project combined with rapid and sustained residential and commercial growth within the Flathead River valley could contribute to substantial wetland impacts and losses in the region, if such effects were not mitigated. All practicable efforts to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands will precede any efforts to mitigate impacts. Plans to mitigate impacts on wetlands and other elements of the aquatic ecosystem are required elements of this project.

Highway reconstruction and other activities within or adjacent to wetlands or surface waters presents the potential for spreading noxious weeds. Invasion of wetlands by species like spotted knapweed, Canada thistle, or purple loosestrife is a primary concern. Such species have become established in portions of the Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge, a large wetlands complex located south of Polson.

H. Determination of Secondary Effects on the Aquatic Ecosystem

Secondary effects are the effects on an aquatic ecosystem that are associated with the discharge of fill materials but do not result form the actual placement of the fill material. The most apparent secondary effect on the aquatic ecosystem is the potential for spills of fuel, oil, hydraulic fluids, or other substances during construction activities and the subsequent use of the facility. Such spills have the potential to degrade water quality and adversely affect all elements of the aquatic ecosystem.

Two spills have been documented in the project area as described in Part IV.D.1.e of this Evaluation. The potential for spills of hazardous substances always exists. There are few, if any, restrictions placed on the use of US 93 by firms transporting hazardous substances by truck.

Secondary impacts on the aquatic ecosystem also occur when minor amounts of road sands and salts enter into the Flathead River system during snow plowing activities during the winter. Snowmelt and stormwater runoff from the highway also transports small amounts of materials that can degrade water quality to adjacent surface waters and wetlands.

Other secondary (indirect) effects of the project are discussed in Chapter 4 of the Final EIS.

IV. Findings of Compliance (Section 230.12)

A. Adaptation of the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines to this Evaluation

The evaluations contained herein are based on a conceptual design of the project alternatives prepared solely for the purpose of identifying and quantifying the environmental impacts associated with the project. This project must identify a preferred alternative and receive design and location approvals before the project can be advanced to the design stage.

Therefore, this evaluation deviates slightly from the requirements outlined in 230.10 and may not fulfill all the requirements of these guidelines. Some project specific information required for the Section 404(b)(1) evaluation can not be accurately predicted until final design plans are available, however, many of the conclusions offered in this document are not expected to change based on the final design of the proposed facility.

B. Evaluation of Availability of Practicable Alternatives to the Proposed Discharge Site Which Would Have Less Adverse Impact on the Aquatic Ecosystem

1. Alternatives Considered That are Available and Practicable

As described in II.B. of this evaluation, no preferred alternative has been selected. Evaluation of the practicable alternatives is presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 of the Final EIS.

C. Compliance with Applicable State Water Quality Standards

The project would be in compliance with both the Montana Water Quality Act for Section 3(a) authorizations, and the Montana Stream Protection Act (MCA 87-5-501) with the following:

- a 124SPA Stream Protection Act Permit issued by the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Services Water Quality.

The 3(a) authorization is typically issued to the project contractor.

All work would be done in accordance with Section 319 of the Water Quality Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-4). Control of water pollution for both specific and non-point sources would be described in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (P.L. 92-500) for the proposed action. The project would require a Clean Water Act (33 USC 1251-1376) - Section 402/Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) Permit from the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences' (MDHES) Water Quality Bureau. The construction of bridge piers requires that an MPDES permit be obtained.

MDHES Water Quality Bureau must certify that any discharges into state waters will comply with certain water quality standards before federal permits or licenses can be granted. The authority for this action comes from Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The certification must be provided to the Corps of Engineers by MDHES prior to the issuance of a Section 404 permit.

A Storm Water Erosion Control Plan based on the final design of the project would be submitted to the MDHES Water Quality Bureau in compliance with their Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Regulations (ARM 16.20.1314). Best Management Practices would be used in the design of this Plan using guidelines established in MDT's *Highway Construction Standard Erosion Control Workplan*. The objective of the Plan is to minimize erosion of disturbed areas during and following construction.

With careful planning and proper implementation of the erosion control plan, the chance of pollutants or sediments reaching surface waters will be reduced. The plan will be incorporated into the construction plans and specifications for this proposed project. Contractors will be required to strictly adhere to its provisions.

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) requires that the contractor for the project obtain a temporary water use permit if construction activities (like dust control) use surface water at a rate of over 132 liters (35 gallons) per minute or use over 12,196 cubic meters (10 acre-feet) of ground water.

Evaluation of the discharges relative to Montana Water Quality Standards found in Title 16, Chapter 20, Subchapters 6 and 7 and an assessment of the project's impacts upon the water quality and designated uses of local waterbodies is presented in Section 4.10 Water Resources and Quality of the Final EIS.

D. Compliance with Applicable Toxic Effluent Standard or Prohibition Under Section 307 of the Clean Water Act

Section 307 of the Clean Water Act imposes effluent limitations or prohibitions on discharges of materials containing specified toxic pollutants into surface waters. Identified toxic pollutants include aldrin/dieldrin, several DDT compounds, endrin, toxaphene, benzidine, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Neither the project nor activities associated with it would discharge toxic pollutants identified in Section 307 of the Clean Water Act.

E. Compliance With the Endangered Species Act of 1973

The USFWS has reviewed the Biological Assessment (BA) prepared for this project addressing impacts to threatened and endangered species. The USFWS concurs with the determination made in the BA that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect the endangered bald eagle, the endangered peregrine falcon and the proposed water howellia.

F. Compliance with Specific Measures for Marine Sanctuaries Designated by the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972

This Act is not applicable because the project does not involve the discharge of materials into the ocean.

G. Evaluation of Extent of Degradation of Waters of the United States

1. Significant Adverse Effects on Human Health and Welfare

The project would not adversely affect municipal or private water supplies, recreational or commercial fisheries, plankton, fish, shellfish, or most forms of wildlife.

2. Significant Adverse Effects on Life Stages of Aquatic Life and Other Wildlife Dependent Upon Aquatic Ecosystems

The project would not produce significant adverse effects on the life stages of aquatic organisms or other wildlife dependent upon the aquatic ecosystem.

3. Significant Adverse Effects on Aquatic Ecosystem, Ecosystem Diversity, Productivity and Stability

The project would not produce significant adverse effects on the diversity, productivity or stability of the aquatic ecosystem in the project area.

4. Significant Adverse Effects on Recreational, Aesthetic and Economic Values

The project would not have significant adverse effects on the recreational or economic values of the aquatic ecosystem in the project area.

H. Appropriate and Practicable Steps Taken to Minimize Potential Adverse Impacts of the Discharge on the Aquatic Ecosystem

The measures taken to minimize the potential adverse impacts of the proposed discharges on the aquatic ecosystems have been described previously in this Evaluation. These impacts primarily focus on the potential for impacts caused by erosion of disturbed areas and the transport of sediments from the project area to nearby surface waters. These potential impacts will be addressed by employing measures during and after construction that will:

- ensure that the developments associated with this project conform to the natural characteristics of the area;
- limit the area of land disturbed and the amount of time that disturbed areas are exposed;
- stabilize and promptly protect disturbed areas;
- keep runoff velocities low;
- prevent off-site water from entering and running over disturbed areas;
- retain sediments within the project area by filtering runoff as it flows or by detaining runoff for a period that will allow sediment particles to settle out; and
- ensure that erosion control features are functioning as intended and that adjustments or improvements are made if needed to prevent sediments from leaving the project area.

Other specific mitigation commitments proposed for this project are discussed in Chapter 4 of the Final EIS.

I. Conclusion

On the basis of the Guidelines, the proposed disposal sites for the discharge of dredged or fill material is specified as complying with the requirements of these guidelines, with the inclusion of appropriate and practical conditions to minimize pollution or adverse effects on the aquatic ecosystem. These conditions are generally described in H above.

File

RECORD OF DECISION

For

US 93 (Somers to Whitefish West)
Milepost 104.3 to 133.0
Flathead County, Montana

Final Environmental Impact Statement
Final Section 4(f) Statement
FHWA-MT-EIS-94-01-F

Federal Highway Administration

Date: 11/30/94 By: James W. Lamb
FHWA

Office of Planning and Program Development
Federal Highway Administration, Region 8
Lakewood, Colorado

Record of Decision for
US 93 (Somers to Whitefish West)
Milepost 104.3 to 133.0
Flathead County, Montana

Final Environmental Impact Statement
Final Section 4(f) Statement
FHWA-MT-EIS-94-01-F

Decision

The decision of the Federal Highway Administration in cooperation with the Montana Department of Transportation is to select Alternative A(COMBO) for the reconstruction of US Highway 93 between Milepost 104.3 and Milepost 133.0. Alternative A(COMBO) consists of:

- From Milepost 104.3 to Rocky Cliff Road, a four-lane facility with a depressed median (rural section).
- From Rocky Cliff Road to Cemetery Road, a five-lane facility (rural section).
- From Cemetery Road to Airport Road, a five-lane facility (urban section).
- From Airport Road to Ninth Street, a four-lane facility (urban section).
- From Grandview Drive to Reserve Drive, a five-lane facility (urban section).
- From Reserve Drive to Milepost 117, a five-lane facility (rural section).
- From Milepost 117 to Timber Lane, a four-lane facility with a depressed median (rural section).
- From Timber Lane to MT 40, a five-lane facility (rural section).
- From MT 40 to the Whitefish River (South), a four-lane facility with a raised median (when traffic volumes warrant it). If a five-lane facility is built, it will be wide enough to accommodate a future raised median (urban section).
- From Whitefish River (West) to Karrow Avenue, a three-lane facility (urban section).
- From Karrow Avenue to west of Lion Mountain Road, a two-lane facility with a raised median (urban section).

- From west of Lion Mountain Road to Milepost 130.6, a three-lane facility (rural section).

- From Milepost 130.6 to 133.0, a two-lane facility (rural section).

The selected alternative also includes:

- Kalispell bypass alternative B, with right-of-way for a four-lane south of US 2 and a four-lane with a median north of US 2.

- Whitefish area alternative C-3, which converts Baker and Spokane to a one-way couplet, each carrying two through lanes and includes a new bridge over the Whitefish River for Seventh Street.

The selected alternative also includes a bikepath located as follows:

- From south of MT 82 to Ashley Creek: separated bikepath.
- From Ashley Creek to Airport Road: bikepath on shoulder.
- Along Kalispell bypass south of US 2: separated bikepath.
- Along Kalispell bypass north of US 2: separated bikepath (where feasible).
- From Grandview Drive to Reserve Drive: separated bikepath.
- From Reserve Drive to Whitefish River: bikepath on shoulder.
- From Whitefish River (west) to MP 133: separated bikepath (where feasible).

Other elements of the selected alternative include construction of a scenic turnout south of MT 82, construction of entry treatments for Kalispell and Whitefish and construction of three park-n-ride lots.

Alternatives Considered

The alternatives evaluated for the project varied by segment.

For the majority of the corridor, there were three basic build alternatives that were evaluated in detail. A brief description of these is included here:

- A(TURN-LANE) consists of four 3.66-meter (12-foot) through lanes plus a center left-turn lane. Shoulders of 2.44 meters (8 feet) would be provided in rural areas and shoulders of 3.05 meters (10 feet) would be provided in urban areas.

- A(MEDIAN) consists of four 3.66-meter (12-foot) through lanes separated by either a depressed grassy median or a raised median (in urban areas). Shoulders of 2.44 meters (8 feet) would be provided in rural areas and shoulders of 3.05 meters (10 feet) would be provided in urban areas.

- A(COMBO) combines the two basic cross-sections from each of the other two build alternatives and varies the application of these through the corridor.

A summary by segment of alternatives considered is included here:

Segment	Alternatives initially considered:	Alternatives evaluated in detail:	Selected Alternative:
Somers to South of Kalispell	No-Build Somers West Loop New Corridor A(TURN-LANE) A(MEDIAN) A(COMBO) Mass Transit TDM	No-Build A(TURN-LANE) A(MEDIAN) A(COMBO)	A(COMBO)
Segment in Kalispell area	No-Build Bypass A Bypass B Bypass C1 Bypass C2 Bypass D Bypass F Bypass B Extended US 93 improvements only Mass Transit TDM	No-Build US 93 (Alt. A) plus B(TURN-LANE) US 93 (Alt. A) plus B(MEDIAN) US 93 (Alt. A) only	US 93 (Alt. A) plus B(MEDIAN)
North of Kalispell to South of Whitefish	No-Build Farm-to-Market Road KM Road Whitefish Stage Road New corridor A(TURN-LANE) A(MEDIAN) A(COMBO) Mass Transit TDM	No-Build A(TURN-LANE) A(MEDIAN) A(COMBO)	A(COMBO)
Segment in Whitefish Area	No-Build A(FOUR-LANE) Bypass A Bypass B Bypass C Bypass D Bypass E Couplet (Alt. G) Mass Transit TDM	No-Build A(FOUR-LANE) C(COUPLET-1) C(COUPLET-2) C(COUPLET-3) C(COUPLET-4) C(OFF-SET)	C(COUPLET-3)

Segment West of Whitefish	No-Build A(TURN-LANE) A(MEDIAN) Mass Transit TDM	No-Build A(TURN-LANE) A(MEDIAN) A(COMBO)	A(COMBO)

In the Kalispell area, three build alternatives were evaluated in detail. These included:

- Improvements to US 93 through town (Alternative A).
- B(MEDIAN): Construction of a west bypass with a raised median and improvements to US 93 through town.
- B(TURN-LANE): Construction of a west bypass with a center left-turn lane and improvements to US 93 through town.

In the Whitefish area, six build alternatives were evaluated in detail. These were:

- A(FOUR-LANE): Improvements to US 93 on Spokane and Second only.
- C(COUPLET-1): One-way traffic on Second/Spokane and Second/Baker
- C(COUPLET-2): One-way traffic on Second/Spokane and Second/Baker; with new Seventh Street bridge; and construction of Baker Street extension.
- C(COUPLET-3): One-way traffic on Second/Spokane and Second/Baker; with new Seventh Street bridge.
- C(COUPLET-4): One-way traffic on Second/Spokane and Second/Baker; with construction of Baker Street extension.
- C(OFF-SET): Two-way traffic on Spokane, Baker and Second; Spokane with two northbound lanes and one southbound lane; Baker with two southbound lanes and one northbound lane; and Second with two westbound lanes and one eastbound lane.

Each of the reasonable alternatives in the EIS were evaluated for the full range of environmental issues. The primary issues that were important factors in the decision-making process were:

- Traffic operations, which were a particularly important issue in the Kalispell and Whitefish areas. The selected alternative in these areas had generally better traffic operations characteristics than the other build alternatives.

- Traffic safety, which was an issue along certain segments of US 93. The selected alternative was projected to have improved safety over the No-Build alternative. No significant differences in overall safety were found between the A(MEDIAN) and the A(TURN-LANE) alternative.

- Land use, in particular the geographic distribution and form of new development (compact vs. dispersed) and compatibility with city/county planning objectives. The selected alternative was chosen to balance these values with the values of construction cost and right-of-way.

- Social impacts, in particular compatibility with community character and enhancement of residential values in downtown Kalispell. The selected alternative is anticipated to improve social values, since through traffic will be reduced because of the bypass.

- Air quality impacts, which were a particularly important issue in the Kalispell and Whitefish areas. The selected alternative in these areas had lower PM10 emissions than the other build alternatives or the No-Build alternative.

- Visual impacts, including enhancement of scenic values, were an important issue. The selected alternative was chosen to balance these values with the values of construction cost and right-of-way.

- Access provisions, including location of direct access points on US 93. Where there are numerous curb cuts along one or both sides of the roadway and a limited number of vehicles use any one driveway, the continuous two-way left-turn lane as in Alternative A(TURN-LANE) has been selected.

There are two alternatives which have fewer impacts to natural resources. The No-Build alternative is the alternative that causes the least harm to natural resources; however, it fails to satisfy the stated purpose and need for the project. Implementation of Alternative A in the Kalispell area would cause less harm to natural resources; however, its social, economic, congestion and air quality impacts to the central area of Kalispell would be greater. The selected alternative provides the best transportation solution while minimizing impacts to natural resources.

Section 4(f)

Four properties were determined to have Section 4(f) impacts:

- Purchase of 0.10 hectare (0.25 acre) of a portion of the Ashley Creek recreation trail, which will be converted to a transportation use.

- A portion of the historic Kalispell-Somers railroad spur which will be converted to a transportation use.

- A small number (three) trees within the historic Kalispell Courthouse Historic District that will be removed.

- Roadway widening and addition of a sidewalk in western Whitefish which will occur adjacent to the West Second Street properties, which are in a historic district.

A variety of location and design alternatives were considered in an effort to avoid or minimize impacts to these Section 4(f) properties. However, these avoidance alternatives failed to satisfy the purpose and need for the project, would have extraordinary costs, or would cause environmental impacts greater than that of the selected alternative. Therefore, it was determined that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of these Section 4(f) properties. The US Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary concurred with this determination and with actions proposed as mitigation for impacts to the properties in correspondence dated August 3, 1994.

Measures to Minimize Harm

The following text summarizes the major mitigation commitments. These will be implemented and monitored by MDT.

Relocation Mitigation

Property which is required for construction of a federal highway will be subject to the provisions of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

Air Quality Mitigation

Air quality mitigation measures to be implemented between MT 40 and Lion Mountain Road are:

1. Surfacing of gravel and dirt shoulders.

2. Construction of curb and gutter.

Wetland Mitigation

A wetland mitigation plan has been discussed and approved by the resource agencies. It consists of the following three elements:

1. Replacement or enhancement of wetlands at two or three "on-site locations," adjacent to the area of impact. Locations for these will be determined during the final design process.

2. Enhancement of 3.3 hectares (8.2 acres) of wetlands in the Waterfowl Production Area on the north end of Flathead Lake.

3. Wetland replacement at Lawrence Park.

Cultural Resources Mitigation

1. The MDT will conduct monitoring at the Altenburg and McCormack farms to assess the visual and audible impacts to the site before, during and after construction. The results of the monitoring will be provided to SHPO and the ACHP within 18 months of the completion of construction.

2. Continued communication with the Flathead Culture Committee regarding cultural materials of concern to the Committee.

Other mitigation is addressed in the Section 4(f) section.

Hazardous Materials Mitigation

Detailed hazardous materials analyses, including sampling and testing of questionable soils or water will be conducted during the design of the selected alternative.

Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) located adjacent to the highway on Sites 2, 3, 5, 28, 45, 50, and 59 (as shown on Figure 4-8 of the FEIS) will be located prior to construction so that potential contact with the fuel tanks can be avoided during construction. For the Burlington Northern trackbed located between Somers and Snowline Road, the right-of-way purchase agreement between MDT and railroad representatives requires specific pre-construction mitigation responsibilities of both parties involved in the property transaction.

For Site B6 (shown on Figure 4-8 of the FEIS), excavation and /or landfarming of potentially-contaminated soils are possible mitigation measures and will be implemented (if necessary) in concert with roadway construction.

Construction Mitigation

MDT will require the contractor for the proposed action to schedule construction operations and provide traffic control in a manner that will assure:

1. Adequate safety and convenience to motorists and pedestrians, and the safety of construction workers at all times.

2. Traffic control conforms with all MDT specifications and plans and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

The contractor will be required to submit detailed traffic control plans that designate how access will be maintained to abutting land uses, keeping a minimum of one lane open in each direction of travel at all times during construction. A public information plan will also be developed that warns motorists in advance of the construction activity that construction will be occurring.

The following additional mitigation will be implemented:

- A construction staging plan will be developed to minimize construction impacts to adjacent property owners. This will include specifications to address issues such as number of lanes open to traffic, traffic control, restrictions related to work hours or haul routes, pavement marking, flagging operations and area disturbed. Consideration will be given to providing incentives to contractors to minimize the construction disturbance.

- Best management practices such as timing will be used to minimize disruptions to spawning or migration of aquatic species.

Section 4(f) Mitigation

Ashley Creek Recreation Trail

Agreement has been reached to provide the following mitigation:

- Purchase property for approximately 625 meters (2,050 feet) of relocated trail.

- Build approximately 625 meters (2,050 feet) of new trail generally south of Ashley Creek, just south of US 2.

- Provide for an at-grade signalized intersection across the Kalispell bypass at US 2.

- Provide for a grade-separated bikepath crossing adjacent to and on the south side of Ashley Creek as it crosses the Kalispell bypass just south of US 2. Usage by equestrians will be provided for if possible.

- Connect the Ashley Creek trail with the new bike lane along the Kalispell Bypass.

- Provide approximately 2.11 hectares (5.22 acres) of property to Flathead County Parks. This is planned for at least partial use as parking and a trailhead facility, to compensate for the approximately 0.10 hectare (0.25 acre) of Section 6(f) land converted from a recreation use. If the appraised value of the replacement land is less than the appraised value of the impacted property, additional property (to make up the difference) will be provided to Flathead County Parks as 6(f) replacement property.

Historic Properties

At 24FH350 (the railroad spur) on the Kalispell bypass, the MDT will install a historic marker describing the history and significance of the Kalispell-Somers Railroad spur.

For the Whitefish Residential Historic District, the MDT will conduct additional survey work and prepare the nomination of the district to the National Register of Historic Places. When the nomination has been completed and accepted by the NRHP, the MDT will then prepare a NRHP sign to the local historical society describing the Whitefish Residential Historic District and its significance to the history of the community.

If construction in the Kalispell Courthouse Historic District results in the removal of any trees, they will be replaced by MDT.

Monitoring or Enforcement of Program

The Montana Department of Transportation will monitor the project to ensure compliance with the plans and specifications for this project. Adherence to the specifications will mitigate the short-term construction-related impacts.

Based on coordination with regulatory agencies, the following permits must be obtained prior to the construction of the proposed action:

- Section 404 Permit: The Montana Department of Transportation must obtain a Clean Water Act: Section 404 permit from the Corps of Engineers.

- Section 401 Water Quality Certification: The MDHES Water Quality Division must certify that any discharges into state waters will comply with certain water quality standards before federal permits or licenses can be granted.

- NPDES/MPDES Permit: The MDHES Water Quality Division will review plans and specifications relative to erosion control for a stormwater discharge permit. A Storm Water Erosion Control Plan will be developed for the project.

- 3A Authorization: This authorization must be obtained from the MDHES Water Quality Division for construction activities that may cause unavoidable short-term violations of state surface water quality standards for turbidity, total dissolved solids, or temperature.

- 124 Stream Protection Act: This permit is needed from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to maintain the quality of streams and fisheries affected by highway-related construction.

- Beneficial Water Use Permit: Under the Montana Water Use Act, a temporary water use permit will be required from the DNRC if water is needed for dust control or other construction-related purposes.

- Floodplain Development Permit: A floodplain development permit from Flathead County will be required for road and bridge construction and placement of fill in floodplains of the Flathead River system.

- Air Quality Permit: The suppliers of asphalt materials and crushed rock needed for construction must have an air quality permit from the MDHES Air Quality Division.

- Construction Blasting Permit: The Contractor performing any blasting required for the proposed action must be licensed by the Safety Bureau of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, Worker's Compensation Division.

- Permits for Open Burning: If open burning occurs with the right-of-way clearing activities for the proposed highway improvement project, fire control permits from DSL and open burning permits from the MDHES Air Quality Division and Flathead County may be required.

Comments on the Final EIS/Section 4(f) Statement

Ten letters or telephone calls were received following public distribution of the Final EIS. The letters that were received either endorsed the selected alternative, requested reconsideration of an alternative on another corridor, or requested provision of access for a particular property.

Here is a response to the letters received:

1. Development of alternative corridors to US 93 was considered but dropped from final evaluation because traffic demand on the US 93 corridor is such that improvements would still be needed to US 93.

2. Coordination with individual property owners will occur during the design and right-of-way process. Details related to property access will be negotiated with individual property owners.

US Highway 93 • Somers to WhitefishWest

FINAL
Environmental Impact Statement
and FINAL
Section 4(f) Statement

VOLUME II

US Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

FHWA-MT-EIS-94-01-F

US 93 (Somers to Whitefish West)
Milepost 104.3 to 133.0
Flathead County, Montana

Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Section 4(f) Statement

Volume II

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COMMISSIONERS OFFICE

Submitted Pursuant to 42 USC 4332(2)(c);
49 USC 303; MEPA 2-3-104 and 75-1-101;
and Executive Order 11990

US Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Cooperating Agencies:
US Army Corps of Engineers
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Soil Conservation Service
Flathead County
Montana Department of Transportation
Montana Department of Health and Environmental Science
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

US 93 (Somers to West of Whitefish)

Flathead County, Montana

Final

Environmental Impact Statement

Volume II

September 1994

Federal Highway Administration

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2-25-94
Vol. 59 No. 38
Pages 9065-9380

federal register

Friday
February 25, 1994

Briefings on How To Use the Federal Register
For information on briefings in Washington, DC, Tucson, AZ, and Oakland, CA, see announcement on the inside cover of this issue.

United States Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration, Parker-Davis Project

Schedule of Rates for Nonfirm Transmission Service

Effective

Step One: The first day of the first full billing period beginning on or after February 1, 1994.

Step Two: The first day of the first full billing period beginning on or after October 1, 1995, and remaining in effect through January 31, 1999, or until superseded, whichever occurs first.

Available

Within the marketing area served by the Parker-Davis Project (P-DP) transmission facilities.

Applicable

To nonfirm transmission service customers where capacity and energy are supplied to the P-DP system at points of interconnection with other systems, transmitted subject to the availability of transmission capacity, and delivered on a unidirectional basis, less losses, to points of delivery on the P-DP system specified in the service contract.

Character and Condition of Service

Alternating current at 60 hertz, three-phase, delivered and metered at the voltages and points of delivery established by contract.

Step One

Nonfirm Transmission Service Charge: 1.98 mills per kilowatthour of the scheduled or delivered kilowatthours at point of delivery, established by contract, payable monthly.

Step Two

Nonfirm Transmission Service Charge: 2.39 mills per kilowatthour of the scheduled or delivered kilowatthours at point of delivery, established by contract, payable monthly.

Adjustments

For Reactive Power

None. There shall be no entitlement to transfer of reactive kilovoltamperes at delivery points, except when such transfers may be mutually agreed upon by the contractor and contracting officer or their authorized representatives.

For Losses

Capacity and energy losses incurred in connection with the transmission and delivery of power and energy under this rate schedule shall be supplied by the customer in accordance with the service contract.

Issued at Washington, DC, February 18, 1994.

Joel K. Bladow,
Assistant Administrator for Washington Liaison.

[FR Doc. 94-4341 Filed 2-24-94; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-M

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[ER-FRL-4708-8]

Environmental Impact Statements and Regulations; Availability of EPA Comments

Availability of EPA comments prepared February 07, 1994 Through February 11, 1994 pursuant to the Environmental Review Process (ERP), under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act as amended. Requests for copies of EPA comments can be directed to the Office of Federal Activities at (202) 260-5076.

An explanation of the ratings assigned to draft environmental impact statements (EISs) was published in FR dated April 10, 1993 (58 FR 18392).

Draft EISs

ERP No. D-AFS-L65205-ID. Rating EO2, Sunshine Timber Sale, Implementation, Salmon National Forest, Cobalt Ranger District, Big Deer Creek, Lemhi County, ID.

Summary: EPA expressed environmental objections based on the potential for adverse effects to existing beneficial uses of Panther Creek and its tributaries under all of the action alternatives. Panther Creek and its tributaries have been listed as stream segments of concern by the State of Idaho. Several of the alternatives are also not consistent with the Salmon National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. EPA requested additional information regarding water quality standards, wetlands effects, the potential for erosion hazard, mitigation effectiveness, site specific monitoring, noise effects and air quality effects.

ERP No. D-AFS-L65208-AK. Rating EC2, Shamrock Timber Sales, Timber Harvesting and Road Construction, Stikine Area, Kupreanof Island, Tongass National Forest, Implementation, AK.

Summary: EPA expressed environmental concerns based on the potential for adverse effects to existing beneficial uses of streams in the Shamrock analysis area from this timber sale and future timber sales. EPA requested additional information about compliance with water quality standards, noise effects, site specific monitoring and mitigation effectiveness.

Final EISs

ERP No. F-BPA-L08049-00. Alternating Current (AC) Intertie Transmission Facilities, Capacity Ownership and Federal Marketing and Joint Ventures, Implementation, WA, OR, ID, MT, CA, NV, UT, NM, AZ, WY and British Columbia.

Summary: Review of the Final EIS has been completed and the project found to be satisfactory. No formal letter was sent to the preparing agency.

ERP No. F-FRC-B05182-NH. Upper Androscoggin River Basin Hydroelectric Projects, Issuance of New Licenses/Relicensing for Operation of Seven Hydroelectric Projects, Coos County, NH.

Summary: EPA expressed environmental objections in that the FEIS: Did not resolve the issues of the scope of the analysis, range of reasonable alternatives, cumulative impacts, potential wetland impacts, water quality impacts and dioxin contaminated river sediments. EPA recommended that a supplemental EIS be prepared to assess the above issues and the environmental impacts from the modified project.

Dated: February 22, 1994.

Marshall Cain,
Senior Legal Advisor, Office of Federal Activities.

[FR Doc. 94-4349 Filed 2-24-94; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-U

[ER-FRL-4708-7]

Environmental Impact Statements; Notice of Availability

Responsible Agency: Office of Federal Activities, General Information (202) 260-5076 OR (202) 260-5075. Weekly receipt of Environmental Impact Statements Filed February 14, 1994 Through February 18, 1994 Pursuant to 40 CFR 1506.9.

EIS No. 940047, Final Supplement, AFS, MT, Beaver-Dry Timber Sales, Timber Harvest and Road Construction, Updated Information, Implementation, Helena National Forest, Lincoln Ranger District, Lewis and Clark and Powell Counties, MT, Due: March 28, 1994, Contact: Maggie Pittman (406) 449-5201.

EIS No. 940048, Draft EIS, IBR, UT, Narrows Multi-Purpose Water Development Project, Construction

Notice of Availability and Public Hearings

US 93 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

The DEIS for the US 93 (Somers to Whitefish West) project is available for public review at the following locations:
Kalispell: City Hall, Edgerton School, Kalispell Library, Flathead County Commissioners Office
Somers: Somers School
Whitefish: City Hall, Central School, Whitefish Library

Public comments must be received by May 2, 1994. Comments can be submitted in the following manner:

❑ By attending one of the Public Hearings listed below:

Kalispell	Somers	Whitefish
Tues. 3/22/94	Wed. 3/23/94	Thurs. 3/24/94
6:00-9:00 pm	6:00-9:00 pm	6:00-9:00 pm
Cavanaugh's	Somers School	Mountain Mall

❑ By mail or phone to: Gina McAfee, Carter & Burgess
216 16th St., 1700, Denver, CO 80202 (303) 820-5240

❑ By phone to the Whitefish Hotline: 862-1388

❑ By phone to an Advisory Committee member:

Andy Feury	752-5812	Dale Ennor	862-2640
Pam Kennedy	752-4215	John Wilson	752-6600
Bill Hedstrom	758-5503	Marc Pitman	758-5790
Jim Weaver	444-6003	Bruce Boody	862-4755
Phil Lauman	857-3632	Jim Lynch	752-4215
Mike Stocklin	756-7217	Shirley Schmidt	862-5536
Tom Little	752-1440	Marshall Murray	755-5700
Steve Apgar	257-4141	Tracy Crabtree	756-1150

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Public Hearing Transcripts

U.S. HIGHWAY 93

SOMERS TO WHITEFISH WEST

DRAFT INVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

PUBLIC HEARING

Held Tuesday, March 22, 1994- 6:00 P.M.
Cavanaugh's, Kalispell, Montana

ORIGINAL

Reported By: Bambi A. Goodman, CSR, RPR

Printed on recycled paper

I-N-D-E-X

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TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 1994 - 6:00 P.M.

Oral comment:

Dr. Lawrence Iwersen. Regarding the issue of a divided highway versus a nondivided highway, it is my feeling and experience that safety would be better served with a divided highway. The costs of head-on collisions in medical costs, post-hospitalization costs and eventual Social Security disability costs over the course of five years would offset any increased costs for spending incurred by developing a divided highway. Obviously, the safety of people in the valley would be better served with a divided highway and, as a physician, I would strongly recommend that a divided highway be constructed. Thank you.

Written comments:

Support Alternative B as bypass to Kalispell. Really want divided highway. Five lanes won't do any good because we can't see lines. Left-hand turn lane isn't safe because you can't see the lines.

Median design will not work between Somers and Kalispell due to high number of existing accesses.

Let highway department come in and build road and be done with it.

People want to get through town. Visual importance is secondary.

Stillwater is big mistake - impact on residents out on Stillwater.

Safety factor not major difference - five lane is more optimal.

Oral comment:

My name is Virginia Sloan. I live in Kalispell. And it's real obvious to me that the what you call the turn lanes appears to be a much more dangerous alternative than the meridian. Another thing that I'm real concerned about is the potential for growth and land use issues along the highway. I think you have more chance for uncontrolled, erratic growth patterns without appropriate zoning and planning with the five-lane design. And I think that's a real concern.

The elements that I would really like to see included in the plan are the bike paths and the--if you want to call them extra-design elements. They're a real plus. And we need to be visionary and long-term thinking in the design of this highway. And I guess I would--I would expound in length in my writing. For safety also, I would emphasize that.

Written comments:

Owns property southeast corridor Schrade, 16 acres of highway frontage. Would like access in south of property and in middle. Likes five lane.

Concerned with median and access. Thinks five lane is safer.

Put a light at intersection at Schrade. Schrade is a very dark intersection. Consider left-turn bay for Schrade Road.

Highland Drive. Concerned about an approach just north of Highland. It was? The original plan is not there now.

MS. BRAMER: Greetings. I just want to briefly talk about what we're going to do for the next hour or so and do a couple of quick introductions. We'll talk a little bit about the purpose of the meeting and some of the major findings of the draft Environmental Impact Statement and the process from here on out to the final EIS and then take any questions, clarifications from this group, and then we'll be breaking up again and do much of what we've been doing for the last hour or so and give you the opportunity to talk to us about what your comments, questions are about the highway and your preferences and make sure that they get written down. We'll talk more about that process in a minute.

But what I'd like to do is just very quickly, without going through all the names, introduce two groups of people to you. One is the staff of Carter - Burgess who have been preparing the EIS. If you could just raise your

hands, you'll see who they are. Most have Magic Markers and papers in their hands as we've been taking comments. And the other group is the Project Advisory Committee. I know some of you are seated. If you could just stand up, please, thank you. And some of them are already standing and the rest of you can raise your hands. They also will take comments as we go through the evening.

What I'd like to do is just very quickly tell you the purpose of the meeting is to present to you some of the draft and environmental impact findings, some of the work that we've been doing since the last time we saw you, some of the information that's been generated, the analysis and interpretation, much of which you see pictures of, but Gina's going to go over that in much more detail, and then to get your input on some of these specific alternatives. As you can see, we've got some cards hanging on the wall that have already been noted and we also want to hear from others of you that we may not have yet in as much detail as noted. Any questions about the process at this point? Okay.

MS. MCAFEE: I'm going to spend, oh, maybe ten or fifteen minutes just describing some of the main findings that we--that we have come to through the draft EIS process. These are summarized in this handout, which I hope most of you got when you came in the room. We

also have copies of the draft EIS here. And there is a lot more detail in the draft EIS about the things that I'm going to briefly summarize tonight. So if you have any particular questions where you need more information about a particular item, you'll hopefully either find it in the handout or, if not, look--ask one of us to help you find something in the draft EIS.

The primary purpose and need for improvements to U.S. 93 is summarized in chapter one of the draft EIS. It is to reduce congestion; provide for planned growth and development; provide for improved connections with intermodal facilities; improve safety; and provide for enhanced scenic values.

Chapter two of the draft EIS summarizes the group of alternatives, and there were many alternatives that we initially looked at. Some of you were involved in that process and remember, you know, the many different corridor location alternatives that we looked at and, you know, all the way up and down the thirty-mile corridor. Chapter two does summarize that process, summarizes all of the alternatives that we looked at and which of those were advanced. Advanced means that they were then evaluated in detail in chapter four of the draft EIS.

The alternatives that were advanced are summarized in this handout and they're drawn on the aerial

photos that you see here tonight. Those alternatives include the No-build Alternative, which is basically to leave U.S. 93 in its current condition in the what we call the rural corridor areas, which is the Somers-to-Kalispell section and the Kalispell-to-Whitefish section. We looked at basically three build alternatives. We looked at one that we called A (turn lane), which means that there were two--two lanes on one side going in one direction, two on the other side going in the opposite direction and a fifth lane in the middle that was used as a center or turn lane. We also looked at an alternative which we called A (median), which had two lanes going in one direction, two in the opposite direction with some sort of a median in the middle. And the median varied depending on whether we were in a rural section where you would tend to go for a depressed grassy median, you know, slightly lower than the travel lanes, or sometimes in the more urban sections we would recommend a raised median. But some sort of a separated median. And then we also looked at what we call an A (combo) Alternative, which combines features of both the A (median) and the A (turn lane) Alternative in different locations throughout the corridor.

I would like to note that the combo, the A (combo) Alternative that we looked at, is just one example of, you know, maybe a hundred different combinations that

you could come up with using different sections of either the A (median) or the A (turn lane). We chose the A (combo) one just as one illustration of what that could be.

In the Kalispell area, we looked at also three different build alternatives. Two of those alternatives assumed that there would be a bypass of the Kalispell area. The bypass would be located generally on--along the railroad line west of town and then generally along Stillwater Road. Again, a more detailed alignment is, I believe, on page eight of your handout, and it's also on this aerial photo.

The two along that bypass alternative we looked at also both a B--this Alternative B and we call it--there was an alternative that we called B (turn lane) similar to A (turn lane) with the fifth turn lane in the middle and also B (median) was the second basic alternative. And these are--these two alternatives have similar characteristics to the A (turn lane) and A (median) that I just described. And then we also looked at a third alternative, which was just improving Main Street through town. And that we called Alternative A, you know, through Kalispell. So we did look at an alternative that did not include implementation of the bypass and then the two alternatives that did include implementation of the bypasses, and along with those would also be improvements

to Main Street through Kalispell.

In the Whitefish area, which is these drawings over here on this wall, we looked at six build alternatives. And the six build alternatives that we looked at included--one of them included improvements just to Second and Spokane through town and then the other five alternatives were different variations of splitting traffic between Baker and Spokane. Sometimes it was a one-way couplet type of split of traffic and sometimes we had two-way directional traffic on both Baker and Spokane. And I won't go into those in detail. Again, they are summarized on pages ten and eleven of this handout.

Now, I just want to go briefly into the major findings of the EIS. I will do it by impact category. These are--these are categories that are defined by the National Environmental Policy Act that you need to evaluate impacts for. So that's the way I will just describe generally what we found.

In the area of transportation, traffic operations, we found that all of the build alternatives that I've just described will improve future traffic operations. So they will respond to the purpose--one of the purposes and needs for the project, which is to reduce congestion. We found that in the year--by the year 2015 there would be a noticeable reduction in congestion, if

these build alternatives were implemented. The build alternatives all improved the safety conditions. I know that is of concern to a lot of you. That came up quite a bit in our scoping process. And all of the build alternatives would improve safety over the no-build.

We did find that there were some differences between the two basic A (turn lane) and A (median) Alternatives in the locations of where future accidents might occur. The A (turn lane) Alternative could have more accidents that were nonintersection related, that would occur in locations where there was not an intersection. The Alternative A (median) could have more accidents at unsignalized intersections. But I also--and these are--that is when they are compared to each other. But they're both a dramatic improvement over the No-build Alternative.

In the land use area, we found that the Alternative A (turn lane) would tend to encourage less dense and uneven extensions of either commercial strips in the area south of Kalispell and south of Whitefish or residential-type uses in other areas. We found that the Alternative A (median) would tend to focus development in a more denser form, generally along the major intersections. In Kalispell, the Alternative B, which is the bypass alternative, would tend to accelerate development along the

bypass.

We looked at the right-of-way that would be needed. And a lot of you may know that the Montana Department of Transportation has already purchased quite a bit of right-of-way from both, you know, primarily in the rural sections, again, from Somers to Kalispell and from Kalispell to Whitefish. Those lines are drawn on these maps. Additional right-of-way will be needed for frontage road areas for what we've shown the Alternative A (median), some what we call split-alignment areas where the two different directional lanes of traffic would split and there is more area in between. Additional right-of-way would be needed for that. Additional right-of-way would be needed for the what we've called the special design concepts, which are the gateway areas and some of the other special features that we've shown on the wall over here.

Also, in locations where the centerline of the new roadway would be moved off the centerline of the existing road, those are also locations where additional right-of-way would be located.

The Alternative A (median) concept does require more right-of-way and would require more residential right-of-way locations than the A (turn lane) Alternative. I also want to point out that there are some discrepancies that are in the information that was on the EIS and that is

shown on these plans tonight. The correct information is the information that's shown on these plans tonight. But basically what you'll find is that on the plans here we have a dashed line that shows where the future right-of-way line is likely to be. So I encourage you to make sure you study those plans because that is the correct information and we will make sure that that is--that the next step in our process is a final EIS and that information will be correct in the final EIS.

We looked at economic impacts these alternatives may have on the economy. Generally, the building alternatives will improve the economic situation over the no-build because there would be less congestion.

There was a lot of concern about accommodations and facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. We have included in the design a number of recommendations for special accommodations for pedestrians that need to cross over U.S. 93 at certain locations and those are listed on the wall. They're also listed in the handout and in the EIS. So that--that would result then in an improved situation for pedestrians and bicyclists. We're also including in our design either a separated bike path, a bike path--probably a ten-foot wide, nine to ten-foot-wide bike path that would be separated from the highway or accomodations for bicyclists along the shoulder of the

highway. That's actually one of the areas that we're hoping to get some expression of preference from you tonight, if you prefer one or the other. But either one will improve conditions for bicyclists along the corridor.

The A--Alternative A (median) will also improve conditions for pedestrians who need to cross the highway because that median area can be used as a refuge, as a place for them to wait while traffic clears that's coming in the opposite direction.

We looked at air quality. We found that any of the build alternatives would result in decreased emissions from carbon--of carbon monoxide. That is because they generally will improve overall traffic flow and there's more carbon monoxide that gets emitted during congested conditions. We looked at the main air quality problem in both Kalispell and Whitefish which is a pollutant called PM-10, which means fine particulate matter. So we looked at how these alternatives would likely affect the fine particulate matter. And we found that any of the alternatives in Kalispell that included the bypass would result in decreased emissions of fine particulate matter. The primary reason for that is the bypass will encourage more of the travel to occur outside of what's called the nonattainment area boundary, which is basically the area within Kalispell that's been found to have the worst air

quality problems. So by building the bypass, you will encourage more of the travel out of that nonattainment area boundary and you will decrease the emissions of fine particulate matter.

In the Whitefish area, we found that--again, this is within the Whitefish nonattainment area, the build alternatives would generally--would result in slightly increased emissions of fine particulates. This is when compared to the No-build Alternative. Except for one alternative, which was the C--we called it the C (offset) Alternative. And that alternative would have slightly fewer emissions when compared to the No-build Alternative.

We looked at noise levels. We monitored existing noise levels along U.S. 93 and in other locations and then we predicted what the future noise levels would be with implementation of each of these alternatives. Generally, we found that there would be increased noise levels typically in the vicinity of two to three decibels, which is at a point that's barely perceptible to approximately ninety-five either homes or schools, someplace where noise could be of concern. This did not vary much depending upon which alternative you were looking at, except in Kalispell along the bypass, there were an additional approximately twenty-six either homes or schools that would be--where they would receive noticeable noise increases.

We looked at impact to water resources. There are a number--as you know, there are a number of stream crossings along the corridor. There are also a number of wetland areas that are protected by special legislation. Generally, the Alternative A (median) had more river and flood plain encroachment and slightly more wetland encroachment. It was not significantly more but slightly more. Along the bypass, there were approximately four acres of wetlands that were impacted and additional river and flood plain encroachment along the bypass alternative in Kalispell.

Getting close to being done, so don't fall asleep yet. We looked at historic properties. We surveyed all along the corridor looking for both archeological properties as well as buildings and other--other things that might be of significance to the community from a historic standpoint. And we did find that there were several resources in the area that could be impacted that these are either on the National Register of Historic Places or determined to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register.

We found that in the Somers-to-Kalispell section and also along the Kalispell bypass, the railroad right-of-way itself is a historic property because of the importance of the railroad in contributing to the history

of this valley. And since we are in many locations going to be either impacting on that railroad right-of-way or, you know, on the--in Kalispell we are planning to place Alternative B right on top of the railroad right-of-way, that would likely be an adverse impact to that historic property, which is the railroad right-of-way.

Also along the Kalispell--the Kalispell Alternative B, which is the bypass, we found a historic farmstead called McDonald place and we will likely be encroaching on a quarter of that property. Also, that's something that will likely have an adverse effect to that historic property.

There are a lot of parks in the corridor and we looked at the--we looked at potential impact to all of the parks. In most of the cases, what we found is that we would not encroach on park property. We may be bringing the highway closer to the park but it's in locations where it's already in MDT ownership, so it's not actually park property. There would be a increase in noise and visual impacts to the users of the park. There was one situation where this was not the case and that was along the Ashley Creek trail that is, again, west of Kalispell. This is a--it's planned for a future Rails to Trails conversion but it's also currently used as a recreation trail owned by--or operated by Flathead County Parks. And we would have a

direct impact. We would actually cross that trail since it does go along the rail spur line in there. So we would have a direct impact to the Ashley Creek recreation trail.

We looked at the visual impacts of the various alternatives, and generally what we found is that the Alternative A (turn lane) would be perceived by the motorist as a much increased expanse of pavement, as you were driving along. That expanse of pavement, the visual impact of that would be interrupted by Alternative A (median). You would see--as the motorist was driving along you would be able to see the grassy median on the side which, you know, would appear somewhat similar to what you see now. And in some cases you would not even really be all that--it would not--the other lanes would not be all that noticeable. So we did find that the median did serve a very important function visually of breaking up that expanse of pavement.

The special design features that we've recommended we found would improve visual quality in a number of locations along the corridor. And these--most of these are assumed with either of the two basic alternatives.

I also wanted to mention that in Kalispell we are showing a widening in Kalispell. There are trees, as you know, right now that are south of the courthouse area. We

are planning to do the construction of that in such a way so that we do our best to not impact those trees but it is possible that we could lose some of those trees just as a result of construction activities.

Then we looked at implementation, and some of the schedules for implementation that are possible are laid out on the wall in the back there. We also found--we looked at some of the disruption during construction that could occur. We did find that traffic that's moving along the road, people traveling along the bases, would definitely be of concern, would generally be less disrupted in the locations where the centerline of the road is moved away from the centerline of the existing road, where the alignment is offset is the term that we used in the Environmental Impact Statement. This occurs, again, where our design is moved off the centerline of the existing road. This occurs most frequently with the Alternative A (median) concept, so it is likely that at least in certain sections you will not notice as much disruption during construction with the Alternative A (median) than with the Alternative A (turn lane).

The other thing in the EIS, we defined several different options for access control and we have--these are, again, in your handout and they're also on this chart over here under the other design elements category.

We--there is a possible no-access-control alternative, a restrictive-access-control alternative, which basically places, you know, a fair number of restraints on how often you would--you would provide for driveway access to U.S. 93. And then we have one that's called situational that's, in a sense, sort of halfway in between no-access control and restrictive-access control. The chart underneath that provides some evaluation of those three basic access control alternatives. Generally, the restrictive-access control would take more time in the right-of-way acquisition process and would be more costly in the right-of-way acquisition process but would have some different advantageous effects on traffic operations, on safety and on land use. So we also encourage you to provide us feedback on those access-control alternatives tonight. Because there are different access-control alternatives that could be implemented by MDT along with any of these basic alternatives.

The process from here, tonight is the first of three public hearings that we are having. These are somewhat more formal than the public meetings we have had before. They are being--we do have a transcriber in the back. There will be a transcript prepared of this hearing. And as Kathy mentioned, the primary purpose for these hearings is to hear from you. This is your--your

opportunity to--a lot of you have sat through these meetings for the last year and this is your real opportunity to give us your input. We're also--last week and this week and the next couple of weeks we are going to be meeting with various groups in the valley. We also have meetings with agencies because there are agencies who have responsibility for reviewing portions of this EIS. And we've already received a lot of letters. People have written us letters. People have called our--the Whitefish phone number that we have to let us know what their feedback is, so that's the kind of feedback that we're starting to get on the draft EIS.

From here we will be analyzing and incorporating the input that you give us and then we will be, together with our advisory committee, we will be identifying a preferred alternative. And I wanted to just mention briefly some of the thought process that we will be going through to identify the preferred alternative. First of all, you know, your input tonight is very important as well as is the input from the agencies and the input from our advisory committee. There are requirements through the National Environmental Policy Act and also through the new ISTEA Legislation. ISTEA is the new Federal Highway Administration Funding Act. These pieces of legislation require a balanced approach to decision-making about

transportation. It requires that, you know, we not only look at some of the things that may seem very important, you know, or have seemed important in the past but also that we look sort of to the long-term. We look to some of the social impacts of some of these alternatives, more over the long-term. That the National Environmental Policy Act specifically requires we look at environmental, economic and social impacts of the alternatives. So those are some of the things that we will be considering.

There are also--some of the resources that I mentioned tonight is protected by specific legislation. The air quality is protected by the Clean Air Act; the wetlands that I mentioned, as well as rivers, are protected by the Clean Water Act; the historic properties are protected by the National Historic Preservation Act; and all of those pieces of legislation have particular requirements that we need to meet if any of the alternatives that I've described here tonight will actually impact those. So that's another factor in what we will be considering when we recommend a preferred alternative.

After we have had preliminarily selected a preferred alternative, we will be sending out a newsletter where we will, you know, let you know the--what our preliminary recommendation is and the reasons for that. And we will do this in advance of the--when we will be

finishing really our final--the final document on this project which is the final EIS. And we're right now projecting that that will be finished in September of this year. So between now and September is when we will be selecting the preferred alternative.

After that final EIS is finished, then the Federal Highway Administration, which is the lead federal agency on the project, will issue what's called a Record of Decision in the Federal Register. And that's when they formally adopt an alternative for the Somers-to-Whitefish project. And after that point in time, the next steps before construction are--you know, these are conceptual designs on the wall. Those will need to be finalized into actual final designs that you could build something from. And as I mentioned, there will be some additional right-of-way that will be required so there will be a right-of-way acquisition process, there will be a--if there are utilities that need to be moved, there will be a utility relocation process and construction following that.

That's really all of the presentation I had on the technical part of the project. What I'm going to do now is just let you know again the ways that you can comment. Again, the primary purpose for this meeting is for us to present the findings of the EIS and then for you to tell us what your response is to that. You know, if

there's something that you like, is there something that you don't like? This is the official time in the process for you to do that. The ways that you can comment tonight, we have several different ways. You can sit in front of the transcriber who's over in the corner and she will type in your comments and that will be a formal part of the record. You can also fill in a comment sheet. We had comment sheets when you came in, and as well there are some back by the comment box so you can fill in the comment sheet and put it in the box. You can--we have these cards around the room, you can actually--and they're also now some of them are up on the wall. You can write on one of those and put it up on the wall and that is also going to be entered as part of the formal comment received tonight. Or you can just talk to one of us, we'll write down what you're saying, or you can talk to one of the advisory committee members also. They'll write down what you're saying and that will also be entered in as a formal part of the hearing tonight.

After tonight, there is still an opportunity to comment. The comment period for the draft EIS is not over until May 2nd. And the ways that you can comment, on the back of the comment sheet you can fold it up and mail that in. You can write us a letter and the address is listed here on the back of the handout. You can call our--the

Whitefish telephone number and that's also listed on the back of the handout, or feel free also to call one of the advisory committee members. We are working very closely with our advisory committee on this process. So feel free to call them, if you also have official comment on the EIS.

Before I turn it back to Kathy, I just want to reiterate the type of comment that we're looking for. We're looking for if you want to express an opinion about a preferred highway alternative, you know, either overall or in different sections, in different locations of the corridor, we encourage you to express an opinion about one of the access-control alternatives and you think that you like. We encourage you to express an opinion about whether you prefer a separated bike path or a bike lane that's used together with the shoulder of the highway. We have--in the EIS, we've made several recommendations for what we call mitigation. If you have any suggestions for mitigation for impacts that we've identified, we encourage you to tell us that. If you have--on this wall over here we've made suggestions for special places to--for pedestrian crossings, special facilities for that, we encourage you to comment on that. We're looking for all sorts of different types of comment. And that's about all I have to say right now. Kathy?

MS. BRAMER: One of the things that's

been a little different about our public hearings than some others that you may have been to is we very seldom put a microphone in the middle of the room and get comments. The reason for that is because we think we can get more information by working individually and in smaller groups. So we are, again, tonight not going to spend a lot of time in the whole group taking comments but, in fact, we want to get everything you have to say written down so it goes into the records so we have time to get everyone's comments.

Having said that, I would be willing, however, if there are any particular questions regarding clarifying any of the things that Gina said, is there anything at this point you can also ask those later, you know, of individuals.

FROM THE FLOOR: Would you clarify the Alternative A (combo) for the Kalispell-Whitefish section that is not shown? That's certainly something we talked about at great length and is not there.

MS. MCAFEE: I believe that the Alternative A (combo) that's documented in the draft EIS for this particular section is identical to A (median). Tonight we also talked, though, about a couple of other different combo sections that could be considered for that and that's the kind of input that we're looking for tonight. For instance, we were talking about you could

median design except from Ashley Creek north because area has not developed yet. Build the bypass alternative.

Five lane is better because farm machinery can't make the turn around.

Blizzard will cause snow to back up behind it like a snow fence.

Doesn't like parkways because more deer are attracted and more accidents with wildlife.

Lori Angus lives in property number 17, yellow dot on map. Earth moving, grading has begun on subdivision, Greenbrier directly in path of Kalispell bypass. Birk and Astle is developer of Greenbrier subdivision. What criteria is used to determine if improvements are needed?

Unless planning is done very carefully, there will be continuous traffic signals between Kalispell and Whitefish. Median design will work well from a traffic standpoint and will cluster development around cities. Our perspective is clouded. In other parts of country this project would be low priority.

Preserve gateway view of Whitefish both sides of Montana 40. Small-town feel of Whitefish is being lost. Left turn out of west side business south of town could be wise with five lane. Baker could be extended south of Safeway. Right-of-way is being acquired, eventually come

out at Commerce west of Mountain Mall. EIS should adjust this better.

Median method not feasible. Stick to five lane as originally designed.

Why was the northern separation at the location it is? Prefer that the wider median not used. Takes property. Would not like the separated alignments.

If commercial clusters are done at Schrade, the median will restrict it.

Is this really the best use of this much money? Most people between Somers, Kalispell in favor of five-lane alternative.

A lot of businesses south of Kalispell are semi-truck oriented. Five lane gives more stacking and turning room.

Trucks often stack needing to turn.

How will construction phasing and access be maintained with five lane?

Libby-Troy highway construction was terrible, delays sometimes as long as all day.

Opposed to expanse of median construction and also additional right-of-way requirement in all sections.

Highway can be constructed adjacent to existing road and then when it is done the existing roadway can be constructed.

Want a left-turn option at Kelly Road and Somers to Kalispell.

Range of alternatives through Kalispell was only two. Original Kalispell bypass routes not evaluated as promised at those meetings. Two alternatives is not a reasonable range to consider and display effects.

Need of frontage roads on U.S. 93 south of Whitefish. JP Road to river or parallel roads to east and west. Should be more long-range planning for Whitefish. Need better defined grid system.

Strongly support the design elements that focus on aesthetics. Make it beautiful as long as we are doing it.

Combo alternative through restrictive areas, Kalispell to Whitefish segment. Should consider five lane in other sections to minimize cost. Also just south of Kalispell, 13th to Lower Valley Road.

Group of business people from south of Kalispell strongly support the five-lane option from Somers to Kalispell.

Montana Forest Products has a phase one assessment that has cleared the site.

Split alignments actually avoid relocations of residences in many instances.

When indicating a hazardous material site, should

use word "potential" because may not be any.

Combo is missing on Kalispell to Whitefish. Also divided separated.

Trucks will be using Whitefish Stage Road in lieu of U.S. 93 during construction. Why are new traffic lights in Kalispell turned off at night? They should be left on at all times or at least until 11:00 p.m. or later. Emergency vehicles activate traffic signals for too long. People start running red lights creating unsafe conditions.

Five-lane design at race track would encourage people exiting the race track to use center turn lane to merge into traffic. Race track location with median design would take people exiting a very long time and create unsafe conditions. Should consider number of cars exiting at this location. Schrade Road.

Median design has a large amount of additional cost for only limited additional aesthetic improvements.

Design road to ensure safe traffic operations-median will prohibit unsafe passing in center lane that some drivers do.

Taxpayers should question cost for aesthetic values.

If there is a median open, there needs to be a decel lane. Five lane is my preferred option.

I am not giving an inch of my land.

There needs to be a left-turn lane at Cemetery.

I do not plan to turn over more right-of-way without need for median justified. And median is not justified.

Landscape median in Montana don't work because they are not maintained.

Zoning manages land use. It is not the highway's function.

Maintaining landscape median is hazardous to workers.

I will not sell any land for a new bike path. I cannot stand to lose land due to subaddition A.

I don't have a problem with five lane but four lane I take issue with.

Suggest showing graph or table illustrating how much noise changes relative to distance from the source.

From Cemetery Road to Livestock Auction Barn to Industrial Park needs unrestricted access; right-of-way issues; all truck-oriented businesses.

Five lane for turning trucks is safer than median, especially for 90-foot trucks backed up four or five deep.

With median section between Cemetery Road and livestock, turn lane would have to be long enough to accommodate four to five trucks.

Put bicycle paths away from road; the truck traffic can pull cyclists in their draft.

Left-turn lanes must be installed at all openings to keep slowing vehicles out of fast lane.

There is a body shop just south of MP 117.

Delay in project has caused my husband his health. He was in an accident on 93.

Question spending extra dollars for a median just to see more open space - prefer the A (turn lane) Alternative. Also recommend slowing traffic down. Would like to see more detailed information on other bypass alternatives in Kalispell - like meridian. Should have more fully evaluated other corridor alternatives. These should have been documented. Property rights should be more important than aesthetics. If I owned a business along a split alignment, I would not be happy with the loss of accessibility. Safety of school children getting on and off of buses is better with the five lane.

The long-range economic impacts on the cities in specific and the Flathead Valley in general must be included in the evaluation and selection of the alternative. I believe A (median) or A (combo) would serve the purpose of the Highway 93 widening and the valley economy best for the following reasons:

1. Less asphalt to maintain and install.

2. Easier, safer and cheaper for snow plowing.

3. Less proliferation of strip commercial that will erode the tax bases of the traditional centers of commerce. If the historic commercial tax base declines, the burden of supporting local government and services will shift to the residential property owner.

4. Incorporation of the special design concepts will enhance the initial investment of the highway project. Present a sense of a special place to live and visit. Increase the economic development opportunities, attract visitors and keep them an extra day or two. Increase property value for a healthier tax base.

5. Safer and easier design to drive.

6. Controlled intersections help identify where turning movements can occur. Also, lighting can be specific for safer visibility.

Bike ways - separated would seem to be safer if a commitment is made for sweeping and maintenance. Attached to highway easier to maybe maintain. Need a clearer picture of the pros and cons for each.

We definitely need Alternative B bypass to Kalispell, even if nothing else gets done. There must be provisions for bicyclists and pedestrians. The ignoring of this simply is inviting disaster to school children. Why not this type of channelized intersection?

Graduated high school in Kalispell in '65. At that time the same discussions were being held in Kalispell. Problems identified, solutions given but no action. Right now we have a transportation infrastructure crisis and we continue to delay. Let's stop spending money on study and get started solving the traffic safety problems. Widen Highway 93 now. Use five lane stockyards to Kalispell. Kalispell to Fenders, Highway 40 to Whitefish with the rest with median. Median the Kalispell bypass now before anyone has time to build. More info call Roger Somerville, P.O. Box 186, Lakeside, Montana, 844-3667, or at TDH, Inc., 752-5246.

Do something. Get the money to make it work.

Ninety-three separate because of speeds. Other streets use edge or shoulder.

We need to bypass through Kalispell for obvious congestion reasons. We also need bike lanes. I personally prefer separate from road, not just on shoulder. I would think they would be safer.

Access control. Since I found both the restrictive and situational control acceptable, and the restrictive control has the least accident potential, I would be encouraging the restrictive-access-control alternative.

Kalispell to Whitefish section. Would support

median alternative since it appears to be safer and would encourage clustering of commercial development at intersections and would be more visually pleasant.

But see no need to spend money on frontage road areas where road splits with more space in between. No need to displace Smith residence or take more of Patterson property for no apparent reason other than variety of design.

Bottom line is how much more will it cost, and can we afford the luxury of it?

Prefers median Kalispell to Whitefish. Separate the bike paths.

Cannot accept increase in noise. It is too noisy now and extra width will make it worse.

Area north of wetland at Schrade floods every few years.

I'll be buried before the road is built.

Preference for a combo but different from March newsletter. Kalispell to Grandview five lane. Then from Grandview north to at least the Stillwater River, divided highway with recessed median, et cetera. Past dump area then lots of driveways, i.e., access, turn-around then to five lane. Then to four lane, back to five lane back into Whitefish. This has been the main concern from the beginning. Combo Kalispell to Whitefish. Please contact

Pam Kennedy, Nick Herron, Bruce B. Mayer, Doug Rauthie to clarify this.

Jim Lynch, Marshall Murray. Five lanes work better in an urban community where speed is 15 to 45 miles an hour.

On Kalispell do both A and B.

Combo is missing on Kalispell to Whitefish.

Letters divided separated highway north of Tronstad Lane and divided highway north of Hodgson Road should show area in the middle of separation as green.

Wetland mitigation. A Lawrence Park discussion of 1.5 to 2 acre park, wetland creation. Also, if surplus fill from pond use as fill on highway. Consideration? Out of football fields and city shops there is potential for park - ponds here also. Two hundred plus housing units proposed near here. West side municipal golf course by old mill site. Ponds could be constructed. Possibility of bending 18th around to Whitefish to access this site. Eighteenth could and does connect to many of the Kalispell area.

Oral comment:

Mark Koeneker. And my comments regarding expressing a preference for a separated bike trails over widened bike shoulders. I feel that separated bike trails are more beneficial to greater numbers of the general

public, specifically people with families, senior citizens, others that don't care to ride with traffic on a busy highway. I feel that they represent an increase in safety over shoulder-type trail.

Regarding crossings--pedestrians crossings described as design treatments, I feel that pedestrian crossings can be made safer by using a treatment that breaks up the pavement such as some areas have used cobblestone or other types of materials to give drivers an indication that there is a crossing, which is preferable to just a painted surface treatment which sometimes gets worn off or is not easily visible. I think that's it.

Written comments:

Major storms come from northeast. Problems with large vegetation in median at the split alignment south of Fenders. Median would cause drifting of snow and visibility problems. Just south of Church Drive is also prone to drifting and fog.

Prefer restrictive access control with zoning for open space.

Tom Jentz. Other design elements.

1. Scenic overlook - a must for slowing traffic from viewing highway.

2. Support divided privilege concepts.

3. Provide bike underpasses. West Whitefish -

nice entry. In Kalispell, enhanced median and entry good. All good concepts, keep them.

Need B (median) alignment good. New subdivision. Long-term solution is divided here.

Divided highway - only good solution for pedestrians.

1. Five lane entire way except north of Stillwater and south of Fenders. Use divided plan for entire length of that section.

2. Bike paths on the shoulder of highway.

3. Page eight part B, bypass, to Highway 2 only then to meridian and up to 93. It would be too expensive to go north of Highway 2 and not a direct route.

4. Willow Glen - Conrad Drive - LaSalle extension is still the least expensive and will be the most effective.

Why have split alignment north of Happy Valley? Cost - row.

What are requirements for emergency turn-around? Do not like separation due to cost and no good visual advantage. Increased emergency response due to increased travel from turn-around will increase insurance rates. People leave race track all at once and going to Whitefish. There has to be a left-turn access.

Willow Glen and Conrad Drive corner. If do

bypass on Willow Glen, will lose too many homes. Kalispell bypass B looks expensive - should use north Meridian as well on south end as south end of Meridian - don't go so far west - concerned about lack of safety data - seems only logical divided highway safer - bypass on old railroad row south of Kalispell a good idea - 4500 Highway 93 south Kalispell to Whitefish own the property there - very worried about the noise levels. Already too loud - concerned about purchase of extra right-of-way. Would lose trees. Front door would be next to highway - if you buy more right-of-way, at least pay what it's worth this time.

Speed on proposed improvements will be limited by numerous traffic signals. Need less signals on proposed route or better coordination/timing of signals. Pond proposed at Lawrence Park could be used as wetland mitigation replacement - more useful wetland than if constructed at other locations.

Median configuration is safer; limited access keeps slow traffic from trying to join fast-moving traffic. Median configuration is better for snow removal. Like the bypass option around Kalispell.

My only real comment is on the bike paths. I feel that they should be incorporated with the shoulder of the road. As an experienced commuter, one thousand miles a year, I have never had a problem with riding on the

shoulder. Of course, a person on the bike must be competent enough to let all vehicles around know his/her intentions at all times.

By making a pedestrian/bike path, you clear up the vehicle-bicycle problem but you now have a pedestrians-bicycle problem. Have you seen most people walk? They cannot follow a straight line nor do they telegraph their intentions. I feel there would be much more accidents. Besides, what's the purpose of a bike path - for traveling. Much safer as a car/bike path. Dana R. Wastjer, 2009 Highway 2 East, 756-0053, work phone.

Five lane essential for safety. Bike paths good for now and future. Mary Ellen Nelson, 549 Sylvan Drive, Kalispell, 755-8851.

It is obvious that the ideal format would be a five lane. Please strongly consider this.

Medians always turn out to be ugly gravel and garbage collection areas that become eyesores.

If you drive 93 Somers to Kalispell every day, you would know it needs a five lane with truck route to east. Ted Matelich, Box 47456, Kalispell, 756-7175.

1. EIS - why necessary when design is appropriate for Highway 2 one mile away.

2. I support the safest, most economical to maintain and the least expensive alternative. I believe

that would be five lane with turn. It is utilized throughout the state and is okay.

3. Bypass. I support meridian to Highway 93 and Willow Glen to LaSalle. We must make access to bypass easier and safe. Don't make traffic stop to access bypass.

4. Safety five lane seems best.

5. Maintenance. Hasn't Highway 2 east taught us anything about median maintenance?

6. We've already spent study dollars, felt the impact of inflation, continued costs. Let's build the thing as our professionals design it. Tax dollars are slipping away. Greg Barkus, 1144 Whitefish Stage Road, Kalispell, 755-8362.

Provide? EIS examples for noise DBD levels.

Kalispell bypass B comes into an intersection at U.S. 93 at Reserve Drive. Can't you make traffic flow here, grade separate or something? Northbound traffic must stop.

Also shift right-of-way south on Reserve Drive west of 93, to avoid noise impacts to homes on north side of Reserve Drive.

Where would bike paths be located? A lot of recreation that go to parks prefer separated path.

Concerning the Ashley Creek recreation trail, the alternatives advanced were a grade crossing 1, pedestrian

overpass or 3, pedestrian underpass. Each of these mitigation proposals leave the trail in a lesser condition than the trail's intact condition would be for the reasons listed below.

No alternative was mentioned which would leave the grade of the trail intact and adjust the grade of the highway to be an underpass or overpass.

The negative impacts of the alternatives advanced: underpass and overpass - not suitable for equestrian users and cross-country skiers. At grade crossing - has serious safety implications, even if the crossing is fully signalized.

The turn lane option is preferred with a separate bike lane. Martin and Sue Ann Gilman, 145 Highland Drive, Kalispell, 257-7684.

Looks like you did a good job documenting effects in the EIS.

I prefer the median approach because it will cluster development and lead to more rational land uses. No strip development. Also, it's safer and much more aesthetic. Steve Thompson, 45 Woodland Park Drive, number 9, Kalispell.

Other design elements are crucial to process of entire project. The long-term benefits far outweigh the short-term savings of excluding these elements. Most of

these additions would be appreciated far into future. The benefits to business through beautifying the communities. L. Iwersen, M.D., 444 Woodland.

Favor a median design five lane. Five-lane design would degrade the visual quality of this area.

Elaine Snyder, Kalispell. B good but...congestion at Reserve intersection and 93 will be a huge problem. Also impact residences. Other design elements all special design concepts good. Restrictive access the long-term conclusion.

1. Whitefish - like couplet offset. Do not want 7th Street bridge. Alternative A (median) with restricted access, and bike path on shoulder.

2. Kalispell to Whitefish - definitely with alternative with median and restricted access points/minimum stop lights. Do not want to see strip development encouraged. Should be a bike path.

3. Kalispell - like median bypass west of town with minimum turn outside/access points.

4. I live near Reserve Drive and 93. I am concerned that the bypass coming back into 93 there. This is a tight intersection anyway. Bypass would back up on 93 beside Country Estates, Mountain Villas Apartments entrances. I would recommend bypass coming in further north on 93.

5. Like all special design features.

6. Want restricted access for future development, character and safety features. Elaine Snyder, 5540 Country Way South, Kalispell, Montana 59901, 756-6240.

(Proceedings concluded at 9:05 p.m.)

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Bambi A. Goodman, CSR, RPR and Notary Public for the State of Montana, do hereby certify:

That I did report the foregoing public hearing; that said public hearing was taken at the time and place stated on the caption hereto; that the statements and written comments were taken in shorthand by me and subsequently reduced to writing under my direction; that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the foregoing.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed my seal of office this 4th day of April, 1994.

BAMBI A. GOODMAN, CSR, RPR and
Notary Public for the State of Montana
Residing at Whitefish, Montana
My Commission expires March 21, 1998

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARING
Kalispell

March 22, 1994

Name (please print)	Mailing Address
B.J. Carlson	375 Grandview Dr. Kalispell
Elaine Snyder	540 Country Way So. Kals.
Joe Fisher	407 Ashley Ct., Kal.
Alvin Jacobson	696 Conrad Dr. Kalispell
Ted MATELICH	105 old Hwy 93 S. Somers.
Nick Haren	15 Depot Park, Kalispell
PATRICK THOMAS	175 LAKESHORE Dr. KALISPELL
Tom McDermott	One McDermott Ln. Kalispell
C. CHAMBERLAIN	4150 Hwy 93 N KALISPELL
Anella Remiaggi	P.O Box 126, Kal. 59903
J.T. Dedmaier	1310 MT 208 Somers MT 59932
Gary E Howard	4500 HWY. 93 So. W-FISH 59937
SHARON STERNS	" " "
Judy Chamberlain	4150 Hwy 93 N. Kalispell 59901

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARING
Kalispell

March 22, 1994

Name (please print)	Mailing Address		
Al. Dramstad	915 third Ave. W.	Kalispell	
Carol Dennis	5436 Clark Rd #27	Paradise, Ca.	95954
CAROLE BRUMMELL	149 AURORA DR.	LAKESIDE, MT.	59922
Richard Kuhl	867 N. Main	Kalispell, MT	59901
Lori Angus	P.O. Box 7011	Kalispell	59904
Harold & Agnes Gustafson	792 N Valley Dr	Kalispell	59901
Steve Thompson	43 Woodland Pk. Dr. #9	Kalispell	59901
Ken Galloway	3235 Hwy 93-50	Kalispell	59901
Pam Kennedy	1036 6th Ave W	Kal.	59901
L. J. Iversen	444 WOODLAND	Kalispell	59901
ROSS PLAMBECK	BOX 1997	KALISPELL	59903
Arlene Clarke	432 Kelley Rd	Kalispell	59901
Dale Luhman	169 Trail Ridge	Kalispell	59901
Charlene M. O'Neil	P.O. Box 7038	Kal.	59904

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

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Kalispell

March 22, 1994

Name (please print)	Mailing Address	
TOM JENTZ	FLATHEAD REGIONAL DEVEL. OFFICE	KALISPELL, MT
Lee Ten Eyck	2794 Hwy 93 N.	KAL.
Mary Jo Ten Eyck	2768 Hwy 93 N	Kal.
ROGER SOMERVILLE	P.O. BOX 186, LAKESIDE, MT 59922-0186	
Patterson Investments	217 Marigold Lane Polson, Mt 59860	
ANDY FEURY	STILL THE SAME	
ANNA JONES	1631 Howell St - Missoula, Mt. 59802	
Tracy Crabtree	Sen Max Baucus 220 1st Ave E	Kal
Nancy Kostman	3528 28th St. San Diego CA 92104	
Mary Ellen Nelson	549 Sylvan Dr. Kal	59901
VIRINIA SLOAN	445 6TH AVE KAL	59901
GREG BARKUS	1144 WHITEFISH STAGE KAL	59901
Cheryl Odegaard	Box 1641 Kal	
STEVE HOBBY	FRDO 723 5th Ave E Kal	59901
DANA R WASTJER	2009 HWY 2 E KAL,	59901

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARING
Kalispell

March 22, 1994

Name (please print)	Mailing Address	
Charlie L Solberg	3560 Hwy 93 So.	Kalispell Mt.
Dale Haan	80 Buffalo Hill Dr.	" "
Tom Little	150 Snow Line Ln	" "
Carol Patterson	130 River Bluffs	Col. Falls, Mt.
Henry E Patterson	130 River Bluffs	Col Falls, Mt
Harold Wachsmuth	450 White Birch Lane	Kalispell Mt.
Bernie Alt	97 Northern Lgts Blvd	Kalispell
Judy Cornell	3859 Hwy 93 N	Whitefish
Doug Rautho	Box 1997	Kalispell 59903
BILL HEBERT	315 8TH. ST. E.	Kalispell
Marty and Susan Gilman	P.O. Box 7274 145 Highland Dr.	Kalispell 59904
Katy Branner	Carter Burgess	
Roy Kramer	731 11th AVE WEST	Kalispell, Mt.
Joe Schletz	600 4th Dr	Kal
Jim Lynch	2355 Hwy 93 N.	Kalispell, Mt.
Bill Hedstrom Sr.	75 Hewitt Hill	Kalispell

2-27

U.S. HIGHWAY 93

SOMERS TO WHITEFISH WEST

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

PUBLIC HEARING

Held Wednesday, March 23, 1994 - 6:00 P.M.
Somers School, Somers, Montana

ORIGINAL

Reported By: Bambi A. Goodman, CSR, RPR

inted on
cycled paper

I-N-D-E-X

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 1994 - 6:00 P.M.

Written comments:

Like the Ashley Creek Bridge for wildlife habitat enhancement.

Center turn lane can be used for large trucks to cross two lanes then wait in center lane to merge with traffic.

Favor Alternate B (bypass) with five lane for safety of turning trucks. Also same applies for U.S. 93.

Provide a direct connection to bypass at south end, instead of requiring a left turn from U.S. 93 to attract traffic to bypass.

Eaton residence near Cemetery Road. Remove septic system. No replacement area for the septic system. Removes seven large pine trees and a weeping willow tree.

Suggest move the alignment to the east. This will have impact on the businesses to the east that already are noted to be displaced. Moving the alignment east reduces impact to homes on west side.

Notes, relocation for material to Eaton will be difficult and expensive. It is a--he is a fireman and must reside within three miles of the city. In the last six years, homes have gone up in value and are scarce. Mr. and Mrs. Eaton also own Four Corners Collectibles located just west of their home. Thus, a relocation would involve

finding a home with an adjoining business location within three miles of the city. The house is a brick house. Note, the Eatons are being impacted far beyond apparent market value.

Right-of-way lines shown on aerials may show the right-of-way proposed by MDT, but never acquired.

Temporary signal at 18th and U.S. 93 going in this May, 1994.

Median shown south of Montana 82. How far will the median extend?

Like these design plans. I came to the last meeting and made suggestions and you obviously listened.

What will be noise levels at residences behind the ones with the yellow dots?

At Willow Glen and Lower Valley there is a problem with cars backing up to turn south on 93. They stack all traffic including northbound traffic.

Mergenthalers and John Deere; who decides who gets a median opening?

The five lane is the only thing that will service Mergenthalers and John Deere's needs.

U-turns to backtrack due to median difficult for trucks.

Commutes on Montana 82 northbound on 93. I am in favor of median.

Trucker. Likes four lane because at speeds of 50 to 60 miles an hour and with cars turning into suicide lane, there is potential for head-ons.

Four lane will be more aesthetically pleasing and will help control growth.

Four lane for truck turn-arounds provide an additional outside lane for acceleration.

At Montana 82 and 93 should be a single through lane north with the westbound to northbound 93 forming the new lane. See next card. Drawings attached.

Prefer median option because less asphalt. Eliminates dangerous center turn lane. Median is a safe zone for pedestrians crossing the road. Prefer bike path on shoulder. Concerned about truck turning radiuses at the intersections where medians are used. Suggest widening the standard to allow trucks room. South ends of Kalispell bypass, suggest not using a T intersection. Allow traffic to flow by reducing the angle of intersection. At south end of Kalispell bypass, suggest making this a pleasing gateway entrance to the community. At north end, follow power line corridor. Right-angle intersections should be changed to encourage the use of the bypass.

Favor five lane, Somers to Kalispell. Less expensive. Don't like median because trucks can't turn around. Favor separate bike path Somers to Kalispell, both

commuter and recreation.

Three thousand Highway 93 users from Somers to Kalispell signed a petition approving of the Montana Department of Transportation five-lane 93 design.

Let our Montana people design our highways without federal interference.

South of Kalispell need the current center turn lane to accommodate 90-foot tankers turning both in and out.

Need the five lane from Four Corners to mile post 106 the wetland to accommodate the industrial park. Maybe go all the way to Somers.

The center lane is easier for fire trucks and ambulances to get through traffic.

Put greenbelt from Four Corners to town.

Because crossing intersection goes through my propane tank; there is an existing road to the south that could be used.

Need to preserve existing access point on rural property just south of mile post 107 that will be covered by widened highway.

Kalispell through town, suggest abandon Main and make it a pedestrian mall. Then make 1st Street East and 1st Street West one-way couplets. This would discourage through traffic in town and encourage use of the bypass.

At south end of Kalispell bypass, why T intersection? Suggest reduce intersection angle to allow traffic to merge.

At north end of Kalispell bypass, suggest move intersection south to allow a southbound lane to merge into the bypass.

Prefer, from emergency vehicle standpoint, to have five lane. Emergency vehicles can move down middle lane.

Separate bike and pedestrian from highway. Large vans, chip trucks, et cetera, tend to suck back toward the truck.

Intersection at Twin Acres Drive. Road going west of 93 is private. Road west is unnamed and is not maintained by county.

Solberg Trucking. Grade at north entrance very steep. Concerned about how access affects 22 trucks in and out a day. Solberg Trucking. Full pumps are close to proposed edge of four lane.

A lot of logging trucks northbound on 93 go up northbound Willow Glen. Expect trouble with turn movements.

County shops are on Willow Glen and there are a lot of turning trucks there.

Too much truck traffic south of Kalispell for

four lane. Needs to be five lane.

Consider keeping Reserve Drive as a frontage road to the bypass. Concerned with access to multi-family residences and single-family residences northwest of U.S. 93-Reserve intersection.

Consider Four Mile Drive instead of Reserve Drive for the east-west portion of the bypass.

Concerned with Reserve-U.S. 93 intersection traffic. Operations heavy eastbound to northbound left turns.

At north end of Kalispell bypass, suggest come straight north at Three Mile Drive then cut west to 93 using Four Mile Drive.

West leg of Twin Acres is a private road. Montana Department of Transportation does not recognize as a route. Will probably be closed to extend the runway. At Willow Glen and U.S. 93, tough turn at intersection for logging trucks.

MS. BRAMER: I'd like your attention up here, if you could; maybe get a seat at one of these tables if there are some seats and we'll spend a little bit of time as a whole group and then we'll give you a chance to look over the maps some more.

I'd like to welcome you. I'm Kathy Bramer with Carter - Burgess, and there's some new faces here tonight.

Glad to see some folks maybe we haven't seen before. I'm glad people got here in time to take a look at some of these maps. I've already gotten a lot of comments from you and hope that we're not done. We'll get some more as the evening goes on. What I'd like to do is--I think most of you picked up an agenda when you walked in the door over there, and I just want to--if anybody didn't get one that wants one, could you maybe bring a couple over? What we're going to do is put some more chairs down. We're doing construction as we speak.

The purpose of the meeting tonight is to present some of the findings that we have from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. And for those of you who haven't seen the document yet, it's about an inch and a half thick. And we've been collecting a lot of information since last fall, the last time we had hearings. And so we wanted to at least highlight for you some of the things that we've learned, some of the implications for the highway, so that you can consider that as your reflecting on what's going on here. And then in response to that, your feedback, your input, your thoughts, your preferences about what's going to happen. This is the last hearing that we're going to have in Somers, so we want to hear from you tonight as much as possible about your preferences and hopefully you can focus on what your specific interests are

and why you believe things ought to be done in a particular way. And I know many of you are already thinking along those lines because we've had some great comments already.

We'll have a few comments about the process and the schedule from here on out, and then we'll take some questions for clarification in this whole group before we then go back out to the stations around here and take comments from you on the cards. One of the reasons, I just want to tell you, that our public hearings are structured a little bit differently than some of the other hearings where you might have been, where you all sit in rows at the microphone and everybody lines up and gives their comments, is because we believe that we want to hear from each and every one of you. And one of the best ways for us to do that is for us to talk to you one-on-one and get things written down so that you have an opportunity in the time that we have here to make sure that we hear what you have to say.

Gina--she was right there.

MS. MCAFEE: I'm right here. I was going to see how worried she got.

MS. BRAMER: Really getting worried. Well--oh, lets see. Gina McAfee is the project director. She is going to talk a bit about the findings and the process.

MS. MCAFEE: I'm just going to talk relatively briefly about the major findings of the Draft EIS. When you came in the door, we did have this handout, which is a twenty-page version of the EIS, which is substantially shorter than the actual EIS itself, which a few copies are sitting on the tables here. And tonight I'm going to present an even more abbreviated summary of the major findings of the EIS.

A lot of you have been to a number of our meetings before, so some of this may be familiar to you. But I will repeat some of this because we are--this will be a part of a formal transcript. We have a transcriber here tonight who is actually, formally recording the presentation as well as any comments that you make.

The primary purpose and need for improvements to U.S. 93 is to reduce congestion on the existing facility; to plan for future growth and development in the area; to improve connections with other intermodal facilities in the area; to enhance safety; and to provide for enhanced scenic values.

We looked at a number of alternatives. Again, a lot of you were involved in the meetings last spring, last summer and in the fall when we were looking at a lot more alternatives than the ones you see on the walls here tonight and documented in this handout. Some of the

alternatives that we initially looked at included ones on completely different--they were all in the Flathead Valley but they were ones on completely different corridors than the ones that are documented on the walls tonight.

We did go through a process of looking at the benefits and disadvantages of those various alternatives and selected what are the reasonable and feasible alternatives. And these are the ones that we fully evaluated in the EIS, actually in chapter four of the EIS. Chapter two of the EIS does describe the various alternatives that we looked at and describes in detail the reasonable alternatives that were fully evaluated.

The alternatives that we looked at include, first of all, the No-build Alternative, which basically means making no improvements to U.S. 93, except those that are needed for maintenance reasons. In the rural corridor areas, the areas that are not within the general urban limits of either Kalispell or Whitefish, we looked at three basic alternatives and these are defined in the handout. One of them we called Alternative A (median). The A meaning that it was along the U.S. 93 corridor, the median part of it meaning that it did have--it was basically two lanes in each direction separated by a median. And we generally looked at a depressed grassy type of median in the rural areas and in the more urban areas we looked at

some sort of a raised median.

The second basic alternative that we looked at for U.S. 93, the rural area, was what we called the A (turn lane) Alternative. The A again meaning that it was basically along the U.S. 93 corridor turn lane, meant that we had again the two basic lanes in each direction and in the middle we had a fifth lane that was a center turning lane. So you had five lanes total for the A (turn lane) Alternative.

And then the third basic alternative that we looked at was called the A (combo) Alternative or combination alternative. And this alternative just took the features of the other two basic alternatives and varied them throughout the corridor depending on adjacent land uses and adjacent other constraints like wetlands or other things that we wanted to try to avoid.

So those were the three basic alternatives that we evaluated in the rural corridor areas.

In the Kalispell area, and we have the drawings for that area on the wall over here on the left, we looked in addition to improvements to U.S. 93 through town, we also looked at the--at an Alternative B, which was a western bypass to Kalispell, and that generally was located along the railroad corridor until you got a little bit further north and generally along Stillwater Road. It

obviously doesn't follow along either one of those corridors the whole way, but that's a general description of where that one is located. And similar to U.S. 93, we looked at two basic alternatives along that bypass corridor. One of them was the median alternative and the second one was the turn lane, and those had the same general characteristics as the A (median) and A (turn lane) Alternatives. This location, because it was along another corridor, we called it B (median) and B (turn lane). And we did assume that in the Kalispell area, the bypass alternative would be implemented along with--together with improvements to U.S. 93 through town. A third alternative that we also fully investigated in the Kalispell alternative was not building the bypass but making the same basic set of improvements to U.S. 93 through Kalispell. And generally you would tend to get just a lower level of service on U.S. 93 through town with that alternative. So that was the third build alternative that we investigated in the Kalispell area.

And in the Whitefish area, we don't have detailed drawings up on the wall for the Whitefish area tonight but those are in the handout, we looked at a total of six build alternatives. One of those included making improvements just to Second and Spokane through town in Whitefish. That was basically improving it to four eleven-foot lanes on

both Second and Spokane. It would include some improvements to the Second and Spokane intersection. The other five alternatives were different variations of splitting traffic between Baker and Spokane through Whitefish. And if you have any questions about those, you know, I can either answer them immediately after this formal presentation or, you know, find one of us and ask us more questions about those. We just did not include the detailed drawings of those tonight.

Now, I want to just briefly go through some of the major findings of the EIS. What we did, according to the--the National Environmental Policy Act requires that you look at a lot of different impacts to a lot of different areas; social impacts as well as environmental impacts. And so what I want to do is summarize the major findings when we looked into each of these areas. Can everyone hear right now? Okay. It's starting to get louder and louder, so I guess I'll just talk louder and louder until my voice gives out.

We looked at how these improvements improved, you know, one of the primary purposes and need for the project was to reduce congestion. So we drew up the alternatives, we ran them through a traffic model and we looked at, well did they reduce congestion. And we found that, yes, any of these build alternatives would--we looked--predicted

conditions out to the year 2015 and we looked at the difference between the no-build alternative and the build alternatives. And we did find that the build alternatives in all cases would improve traffic operations. There would be less congestion on U.S. 93 with these improvements than if you didn't make any improvements.

We looked at safety. You know, a lot of you told us in the scoping process that trying to decrease the accident rate was an important element of this project. Any of these build alternatives would decrease the accident rate over the no-build, over making no improvements. There were some differences between the Alternative A (turn lane) and A (median) when you compared them to each other in terms of where future accidents might occur. Remember, this is all an improvement over the no-build situation.

But we did find that the A (turn lane) Alternative, again, which is the one that has the fifth lane in the middle, you may have more accidents that are nonintersection related. So accidents that are not related, that do not occur at an intersection, more of those may occur with the A (turn lane) Alternative when compared to the A (median) Alternative. With A (median) Alternative we did find that there could be more accidents at unsignalized intersections. And that's, again, when compared to the A (turn lane) Alternative.

From a land use perspective, we found that the A (turn lane) Alternative would tend to encourage less dense, sort of uneven, extensions of either commercial strips in the areas south of Kalispell or south of Whitefish or residential in other areas. The A (median) would tend to encourage land use that is denser, more compact and concentrated at major intersections. And in the Kalispell area, the bypass, inclusion of the bypass would tend to accelerate development that would occur either along the bypass or in the general vicinity of the bypass.

We looked at future right-of-way and where that might be needed. As a lot of you are probably aware, the Montana Department of Transportation has already purchased quite a bit of right-of-way along this corridor and we tried to take full advantage of that wherever we could. Additional right-of-way would be needed for some of the frontage roads that we've shown, for it's the split alignment areas which we are primarily looking at right now in the Kalispell-to-Whitefish section. Additional right-of-way would be needed for some of these what we're calling special-design concepts that are colored up on the wall over here. And, likely, also in any locations where the alignment of the new road is moved off the centerline of the existing road, the A (median) Alternative, would require more right-of-way and would result in more

residential and business relocations.

I also wanted to point out that the--I don't know if anyone had a chance to look at the drawings in the EIS, but there is a discrepancy between the drawings that are in the EIS and those shown on the wall tonight. The future right-of-way that is shown on the wall tonight is the correct information. So I encourage you to look at that and, you know, see if you have any questions about that. That information will be corrected in the next major document in our process, which is called a Final EIS.

We looked at economic impact. We found that generally these build alternatives would improve overall economic conditions for businesses in the valley primarily because of a reduction in congestion. We looked at the impact to pedestrians and bicyclists. And I don't know if you noticed or not, we do have some recommendations right now that are included in our design special accommodations for locations that are known to be places where people want to cross U.S. 93. We have some recommendations for how to make that safer for those pedestrians to cross. We're also recommending as a part of the U.S. 93 project that either a separated bike path, one that isn't--this would likely be a ten-foot bike path that is separated from the highway or an inclusion of a bike lane on the shoulder of U.S. 93; that either one of those two be included as a part of this

project. This is one of the areas that we would like some feedback from you tonight, if you have a preference for either the separated bike path or the bike lane on the shoulder.

We looked at the impact these alternatives might have on air quality. What we found is that any of these--any of the build alternatives would likely decrease emissions of carbon monoxide because those emissions are directly related to congestion. And since these alternatives would likely reduce congestion, then they would also tend to reduce the carbon monoxide emissions. We also looked at emissions of fine particulate matter, which are of a concern in the general Kalispell urban area as well as in the Whitefish urban area. And what we found is that the alternatives that included the bypass would tend to decrease emissions, the fine particulate matter. That's because with the bypass alternatives, more of the travel would occur out of the main polluted area of Kalispell or the area in Kalispell that receives the most particulate emissions. In Whitefish, what we found is that the build alternatives would result--when compared to the no-build alternative, would result in slightly increased emissions of fine particulate matter except for the alternative called C (offset), which was one of the alternatives where traffic was split between Baker and

Spokane. And that particular alternative had slightly less--slightly fewer FPM, fine particulate matter, when compared to the no-build.

We looked at the noise impact. We took noise readings all along U.S. 93 and other locations in the Flathead Valley and we predicted what the future noise levels would be. What we found--and a lot of this information is again shown on the maps tonight--we found that there would be increased noise levels that would be heard at approximately ninety-five either homes or schools or other areas that are sensitive to noise, called sensitive receptors. And that that didn't vary substantially between any of the alternatives, except for the bypass alternative. And the bypass alternative impacted approximately twenty-six additional homes. They would receive increased noise.

We looked at impact to water resources. As you're aware, there are a lot of creek crossings along the corridor, a lot of wetland areas that are also protected by federal legislation. The Alternative A (median) would result in more river and flood plain encroachment and slightly more wetland impact. We also looked at the impact of the--again, of the Kalispell bypass alternative. And it did--I think we counted up nine separate wetland areas that that alternative would impact, totaling over four acres.

So there would be more wetland impact as a result of the Kalispell bypass alternative.

We are in the process of working with agencies to determine what the best mitigation is for, you know, some of those impacts like the wetland impacts, and they will be fully mitigated.

We looked along the area to see if there were any historic properties that could be impacted and there are two. The railroad between Kalispell and Somers is itself historic because it was important to the overall history of the area, the historic development of the area. And we will have an adverse impact on that railroad. As you're probably aware, a lot of the segment between Somers and Kalispell and also along the bypass is located right on that railroad corridor. So there would be an adverse effect to that historic railroad. Along the Kalispell bypass there is also a historic farmsted called the McDonald Place, and we would--we are at this point likely to encroach on a corner of that property. We are not anticipating actually needing to take any of the buildings that make up that historic farmstead but that also will be a likely adverse impact.

We looked at a number of the parks to determine what the impact might be to parks and found that the only direct adverse impact that we had was to a--the Ashley

Creek Recreation Trail, which is, again, along the Kalispell bypass alternative. The portion where we will be crossing it is not--it is owned by Flathead County Parks. It's actually still a railroad--still operating as a railroad but they have plans to convert that using some of the Rails to Trails conversion. They're getting some funds through the ISTEA legislation to do that. And we will be going across that planned future trail. We met with them this morning and I think we can work out some mitigation where we actually relocate the trail for a short distance along Ashley Creek. So we're working with them on mitigation.

I'm almost through, so don't give up. We looked at the visual impacts of these different alternatives and we did find that when viewed from the motorists--from a motorist's viewpoint, the A (turn lane) Alternative, it would definitely be perceived as a much wider expanse of pavement, that the A (median) Alternative would serve to interrupt that view with a grassy median. So that was perceived to be a positive visual impact of the A (median) Alternative. The special design features that we've included, and these are included with both of the two basic alternatives, would tend to enhance visual quality. We have included these in a number of locations along the corridor.

The other thing I wanted to mention in the Kalispell area is that we are assuming widening of the road south of the courthouse and we are--we're doing that--we're trying to do that in a manner so that we can protect as many of those mature trees through there as we can. But it is possible that we may lose some of those just through damage to the root system during construction. Again, we're going to try our best to not damage those but it is possible that we may. And that would be a visual impact in that area.

And then, finally, we looked at implementation. What it will take to really get from what we are doing now, which is an Environmental Impact Statement, to construction. We heard very clearly from everyone that you want to try to progress through this as quickly as you can and get to construction. So we did look at some of the possible schedules for doing that, and the different alternatives do take different amounts of time in the design process, which needs to occur, you know, after the EIS and the right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation and in the construction process. Some of this varies also depending on which of the access control alternatives that is chosen. And I did mention--did forget to mention that those are also alternatives that we are looking at and we want your feedback on those tonight, too, if you have a

preference.

The basic alternatives are summarized on the chart over in the corner. There is an alternative which is basically no-access control, one that is called restrictive-access control, which has the most restrictions on where there would be future breaks, future driveway accesses allowed to U.S. 93, and then the third one is called situational-access control, which is between--generally between no-access control and restrictive. Doesn't have quite as many constraints on it. And those different access-control alternatives do take different amounts of time in the right-of-way acquisition process. The restrictive one would tend to take more time in the right-of-way acquisition process.

We also did come up with preliminary construction costs for these alternatives and we did it by segment because that seemed to be the best way to really compare cost. And what we found for--and this is just for the rural segments, which includes Somers to Kalispell, the Kalispell to Whitefish section and then the section that is west of Whitefish includes all the way to the Spencer Lake turnoff, if you know where that is. What we found is that the A (median) Alternative would cost approximately seventy-three million dollars, the A (turn lane) concept would cost approximately sixty-four million dollars and the

A (combo) concept would cost approximately seventy-one million dollars.

That's really all of the technical presentation I had. I do want to talk a bit about the process from here. This is--we just finished the Draft EIS. What we're doing now is this is the second of three public hearings that we're having. We're also having a number of meetings with smaller groups in the valley. We're meeting with our--we have an advisory committee whose names are listed on the back here. We've already met with them since the Draft EIS has been released and we will do so again. We have meetings with agencies that we are conducting. We've received a lot of letters, a lot of phone calls. There does seem to be a lot of opinion about this project. So what we will be doing for the next several months is analyzing the input that we get, incorporating it where we can. You know, I know a lot of you tonight have come up with some ideas that we will definitely consider as we do any refinements to the design from here. The last time we got some good ideas about suggestions for different types of intersection improvements to include in certain locations, that kind of thing we'll be incorporating as much of that input as we can.

We'll be evaluating the issues that have come up and then we'll be working together with our advisory

committee to identify the preferred alternative. And it's that alternative that will then be fully assessed, fully analyzed in the final Environmental Impact Statement, which we're planning to have complete in September of this year. And once the final EIS is done, then, as I mentioned earlier, the next steps are beginning the design process and then proceeding with right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation and construction. And I did want to just mention that this is all dependent on the availability of funding. And that is--that is a big unknown factor right now, and that's the primary reason why these charts are drawn the way that they are, which is, you know, just a little star over here for construction. Because we really don't know what the availability of funding is and how much is likely to be available and when it will be available. And that really does drive the process from this point.

So the ways--Kathy mentioned the primary purpose for the meeting tonight is to get your feedback. The ways you can comment--we have a number of different ways. You can--this is Bambi over here and she--you can talk directly to her if you'd like. She will then include your comments as a formal part of the transcript. You may write your comments on one of these comment sheets and put them in the box. Dick's holding those up. You may talk to one of us and we'll write down what you say on one of these cards,

hang it up on the wall and then Bambi will also include that as a part of the transcript. You can write on one of these cards yourself and give it directly to Bambi, if you'd like. So there are a number of different ways to give us your input. I also wanted to mention that there are several members of our advisory committee here and feel free to give your comments directly to them, also. They should have name tags on. I see that Tracy does, Jim does also, yeah.

MS. BRAMER: People on the advisory committee, maybe you could just raise your hands.

MS. MCAFEE: Some of them are trying to hide over there.

The other thing I wanted to mention is the formal comment period for this Draft EIS is May 2nd. So you still have over a month after this to give us your comments. So if you think of something after tonight, feel free to write us a letter. The address is listed on the back of this handout or you can call one of the advisory committee members or you can call our telephone number in Whitefish and leave a message. So, you know, again, we encourage your comments. We encourage your ideas. And just to mention, just to go over briefly, again, the type of input that we're looking for, we're looking for any ideas that you have on, you know, which of the highway alternatives

that you prefer. If you prefer one of the accesses or have any ideas on the access-control alternatives, the bike lane versus separated bike path is something that we would specifically like to get feedback on. Any of the special design concepts, recommendations for pedestrian crossings. You know, we've included, for instance, along with the A (median) Alternative, we've included a few locations for places for trucks to do a U-turn. If you like those ideas, if you think there should be more, we're looking for all of that kind of feedback. So we've already gotten quite a bit and we encourage you to give us more. Thank you very much.

MS. BRAMER: What I'd like to do is just--I mentioned before that the reason we're not going to spend a lot of time taking comments here is because we won't get comments from everyone if we do it in a large group. But I would ask if there are any questions of clarification. Any of the questions that Gina talked about, any of the technical information, things that you didn't understand or wanted to know more about it.

FROM THE FLOOR: I guess I have one concern. She said that the bypass was going to be included in the construction of 93 north and south of Kalispell, that were going to be included?

MS. MCAFEE: The bypass is one of the alternatives in the Kalispell area. We're looking at

three; a No-build Alternative, we're looking at two alternatives that include a bypass and we're looking at a third build alternative that does not include a bypass. So that's not a given. It's one of the alternatives that we're considering.

MS. BRAMER: Other clarification questions?

FROM THE FLOOR: Gina, one of the things that you indicated that gave you direction as to an idea was the adjacent land, whether it's wetlands or land use. How can you predict what the land use will be in, say, twenty years from now? It changes within a year whether it's developed or rural, agriculture or what.

MS. MCAFEE: I think what I was referring to--what I said is that we were trying to figure out whether or not what to include in the A (combo) Alternative that I--that's what I meant when I used that reference. What we were looking for was existing constraints. If there was an existing wetland or an existing land use that we wanted to avoid for some reason, you know, it could have been to avoid property or something like that. We were not trying to avoid future land use.

We do, however, in doing an Environmental Impact Statement, we do try to predict what the future land use will be. We need to do that to try to understand what the

traffic will be twenty years from now. So we did--we through the process we formed what we call land use subcommittees that helped us come up with what, you know, possible land use would be twenty years from now. We did use those in the predictions of traffic, noise, air quality, some of those things.

MS. BRAMER: Any other questions? Okay. For those of you who have been giving me comments too, you'll know what I'm about to say. When you give comments to us, I've been asking you why. The more detail that you can give us about why you feel a particular way, the more easily we can incorporate that into the thinking and the planning that goes on. I want a five lane, I want a four lane, I don't want this intersection, I do want that intersection, isn't as helpful to us, although we will take those comments certainly, but it isn't as helpful to us as to say I know what the traffic pattern is here and My driveway deals with it this way and If you improve the intersection over this way it might help. The more specific you can be, the better. So don't get threatened if I ask you why. I just want more information so I know what you're thinking. Okay? If there aren't any further questions--now the Carter and Burgess staff have held up their hands. They are all people armed with paper and pencil, as well as the advisory committee members, as well

as the transcriber who want to know what you think. And thank you all for coming.

(Oral presentation concluded at 7:45 p.m.)

Written comments:

Most of the Airport Road traffic into Ball's Crossing turns south on 93. Could improve the west side of intersection and leave most of east side alone. At north end of Kalispell bypass, suggest extending two-lane highway at two miles north up Stillwater Road to then head east to connect up to U.S. 93. Keep intersection at Reserve Drive and 93 to make a connection to LaSalle at U.S. Number 2. At south end, remove right-angle intersection and extend road south along railroad grade past elevators to connect up to U.S. 93.

Favor of median all the way, in part, due to minimal additional right-of-way needed. It will be much more pleasant to travel and safer.

One point thirty hectares less pavement for median design.

Time factor is lesd critical than getting design right. Traffic is not presently that bad, compared to other urban areas, that we can't wait for the best design.

A turn lane deteriorates over time. Under economic criteria, should also apply under safety for this alternative.

Consider providing a tractor underpass for Altenburg farm.

Prefer median because of safety; also separate bike path from roadway for safety.

In the EIS Draft re: right-of-way, please include what's already acquired as well as what's still needed.

Provide an underpass for Altenburg farm. Need two underpasses; one underpass just north of farm, one south of wetland number 3.

Favor doing away with existing billboards.

Highway 2 think had median originally. It was torn out and a paved lane was put. Why not do a five lane in the first place?

Visitors center at Four Corners unnecessary and extra cost.

Eliminate intersection just north of livestock. A (median) Alternative unnecessary and costly.

Ramada Inn owner concerned about possible loss of an access with any design.

Support scenic overlook near 82/Somers. One of best views in valley.

Prefer five-lane design since it could be built faster.

Favor median alternative. Favor more restrictive access control because opposed to strip development. Try

to maintain separate communities - maintain character identity - don't want to look like Orange County. Highway must fit with Master Plan currently being developed.

Need farm access at mile post 105.6. Single owner both sides 104.3 to 105.8. Plan so farmer has access and doesn't have to drive equipment along highway.

Montana 82 and 93 should not be four lanes through south of intersection. Like five lane. Best piece of road between airport and Blue Moon en route to Hungry Horse.

There is more maintenance with the median.

Would not like to see Kalispell bypass included because they may have problems getting right-of-way.

Like separated bike path to keep the bikes separated.

If main line of traffic going up Kalispell bypass, why not make it a straight shot?

Major amount of traffic will use bypass since they will have a shorter route to north.

Fifty-five acres seems too much for turn lane alternative. Ten million dollars seems too low a cost.

Funding is a major concern - available historic funds per year - schedule is deceiving - schedule looks like all construction can happen within one to two years.

I favor Alternative A (median). Change

intersection 93 and 82 to three lanes north; one light, one straight ahead, one right, then merge 82 into 93 north with 82 traffic having own lane, not merger lane.

2. Left turn on median should incorporate an extra lane on other side going other direction for U-turn and merger lane.

3. The naming Alternative A and Alternative B is misleading. Both are possible and both should be fully implemented.

4. Alternative B (bypass) should continue to intersect 93 at elevator at Ball's Crossing, i.e., Long Machinery. This could be accomplished by allowing farm equipment from farm to pass under bypass and thus keep bypass at grade.

5. Bypass return to highway at Reserve is good but would it make sense to continue a smaller alternative route north, i.e., two-lane, that would join 93 at one to two miles north of Reserve.

6. No suicide lane. A turn lane means people from opposite direction deciding at same time to turn... This greatly increases potential for a major head-on accident. Even in town, this is currently risky at 35 miles an hour... At a 55 miles per hour zone, the reaction time to head-on and rear-end avoidance would be diminished significantly.

7. Fine particulate impact: as a past member, first three years, of Kalispell/Flathead Air Advisory Committee, anything you do to take traffic out of downtown Kalispell and Whitefish is great... i.e., create bypass.

8. From a strictly aesthetic point of view, I favor median... Having lived in valley since 1980, I have observed firsthand the changes that growth have wrought. We must plan for long-term, not shortsight this important decision... For all intents, U.S. 93 is an interstate and international highway. The revamp should do all possible to keep our area safe and uncongested as possible. Median would do both and be more green to eye. Bill Myers, Jr., Eastshore Route, Bigfork, Montana 59911. 837-5617.

Prefer separated bike path. Closer to highway means more noise and more potential for accidents. Prefer median for safety.

Like scenic overlook at Somers. Traffic signal may be needed at Lower Valley Road.

Definitely need a signal at Cemetery Road - it serves a lot of agricultural truck traffic.

Bypass is very important and needed. There is so much traffic that goes through town that doesn't need to.

Do we believe that the EIS will support necessity argument if property acquisitions are contested in court?

Alternative A (median) will serve the valley

better over the long term and would be better for visual and aesthetic reasons, also for more compact land use.

Need some limited access to keep traffic moving; use signals; especially good for truck traffic that needs extra time. Median is a weed trap and trashy; harder to maintain. Want light signal at Four Corners for safety.

Four Corners, Levengood's, Ball's Crossing intersection ingress and egress is an issue. Will have to turn left across two lanes. Need signal or overpass.

Need a truck bypass through Kalispell; on west side of town and on east side, Willow Glen. With a signal at Montana 82 and U.S. 93, southbound trucks will need a climbing lane to the south. What's hazardous material at site 48? Was never a gas station there.

(Proceedings concluded at 8:30 p.m.)

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Bambi A. Goodman, CSR, RPR and Notary Public for the State of Montana, do hereby certify:

That I did report the foregoing public hearing; that said public hearing was taken at the time and place stated on the caption hereto; that the statements and written comments were taken in shorthand by me and subsequently reduced to writing under my direction; that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the foregoing.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed my seal of office this 4th day of April, 1994.

BAMBI A. GOODMAN, CSR, RPR and
Notary Public for the State of Montana
Residing at Whitefish, Montana
My Commission expires March 21, 1998

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARING
Somers

March 23, 1994

Name (please print)	Mailing Address	
Larry [illegible]	210 MT Hwy 82	Kalispell
Leslie Cooper	215 MT Hwy 82	Kal
Sally Cooper	215 Hwy 82	Kal.
Jim Heim	86 Plaza Dr.	Lakeside
Ken Galloway	3235 Hwy 93-So	Kal
Tracy Crabtree	220 1st Ave East	Kal
DAN BANGEMAN	543 N JUNIPER BAY	SOMERS MT 59932
Richard Altenburg	650 Forest Hill Rd.	Kal
John Agnew	180 McDowell Dr	Big Fork
Morey D. Grove	PO Box 262	Somers MT. 59932
James Torgersen	120 Christopher Ct	Kalispell
J.T. Dedman Jr	1310 MT 208	Somers MT 59932
Phil Lauman	Same as always	Somers
Sharon & Wayne Finney	5557 Hwy 93 So	Somers
[illegible]	345 Sven Hill Drive	Bigfork

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARING
Somers

March 23, 1994

Name (please print)	Mailing Address	
Terry & Pam Eaton	105 Welf Ln.	Kalispell MT
Carl C.H. Fein	305 Forest Hills Vly	Kalispell, MT.
Orville S. Soeberg	3560 HWY 93 So.	Kalispell Mt
Dave Waatti	P.O. Box 1	Kalispell, Mt
Ron Kaske	P.O. Box 1	KALISPELL MT.
Ted + Sherrie Higgins	143 Old Hwy 93	Somers, MT
Gerry Burden	2727 Whitefish Stage Rd	Kalispell
Bill Myers	East Shore Rt.	Big Fork 59911
Tom Tittle		
Hank Honeywell	2514 Look Out Cir.	Helena, Mt. 59601
James A Seek	17 Trails End Dr	Kal MT 59901
Robert W. Riley	Box 218	Lakeside, Mt. 59922
D. MILLER	558 S. Stage	Kalispell
Charles Stoos	Box 99 - Somers,	Somers, MT.
Ronald Hartsock	27 Silver leaf Dr.	Kal. Mt. 59901

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARING
Somers

March 23, 1994

Name (please print)	Mailing Address	
DARRIS FLANAGAN	480 Wiley Dike	Kalispell
Robert Walker	Box 88	Somers

U.S. HIGHWAY 93

SOMERS TO WHITEFISH WEST

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

PUBLIC HEARING

Held Thursday, March 24, 1994 - 6:00 p.m.
Mountain Mall, Whitefish, Montana

ORIGINAL

Reported by Nancy Skurvid, Registered Professional Reporter, and Notary Public for the State of Montana

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 1994

Prefers five-lane between Montana 40 and Baker to allow business access. If a median alternative is chosen, then provide adequate stacking distance for turn lanes. Prefers median between Montana 40 and Baker. Too many safety hazards now with five-lane. If median, then landscape median. Would suggest a truck bypass.

Prefer separate bike/pedestrian lane from road because cars creep up on bike lane and vice versa. Look at Lakeside to Somers painted walk. It does not work.

Since I am unable to attend the March 24th meeting, please record my following comment and opinion on Highway 93 reconstruction. I strongly support the five-lane center-turn design with absolutely no medians. A highway should be a system to get people where they want to go efficiently with unrestricted access. I own the businesses on Highway 93 -- Whitefish RV Park, Holiday Plaza and Happy Valley Storage -- so I hope my comment will be seriously considered. Also, I feel that Highway 40 junction to Whitefish should be left three lanes to be more aesthetically pleasing, and more signals added at intersections. Thank you.

Northwest corner Baker and Seventh corner house very close to road. Garage in basement. Difficult to get out onto Baker and Seventh.

Concern about the Seventh Street bridge and the impacts on Whitefish River and pond in that area.

Concern about off-set two-lane one-way and one-lane other on Baker or Spokane.

Should have ways for citizens to keep up the landscaping in medians in city.

Suggest: Build it. Prefer five-lane. Road should be used. Landscaped medians are expensive to maintain.

Suggest: Lighting back to Montana 40.

Note: A decision was made two years ago. The access and safety will both be improved with five-lane.

Suggest: This should have been built two years ago.

Suggest: Five-lane because it is more functional and less expensive.

Suggest: A separated bike path.

Prefer median. This would be safer. Can get out of traffic stream to turn. Separate bike lane would be great. But do put one in.

Pedestrians now have difficulty crossing 93. A median alternative will provide a safety zone for pedestrians. Median will also look better.

Prefer five-lane. Median will not be safer. Snow will be piled in median. Has a business on 93

and invested $300,000 based on past five-lane decision. A median will put this man out of business.

Antelope Trail, I hope it does not disrupt the existing homes.

Combo Alternative north of Montana 40 is good but needs some medians to control drives and make Whitefish "entry" statement.

Make use of grade at Grandview and Reserve intersections and let left turns cross under U.S. 93.

Connection from Baker to U.S. 93 north of Town Pump would be a good idea. Graphics should show future city extension of Baker south of Safeway.

Whitefish River elevation through town caused by 93 culverts too high. Resulting river elevation is good; creates wetland area and ponded area by park.

Frontage road north of Montana 40 or Baker extension is very needed. No way to currently get on to U.S. 93.

Prefer to keep two-way traffic on Spokane and Baker to minimize impact to neighborhood.

Prefer no new bridge because construction will have water quality impacts to Whitefish River.

Would not like a bridge aligned with Seventh because it is a bad road now.

Oil is laying in Whitefish River bottom from dumping by railroad.

Prefer the median concept because of aesthetics, safety, land use.

Believes highway separation will impact too many existing homes.

Concerned about increases in traffic volumes on Baker, effect to residential uses.

Recommend considering benches or other seating areas along with Seventh Street bridge.

What is our selection on Seventh Street bridge? Will it allow for pedestrians and bikes? It should.

Karrow-93 intersection should be smooth, lesser grade, to avoid accidents involving turning vehicles.

A temporary stoplight at Baker and Spokane would be a good way to enhance safety until construction.

KATHY BRAMER: If you'll come on over, we'll get started with the presentation. These are some glasses that were found. Has anybody lost a pair of glasses? Glasses?

I'd like to welcome you -- my name is Kathy Bramer, I'm with Carter & Burgess -- to the third or fourth

-- the last public hearing that we're going to have on Highway 93 in Whitefish. I want to urge any of you who want to come forward, up to this area, to come on up and sit down.

I want to start by introducing just a few folks. We have a project advisory committee that's been working with the Carter & Burgess team on deliberating and studying the information that has been collected in the EIS. And there's a number of those people here, if you could just stand up and raise your hand. The advisory committee members, back there and here, and there. Four or five here tonight. And I'd like to thank them right now for all the hard work that they've put into this project in addition to being here.

We also have members of the Carter & Burgess team who are here, staff, and many of them have been walking around holding 5x8-size index cards writing down your comments. The staff, all around here, a group of them. Great.

Please don't hesitate to report to any of those people. The advisory committee members, as well as the staff, are prepared to take your comments tonight.

What I'd like to do now is just walk very briefly through the agenda. I think, as you walked through the door, you got a copy of an agenda that looks something like

this. If anybody didn't get one, raise your hand if you want one. Can we bring a few over?

Many of you have already been here for the last 45 minutes or an hour looking at the maps and the graphics, which have more detail on them this time than the last time we were here, and giving us some of your comments.

We would like to spend the next half hour, approximately, talking to you about some of the draft findings -- or some of the findings for the Draft EIS to let you know some of the things that we've been learning over the last four months, or so, in particular. And then to take some time after that to maybe ask a few questions for clarification, if you have them, about the draft.

And, by the way, the draft is -- for those of you who haven't seen them, it looks a lot like this. That's what we're going to be -- Gina is going to be talking about in very summary form tonight.

Then we'll, after about a half an hour, go back out again and just let you wander around here and corner us and get your comments.

One of the reasons these hearings are set up this way is so that we get a chance to talk to all of you and make sure we get you included in the record and into deliberations of EIS. So we look forward to hearing your comments tonight. Gina.

GINA McAFEE: Thank you, Kathy. I'm Gina McAfee. I'm the project manager for the project. I'm with Carter & Burgess. And I recognize a lot of you. We've been -- as Kathy mentioned, this is our fourth round of public hearings, and I do see a lot of familiar faces.

I did want to spend a few minutes summarizing the major findings of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. These findings are summarized on graphics that you see on the walls, they're summarized in this handout which I hope most of you got a copy of when you came in. There are also a lot more copies over there, so feel free to take one if you didn't get one, and take one to your neighbors if you'd like to spread the information around. And we also have copies of the Draft EIS itself here tonight for you to look at.

The primary purpose and need for improvements to U.S. 93 is summarized in the EIS and in the handout. It is to reduce congestion on U.S. 93, provide for future growth and development, to provide for improved connections to intermodal facilities, to improve safety and to provide for enhanced scenic values.

The alternatives for U.S. 93 that we looked at in the EIS are summarized in Chapter 2 of that document. They include an initial consideration of a number of different alternatives. And a lot of you may remember the -- some of

the meetings that we had earlier in the summer where we were looking at a lot of bypasses of Whitefish. We also looked at several different bypasses of Kalispell, as well as other corridor locations for -- you know, rather than just improving U.S. 93.

What we did then, was go through a process of screening down those alternatives to the reasonable alternatives. And these are fully assessed in Chapter 4 of the Draft EIS.

Just briefly to describe the alternatives that are the reasonable alternatives: First of all, we fully assessed what we call the No-Build Alternative. This is assuming there are no improvements made to U.S. 93. And what we did, was look out to the year -- approximately 20 years from now, to the year 2015, to look at what the impacts might be if there were no improvements made to U.S. 93.

In the rural corridor areas, Somers to Kalispell -- Somers to Kalispell Section, Kalispell to Whitefish, and generally West of Whitefish, we looked at different alternatives for improving U.S. 93, different Build Alternatives.

One of these we called the A(turn-lane) Alternative. We used the "A" connotation to mean all improvements that were generally along the U.S. 93

corridor. The "turn-lane" description referred to -- we were assuming four lanes with a fifth lane in the middle which was to be used for turning traffic. So that was the A(turn-lane) Alternative.

The A(median) Alternative was also four lanes. And then it assumed some sort of a median. Generally, we looked at a depressed, grassy median in the rural sections of the corridor. And in the more urban sections of the corridor, we would generally look at some sort of a raised median.

And then we also looked at what we called an A(combo) Alternative, short for a combination. And this basically took features in both the A(turn-lane) Alternative and the A(median) Alternative and varied those throughout the corridor, depending on things like adjacent land use and whether or not there were any other constraints, like wetland areas, that we were trying to avoid.

So that's a general description of the three basic Build Alternatives that we analyzed in the rural corridor areas.

In Kalispell, which is the graphics shown on the wall to my left, we looked at -- also at three Build Alternatives. Two of these assumed that a new road would be built, a western bypass of Kalispell generally located

along the railroad corridor, and then also generally along Stillwater Road once you got a little bit further north.

We looked at two basic variations of that alternative, again similar to the ones that we looked at along U.S. 93. We called that Alternative B, which meant that it was along that particular corridor.

And then we looked at a median -- B(median) Alternative and then a B(turn-lane) Alternative. And those had similar design characteristics to the Median and Turn-Lane Alternative for U.S. 93.

There was a third -- let me explain that both of those bypass alternatives also assumed the improvements would be made to U.S. 93 through Kalispell. And those are described on that graphic on the bottom.

The third Build Alternative that we evaluated in Kalispell assumed that you would only improve U.S. 93 through Kalispell, you would not implement the bypass.

So those were the three basic alternatives that we looked at and fully evaluated in Kalispell.

In the Whitefish area, we looked at six Build Alternatives, and those are those little maps over on the wall behind you. I'm not going to describe them in detail. I do encourage you to look at those after the presentation. And they're also summarized in your handout on pages 10 and 11.

But generally, we looked at one alternative that we called A(four-lane), "A" again meaning that it was along the basic U.S. 93 alignment.

What that meant is that we made improvements to only Second and Spokane through Whitefish. It did assume improvements to both of those streets to handle four lanes of traffic, which would be narrow lanes, 11-foot lanes, but you could fit four lanes of traffic on both of those streets. And that we called the A(four-lane) Alternative.

The other five alternatives were different variations of splitting traffic between Baker and Spokane. Sometimes in a one-way configuration, and sometimes it was not a one-way configuration.

And those were all -- they were all called C, which, we want you to know, is splitting the traffic between Baker and Spokane. And the ones that were one-way -- the one-way couplets all had a couplet descriptor used for them. We had C(couplet-1), C(couplet-2), C(couplet-3) and C(couplet-4).

So those were the six basic Build Alternatives that we looked at here in the Whitefish area.

We did also look at an A(median) and A(turn-lane) Alternative for a short section West of Whitefish, basically between Karrow Avenue and just past the Lion Mountain Road turnoff.

And in these two sections, we were looking at a total of two through-lanes with the Turn-Lane Alternative having a third lane in the middle which would be used for turning traffic, and the Median Alternative having a median in the middle of the two through-lanes.

And then I also wanted to just make certain that everyone understood that we are recommending improvements that extend all the way past the Spencer Lake turnoff to approximately mile post 133. And that is also shown on that graphic in the back.

Generally, once you get past the main part of Whitefish, we don't -- our future traffic projections do not show the need for anything more than two through-lanes after the year 2015. So it's minor widening and improvements to the road that would be occurring West of Whitefish.

So that's a brief description of the alternatives that are fully evaluated in EIS. And I want to spend a few minutes just describing some of the main findings that are summarized in Chapter 4 of the EIS. And these are also summarized, if you look on pages -- starting on page 14 of your handout and then going through to basically the rest of the handout. It summarized some of the findings of the evaluation.

I'm not going to go through it by section. This

is organized by segment of the project. But, you know, you can pick up some of the major differences by looking at the handout.

We looked at what the change will be in future traffic operations. That was -- one of the major criteria was whether or not these Build Alternatives would reduce congestion, and we did find that all of the Build Alternatives would result in reducing congestion in the year 2015. So traffic would definitely flow better with the Build Alternatives than with the No-Build Alternative.

All of them improved safety. The accident record would be projected to decrease with all of these alternatives when compared to the No-Build Alternative.

There were some differences when you compared the A(turn-lane) Alternative to the A(median) Alternative in terms of where future accidents could occur. The A(turn-lane) Alternative could result in more accidents that are non-intersection related. So accidents that occur in locations other than at intersections. The A(median) Alternative could result in more accidents that would occur at unsignalized intersections.

We looked at land use. You know, how these alternatives might influence future land use patterns. The A(turn-lane) Alternative would tend to encourage less dense, uneven extensions of commercial strips in the areas

generally south of Whitefish and south of Kalispell and residential land uses in other areas. The A(median) Alternative would tend to encourage denser, more compact development typically concentrated at major intersections.

In Kalispell, the implementation of the bypass could encourage accelerated development in the parcels adjacent to or close to the bypass.

We looked at the need for driveway for these different alternatives. You may know that the Montana Department of Transportation has already purchased a lot of the right-of-way along this entire 30-mile corridor.

There would be additional need for right-of-way for frontage roads. We have shown frontage roads with some of these alternatives.

For areas of split alignment for the A(median) Alternative, we have shown -- we have recommended some locations where the two different lanes would be split apart to allow sort of a wider median area in the middle. Additional right-of-way would be needed for that.

Additional right-of-way would be needed for all of these, what we call, "special design concepts." These are these maps that are colored on the walls. And we're recommending gateway treatment for the cities, special treatments along some of the bridges, additional right-of-way would be needed for some of those special

design concepts.

And then we've also recommended, in some locations, that the center line of the new road would be moved off, moved away from the center line of the existing road. And there would likely be a right-of-way required in those locations as well.

The A(median) Alternative would result in more right-of-way and more residential and business relocations when compared to the A(turn-lane) Alternative.

I did also want to mention that there are discrepancies between the right-of-way lines that are shown on the aerial photos in Appendix A of the EIS and those shown on the plans tonight. The one shown on the plans tonight is the correct information. So if you had any questions about that, I encourage you to look at the plans tonight. And that correct information will be shown in our -- the next major document, which is a final EIS. So that will have correct future right-of-way lines on it.

We looked at economic impacts of the alternatives. And over the long term, these Build Alternatives would result in generally improved economic conditions in the area.

We looked at how the alternatives would affect pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. This came across during the scoping process of being a concern to a lot of

you. And in Whitefish, where we can, we have tried to include bicycle lanes along with the improvements.

Our design for U.S. 93, in general, includes either a bicycle lane on the shoulder or a separated bike path. We have not tried to decide, you know, where we should put which one at this point in time. In fact, that's some of the feedback that we would like to get from you tonight, if you would prefer a bike lane that would be on the shoulder or a separated bike lane. So if you have a preference about that, please let us know.

But, generally, we found that the improvement that we have recommended for pedestrians and bicyclists would improve overall conditions for those particular modes of travel.

We looked at air quality. Air quality is a concern in Kalispell and in Whitefish. The areas are both designated as non-containment for PM10, which is fine particulate matter. That means that violations of the PM10 standard do occur in both Kalispell and Whitefish. So we did look at how our alternatives would likely affect PM10 emissions.

In Kalispell, we found that construction of the bypass, implementation of the bypass, would result in generally decreased PM10 emissions when compared to the No-Build Alternative. This is primarily because more of

the travel would be taken out of the non-containment area bather, which is the main part of Kalispell.

In Whitefish, we found that, except for one alternative, the Build Alternatives that we have examined would slightly increase PM10 emissions in the non-containment area boundary when compared to the No-Build. The exception to this is what we call the C(off-set) Alternative, and that one would result in slightly fewer PM10 emissions.

So we're working with the Montana Air Quality Bureau right now to determine what mitigation we would include as a part of these alternatives to account for that increase in PM10 emissions that right now we are projecting to occur.

We looked at noise -- and I notice that some of you have already asked questions about the little yellow dots on the aerial photos. Those little yellow dots show houses that would be projected to hear noise levels during the peak traffic time, which would be a summertime, a late afternoon time when it would most -- the most traffic would be on the road.

And during those times, the little yellow dots signify a decibel reading of 66 or higher. And that's right at the threshold of acceptable noise levels for residents.

I do want to say that, in a lot of cases -- we took existing noise measurements. And in a lot of cases -- and this was true in Whitefish, as well as other parts of the corridor -- residents currently receive noise levels that are that loud. So the actual increase in noise is probably in the neighborhood of two to three decibels, which is an amount that's barely perceptible.

But that's what the little yellow dots mean. And we counted out approximately 95 homes, schools or other land uses that would be considered sensitive to noise that might receive levels that are 66 or higher. Along the bypass, there were approximately 26 additional homes that would receive noise levels that are that loud.

We looked at the difference in impact to water resources; rivers and floodplains and wetland areas. The Alternative A(median) would result in more river and floodplain encroachment, and slightly more wetland impact. Along the bypass, there was substantially more impact to rivers, floodplains and wetland resources.

Want to let you know I'm almost through here, so don't get worried.

We looked at historic properties, and we found that there were two that could be adversely impacted. They're at the railroad between Somers and Kalispell, and then along the west side of Kalispell is, itself, a

historic property.

Now, the railroads often are very important in contributing to the overall historic development of the community. And so that railroad itself is a historic property, and that will be adversely affected by implementation of any of these alternatives.

There is also a historic farmstead that is located along the Kalispell bypass that would be affected by those alternatives. At this point in time, I don't think we're going to need to displace any of the buildings. There are five buildings on this historic farmstead. It would take a corner of the property.

We looked at impact to parks and found that there would be a direct impact -- we would be taking park property -- to only one park. Or it was actually a trail, the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail, which is also west of Kalispell. And we're currently working with the Flathead County Parks Board to come up with mitigation for that particular impact.

We looked at the visual impacts of these alternatives. And, generally, what we found is that, when viewed from the motorist's -- you know, a motorist driving along the road, the A(turn-lane) Alternative would be perceived as a very wide expanse of pavement. You can probably visualize what it would look like. You know,

similar to maybe U.S. 2 in the section where it is five-lane. But when you're driving along, you are definitely aware of the pavement; you know, a wide area of pavement in front.

The A(median) Alternative with, you know, a grassy median would serve to break up that sort of large expanse of pavement, and that would seem as a positive visual characteristic of that particular alternative.

We also found that any of these special design features would tend to improve the visual quality for the motorist driving along the road.

I also wanted to mention that, from a visual impact standpoint, the minor widening that we are proposing in Kalispell south of the courthouse, we are going to do that in a way that -- where we will try to save as many of those mature trees as we can, but it is possible that some of those may be damaged during the construction process. And that would be a visual impact.

Finally, we looked at implementation. We looked at how costly these alternatives would be, we looked at how much time it would take. In September we're anticipating finishing the EIS process, but there are a lot of activities that need to occur once the EIS is finished before you can move into construction.

And we've drawn up some possible schedules

showing, you know, that there does need to be a design process that would occur after the EIS is finished, and there would need to be a right-of-way acquisition process for some of the additional right-of-way that I talked about earlier, a utility relocation process, and then construction would follow that. And some of these alternatives vary in how long they would take to get through that process.

Another variable in that is the -- what access control alternative is chosen. And we did look at three different access control alternatives. Those are summarized on the charts in the back. This is another area where I encourage your feedback tonight.

We looked generally at something that was no access control, one that was a restrictive access control policy, and that basically placed most restrictions on allowing for future breaks in driveway access to U.S. 93. And then there was a third access to our alternative called "situational." And this is generally halfway between access control and restrictive access control. And these also take more or less time in the right-of-way acquisition process, as we indicated on those charts in the back.

We did come up with preliminary cost estimates for the alternatives. And these are based on a very conceptual level of design basically, you know, drawn on

these aerial photos. They will be refined as a more detailed level of design is done.

And, basically, in the -- primarily in the rural corridor areas from Somers to Kalispell, Kalispell to Whitefish, and including the West of Whitefish Section, not including any of the Whitefish Area Alternatives or the Kalispell Bypass Alternative, what we found is that the A(median) Alternative would cost approximately $73 million, the A(turn-lane) Alternative would cost approximately $64 million, and the A(combo) Alternative would cost approximately $71 million.

I also want to just mention briefly, we did come up with separate costs for the six Build Alternatives in Whitefish. And those costs are: For the A(four-lane) Alternative, approximately $4.4 million. For the C(off-set) Alternative, approximately $5.5 million. For the C(couplet-1) Alternative, approximately $4.7 million. The C(couplet-2) was approximately $7.4 million. C(couplet-3) was approximately $9.6 million, and C(couplet-4) was approximately $5.3 million.

I also wanted to mention that one of the reasons these schedules are drawn the way they are with no set time for beginning construction is that, at this point in time, there is no -- no funding source has been identified. And, you know, that is a process that will begin -- or looking

for funding would begin once a preferred alternative is selected.

But as of this point in time, there is no funding that has been available. And, you know, this project will need to compete basically with other projects in Montana.

That's really all the technical presentation I wanted to make. I wanted to describe, briefly, the process from here.

This is the third of a series of public hearings that we have had this week. We've also been meeting with a number of different groups, and we've had meetings with our advisory committee, we have had meetings with our -- we have an agency review group that we met with today. We've been receiving a number of letters. A number of you have called in to our Whitefish telephone number to express an opinion.

What we're going to be doing in the next few months, is we're going to be analyzing that input, we're going to be incorporating recommendations for, you know, design that have been made as much as we can.

There have been a lot of suggestions over the last few days for, you know, modifications of intersections at certain locations, places to include -- or suggestions for places to include a combination for pedestrian crossings, as an example.

Anyway, we're going to be analyzing all this, incorporating it, evaluating issues, and then working with our advisory committee to identify a preferred alternative.

Sort of the thought process that we need to go through in doing that is to be as objective as we can, to take a balanced approach. We're not just going to be looking at one or two main criteria. We are going to be looking at, you know, the social impacts, environmental impacts and, you know, sort of the long-term ramifications of a preferred alternative.

It also needs to be balanced with some of the requirements of environmental legislation. The Clean Air Act has some fairly strict requirements that could affect selection of a preferred alternative, as does the Clean Water Act and other environmental legislation like that.

Our intent is, once we have identified a preliminary preferred alternative, we will document that in a newsletter and get it out to people so that, you know, if you have any final information you want us to consider, you can get that back to us before we document everything in a final EIS. And we're anticipating that that will be finished in September. And that also would be made available to the public to review.

And then after that point, we'll start the -- you know, the design, the broadway acquisition and construction

process.

The ways to comment tonight -- we have several ways for you to comment. You can talk to one of us, you can talk to one of the advisory committee members. What we're going to be doing is writing down what you say on one of these cards. We're going to be providing it to -- it will be entered in as a formal part of the record. Another way you can do it is to fill out a comment sheet, put it in that box, and that will also be entered in as a formal part of the record. You can also just talk to the transcriber, and she will type in your comments as you're talking.

After tonight -- the comment period is still open until May 2nd. So if you have any other ideas or anything else you want to tell us after tonight, feel free to either write us a letter -- and the address is listed on the back of the handout -- or you can either write a letter to one of the advisory committee members or give them a call. That information will get back to us. Or you may call our -- the Whitefish number that's, again, listed on the back of the handout.

So I want to thank all of you for your participation in this process, and I encourage you tonight to make sure that you give us your comments. Thank you very much.

KATHY BRAMER: I'd just like to stop for

a second and see if there are any questions that you have for clarification about any of this information.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: Has any study been made about improving the traffic through these roads? We've got the environmental, we've got the bicycles, we've got the wetlands, we've got everything else. We've done all these studies on everything, but a two-lane highway is still a two-lane highway, and that won't improve the traffic problem at all. You may improve the traffic problem very little unless you do something about the side roads. I don't think you did anything. I think maybe you better go back to the table and re-evaluate the whole thing.

GINA McAFEE: Yeah, there was a whole traffic study done and --

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: Did they say we can move all the cars? We can -- highways are built to move traffic from one place to another.

GINA McAFEE: I'll be glad to meet with you in a few minutes. I can show you, on Graphic 4, where we've shown what the future traffic will be and how that will be accommodated.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: I live on this two-lane highway that you got now. I've set for sometimes 15 minutes to get on that. And it's -- I don't see where

there's any improvement that's going to be there when you got another 300, 400 homes coming in. It looks to me like --

GINA McAFEE: We also have traffic engineers tonight that will be glad to meet with you.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: I'd like to know who will choose the final design.

GINA McAFEE: We will -- as I mentioned, together, with our advisory committee, it will be our responsibility to -- the responsibility of Carter & Burgess to recommend a preferred alternative, and that will be documented in the final Environmental Impact Statement.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: Will that, in turn, be put up for a vote to the public?

GINA McAFEE: There will be no vote.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: So, in other words, whatever you decide and submit is going to be the final decision of what's going to happen here?

GINA McAFEE: That's correct. Assuming that -- ultimately, the Highway Commission is responsible for partially funding the highway, so they will need to accept that. And then the Federal Highway Administration will also -- is also anticipated to partially fund it, so they will have, you know, responsibility to accept that.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: I have one last

question. On the median, I've seen pictures of the medians, and I've seen places where they go through residential areas and business areas where people are going to have to travel miles to turn around in this median.

At that particular point, from what I've seen from your design, is there -- have you made any type of decision on how turn-arounds are going to be made at these particular points? I mean, I've seen them in major cities where you can go around blocks to get back out onto a highway. But places like Highway 40, Blanchard Lake Road, you know, Midway Mini Mart, places like these aren't going to have a place where you can actually turn around without performing a U-turn in the middle of the road.

GINA McAFEE: Well, what I recommend is that, right after this, you get with one of our designers, and we'll show you the special accommodations that we have made in a number of locations to allow exactly for what you're saying.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: Yeah, our local cooperative planning coalition, they serve 33,000 -- now over 11 percent return, and there was some real pointed questions about highways, commercial development, what people would like to see happening. I'm wondering if folks -- you're shaking your head. Have you incorporated any of

that information into --

GINA McAFEE: Yes, we have. And we're continuing to work with them, and will, as they develop their master plan. But, yes, we have incorporated that information.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: I think it might be useful, on the survey of summary of impact, if you gave an explanation of the level of service codes. It might not be apparent to some folks.

GINA McAFEE: Okay. There's a great graphic that describes those probably better than I could in the EIS. Joe, do you want to try to quickly describe all those symbols?

JOE HART: It's a qualitative measure of just how traffic flows. And in the report, if you looked through the report, level service A is extremely good traffic flow, F is a total parking lot type of situation. And then each of the grades, just like grades in school, are somewhere between A and F.

We're trying to design the roadways to a level service C operating condition, which would be a free-flowing traffic condition. Anything less than that, worse than that, would be something lower than that. And the projections are that the roadway operate at a level B or C, except at specific locations down in Kalispell where

there would be some level service D operation at the worst intersections.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: I have a question with regards to the area into Whitefish and through Whitefish in relationship to the PM10 count. In all the alternatives, will there be a storm runoff area incorporated into that and built into that? And would -- if that is built, would that not have a positive effect on PM10 and in being able to get rid of sand?

GINA McAFEE: We have looked at storm drainage specifically in Whitefish, and there will be a storm drainage system. We haven't worked out the details of that yet.

The effect to that on PM10 -- you know, it's more a factor of how quickly the sand is picked up after it's spread on the road. You know, it's certainly -- if it can be moved off the road, you know, into a grassy area where it doesn't get kicked up by the -- the problem is it gets ground up by the vehicles continuing to drive on it and it gets resuspended in the air after --

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: Usually it would be icy.

GINA McAFEE: So, you know, there certainly could.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: Would that

storm runoff area, drainage area -- how far south on 93 would you incorporate that into the planning? Would that be part of the cost of the road?

GINA McAFEE: Any storm drainage that's required for U.S. 93 is included as a part of the road, yes.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: Do you know where you would start?

GINA McAFEE: I don't remember exactly where we have -- that's described in the EIS also. If you want to see me afterwards, I can show you.

KATHY BRAMER: If you have a preference of where you think it should start and stop, let us know. Okay.

GINA McAFEE: Maybe one more.

KATHY BRAMER: Yeah. Any other questions of clarification? Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: How can you -- how can you justify the cost of a new Seventh Street bridge and the associated paving in the event that would take place? How can you justify that cost to this project?

GINA McAFEE: The reason we even suggested that -- that's included as part of the two alternatives. The reason we have suggested that is to alleviate out-of-direction travel that would be required as

a part of some of the one-way couplet alternatives on Baker and Spokane.

We encourage you -- we encourage people to give us input on those alternatives. We're really looking for that input tonight. So we do encourage you, if you have a concern about that, to let us know.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: Who do you let know?

KATHY BRAMER: Any one of us.

GINA McAFEE: Yeah, any one of us.

KATHY BRAMER: Anybody you see walking around with a little white card. Or talk to Nancy, the transcriber. We want to make sure we hear from all of you tonight. So let us know.

UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: Do we need the highway? We're almost scared to ask anything. This has been delayed and delayed and delayed.

KATHY BRAMER: Okay. Thank you for coming. I'll get my cards and come over and talk to you. There's a lot of folks here who can answer your questions, and we can get more questions answered if we do it individually.

(Presentation concluded at 7:40 p.m.)

I prefer the A(turn) Alternative on the highway. That's the five-lane design. And my wife does.

TOM VARS: I don't know which one to start first. But anyway, we live along 93; we're one of the impacted areas. And one of the things that really bothers me the most about the EIS is the fact it does not really talk about impacts to people that live along 93. It talks about impacts to the businesses, it talks about the tourist. It says nothing about the people that live and have to come out on 93. Okay. One of the things the EIS doesn't even address in relation to those residents is as far as emergency vehicle access to their homes, particularly if the highway has a median. With the median, based on what's in the plan, with access turns a quarter to a half a mile apart, and with potential traffic flows is -- what you're looking at is anywhere you could have 10 to 15-minute delays for emergency vehicles to get to a home versus a highway that allows a direct turn into their driveways. The EIS doesn't even talk about that type of impact. The median road shows some intersections with a left-turn bay which allows the traffic to pull out of the north -- north or southbound passing lane and protects the rig until they turn. In other sections where it just allows a crossing through the median, there is no left-turn bay. This would require a vehicle that makes a U-turn, which they will have to do if they want to get back to their home, potentially sticking their rear end of their

vehicle out into the passing north or southbound lane. They already admit accidents may change in location. And I think all they're building with the median as it is proposed -- unless it's wide enough to provide complete security to a vehicle at all locations, they're asking for trouble. My son-in-law has a 30-foot RV, and that thing is definitely going to occupy several lanes of traffic to make U-turns to get to our house. Such things aren't even talked about in the EIS. Okay. The maps displayed on page 315 that show ownership pattern are all wrong. They're referencing a lot of state lands as federal lands, and that's not true. That map is really poorly done. And all I hope, is that other maps and diagrams in the document aren't as poorly researched as that particular one is. As far as bicycles lanes go, bicycle lanes should be separated from the highway, not on the shoulder. There should be a separate entity in the areas that they're designed. At the Happy Valley crossing site -- or intersection, I would recommend serious consideration of a pedestrian tunnel under the highway to allow access between Forest Acres and the Happy Valley store and the school kids. Just north of the Happy Valley turnoff and interchange as shown in the planned EIS, from Bowdish Road to Hodgson Road, there's a frontage road. In the design that's shown, they've eliminated the county access from Hodgson Road to 93.

This, to me, is a serious error and should not be -- there should be an intersection at that location. If they use the residential road that fronts 93, eliminating the Hodgson interchange -- or the ability to get onto 93 and require them to go down to the Happy Valley intersection, they're putting a lot of county road traffic through a residential area with a street that wasn't designed structurally to support that amount of traffic. Plus, they're running it right through the residential area. And they just can't, in my way, justify such an item. And let's see, what else could there be? I think I'm getting wound down. Well, the only thing I want to say, I guess, if we're back in that mode, is that, basically, I have trouble supporting the median concept, and particularly how it relates to folks that front the highway and the effects that will be felt by them by a median-type road. And that's it.

Pedestrian overpass or underpass (tunnel) Baker/Spokane area.

If a median is built, a maintenance plan must be included and implemented.

Intersection at Lion Mountain and state park needs to more easily accommodate increased traffic currently awkward.

Forest Ridge area subdivision is going to

increase traffic around golf course.

A divided highway is just another place for deer to hide, traffic hazard and weeds to grow. Most medians are filled with knapweed.

There must be an intersection at Hodgson Road. This is a serious flow. Prefer five-lane, but median has advantage.

In Kalispell, where concrete median is in place, it is inconvenient to have to turn around and double back.

South of Whitefish, four-lane highway and build frontage roads in areas of high number of access drives. All the way from Montana 40/U.S. 93 into town

Montana Air Systems has an apartment in building. Property also has radio station; KJJR/B98 and one other. Montana Air Systems/radio station generates a lot of traffic. Montana Air Systems is a distributor, a lot of large trucks. Business will also be expanding and getting more trucks. Radio station and Montana Air Systems combined equal large quantities of traffic. Driveway into Montana Air Systems is tight turn with existing design. Any major reduction will cause problems of accessing garage/loading area on south side. Highway adjacent property owners were paid $300 to limit access by MDT.

Trucks gearing down approaching Montana

40 from south are very loud.

Has there been a survey of residential/business along the highway?

A lot of towing businesses along portion south of Whitefish. Median concept will be dangerous with vehicles towing other vehicles.

Where will snow be plowed with median?

There will be lawsuits if median design is proposed.

There has not been proof that median is safer.

With signal at Mountain Mall, there will be lines of traffic with no gaps for drivers to get onto U.S. 93.

Whatever alternative is chosen for Spokane and Baker, that Baker Avenue from the Whitefish River bridge south along the river have all homes removed on the east side and whatever is not used for right-of-way should be used as an extension of Riverside Park.

Prefer: Divided. It is safe and looks better.

Prefer: A separated bike/pedestrian trail.

Divided highway would slow commercial development.

Buses use Hodgson also. Also should be an access intersection at Hodgson.

Stelle Lane should be improved with an intersection. Appears to be potential for development that would access Stelle Lane.

Lots of pedestrians cross at Hodgson. In the last three months, two pedestrians have been killed by Forest Acres and Happy Valley. Need to provide a separate pedestrian crossing.

Note: Lots of traffic on Hodgson. It connects to U.S. 2. MP 124 needs. An access median prevents this. Median is okay but need a frontage road on east side by MP 124 or put more breaks in the median. Look at MP 124 north for break or frontage road.

Every one to half-mile breaks or access to existing and future community. Reference: CPC survey, 800 South Main, 1993. Look at what survey said about commercial setback with screening. Therefore, put in more breaks to accomplish this.

Need more median breaks between Valley Disposal and Blanchard Lake Road. Also need a break between Blanchard Lake Road and Montana 40.

To preserve median alternative, you need to put in more breaks. Add two-way frontage road on west side from JP Road back south one-quarter mile of Montana

40. This could be landscaped and a gateway to town.

What is being done about traffic? Highways are designed to carry people. It takes 15 minutes to get on highway now. How are you improving the situation?

North of Hodgson Road is the Diamond K Supper Club and RV Park. Fifty RV spaces in summer. This facility develops lots of traffic. Should be an opening here. Will increase traffic and congestion in this Happy Valley area. Fifth-wheels, long trailers just cannot maneuver fast.

Note: Happy Valley area, lots and lots of kids cross the highway. Whitefish Hills, Inc. will develop on west side of the highway and credit more traffic and kids.

At Stelle Lane was an accident, 1984. Part of lawsuit regards concrete guardrail. Is a guardrail proposed here?

Alternative B bypass will cause development west of Kalispell that is not desirable.

Hodgson Road should intersect U.S. 93 under any alternative. Happy Valley Road not designed to also take traffic load from Hodgson.

Split alignment looks nice and drives well. But cost is a concern. Five-lane safety seems to be

okay. No known head-on collisions on U.S. 2, five-lane.

House just north of KMJ Radiator should, likely, have a yellow dot, indicating noise impact. Appears missing from the aerial photo maps.

Consider a span to accommodate bike travel along Whitefish River.

Solve the problems now while the construction prices are as low as they are.

There will be too tight a turning radius at Baker and 93 with Couplet-3.

Should not use old Baker because of its intersection with 93.

Why build the couplet on old Baker alignment?

I want the median all the way and the specials design elements as much as possible.

Like the couplet with crossing on Seventh Street.

Seventh Avenue extension east helps access to school.

Very much against Spokane becoming four-lane. Likes one-way couplet ideas.

Need more bike lanes in general. Likes separated bike lane to keep traffic away.

Support the one-way couplet. The bridge

is a good idea. We have property on Spokane.

Construction of Alternative B will have too many impacts.

Prefer: Get started with five-lane.

Prefer: Five-lane in order to access businesses. Other states are taking out medians.

Prefer: Five-lane for access. At least from Montana 40 to Whitefish need five-lane.

Antelope Trail north of Timber Lane also needs to be rebuilt.

Note: Hodgson Road needs to have an intersection.

Prefer: Divided highway with a green strip.

Why is Tronstad not identified with an improved intersection? Need intersection turn lanes at Ponderosa, Tronstad, Bowdish Road, Hodgson, Blanchard and Stelle Lane.

With the median, there are limited ways to cross and turn around. This will be a major time-consumer. If median is chosen, provide frontage road or more breaks. Prefer five-lane for that reason.

With a five-lane, trucks will not turn left using the center lane. They will go to the intersection to turn left. They are too long to make the

tight turn required with the center lane.

Prefer: Median. It makes driving more enjoyable. Five-lane requires more concentration. This area is beautiful, and it is one of the only areas that does not have a divided highway.

Recommend re-examining the need for four lanes west of Whitefish, at least to Spencer.

Recommend use of liquid deicers.

CPS study findings of interest: Commercial development should occur off the highway, behind screening. Single most important resource to protect was water quality.

Should consider combo that consists of a five-lane south of Whitefish to Montana 40.

Should consider a two-way frontage road on the west side closer into Whitefish.

At Hodgson Road recommend good intersection treatment.

At Happy Valley area, need pedestrian overpass or special signals.

Figure 3-15 -- check Flathead National Forest designation -- should be state land.

Need to look more closely at emergency vehicular access.

Prefer five-lane. Loss of access, median

will collect trash.

Very concerned about Baker and Spokane couplet. Won't relieve congestion, just convolute it.

There is no alternative parking that will be displaced by Spokane/Baker couplet.

One-way couplets are too confusing, especially for people who have lived here for a long time.

Eliminating parking on Second Street will have a negative impact on our business.

How will NAFTA agreement affect 93 corridor? Time magazine has proposed corridor from Canada to Mexico.

Still want a bypass for trucks in Whitefish.

Want turn lanes at Meridian and between Highway 40 and town. Have 25-miles-per-hour speed limit between 40 and Whitefish.

40-93 intersection needs to be signalized.

Extend Whitefish Stage Road to East Edgewood. Bypass downtown for all skiers.

Ideal would be to have a separate bike/pedestrian trail. Prefers a separate bike/pedestrian path.

Bike path on shoulder okay on main

highway. At Highway 40, use separate path.

For Kalispell, B Alternative, move road back to power line and away from housing north of Reserve Drive.

I have been involved in the decision-making process for six years. Based on a decision being made, I invested $300,000 into my business located on Highway 93. Good, bad or ugly, a decision was made. And based on that, secure in the knowledge that my business would be minimally impacted, I invested in expanding and upgrading my business. Subsequent to my decision, Mr. Baucus was convinced that the public process was not adequate and changed all the rules. Had I been aware or even thought that the decision would be set aside, I would not have put my future and that of my employees' on the line. I do not believe a median will be safer. It is my opinion that the opposite is true. When four to five feet of snow is piled into the median, I believe there will be a decreased visibility and increase in accidents. The delay Senator Baucus has caused will cost us substantially more dollars. Acquisition of additional right-of-way will be costly and not cost-effective. How many more people will have to die before a final decision is made?

Baker needs to be one-way south. Seventh Street bridge needs to be constructed. Intersection for

Mormon church, Park Knoll Estates, DePratu Ford at existing Park Knoll Estates Road. Mormon church is currently working with Park Knoll to use their road as their access as well. DePratu Ford generates a lot of traffic. Need intersection north of Happy Valley at Hodgson Road, at North Valley Refuse. I'm in complete support of a divided road with medians and landscaping.

This highway project should never have been stopped. There have been no improvements demonstrated for a divided roadway. Along with additional costs, an unnecessary delay, the added costs of maintaining the median, one more place for deer to surprise motorists and the restricted access, I can see no reason to consider a divided highway. Let's get the five-lane design under way as soon as possible.

The specific responsibility for maintenance of special landscaping features or plantings, other than ordinary grassed areas, must be spelled out for this project. This should be done, whether or not there is adequate money available at this time. Adequate funds may be obtained later if needed, but you cannot get either funds or maintenance until the responsibility for providing this kind of maintenance is spelled out where people and officials can find it and refer to it.

Concerning raised medians on Highway 93

south of Whitefish, I am opposed to them. If raised medians are built, I think everyone who has a driveway should be entitled to a break at that driveway so they don't have to pass the driveway and go to some other break in the median to make a U-turn to go back to their driveway. No one should be discriminated against by not allowing a break in the median at each driveway. Consider Highway 93 both ways out of Missoula. Five lanes with the middle lane for turns. I think it is a very nice highway and safe. Highway No. 2 from the airport to Columbia Heights also a nice highway. I also like the ideas of Baker Avenue one-way south and Spokane one-way south with a bridge at Seventh Street to allow people living on the west-south side easy access to town. Bridge would be money well spent.

Love the special "other design concepts." Prefer median concept for 93. Like concept of Spokane and Baker one-way designation. Seventh Street bridge a good consideration, if we can afford the cost.

Highway 93, Kalispell to Whitefish, prefer Alternative A with median. Safer, prettier and limits strip development. The separation of the north and southbound lanes may be too disruptive for existing homes and businesses. In this case, I think the median is sufficient separation.

I prefer Alternative A for Kalispell. Less environmental impact and less emphasis on automobile's needs. Bike paths need to be emphasized more. Safe, attractive trails separate from highways wherever possible. Cars and bicycles do not mix well. Ideas for future transportation; i.e., trains, transitways, could be suggested as the study becomes too expensive to run and congestion grows.

Whitefish townsite, Alternative A four-lane preferred. Whitefish in town. No bridge over Whitefish River. Too much more traffic directed to Seventh Street. Also disruption to oil sediment in river. Seventh Street cannot handle more traffic directed on to it. I like median Alternative A. Put disruption of private business around homes via separation north and south of highway may not be appropriate. But median concept is safer, prettier and limits strip development. Prefer Alternative A in Kalispell.

Don't like to see Spokane four-lane because Baker is left in bad shape and creates too much space.

Opposed to Alternative C(couplet-4) with two-way to one-way on both sides.

Prefers one-way couplet on existing Baker. Does not like the idea of additional bridge.

With bridge on Seventh creates too much traffic on Seventh.

Concerned about the couplet happening. Doesn't want to see it.

Prefer median as far as possible. Five-lane is an accident waiting to happen. Cannot see land in winter. Potential for head-on in center lane.

Five-lane would not work at higher speeds and traffic congestion. The center turn will not work.

If Hodgson does not have an intersection, then improve Antelope Lane between Hodgson and Timber Lane.

I would just like to say that I feel that it is critical that the special design considerations be implemented.

Add alternative: Considering constructing Seventh Street bridge and improving Baker and maintaining all as two-way streets.

Bridge on Seventh too expensive. Growth in Whitefish will be to the west.

Run Antelope Trail at Happy Valley through to Bowdish. Will give you natural frontage.

At Bowdish, do an underpass to connect over to KM.

Look at Hodgson Road. Busiest between Whitefish and Reserve.

Hodgson Road. It is possible to move major intersection north to Hodgson and connect Happy Valley to Hodgson via frontage road Antelope Lane?

Resident at Seventh and Baker: Strong concerns about a drop in property values if zoning remains residential. Opposes all plans which impact Seventh and Baker.

Happy Valley intersection, median concept, unacceptable increase in traffic between Timber Lane and Hodgson on Antelope Trail. Suggested frontage road between Hodgson Road and Timber Lane east of highway or total rebuild of Antelope Trail. Don't overlook significant traffic on Hodgson Road from development to the east.

Ben Cohen, North Valley Refuse, recycles. Making frequent left turns into North Valley Refuse. Only recycling center in area. Several other commercial operations in this area would justify more access in this area. Prefers couplet options with the bridge on Seventh in Whitefish. Opposed to off-set couplet for safety reasons. Comments in favor of off-set couplet concept with strong support for Baker Street extension.

Would like to see a more detailed, creative intersection at Highway 40.

Need to re-evaluate intersection at

93/state park and Lion Mountain Loop.

Bypass alternate route is unnecessary and a burden to the valley. This area will be then developed at a much faster pace than a slow evolution. Work with traffic flow on existing Highway 93.

Lion Mountain Road and 93. Southbound on 93 attempting left turn onto Lion Mountain Road, dangerous downhill grade. Safety concerns about the intersection in general.

Seventh Street bridge is too expensive. It will never happen.

Four lanes, narrow, would be unsafe with large trucks through town.

Other road network bridges may be more useful than Seventh. Need to show one block of Seventh east of Spokane too.

Median south of Montana 40 is a good idea, but need accesses north of Montana 40.

Bike path along Highway 93 west of Whitefish at least to Twin Bridges and/or Farm-to-Market Road, it's very dangerous with chip and log trucks and RVs.

Funeral home opposite JP Road needs access to north for processions to cemetery.

Need left southbound access to golf course drive south of JP Road. Corner property is only

200x200 feet. It is too small for cross access.

In Whitefish area, I think I prefer Alternative C(off-set) with the assumption that Baker Avenue will be extended south and come out next to Safeway. Not improving the existing Baker Street intersection with Highway 93, including bike paths. I feel it's best to avoid new bridges as long as possible. I live on the north side over the viaduct and hate it.

"Existing" row line in front of golf course south of JP Road, never acquired by MDT.

Need to consider bypass in long-range master plan.

Median is a help to city and county planning in controlling unlimited development.

Whitefish area preference: One, Alternative C, two one-ways with Seventh Street bridge. Two; i.e. no bridge, then C(off-set) with Baker Avenue extension. Do not run four-lane into town. Do not widen Whitefish River bridge to four-lane. Maintain bike lanes along all major routes. Along entire Highway 93 project, use off-set bike paths, not shoulder of road, for safety and aesthetic reasons.

West entry of Whitefish has steep grades and needs attention. Cite: Distance for eastbound left turn to Lion Mountain Loop Road is difficult.

Decision element plan of south Whitefish entry needs to show Baker extension.

Olney to Big Mountain bypass needs considered.

Whitefish Stage extension is good idea. Montana 40 extension to Karrow is good idea. Both for master plan. KM Road truck bypass.

Need to complete grid of streets east/west Montana 40, JP Road, 18th, to Karrow and to east over river.

Another alternative should keep four lanes on Spokane and bike lanes on Baker.

Fix agreements for maintaining landscaping improvements and/or special desired concepts.

What would be effect on Seventh Street traffic with either of the Seventh Street bridge options? Any additional right-of-way required?

Use an alternative that would best serve transportation, aesthetics and safety.

Removal of culverts under Spokane Avenue bridge to facilitate future recreational path along river.

Baker from Whitefish River to south is a residential neighborhood.

Residential property values will decrease if Baker is used in any of alternatives.

Very tight corner at Baker and Second Street. Trucks have hard enough time turning from Spokane/Second.

Seventh bridge is not needed. Would create congestion near school. Only seven blocks out of way of travel. Not worth cost.

Add right-turn/left-turn lanes on to Seventh Street from Baker and Spokane.

Seventh Street bridge is needed from traffic standpoint. It has been discussed for years.

Feds have obligation to pull out pipes and put in bridge.

Baker is very narrow near bridge. To widen to three lanes will be unacceptable.

Baker bridge should not be widened to four-lane.

How will intersecting streets without Baker, change in grades, be improved?

Consider combining Seventh Street bridge with off-set. More east/west options needed to take pressure off of Second Street.

I am in favor of Alternative A(median) and Couplet-2 in the Whitefish area.

The Couplet-2 would work best. One-ways for flow of traffic. Seventh bridge good for access.

Avoid a four-lane on Spokane.

Would like to see four-lane with median along 93 full length.

Intersection may be more advantageous at Hodgson rather than at Happy Valley. School buses use.

Lots of trucks stationed at properties on U.S. 93 between Montana 40 and KM.

Should have a three-lane alternative on Second from Whitefish River to Karrow without sidewalks.

Character of community improved with median. Keep access limited as possible. Fewer signals better. Four-lane Spokane, hard to cross.

C(off-set) would cause three lanes. Hard to cross.

Modify Couplet-4 to also include cutback north of Town Pump.

Concern that there is no longer a Whitefish bypass alternative.

MP 132 may be an intersection for Whitefish Hills, Inc. redesigned to the north.

Location of U-turns should be increased or else five-lane. Difficulty for trucks to make left turns.

Consider a five-lane configuration from Happy Valley to Hodgson Road, split alignment. Move

intersection to Hodgson Road.

I vote for Alternative A(median) and bike paths inclusive.

(Conclusion of record.)

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2 STATE OF MONTANA)
: ss
3 County of Flathead)

4

5 I, Nancy J. Skurvid, Registered Professional
6 Reporter, and Notary Public for the State of Montana,
residing in Kalispell, Montana, do hereby certify:
7

8 That I was duly authorized to and did report the
9 oral and written comments submitted at the Somers to
10 Whitefish West DEIS Public Hearing held Thursday,
11 March 24, 1994.

12

13 I further certify that the foregoing pages of this
14 transcript constitute a true and accurate transcription of
my stenotypes notes.
15

16 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand on
17 this 3rd day of April, 1994.

18

19 Nancy J. Skurvid
20 Nancy J. Skurvid
Registered Professional Reporter
Residing in Kalispell, Montana
21 My Commission expires 6-3-94

22

23

24

25

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARING
Whitefish

March 24, 1994

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Russ Thompson	101 PARK KNOLL LN WHITEFISH
Tom & Marge Vara	4490 Hwy 93 S Whitefish
RICHARD HANEY	920 PACKRAT LN WHITEFISH
Phil Olson	1281 Conn Rd. Col. Falls
Harold Dalen	6335 Hwy 93 S. Whitefish
Marsha Yarbrough	Box 873 WF
Eileen Kane	190 Haskill Dr Whitefish
James Kane	" " " "
Reggie & Jim Thompson	225 Karrow Ave Whitefish
Bruce Boody	301 Second St 113 WF

13

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARING
Whitefish

March 24, 1994

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Ferne L. Cohen	Box 1782 Whitefish 59937
David Fern	211 Dakota WF
SAM POLLACH	BOX 1268 WF
JIM MOORE	304 Antelope Tr. W.F. 59937
Judy Cornell	3859 Hwy 93 N WF
DREW PASLAWSKY	P.O. BOX 4592 WHITEFISH MT
Rick Martin	100 Mont Pac Ln Whitefish, MT 59937
Keith Boland	4634 HWY 93 SO. W.F. 59937
Gary Vallieres	125 Antelope Trail, Whitefish
BARB ANTON	5835 HWY 93 S. WFSH 59937
David R. McMurdo	700 State Park Rd. WF. 59937
DAVE ANTON	5839 HWY 93 So. WFSH 59937
DON HEPPNER	5930 Hwy 93 So. WF 59937
Bill KUEHN	3058 E. LAKeshore Dr. WF 59937

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARING
Whitefish

March 24, 1994

Name (please print)	Mailing Address	
EVANS	4260 HWY 93 W	WHITEFISH
ALBERT EVANS	✓	✓
DON SPINEY	51 Penney Ln	C. FALLS 59912
Rose Nelson	315 Baker ave	Whitefish MT
Becky Stay	Whitefish Pilot	Whitefish MT
LYDIA BAILEY	560 SOMERS AVE	WHITEFISH
Clayton Lamb	1555 Karrow Ave.	whitefish
Eugene Lamb	1535 KARROW AVE	whitefish
DOUG RHODES	P.O. BOX 1646	WHITEFISH
Bebe Kezar	PO B. 1386	Whitefish
Jeff Jensen	320 Blanchard Hollow	Whitefish
KIM SANDS	P.O. Box 1285	Whitefish
Joyce LeSoesne	Bear tR	WF
[illegible]	Box 1657	WF 59937
Art Baland	4670 Hwy 93 So.	Whitefish 59937

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Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARING
Whitefish

March 24, 1994

Name (please print)	Mailing Address	
Lewis C MASON	5500 Hyw 93 So.	Whitefish MT 59937
LEO KEANE	514 PINE PLACE	WFISH
Bill Hoppe	577 Baker ave	W'F
William T. Kennard	Box 577 Col. Falls, MT,	59912
Marianne Kennard	FRDO	
Brian Carper	106 Montana Ave.	Whitefish
Sandy Skiles	P.O. Box 1869	W.F.
Reggie McMurdo	2475 Hwy. 93 West	Whitefish
Mary Critchlow	636 Columbia	whitefish
Jan Kellogg	538 Scott Ave	WF
Don Montgomery	355 Hidden Valley Dr.	WFSH, MT.
KEN WILLIAMS	1420 WISCONSIN	WHITEFISH MT.
Roger W Stevens	626 14th ST E	Kalispell, MT
J.T. Dedman Jr	1310 MT 208	Somers MT 59932
Karen Reeves	230 Missy Ln	Whitefish
Stephen H[illegible]	6538 Farm to Market [illegible]	Whitefish

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARING
Whitefish

March 24, 1994

Name (please print)	Mailing Address	
Edith [illegible]	Bx 133	Whitefish,
HANK HONEYWELL		Helena
L.N. Kositzky	P.O. 65	Wh sf.
Roger A. Hofacker	P.O. 1936	WF
[illegible] Hallen	Box 2738	Col Falls
Sherley Schmidt		
ANDY FEURY	SAME AS USUAL.	
Chuck Lallier	12954 ON MTN DR	W.F.
Laura Nugent	[illegible] Little MTN. Rd	W.F.
Ann Swanson	215 Antelope Trail	WF
JOHN ATKINSON	215 ANTELOPE TRAIL	WF
Florence Fletcher	332 Columbia Ave.	Wfish.
Cindi Wollan	5340 Stella Ln.	Wfish
Marc Moen	704 Baker	W.F.
DAVE White	Box 1468	WF

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Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARING
Whitefish

March 24, 1994

Name (please print)	Mailing Address	
Connie Cohen	Box 1657	Wfsh
Ed [illegible]	Box 873	WFSH
Ward McCartney	7227 Farm to Market Rd	WF
Jill Johnson	4572 Whitefish Stg Rd	WR
Linda Babiak	Box 1987	W/F
Dan Skiles	Box 1869	W/F
Jan Metzmaker	915 Dakota	WF
Erma Rocksund	6255 Hwy #93 So	WHfsh.
RANDY WILSON	100 OLD MORRIS TRAIL	WFSH
ROY M. DUFF	P.O. Box 185	WFISH.
NORMA "	" " "	"

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes
Seventh Advisory Committee Meeting
March 16, 1994

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of a Somers to Whitefish Advisory Committee meeting held on March 16, 1994. An agenda and handouts are attached.

Meeting attendees were:

Gina McAfee	Phil Lauman
Tracy Crabtree	Marshall Murray
Andrew Feury	Scott Richman
Mike Worrall	John Wilson
Pamela Kennedy	Shirley Schmidt
Bruce Boody	Marc Pitman
Dale Paulson	Jim Weaver
Mike Stocklin	Bill Hedstrom
Kathy Bramer	

A summary of major discussion that occurred was:

1. Rodney Slater is coming to tour the US 93 project -- just Kalispell to Whitefish (Saturday the 26th).

2. For landscape maintenance bring a list of tasks to the next meeting.

3. Bike path maintenance in the summer is not an issue. Winter bike path maintenance could be an issue.

4. Kalispell Parks could likely take over maintenance of gateway areas.

5. The FBIA is doing a survey to determine their preferred highway alternative.

6. The CPC draft recommendation will be ready in a month. Mike Stocklin will make sure we get copies of their documents.

7. Need more information about economic impact to the community during construction. Also need more information about the relationship between the loss of open space and long-term economic viability -- also the social impacts of this.

8. Design, right-of-way, utility relocation and construction schedules are an issue. Two items to keep in mind are:
   - When the job can be made ready -- design finalized.
   - When funding can be made available.

9. MDT has tentatively earmarked $10 million in Fiscal 1996 (starting in September of 1995). That could be the earliest that construction could start. The segment from Kalispell to MT 40 could start early because MDT already has a lot of right-of-way in place and a lot of utility relocation done.

10. Suggest conclusions in the EIS about why the Valley is moving towards tourism (from Andy Feury).

11. Enhancement funds cannot be used for "ordinary" project items.

12. Need to evaluate: do we have enough right-of-way for a separate bike path -- will it fit within the right-of-way in specific locations?

13. The Kalispell Chamber could be a good location for a central file for letters received on the DEIS. Marshall Murray will check on this.

14. Suggest calling the Whitefish Pilot to make sure the west of Whitefish area is included.

15. What learned from phone calls with Advisory Committee members:
    - People liked the public involvement process -- people have had lots of opportunity.
    - Good participation across the community.
    - Improvement in outreach with the media is recommended.
    - The Advisory Committee should help in media contact.
    - If someone is a "them" -- make sure we listen more carefully.

16. The plan from here to reach consensus is to:
    - Focus on shared interests.
    - Likely to be a "new" solution.
    - Consensus may be getting 70 percent of interests/needs met.

17. One option that could be explored in the towns of Kalispell and Whitefish (with the A(FOUR-LANE) alternative) is to buy a few feet more of right-of-way, increase lane widths to 12 feet, remove the trees and replant new ones. This may be politically unacceptable -- Marshall Murray offered to "test the wind" about this new concept and to get back with us.

18. The special design concept at Four Corners was questioned. This location may or may not be available.

19. The Ramada Inn north of Somers is opening.

20. Question the amount of right-of-way needed -- this information needs to be provided for the public hearings. We need to:
    - List what right-of-way is needed.
    - Where and for what.

Issues to be discussed at the April 23 Advisory Committee meeting are:

- Types and design of landscaping.
- Sample landscape maintenance agreements.
- Economic and social impact of different designs as a result of construction phasing techniques, strip development impact (e.g., access). Draw conclusions from existing information.
- Construction phasing variables: design finalized, availability of funds.
- Right-of-way needed for bike paths in specific sites.
- What is the impact on living trees in Kalispell in town options and Whitefish - Spokane.
- Can trees be moved or replanted in urban areas; require extra right-of-way? Coordinate with reforestation project?
- Narrow lanes restrict level of service. Can we expand?
  - Courthouse to Airport
  - Baker to 2nd.
- Need to show accurate predictions of right-of-way necessary for different alternatives; DEIS underestimates.

The next Advisory Committee meeting will be April 12, 12:00 to 2:00.

som0317m.5gm

Agenda

Seventh Advisory Committee Meeting
Somers to Whitefish Project
March 16, 1993

1. **Technical Information**
   - Key Findings from EIS (by segment)
   - Input Needed (by end of AC process)
     a. Preferred Highway Alternative
     b. Mitigation Commitments (such as pedestrian/bike underpass)
     c. Access Control Preferred Alternative
     d. Recommend Locations for Park-n-Ride Lots
     e. Landscape Maintenance Agreements
   - Agency Coordination/Sign-Off Needed

2. **Overall Process From Here**
   - Public Hearings
   - ID Team Meeting
   - Receipt of Letters
   - Small Group Meetings
   - Advisory Committee Meetings

3. **Advisory Committee Process**
   - Report from Advisory Committee contacts - what learned
   - Need information back if Advisory Committee members hear from general public
   - Role of Advisory Committee in decision-making (very important, advocacy, advisory)
   - Collaborative negotiation process
   - Schedule of meetings
   - Meetings with press: March 24 (AM); April 14 (AM)

4. **Initial Feedback**
   - Areas of agreement
   - Areas of disagreement
   - Issues

som0224m.1gm

Carter · Burgess

Meeting Minutes
Somers to Whitefish EIS
Eighth Advisory Committee Meeting
April 12, 1994

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of the Eighth Advisory Committee meeting for the Somers to Whitefish West EIS. An agenda for the meeting is attached. A bound document was handed out, which included information on:

- Summary of responses received regarding the DEIS.
- Maintenance of intensive landscaped areas.
- Safety research.
- Economic impact.
- Update of right-of-way needed.
- Construction staging plan elements.
- Whitefish River Bridge construction and costs.
- Funding situation in District 1 of MDT.
- Detailed access control plan with access control guidelines.

Meeting attendees were:

Gina McAfee	Tom Little
Bill Hedstrom	Jim Lynch
Marshall Murray	Tracy Crabtree
Pam Kennedy	Bruce Boody
Phil Lauman	Jim Weaver
Marc Pitman	Dale Paulson
Joe Hart	Kathy Bramer
Scott Richman	Jeremy Keene
Mike Worrall	

Discussion which occurred was:

1. There was a question about why the ID Team endorsed B(MEDIAN) and not A(MEDIAN). The primary reason for this is that the Kalispell bypass is a new road on new location and there was a concern about induced strip development.

2. Joe Hart updated the Committee on the action recently taken by the Whitefish City Council -- a recommendation for C(COUPLET-3) and A(MEDIAN) between MT 40 and the River.

3. We will confirm with Andy Feury exactly what position the Council took, since there is not general agreement with the idea to add a third lane to Spokane.

4. Carter & Burgess will send out a letter to the cities, county and businesses or service organizations requesting feedback about interest in landscape maintenance agreements.

Evaluation of Access Control Alternatives

Area	No Access Control	Situational Access Control	Restrictive Access Control
Traffic Operations	Least improvement in through traffic operations. Least impact to left-turning traffic.	Moderate improvement in through traffic operations. Moderate impact to left-turning traffic.	Most improvement in through traffic operations. Most alteration to cross traffic. Most impact to left-turning traffic.
Safety	Greatest accident potential.	Moderate accident potential.	Least accident potential.
Land Use	Likely low density residential development will occur in many places; commercial and industrial is likely south of Kalispell and Whitefish.	Future land use could be more dense in some areas; policy could encourage infilling.	Likely more intensive or higher density development will occur in vicinity of the more widely spaced access points.
Right-of-Way Acquisition Time	No additional time needed.	May take six months to one year beyond that to acquire property only (no access rights).	May take eight months to two years beyond that to acquire property only (no access rights).
Right-of-Way Costs	Least expensive.	More expensive than with no access control.	Most expensive, especially if property is commercially or industrially zoned.

5. Safety: new literature/research information reconfirms findings noted in the DEIS. Safety benefits and impacts of each alternative noted. Both provide benefit over No-Build.
   - Lane striping being obscured has little research to support the intuitive conclusion that this is a major impact.
   - Page 4-16 will be revised in the FEIS as noted in the handout.
   - Left/right-turn lane will improve accidents situation.
   - Jim Lynch noted that he thought the DEIS says that intersections with median (raised) have more intersections than intersections with painted turn lanes.
   - Weather-related safety is a major concern.

6. Offered Jim Boyer's attendance at April 23 Advisory Committee meeting if economic impacts are still an issue (they are).
   - Boyer's professional opinion is that there are major features in the Flathead Valley (Glacier National Park, Lakes, etc.) that would draw visitors, new residents, businesses to Flathead Valley regardless of highway construction scenario. Strip development would likely affect economic vitality of the cities.
   - Would tourists come back again? Was their trip memorable? Important questions in tourist decisions on repeat business. What about ability of region to attract future residents?
   - Social impacts -- sense of place/"specialness" are important and may be somewhat understated in the DEIS.

7. Construction impacts -- <u>not</u> just an overlay -- these will be <u>reconstructed</u> roads.
   - City will take opportunity to replace old water lines.
   - Winter construction activities will be limited but are a concern - load limits in Spring.
   - Year-round economy in Kalispell -- winter tourism important, too.
   - Small, one season projects are something Jim Lynch would like MDT to commit to.
   - Small, multi-year projects may be worse for tourism -- image of road construction/detours for many years.
   - A design with an offset alignment would have less disruption to traffic during construction. If the old road can be used as part of the final design -- less disruption. Transition areas to offset alignment would have construction impacts.

8. A bikepath would probably be asphalt. A clay surface might be more appropriate if equestrians will be using the bikepath. Horseback riders might use a path, particularly between Somers and Kalispell. One option could be to encourage equestrian use adjacent to the bikepath -- this should be taken into consideration where possible.

9. The lane rental concept might be a good idea -- it provides an incentive to the contractor. Another idea is to include a waiver to the liquidated damages.

10. Need information about the construction phasing plan for the Stillwater River bridge -- before the 23rd meeting.

11. A request for funding for design has been made to FHWA.

12. MDT has tentatively earmarked $10 million for 1996. Bikepaths or special design features could be funded through enhancement funds. In 1996, slightly less than $2 million (from MDT) would be provided to this project. The Highway Commission will look closely at the "bells and whistles" -- the bridge over the Whitefish River, the separated bikepath may be considered "extras" that the Commission will look to the county or the cities to help fund. Should we "do it right?" There are people out there who are willing to wait. Costs over the long-term also need to be considered. The reasons why the Flathead Valley needs this highway -- need to be presented to the Commission. The Commission may ask -- what is the "lowest cost" that meets purpose and need. ISTEA provisions are important, especially the way the highway responds to this -- the response to scoping issues.

13. The Committee needs to look again at the purpose and need -- and the evaluation criteria. Each of the alternatives responds to purpose and need per NEPA. Dale Paulson noted that all the alternatives meet the purpose and need, but that some elements of each alternative may meet the purpose and need better than others.

14. The detailed access plan for MT 40 to the River was discussed. This was generally favored.

15. Areas of "apparent" agreement were discussed (see attached). General agreement reached was to recommend:
    - Separated bikepath.
    - C(COUPLET-3)
    - Need for bypass
    - Generally restrictive access control, especially along the bypass.
    - A(MEDIAN) - west of Whitefish (Karrow to MP 129).
    - A(MEDIAN) - north of Stillwater Bridge to KM Road.

    Additional information was requested about:
    - What Alternative A in Kalispell?
    - Does C(COUPLET-3) include rebuilding the bridge for Baker over the River.
    - Show detailed access control design alternative in Kalispell.
    - More detail is needed about the three-lane section west of Whitefish.
    - Questions about two-lane versus four-lane bypass?

som0413m.2gm

Areas of "Apparent" Agreement

1. Separated bikepath where possible.
2. Inclusion of bypass in Kalispell with restrictive access control.
3. In Whitefish, preferred alternative is C(COUPLET-3).
4. In general, restrictive access control policy.
5. West of Whitefish, Alternative A(MEDIAN) is preferred (between Karrow and MP 129).
6. Between north of Stillwater River crossing and KM Road, A(MEDIAN) is preferred.

Areas Needing Resolution

1. Preferred alternative between MT 82 and Ball's Crossing.
2. Preferred alternative between Ball's Crossing and Kalispell.
3. Preferred alternative through Kalispell.
4. Preferred alternative between KM Road and Whitefish.
5. Median vs. turn-lane on Kalispell bypass.
6. Preferred alternative between Karrow and River (west of Whitefish). Three-lane or four-lane?
7. Other Issues:
   - Inclusion of grade-separated pedestrian crossing at Happy Valley?
   - Inclusion of split alignments?
   - Bridge over Whitefish River?
   - Frontage roads?

som0413m.2gm

Agenda
Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Eighth Advisory Committee Meeting
April 12, 1994

1. **Summary of Input Received From Others**
   - Public Hearings
   - Agency Meetings
   - Small Group Meetings
   - Letters
   - Hotline calls
2. **Advisory Committee Issues/Reports**
   - Landscape Maintenance
   - Safety
   - Economics
   - Right-of-Way
   - Construction Staging Plan
   - Whitefish River Bridge
   - Funding Situation
   - Detailed Access Control Plan
3. **Other Issues**
4. **Next Meeting**

US 93 Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Ninth Advisory Committee Meeting
April 23, 1994

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of the Ninth Advisory Committee Meeting held on the US 93 EIS project. The meeting was held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Meeting attendees were:

Gina McAfee
Jim Lynch
Marshall Murray
Shirley Schmidt
John Wilson
Bill Hedstrom
Dick Sonju
Fred Bente
Jim Weaver
Mike Stocklin
Joe Hart
Sandra Hayes
Marc Pitman
Kathy Bramer
Phil Lauman
Andy Feury
Bruce Boody
Tracy Crabtree
R.W. "Buck" Torstenim
Lee Ten Eyck
Jim Browne
Tom Little
Pam Kennedy
Dale Paulson
Mike Worrall

Agenda:

1. Opening
   - Agenda Review
   - Ground Rules and Process
2. Updates
   - Recent Meetings
   - Follow-up Topics
3. Issues and Interests
4. Public Comment
5. Options for US 93 by Segment
6. Evaluate Options
7. Next Steps and Assignments

Summary of meeting:

1. Ground rules were discussed:
   - Public input will be taken but limited due to full agenda.

   - Limit debate -- be concise.
   - Move toward the "spirit of consensus."
   - Concern that consensus means 100% versus "70% solution."
   - Voting was discussed, if needed, and record of how each committee member voted.
   - Don't diminish anyone's concerns, don't interrupt.
   - Non-committee members are in attendance as observers, participants only during comment period(s).
   - Restate back -- if there is any question about what was said
   - Breaks at 1-1/2 hour intervals.
   - Be willing to differ -- listen and consider other's opinions.

2. Update of recent meetings:
   a. Wednesday, April 20
      - Rich Dejana organized meeting, somewhat divisive approach.
      - Need further consideration of safety issues -- unclear at discussions in this meeting.
      - Access to farmland -- concerns.
      - Impact of accessibility on businesses.
      - Right-of-way acquisition process may be delayed if access is limited.
      - About seven Committee members and MDT, C&B staff and about 30 landowners attended.
      - Property rights were an initial consideration and this needs to be kept in mind -- just compensation is a concern.
      - Co. Commissioners have accepted Phase I of the D.W., Inc. Master Plan goals:
        - Protecting private property rights.
        - Scenic highway management plans.
        - Proactive systems to guide development (highways, sewer, water).
      - Some property owners felt they did not have a chance to have their concerns heard.
      - Likely lawsuit -- process needs to stand up to suits.
      - Not sure if we've gotten all the comments we may really need -- early meetings were less controversial.
      - Need to reconsider criteria: safety, access, cost of construction (not vague costs), time to construct, maintenance cost, visual quality, maintenance of cost during construction.
      - Need to get back on positive track -- comments at this meeting were one-sided, not considering all issues (balance).
      - Concerns voiced regarding need to preserve farmlands.
      - Committee members noted much time and many meetings have allowed adequate time/opportunity to be heard.
      - Need to balance property owner concerns with all of the public that travels the highway (Valley residents, all traveling public).

- Property owners/committee members need to consider what is best for the entire community.
- Access to property to protect investment in the property.
- Misinformation on decision regarding recommended median.
- Uncertainty on type of median (raised, grass, trees) -- some felt a tree-lined median was proposed.

b. April 22 meetings south of Whitefish to MT 40.
- Owners felt they have not been heard.
- Overwhelming opposition to median.
- Same concerns as voiced at April 20 meeting.
- Tourist traffic is critical.
- Truck access -- large trucks is main concern, not especially customer traffic concerns.
- Safety -- emergency access.
- Opposition to frontage roads -- too closely spaced.
- Some comments that built-up business strip should be considered differently than south of MT 40 to Kalispell.
- Detailed concerns on truck turns, access to loading docks.

3. Comments about meetings:

- Committee members should make a recommendation now, before the May 2 deadline for public comment, in order to maximize the amount of input.

- Comment that public does not understand the use and maintenance requirements of the median and five-lane median area -- education needs to continue with public.

- Bruce Boody noted he has talked to individuals who are in favor of a raised median, noting how a center two-way left--turn lane does not work well and how a raised median with frequent access (similar to East Idaho in Kalispell) is preferred.

- Consensus that May 2 deadline should be extended. Andy Feury suggested a two-week extension with individual meetings to discuss specific concerns, readdress criteria.

- Public misunderstanding that median will have no breaks, requiring many miles of out-of-direction travel.

- Need more effort to let property owners know they have been heard.

- Possible need to reconvene the Advisory Committee to reconsider recommendation following final public comment (following news of recommendation).

- Consider a one-day session for landowners with many graphics and send letters to each individual property owner along the highway.

- Concern that commitments to individual property owners at this point may be premature. We could not commit to specific access/design decisions.

4. Landowners that sold property to MDT were told the highway would be a five-lane design. Individual meetings are necessary since the previous individual meetings with MDT negotiators only discussed a five-lane design.

5. Concern noted that newspapers have not accurately published the areas of "apparent" agreement of the Advisory Committee. Jim Lynch noted that the median north of the Stillwater River to KM Road would have several access breaks, frequent enough to provide property access.

6. Mike Stocklin noted there is a need for a press release to more accurately describe the Committee's actions.

7. Does the Committee need a legal advisor to better describe the ramifications of the process? Condemnations need to be addressed and if Advisory Committee has any liability.

8. Jim Weaver asked that we reconsider the areas of "apparent" agreement. He felt that he did not speak up at the previous meeting, thinking that he was the sole dissenting vote.

9. It may take two weeks to compile names/addresses, send mailings and public notices, and hold meetings with owners.

10. Montana has liberal condemnation process. MDT must prove that the improvements are in the public interest. Court process can be lengthy, discovery process, staff resources at MDT, can significantly slow down the process. Suit against the EIS would be against the FHWA. The Advisory Committee is not liable according to Jim Weaver and Marshall Murray. Four-lane versus five-lane need will be questioned.

11. No need to meet with property owners in downtown Kalispell -- no options.

Tentative Agreements:

1. MDT would agree, as part of a compromise, to a depressed median (natural grasses, no trees) from Somers to about 1/2 mile south of Ball's Crossing (Rocky Cliff) just south of MP 108. This includes possible design options to frontage road from Fir Terrace to Forest Hill. Costs are not substantially greater -- and they include frontage roads and median all the way to Ball's Crossing. PAC tentatively agreed, pending further input from property owners and more fine tuning of cost estimate differential.

2. Rocky Cliff to Airport Road -- five lanes recommended. Zoned for industrial development and highly developed for large trucking industries. Truck movements would make a raised median difficult to function properly. MDT planned to start curb and gutter at Cemetery Road north into Kalispell, landscaping along curb and sidewalk north of Cemetery Road would be included. Painted median width could be two to four feet wider for future raised medians. Landscaped entryway treatments including roadside landscaping need to be included. Billboards need to be removed from right-of-way to be acquired. Consolidation of access needs to be considered but MDT needs flexibility in negotiations. Strict goals but flexible requirements. Wider sidewalks north of Cemetery Road needed instead of separated bikepath.

3. Bikepaths along entire route.

4. Restrictive access control with flexibility.

5. Other discussion:

   - Gateway treatment concepts need to be developed.

   - Need education of public on use of five-lane. MDT did news releases in Libby for first five-lane in area. Need for proper signage for two-way left-turn lane.

   - Airport Road to south of courthouse -- still in question regarding the "historic trees."

   - Not clear if Center Street to one block north of Idaho Street median and reconstruction of pavement, including US 93/US 2 intersection improvements, is addressed in EIS. It probably should be included in the EIS.

   - Idaho north to Grandview -- no median modifications addressed in the EIS (however, median changes were recommended in the Kalispell Transportation Study).

   - Grandview to Reserve is not yet urbanized and would not allow for a raised median until speeds go down with future urbanization. Five-lane with option for raised in future.

Next Steps:

1. Discussed round of meetings with landowners:
   - Public comment period will be extended two weeks to May 16, 1994.
   - Two days, all day long available at Cavanaugh's.
   - "Appointments" made in 1/2-hour blocks with individuals.
   - Individual invitation letters to be sent to property owners.
   - Need to draw 50-scale maps of entire corridor.
   - Need five-lane alternative with access consolidation drawn for Ball's Crossing to Airport Road.

2. Several Advisory Committee members met afterward to prepare the press report. This is attached.

som0425m.4gm

Report from Ninth Advisory Committee Meeting
US 93 Somers to Whitefish West EIS
April 23, 1994

To make sure we are addressing landowner concerns, we have extended the public comment period on the DEIS to May 16, 1994.

In addition, we are setting up two days of scheduled appointments with interested landowners to discuss individual concerns about all alternatives. These will be:

- May 4, 1994 at Cavanaugh's
- May 5, 1994 at Cavanaugh's

Call 862-1388 to leave a name and telephone number and we will call to set up a time to meet.

In addition:

- Additional public comment was taken from landowners from KM Road to Reserve Drive.
- The Committee discussed criteria for deciding on alternatives.
- The Committee reached tentative agreement on:-

  a. A(MEDIAN):
     - Somers to just south of Ball's Crossing.
     - With modification of frontage road.
     - Grassy depressed median.

  b. A(TURN-LANE):
     - Just south of Ball's Crossing to Airport Road.
     - Wider turn lanes to allow for possible future median.
     - Special gateway landscaping along side.
     - Urban section (curb and gutter) from Four Corners to Airport Road.
     - Consolidation of access where possible.

  c. Separated bikepath.

som0425m.1gm

Meeting Minutes
Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Ninth Advisory Committee Meeting

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of an Advisory Committee meeting held on May 17, 1994. An agenda for the meeting is attached, as are handouts used.

Meeting attendees were:

Gina McAfee	Joe Hart
Andy Feury	John Wilson
Jim Weaver	Bill Hedstrom
Duane Lewis	Fred Bente
Mike Worrall	Pam Kennedy
Bruce Boody	Shirley Schmidt
Tracy Crabtree	Marc Pitman
Phil Lauman	Kathy Bramer
Jim Lynch	

A summary of major discussion which occurred was:

1. Whitefish City Council met recently indicating reconsideration and continued support for Alternative C-3.
2. Official comment period ended May 16.
3. EPA letter received supporting A(MEDIAN) and opposed to Kalispell bypass.
4. Received letter from the fire department supporting A(TURN-LANE).
5. Described example concerns from property owner meetings (summary of topics in handout):
   - Altenburg property -- need for cattle crossings and machinery crossing. MDT would not recommend an emergency access unless designed for full turns, turn lanes, since the median opening will be used by all highway travelers.
   - Property south of MT 40 -- need for full turn access -- combined access would only preclude neighbors from full turn. No feasible solution appears to answer property owner concerns for "reasonable" access.
6. Handout distributed summarizing comments from the Highway Commission meeting held May 11, 1994. Concern that restrictive access is essentially a taking of property rights. Agreed that final Advisory Committee position will be discussed with the Commission prior to completing the FEIS. A letter has been written but not yet received from the Commission summarizing their concerns. The Commission is supportive of the EIS process and does not want to jeopardize the

Advisory Committee's work. The Commission's August meeting is typically in Kalispell. Advisory Committee members are encouraged to attend the Highway Commission meeting when the position is discussed.

7. Jim Weaver noted again that he speaks for himself and not the Commission in his role on the Advisory Committee.

8. The number of people participating in the public process is above average and worked to better educate the public on the issues related to the project.

9. Previous agreement reiterated:
   - MT 82 to Rocky Cliff Road - A(MEDIAN) - with appropriate access to meet landowner concerns voiced at meetings with property owners.
   - Rocky Cliff Road to Airport Road:
     - Five-lane design.
     - Median area wide enough to accommodate a median in the future.
     - Shoulders south of Cemetery Road, curb and gutter north of Cemetery Road.

10. Whitefish City Council looked at all six alternatives in Whitefish and concluded C-3 is best for the following reasons:
    - 7th Street bridge has been previously considered by City and is a definite benefit for City traffic circulation, and provides good access to Whitefish schools.
    - Growth to south is recognized.
    - Four-lane on Spokane is not reasonable.
    - A three-lane concept on Spokane may cause driver confusion.
    - Need for mitigation for trucks on Baker -- need to consider a one-lane southbound for trucks.
    - A 136-signature petition was received but Whitefish Council reconfirmed their support of C-3.

11. MDT is concerned with the cost of C-3 and potential delay to project. City Council realistically considers Whitefish improvements long-term, knowing improvements won't happen for at least ten years.
    - MDT feels C-3 is not a cost reflective solution, and favors Alternative C-1.
    - Alternative C-3 has less out-of-direction travel.
    - Alternative C-1 would have greater impacts to other City streets.
    - Residents believe C-3 would take north/south traffic off of Spokane (diverted to Baker).
    - Whitefish plans to abandon the diagonal portion of Baker once the road is extended south.
    - Couplet C-3 was supported by "70%" of the Advisory Committee -- with Marc Pitman and Jim Weaver (and potentially others) opposed.

12. West of Whitefish - The median alternative between Karrow and west of Lion Mountain Road was discussed. Left-turning pockets for the ranger station, border patrol and private residences were recommended. Operational problems with a two-lane median divided road were mentioned by Jim Weaver. Whitefish's loss of character was mentioned -- and the desire to use the median to enhance the community. A gateway treatment eliminating utility poles and planting trees could be considered instead of a raised median. A raised median may only look good if irrigated and heavily planted and maintained. MDT is not interested in this level of median maintenance. Median maintenance may be provided by the Golf Association, Whitefish Parks Department (maybe Grouse Mountain Lodge) at this location. A 73-lot subdivision is planned north of Lion Mountain Road just west of the golf course and pedestrian activity along and crossing the road can be enhanced with a median. Operational problems of U-turns are a concern if frequent left-turn opportunity is not provided. Concern voiced regarding liquid deicer and the impact on plant materials in the median.

    The Committee agreed to a raised median, as long as maintenance responsibility could be worked out and with left-turning pockets.

    From Karrow to the Whitefish River, a three-lane alternative was preferred. An urban treatment with curb and gutter, detached sidewalk and storm drainage is recommended. "Boulevard" (roadside landscape) treatment should also be considered.

13. Whitefish River south to MT 40: City Council of Whitefish has previously stated that a median is recommended. Projected traffic of 35,000 vpd would be better accommodated by a median. Sufficient right-of-way exists for wide median. Shared access already exists and functions well. Baker extension will provide opportunity for circulation "around the block" if full turn access is not provided.
    - MDT comments:
      - Narrow median area (four-foot width) is not landscaped and will not look good.
      - Dealing with business owners and providing cross access easements will be difficult. Even though right-of-way width exists, access agreements still need to be worked out.

- Lighting of area will be required.
- Maintenance of area is a concern - four-foot medians are driven over.
- Level of service not significantly affected by median construction when drives are widely spaced.

- Other comments:
  - Projected traffic far exceeds the MDT policy of consideration of median at 20,000 to 25,000 vpd traffic volume.
  - Restriction of access will increase level of service to accommodate projected traffic.
  - U-turns are difficult to make at high volumes of traffic.
  - Truck access needs to be considered to all properties.
  - Vegetated medians -- who will maintain plantings and irrigation?
  - No organized group identified to maintain the median areas. City of Whitefish may need to commit to maintain.
  - Compromise might be to build median area wide enough to construct median at a future date when volume warrants, and traffic redistributes following Baker extension.
  - Whitefish needs median to help promote unique image.
  - Whitefish city budget may not afford median maintenance.
  - Delay in construction of median will only increase issues of access as traffic volume and increased development continues.
  - Urban treatment (curb and gutter) recommended.
  - Implementation will be delayed by lengthy legal work with property owners.
  - Lighting and long-term power bill would be additional cost of median.
  - Without median, only lighting at intersections may be MDT's recommendation.

- Consensus of group (not unanimous)
  - Median should be recommended if maintenance agreements can be worked out.
  - Proper access needs to be provided to all properties, whether by combined access, Baker extension, additional median openings, limited U-turns.
  - Specific design features of median are important (proper plant material, hardy irrigation).
  - Agreement to "foot the bill" for roadway lighting could be considered.
  - Urban treatment with separated walk and "boulevard" trees should be considered. Separated area between curb and walk is important.

14. South of MT 40 to KM Road: If a median is chosen, full turning movement access would be needed at Diamond K. Concerns with a median:

    - Increased costs with a wide asphalt area.

    - Need to remove trees in front of the North Valley Refuse area.

    - Legal problems associated with the need to renegotiate.

    - Difficulty of providing for needed truck-turning movements.

    - Likely need to provide for truck U-turns.

    Would access need to be renegotiated with a five-lane? The Commission has expressed a concern about access control -- which is (in their minds) a form of land use control. Advantages of the median:

    - Pedestrian refuge provided by median in Happy Valley area.

    - In the Happy Valley area, the median is offset to the west away from the residents.

    A pedestrian and bike underpass could also be considered. Its use would have to be forced -- and in an area with a lot of access -- it could not be fenced. Another likelihood is that a signal will be installed to accommodate pedestrians.

    Should include realignment of roads in Happy Valley area.

15. Between Stelle Lane (approximately) and KM Road, consider a median alternative. The main advantages are aesthetics, limiting access and minimizing pedestrian safety problems.

    - With appropriate traffic lights -- when warranted.

    - With a median break at Diamond K.

    - Off-setting to west.

    - Forest Hills intersection realignment.

    - Possible consideration of truck U-turns if necessary.

    There are a significant number of property owners who have expressed a major concern with the median alternative. A majority of the committee concurred with this recommendation.

16. Between Stelle Lane (or where access is an issue: approximately MP 124) and MT 40 -- there are a lot of closely-spaced driveways. The five-lane makes sense. Consolidation of driveways should be considered where possible. This was supported unanimously.

17. KM to MP 117: One issue with the median is for farm equipment crossings. If we move the road to the east -- will there be less right-of-way and less resistance? What is the trade-off between construction cost savings of the existing pavement

and increased right-of-way cost? One of the advantages in this area is that there are relatively few access points and agricultural land to be preserved. Characteristics of median in this area:

- Access points - provide existing accesses.
- Accommodation of farm equipment where needed.

The median alternative was supported by a majority of the Committee.

18. MP 117 to Grandview -- the median alternative would make sense north of Grandview because it would be an entrance to Kalispell - and the state lands property is the only property along the west. Another idea is a five-lane with roadside landscaping for a gateway type treatment, since south of Grandview is a five-lane.

    - Wide enough to accommodate a raised median at a future date.

    The five-lane was supported unanimously.

19. In Kalispell:

    - We should not cover Main and Idaho in the EIS.
    - Airport to Courthouse: four-lane. If we can put in a left-turn, put it at 12th (or before 11th).
    - For bypass: consider four-lane at the southern end. Consider two lanes phased in initially:
      - Add left-turns at intersections.
      - Buy enough right-of-way for divided with depressed median.
      - Purchase all access rights.
    - On bypass, north of US 2 consider purchasing enough right-of-way for median.

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Agenda
Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Ninth Advisory Committee Meeting
May 17, 1994

1. **Project Update**
   - Comments received
   - Landowner meetings May 4 and 5
   - Highway Commission meeting
2. **Review Previous Tentative Agreements**
   - MT 82 to Airport Road
   - Separated bikepath where feasible
   - Restrictive access control with flexibility
3. **Discuss Remaining Areas**
   - Through Kalispell
   - On bypass: median or turn-lane
   - Grandview to Reserve
   - Reserve to KM
   - KM to MT 40
   - MT 40 to River
   - In Whitefish: COUPLET-3?
   - West of Whitefish: three-lane (river to Karrow) median (Karrow to GML)
4. **What Next**

Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Summary of Highway Commission Meeting
May 11, 1994

A presentation on the Somers to Whitefish West EIS was made to the Highway Commission on May 11, 1994. A handout used at the meeting is attached.

The major items of interest to the Commission were:

- Construction cost overall, especially costs for "special" items, like removing the culverts in the Whitefish River and replacing them with a bridge.
- Comparative maintenance difficulties and cost.
- When is it appropriate for them to take action on the FEIS?
- Concerns about a restrictive access control policy.

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Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Update for Highway Commission
May 11, 1994

Status of Project:

- Draft EIS available mid-February.
- Comment period over May 16, 1994.

Comment Received To Date:

A. Form of Comment:
- Three public hearings (180 people).
- Meetings with general area groups (80 people).
- Meetings with US 93 landowners (160 people).
- Telephone calls on hotline (114 calls).
- Written comments (125 letters).
- Agency meetings (15 people).

B. Nature of Comment:
- Majority (85% to 90%) of letters and phone calls are in support of four-lane divided highway (future land use, consistency with land use planning, preserve beauty of area).
- Public hearing response split 50/50 between four-lane divided and five-lane highway.
- Majority of meetings with general area groups are in support of four-lane divided highway.
- Virtually all meetings with US 93 landowners are in support of five-lane highway (less right-of-way required, fewer access restrictions).
- Support for separated bikepath.
- Support for bypass of Kalispell area.
- Some support for restrictive access control -- with flexibility.
- Support for special design concepts (scenic turn-out, community gateways, bridges which allow for pedestrian and bicycle facilities underneath highway).
- Support for Seventh Street bridge in Whitefish.

C. Official Group Positions:
- Advisory Committee (tentative recommendations):
  1. Support for separated bikepath.
  2. Support for Kalispell bypass.
  3. Support for restrictive access control (with flexibility).
  4. Support for A(MEDIAN): Somers to Ball's Crossing.

5. Support A(TURN-LANE): Ball's Crossing to Airport Road.
6. Support for Whitefish Couplet with Seventh Street bridge.
7. Support for A(MEDIAN): North of Stillwater River to Km Road (recommendation in earlier meeting: may be revisited).

- Whitefish residents -- petition with 100 signatures -- opposition to Whitefish couplet.
- Flathead Business and Industry Association -- support for A(TURN-LANE).

D. Other Issues:

- Need for air quality mitigation in Whitefish.
- Need for Section 4(f) mitigation west of Kalispell.
- Need for wetland mitigation.

Process and Schedule From Here:

1. Receive and evaluate remainder of comment.

2. Meet with Advisory Committee: May 17. Intent: Develop recommendation for preferred alternative. The Committee is fully aware that their recommendation will need to be approved by the Commission and by FHWA. The Committee has discussed their role, which is to advise the decision-makers. The Committee represents a balance of different interests in the Valley and has discussed issues such as funding and scheduling.

3. Meet with Highway Commission.

4. Prepare Preliminary Final EIS, which will evaluate the impacts of a preferred alternative: end of June.

5. Obtain comment on Preliminary Final EIS.

6. Prepare Final EIS: end of September.

7. FHWA Record of Decision, which officially adopts preferred alternative: end of October.

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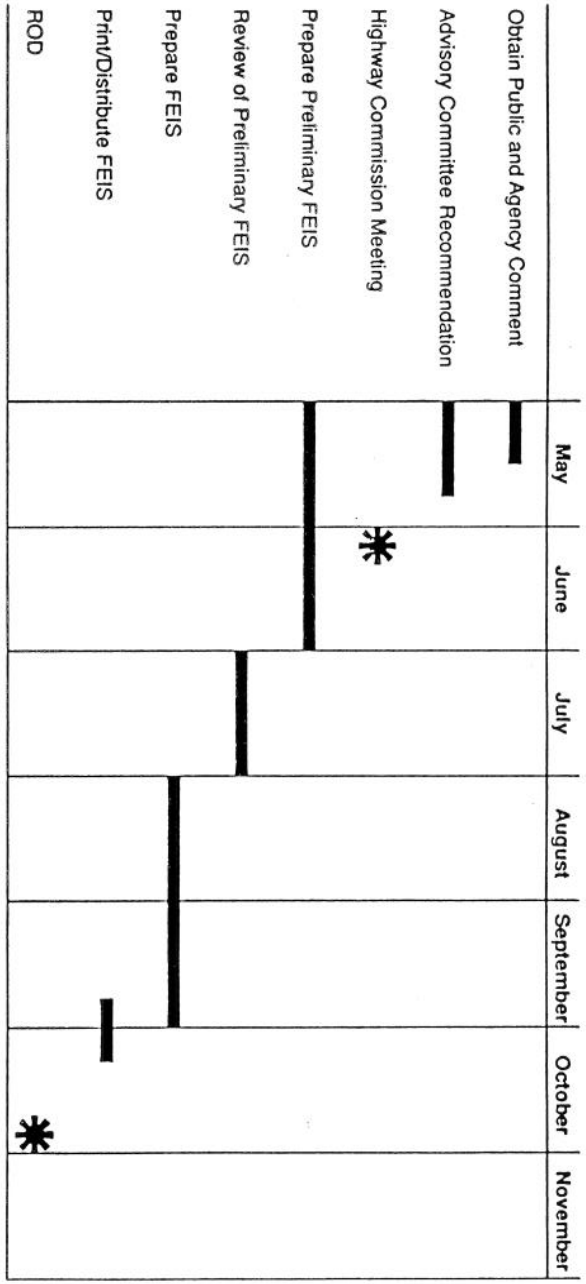
SCHEDULE
Somers to Whitefish West EIS



Meetings With Groups and Individuals

Meeting Notes
US 93 Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Property Owner's Meeting
April 20, 1994

A meeting was convened on April 20, 1994 by US 93 property owners between KM Road and Reserve Drive. The meeting was held at the West Valley Fire Hall. A sign-in sheet is attached.

Following are comments received at a meeting held with property owners on April 20, 1994.

1. Trees or median or shrubs will cause severe drifting -- northeast prevailing wind. Most east-west roads will be closed in storms. Whitefish Stage will not be available for alternative access. Anything that will act as an obstruction will cause drifting.

2. John Wilson stated that trees were not planned for median -- grassy median would not drift.

3. Bill said highway was built up in 1955 because of drifting. Stop signs can cause drifting -- 8-9 foot drifts.

4. Visual effect is main point for median -- impact -- influences tourism.

5. What is the justification for the median?

6. John said that no decision has been made.

7. Lee Teneyck: Article did not show that people's concerns were heard. Gina didn't know her name or about the petition.

8. Buck Torgenson: Small group controlling. Committee's don't care what individual business issues are. "Trying to bulldoze over people."

9. Dick: Special interest groups cannot dictate. Landowners have tremendous amount of power.

10. Land was sold willingly for original design -- don't ask for more.

11. Question to Jim Weaver: Is long-range plan for US 93 to be an interstate? Answer: No -- it will not be required to be designed to interstate standards.

12. State takes land at what they think it is worth -- median is absolutely asinine -- cost.

13. Baucus didn't talk to everybody. Ill-advised decision.

14. Rich said that Senator Baucus will listen -- Tracy Crabtree confirmed this.

15. May 2nd was identified as the end of the public comment period.

16. Pam Kennedy: Trying to take all comments/interests concerns will become part of the decision. We are here as friends -- not to do damage. Nothing has been eliminated yet. Newspaper article stated consensus going into Saturday. Advisory Committee consensus is not Carter & Burgess recommendation. Advisory Committee will bring forward concerns of people in each area.

17. Property owners were not contacted. Some people were not able to attend public meetings.

18. Question: Who will decide? Answer: Carter & Burgess will make recommendation. Federal Highway Administration will make final decision.

19. Newspaper article was confirmed -- Advisory Committee reached consensus on median.

20. Question: What makes medians better? Pam's answer: Accidents, safety issues, visual, strip development. EIS was not done for original design -- EA was done.

21. Rich: Read 4-30 accident tables. Does not support one alternative over another.

22. How does median (split median) preserve farmland?

23. Dick -- summary:
    - Five-lane was acceptable to majority (98%)
    - Special interests changed this.
    - Land owners have "trump" card -- sue.
    - Accidents increase on divided highway (according to insurance company).
    - Safety of highway -- something that must be done soon.
    - Divided highway is effectively "zoning" the adjacent property.

24. Land owners will not sell farmland for business.

25. How will turning farm machinery negotiate median?

26. What is better about median?

27. Not all owners were contacted or were involved. Older farmers/owners not used to process.

28. Need limited access frontage road. Use of intersections to get into traffic.

29. Where do turning cars go with median? Median breaks?

30. Glacial memorial gardens owner needs limited access and does not want more right-of-way taken.

31. Don't like median because of out-of-direction travel for left turn.

32. Supports median because of strip development.

33. Rich Dejana:
    - EIS evaluates things, Sometimes shaded.
    - Take matters into your hands.
    - Median takes farmland.
    - Median encourages dense development.
    - Prettier to put in median (cynically).
    - EIS says median is a _____.
    - Environmentally, median is not source.
    - Advisory Committee represents people.
    - Property owners can fight it legally with right-of-way condemnations.
    - Advisory Meeting -- if meeting is closed there will be severe consequences.
    - Meeting at Cavanaugh's at 9:00 a.m.
    - Easiest solution is to tell Mr. Weaver that they will not negotiate with you.

34. Lee Ten Eyck:
    - Want road improved.
    - 3,000 signatures -- what happened to it?
    - What is the feeling of majority of property owners?
    - Can't approve four-lane.
    - Need to know your concern.

35. Dick Sonju:
    - Main concern -- access to homes, business or property.
    - Can't afford to give them more land. They will renegotiate for right-of-way.
    - What is additional costs? All of these concerns add up.
    - Maintenance is a big issue.
    - Meeting on Saturday -- can't invite people, but can't exclude people.
    - People can't go to public meetings because they have to work.
    - None of the committee members talked to the land owners.

36. People with money are on committee and drive the process.

37. Question to Jim Weaver: Is 93 on interstate system. Answer: No.

38. Carl Andrews owns property. Never done anything but go to meetings about it and pay taxes. State said I had to sell it and will tell you what we will pay.

39. A median is absolutely asinine.

40. We were going along really well and a few people got to Baucus. He only took information from a few people. Majority does not want a divided highway.

41. Median will be more hazardous. Median will impair safety with snow. If ambulance can't get through who are we going to sue? EIS is biased because nobody asked them. He is a weatherman in Kalispell. Wind will blow snow with median to cause drifting. Prevailing wind is out of the northeast. All of the east-west roads get closed first in the city. Most severe weather occurs between College and 40.

42. If grass grows it will catch snow to drift. If it is cut short it will minimize drifts but not minimize it.

43. Medians have more accidents according to statistics.

44. We are talking about people who have their own agendas.

45. Visually is the only argument for median.

46. Visual impact of median minimal.

47. There is a small group of people who is getting listened to.

48. Zoning is an issue to control growth. Private property is private property. Need controlled growth.

49. Can't afford to give them any more land.

50. Can't have special interest groups dictating process. Those are the one's that go to meeting.

51. Landowners have tremendous amount of power.

52. People were willing to give land for safe highway, but can't give any more land.

53. Don't they have to prove need to put in median? Yes they do to condemn.

54. What is cost of lawsuits? The cheapest route is to let it go through and fight it on condemnation.

55. If MDT does not use it, it will go back to property owner.

56. State of Montana did not stop the project.

57. Concerned about farmers having to go around median to get to property.

58. Farm equipment -- won't work with median.

59. Was any consideration given to winter conditions?

60. Median is a crappy idea.

61. Split alignment will take our land and leave us with a useless size parcel left.

62. Need to have field entrances to get into fields at several locations.

63. Need to have enough length with cross-overs for traffic and trucks to park while waiting in the middle.

64. Would like to suggest a grade separation at Reserve and Church to answer problems with high volume of traffic.

65. Anna Jones, 1631 Howell Street, Missoula, Montana 59801, 406/549-2980. How much right-of-way under four-lane (not separated) will be required? Get back to her. Original homestead dictated five acres.

66. Race track owner concerned when race gets out. It happens all at once.

67. The race car rigs are big and stack up to enter track. This needs to be considered with sizing left turn lane.

68. Need an opening on Schrade for and opening for field entrance. Need to get in all sorts of field equipment.

69. Bill Hedstrom:
    - Petition was delivered to the Highway Commission.
    - In defense of Baucus, he is key to getting this through. He will come back to us with funding.
    - Encouraged people to go to Advisory Committee meeting.
    - Consensus at this group tonight should go to Advisory Committee.

    - This district (fire) has a major concern with left turn access. Supports five-lane design.
    - Concerned about drifting.
    - Concerned about tight tax dollars -- maintenance will cost money.

Major issues/concerns:

1. Additional loss of land.

2. Safety -- accident statistics do not support one alternative over another.

3. Weather factor -- drifting snow -- median will make problem worse.

4. Access of farm equipment -- difficulty in U-turning.

5. Special interests -- small groups controlling majority.

6. Why is median alternative better?

Handouts filled out at the meeting are in the project files.

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Carter · Burgess

Meeting Minutes Roster

Project Somers to WF EIS

Purpose

Date Held 4/20/94

Location West Valley Fire Hall

Name	~~Organization~~ Address	Phone No.
[illegible]	4150 Hwy 93 N	257-0128
Betty Van Alstine	228 W. 4th St. Whitefish	862-2253
[illegible]	1631 Howell St. Missoula 59802	549-2980
Yvonne Warner	120 Schrade Rd Kal	752-3082
Pat Warner	120 " " " "	
Ronald "Buck" Torolensen	Bus. 4040 Hwy 93 North Kal- Home 2998 Whitefish Stage	752-2618
[illegible]	Box 233 Somers	844-5407 752-2832
John Wilson	Public Advisory Committee	
Marilyn Hedstrom	3375 Hwy 93 N	756-7262
Glacier [illegible]	Box 457 Kal	752-2832
Richard A. Bergen	2402 Hwy 93 N.	752-4253
Ida Schroeder	3118 Whitefish Stg.	752-3378

4-4

Meeting Minutes
US 93 Property Owners Meeting: Mountain Mall
April 22, 1994

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of a meeting held to discuss a possible access plan associated with the A(MEDIAN) alternative. The meeting was held at the Mountain Mall in Whitefish.

Meeting attendees were:

Dave Jamieson	Shirley Schmidt	Dennis Rasmussen
Bob Depratu	Kathy Bramer	Roy Duff
Roy Duff	Gina McAfee	Mike Worrall
Mark VanNyhuis	Dave Morris	Erma Rocksund
Harold Lietz	Michael Morton	Howard Wood
Arnold Sandefur	Terry Schend	Randy Erickson
Eileen Sandefur	Mike Rinaldi	Ethelyn Dalen
Eileen Kane	Mark Morris	Harold Dalen
James Kane	Robert & Bonnie West	Melvin Norgaard
Joe Hart	Dale Paulson	

General discussion which occurred was:

1. Support the C(COUPLET-4) alternative -- not sure the Seventh Street bridge is worth the extra money.

2. Need to accommodate approximately six trailers moving in and out from the Greenwood trailer park. This park also accommodates a RV Park in the summer. The road at the back of the park is very narrow. Another idea is to have many breaks in the median across from the park.

3. The people who support the median alternative are those who do not own property along US 93.

4. Talked to 20 people who said they do not want medians:
   - Maintenance is a problem.
   - Where is the snow going to go?
   - Where are the trucks going to go?

5. Let's get along with a five-lane design.

6. We can't afford the additional expense of a median.

7. The manager of the Conoco and the Safeway do not support the median -- they feel that it would place them at a competitive disadvantage.

8. Advantages of a median are:
   - Safer because of driveway consolidation.
   - Easier left-turn access.
   - Easier to possibly warrant future signal.
   - Better defines the roadway -- less stressful.
   - Capacity is generally higher -- traffic does not slow down to make turns.
   - Aesthetics.

9. We are skeptical of studies -- the last study said 60% were in favor -- and that was not true.

10. Are right-of-way costs included? Response: Yes.

11. Has the Fire Department expressed a concern about the median?

12. Is the Advisory Committee a balanced group?

13. How will medians affect snow removal -- will the grass and shrubs result in more drifting?

14. From MT 40 north -- the highway performs two functions:
   - Move people safely.
   - Access business

   The median makes the second function of the highway very difficult.

Discussions with specific business owners which occurred was:

1. The Baker extension (to the Mall) would take a lot of pressure off US 93.

2. Big Mountain Glass gets three semis a month -- attached.

3. Safeway -- need the redesigned Baker to mitigate median development.

4. Carpet Studio -- get 10 to 15 large trucks a week; need no median. Maintenance and expense is too great. Eliminate right turns on red to decrease traffic congestion. Frontage road good idea but does not go far enough.

5. Jim Baker, Conoco -- Straighten out Baker to relieve congestion at weird intersection (current Baker).

6. Dalen -- extend Baker all the way down to NAPA Auto Parts behind Safeway.

7. Larry Schend -- car wash -- median or frontage road would take away his staging area. Painted median would work okay for emergency vehicles and could be changed if needed over time. Good for snow removal.

8. Mobile home park (Greenwood) can't maneuver mobile homes in and out with median.

9. Should consider property owners more than anyone else.

10. Bottom line is that 20 business owners and that they don't want medians, period. Where is snow going to go? Where are trucks going to turn? No one wants the median in this area -- let's get on with it.

11. I don't see any petitions pushing a divided highway.
   - They are a small organized group.
   - Does not see any clear number of people who support it.
   - Original intent of MDT was a five-lane design.

12. There have been roads with medians that have been taken out.

13. Trailer park (Greenwood) all of trailer residents don't want a median.

14. Howard Wood -- against decorations in the middle.

15. $3 million more for median: don't need it.

16. Mike's Conoco -- wants access for customers for both directions.

17. Mike, Safeway -- median creates unfair business disadvantage. What are advantages of medians? Joe explained.

18. Why is there all of this work to come up with this decision?

19. Why can we not get on with this. We have been attending meetings for three years and we keep coming up with the same solution.

20. There is a distrust because we see a clear majority and we cannot get clear majority.

21. Bob Depratu -- there is a concern as business owners of increased costs and tax money. The process goes on and it costs more and more money.

22. Par 3 -- They don't have all of the right-of-way. This is why we don't trust the study.

23. Are right-of-way costs included? Yes.

24. Why are other projects able to go without this EIS? Gina: Because of the level of public controversy.

25. Herald Autobody -- If they put medians I would have to go to MT 40 and pull and U to go to Whitefish.

26. Fire Department has expressed strong sentiment against median.

27. How many people on Advisory Committee are five-lane versus four-lane? How were they selected?

28. How is snow going to be handled?

29. Sand and salt in the median will kill the plants.

30. Doesn't there have to be a preferred alternative in the DEIS? Not necessarily.

31. Mike, Safeway -- from MT 40 highway will (1) move people safely, (2) access businesses, a median would severely restrict that purpose of the highway.

32. Dick Wright, Wright Furniture -- he has more tractor trailers and to drive up to Depratu's would cause a problem with turning into the property. Depratu has 500 to 900 cars/day. 80% volume comes in from Kalispell. Average sale is $1,000. He is afraid he would lose business. He would like a median opening for Depratu and Wright. Wright average 15 rigs a week.

33. Perhaps could realign Park Knolls Estates to line up with one of the drives.

34. Wants to maintain business but is not against the concept of a median in general.

35. Depratu could lose display area with combined access.

36. Narrow median used to exist north of MT 40. Cars would hit median -- hard to see, dark.

37. Would MDT plow frontage roads? Time/cost? Frontage roads would be plowed last.

38. Median south of MT 40 is good.

39. Would factory mall affect frontage road?

40. Property behind First Baptist pulls large -- concerned with turns.

41. Carpet Studio -- backs large trucks into business -- blocks highway.

42. How to tell traffic where to turn onto frontage road?

43. Frontage Road intersections are a concern.

44. UPS won't make as quick a delivery to TV shop -- now 11:00 a.m. -- 2:00 in future if first into town.

45. Where will MDT plow show to?

46. Semi's back into Big Mountain Glass -- block highway. Not feasible with frontage road. Terry Schend (Auto Wash) lets trucks deliver across his property in rear of Big Mountain Glass).

47. Baker extension is a good idea.

48. C(COUPLET-3) is not a good idea. Semis on Baker is a major impact.

49. Columbia Avenue extension is a good idea.

50. Elderly may be confused by median openings.

51. Farm equipment crossing at turn for First Baptist Church.

52. Grass median will be feeding area for deer, moose, turkeys.

53. Need long no-passing zones for Farm-to-Market improvements to reduce passenger car traffic volume of bypass and encourage route as truck route.

som0425m.5gm

Meeting Minutes
US 93 Somers to Whitefish West EIS: Meeting at Depratu Ford
April 22, 1994

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of a meeting held at Depratu Ford to discuss the A(MEDIAN) alternative.

Meeting attendees were:

Dale Paulson	Eileen Kane
Gina McAfee	Larry Koritzky
Joe Hart	Al Burker
Mike Worrall	John Austin
Marc Pitman	Gloria Austin
Bob Depratu	Dan Brown
Bart Depratu	

Discussion which occurred was:

1. Bob Depratu handed out a copy of traffic counts that were done recently (attached).

2. A full-turn access between Par 3 and Diamond Jack was discussed and considered generally acceptable.

3. The need for semis to turn around was discussed.

4. The loss of Depratu Ford's showplace is of concern. It would wipe out most of the parking area to accommodate circulation for trucks.

5. Most of the property owners in this area do not support a median.

6. The Fire Department has concerns about loss of emergency vehicle access.

7. This area of Whitefish is a logical place for businesses to locate and the five-lane alternative serves these businesses best. A highway like US 2 would be fine.

som0425m.6gm

DePratu
FORD
Sales • Leasing • Service • Parts
VW Audi

4/15/94	South Driveway	292
	North Driveway	560
4/18/94	South Driveway	268
	North Driveway	660
4/19/94	South Driveway	231
	North Driveway	522
TOTAL		2,533

"Where You Would Send A Friend"

6331 Hwy 93 Box 1217
Whitefish, MT 59937
406-862-2511
Montana Toll Free 1-800-735-6383

DATE 4-15-94

NORTH DRIVEWAY ____

SOUTH DRIVEWAY ✓

TIME OF DAY	CARS	PICKUPS & VANS	TRUCKS	TOTAL
7:00 am				
7:30				
8:00				
8:30				
9:00				
9:30				
10:00				
10:30				
11:00				
11:30				
12:00 pm				
12:30				
1:00				
1:30				
2:00				
2:30	82	90	10	182
3:00	2	9		32
3:30	6	13	2	
4:00	7	3		21
4:30	6	3	2	
5:00	2	6		27
5:30	9	10		
6:00	7	7		27
6:30	4	9		
7:00	2	1		3
TOTAL	127	151	14	292

DATE 4-12-94

NORTH DRIVEWAY ____

SOUTH DRIVEWAY ✓

TIME OF DAY	CARS	PICKUPS & VANS	TRUCKS	TOTAL
7:00 am	6	4		10
7:30	7	11	1	19
8:00	5	6		11
8:30	5	2		7
9:00	1	6		7
9:30	3	7		10
10:00	2	7	2	11
10:30	2	9		11
11:00	7	7		14
11:30	3	3	1	7
12:00 pm	4	7		11
12:30	11	3	2	16
1:00	2	9	2	13
1:30	7	6		13
2:00	2	4	2	8
2:30	4	12		16
3:00	4	8		12
3:30	7	7	2	16
4:00	1	5	1	7
4:30	4	2	1	7
5:00	5	9		14
5:30	7	6		13
6:00	7	5		12
6:30	1	2		3
7:00				
TOTAL	107	147	14	268

DATE 4-19-94

NORTH DRIVEWAY X

SOUTH DRIVEWAY

TIME OF DAY	CARS	PICKUPS & VANS	TRUCKS	TOTAL
7:00 am				
7:30	1			1
8:00	10	9		39
8:30	10	10		
9:00	9	5		33
9:30	4	15		
10:00	9	7		38
10:30	13	8	1	
11:00	10	5	2	47
11:30	15	15		
12:00 pm	10	7		56
12:30	17	22		
1:00	12	11		44
1:30	5	16		
2:00	9	9	2	39
2:30	7	10	2	
3:00	9	12		47
3:30	11	12	3	
4:00	7	21		56
4:30	17	11		
5:00	12	13	1	63
5:30	14	22	1	
6:00	9	11		47
6:30	16	10	1	
7:00	5	7		12
TOTAL	241	268	13	522

Meeting Minutes
US 93 Property Owner's Meeting: Valley Inn
April 22, 1994

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of a meeting held to discuss a possible access plan associated with the A(MEDIAN) alternative.

Meeting attendees were:

Jeff Jensen	Mike Worrall	Gina McAfee
Charlie Nordstrom	Joe Hart	Dale Paulson
Don Jensen	Marc Pitman	

Discussion which occurred was:

1. How are trucks going into Holiday Plaza? Cannot use Valley Inn.
2. Left-turn lane into Valley needs to be long to store traffic -- RVs and trucks.
3. How would medians be landscaped? Don't want to pay for maintaining medians. Concerned with maintenance.
4. Have two motels, RV park, cannot have closed median. Must have an opening. Don't like wide median concept.
5. LaSalle Road took median out.
6. Don't like medians. Traffic signal would help.
7. Have saved room for landscaping, with frontage all of the landscaping would be gone.
8. Need a walkway on the west side of highway

Charlie Nordstrom:

1. Happy Valley mini-storage. How would there be left-turn access into the property? Concerned with having to drive out of the way.

som0425m.7gm

US 93 Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Summary of Property Owner Meetings
May 4 and May 5, 1994

The purpose of this is to summarize the general comments received from individual property owners during meetings held on May 4 and May 5, 1994. The two days of meetings were well attended with 107 individuals representing approximately 90 separate properties voicing concerns and comments.

Large 50-scale aerial graphics were used to illustrate improvement concept alternatives.

All segments of the corridor were represented by the attendees. Some attending owners have participated in earlier meetings and felt it was important to reiterate their concerns. Some have followed the status of the study through newspaper articles and discussions with neighbors and friends. Others were unfamiliar with the study process and improvement alternatives and were seeking general, as well as specific, information. Discussions were one-on-one with Carter & Burgess staff members and generally lasted about 30 minutes each.

A summary of each meeting was prepared and is in the project files.

Common concerns and comments are summarized below:

1. Nearly unanimous support for a five-lane alternative with opposition to a four-lane alternative with median.

2. Nearly all properties have some large truck or vehicle with trailer activity requiring full-turning access to US 93. U-turning at upstream or downstream median openings would be physically limited by the large vehicle/trailer turning requirements.

3. Out-of-direction travel created by medians would be a major inconvenience and may reduce business and increase air pollution.

4. MDT negotiated and acquired right-of-way with specific property owner understanding that the road improvements would be a five-lane design. Any additional right-of-way required for the four-lane with median design would be opposed and would create a significant impact on many businesses and residences.

5. Safety of median and U-turns seriously questioned, especially on north-facing slopes (e.g., north of Happy Valley to MT 40).

6. Many were concerned that a median will create a serious maintenance problem during major winter storms and will collect trash throughout the year. Native grass has little attractive value especially if MDT mows infrequently and is not watered and collects road sanding material.

7. Cutting trees through Happy Valley area to add a native grass median seems counter to project goal of improving scenic nature of corridor.

8. Concern that limited tax dollars available will result in further delay to project especially if project is more expensive due to median construction. The five-lane project needs to be constructed as soon as possible.

9. Concern that new/additional local taxes will be required to maintain medians.

10. Concern that other important state road improvements might be delayed due to additional cost of US 93 medians.

11. Concern that new development would be limited due to restricted access to highway and land values affected.

12. Emergency vehicle access would be restricted by median.

13. All trees along all segments of the corridor are important to save.

14. Landscaping between the road edge and right-of-way is important.

15. There was a general consensus that provisions must be made to facilitate farm vehicles; either to cross to lands on opposite side or to other destinations along the highway.

som0506m.1jh

Summary of US 93 Landowner Concerns
Taken from Meetings on May 4 and 5, 1994

Name	Location of Property	General Nature of Concern				
		Add'l. ROW	Out-of-Direction Travel, Access	Cost	Likely Delaying Tactic	Other
Eugene Lee	BC to Kalispell		X			
Terry Schend	Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X	X		
Garrick Hansen	Baker Ave. - Whitefish					Opposition to couplet.
Mary Jo TenEyck	Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X		X	Median won't be maintained. Will create snow drifts.
Bob & Anna Jones	Kalispell to Whitefish	X		X		Drifting snow.
Jim & Robyn Thompson	2nd Street - Whitefish	X				
Scott & Jay Cloninger	BC to Kalispell		X	X		
Mike Driscoll	2nd Street - Whitefish	X	X			Likes C(OFF-SET)
Dennis Schwenk			X			Likes bypass
Tom Vars	Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X			
Mark & Carol Silliker	Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X	X		Snow removal of median.
Harold Clapper	Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X			MDT ROW process.
Richard Altenberg	82 to BC					Need for machinery crossings.
Linda Robinson	Ponderosa Lane - Kalispell		X			
Ben Cohen	Kalispell to Whitefish		X			Consider frontage road; support medians.
Annie Crenshaw-Reiker	Kalispell to Whitefish		X	X		Save existing trees.
Joan McClure	South of Kalispell		X			May not need bypass.
Gary Treweek	BC to Kalispell; Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X			
Dave & Cheryl Soteros	82 to BC		X			Likes medians; need access consolidation.
Charlotte Cassan	Kalispell - Main Street					Need to protect trees.
Keith & Nancy Bogart	Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X			Median may attract animals - more road kills.
Jackie Adams	Ponderosa Lane		X	X		Will medians be maintained?
Buck Torstenson	Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X	X		Weather; drifting snow.
Gilbert Bissell	BC to Kalispell	X	X			Need sidewalks; limit billboards.
Scott Wendling	Ponderosa Lane - Kalispell		X			Drifting snow; safety; medians more attractive.
Gene Glover	Somers to Kalispell		X			Safety and maintenance.
Sharon Miller	Ponderosa Lane - Kalispell		X			
Dick Sonju	Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X	X	X	Drifting snow.
Bud Dalen	North of Depratu Ford - Whitefish		X	X		Median maintenance; snow removal.
Jim Irvin	South of Whitefish	X	X			Access consolidation a good idea.
Ed Hines	South of Kalispell		X			U-turns safety problem.
Mark Nordahl	South of Jimmy Lee's - Whitefish	X	X			Possible tax increase.
Newton Conklin	North of Montana Villa Apts. - Kalispell	X				MDT ROW process.
Garry & Jan Spannoth	Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X			Median won't be maintained.
Arnold Sanduffer	South of Whitefish		X			
David Morris	South of Whitefish		X			
Howard Wood	South of Whitefish		X			Can't see median in storm.

Name	Location of Property	General Nature of Concern				
		Add'l. ROW	Out-of-Direction Travel, Access	Cost	Likely Delaying Tactic	Other
Gloria & John Austin; Jim Kone; Elma Rocksund	South of Whitefish	X	X		X	Median creates a hazard; collects snow.
Dave Waatti	82 to BC		X			Not opposed to median if access can be worked out.
Nancy Hagen	Ponderosa		X			
Mike Tellers	West of Whitefish	X				Need speed reduced; support bypass; support sidewalk.
Steve Wilson	Ponderosa	X	X	X		
Ed & Lucille Agel	Ponderosa		X			Likes median.
Nicola DiRiezo	Rocky Mtn. Lodge - Whitefish					Likes median; likes couplet; likes ped/bike facilities
Lee & Ocie Kelsey	West of Whitefish	X				Effect to driveway.
Ron Hashi	South of Kalispell		X			Do not realign Demersville; don't care about median.
Brian Clark	South of Kalispell		X			
Dusty Trimble	Comfort Inn - Whitefish		X			Likes median; likes COUPLET-3.
Bruce & Sheila Calhoun	Kalispell to Whitefish		X			Median south of Fenders okay. Median north of MT 40 okay.
Don & Louise Mackey	Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X			Who will maintain median?
Greg Scarf	Main St. - Kalispell					Need signal; need bypass.
Jim Cummings	Spokane Ave. - Whitefish					Remove trucks from Spokane; need bypass.
Leo Olst	Spokane Ave. - Whitefish					7th St. Bridge too costly; okay to remove parking.
Walt, Earl, Hank, Agnes Patterson	Between Church & Schrade		X			Drifting snow a problem; split alignments a problem.
Harold Gustafson	Kalispell to Whitefish		X			
Ron Tappet	Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X			Snow drifting a problem.
Mike & Judy Chamberlain	Kalispell to Whitefish		X			Consider medians south of MT 40 or at Reserve; snow drifting a problem.
Dave & Sue Anton	South of Whitefish		X			
Tom Iverson	North of MT 40 - west side		X			
Bob Ford	South of Kalispell	X				
Wade Fish	South of Whitefish	X	X		X	MDT ROW process.
Harry Berg	Blanchard Lake Road	X			X	
Leslie Cooper	On Hwy 82		X			Farm machinery an issue.
David Dachs	North of Kalispell					Center turn lane will be used as passing lane.
Harold & Carol Leitz	Harold's Auto Repair		X			Snow drifting.
Gary & Sharon Howard	South of Whitefish	X	X			Noise levels.
Jack & Herbert Wirtz	Rocky Cliff					Maintenance cost of median; do not realign Rocky Cliff.
Arne Mohl	A-1 Paving	X		X		Consider depressed median starting at Grandview.
Dave Seyfert	Kalispell		X			Agrees with Committee's tentative recommendations.
Mike Galassi	South of Whitefish		X			Deer in median a concern.
Louis Mason	South of Whitefish		X	X		
Mary Hedstrom			X			

Name	Location of Property	General Nature of Concern				
		Add'l. ROW	Out-of-Direction Travel, Access	Cost	Likely Delaying Tactic	Other
Eric Smith, Dennis Osborn, Carolyn Wirt	South of Kalispell		X			Concerned about loss of parking.
Dave Filler	Kalispell to Whitefish		X			Consolidated access with neighbors and depressed median is okay.
Jim Syvertson	Highland Drive - Kalispell		X			Consider grade separation at Church Drive.
Bruce Christiansen	South of Whitefish		X	X		
Joe Witney	Main St. - Kalispell	X	X			
Phil Anderson	Highland Dr. - Kalispell					Opposed to split alignment; median may make sense to north; drifting snow.
Jim Browne	Glacier Antique Mall		X	X		Maintenance of median.
Penny Leatzow	Main St. - Whitefish					Save trees, loss of parking not a problem.
Bill Gardener	South of Kalispell		X			
Wes Tuma	Kalispell to Whitefish	X	X			Snow accumulation; median maintenance.
Bob/Bart Depratu	South of Whitefish		X			
Rhonda Fitzgerald	Whitefish: 5th/Spokane		X			Supports median; truck bypass; not in favor of couplet.

som0512m.6gm

Meeting Minutes
Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Meeting With Trucking Interests

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of a meeting held on March 24, 1994. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the alternatives defined in the DEIS and their responsiveness to trucking interests.

Meeting attendees were:

Kathy Bramer	Tom Little
Mike Worrall	Orville Solberg
Dave Tonjam	Doug Miller
Ron Kaski	Ken Galloway
Mike Hanegan	Jim Lynch

Discussion at the meeting was:

1. Four Corners to Ball's Crossing -- truck traffic needs to turn left without causing a hazard and potentially using the center lane to merge back into traffic.

2. Additional right-of-way would be required to build five lane/take someone else's property across the road, just not mine.

3. Does a frontage road for trucks make an okay option to feed business and truck traffic onto 93 at a signal intersection the level of truck traffic? Yes.

4. Compared five lane to LaSalle Road, "a good road." Emergency vehicles could use median for passing traffic.

5. Disadvantage of five-lane is congestion. Frontage road could actually enhance property values. Safety is the first consideration; also aesthetics.

6. Need a Four Corner's intersection signal.

7. Four Corners should not have five roads feeding in -- combine Willow Glen and Tower Valley Roads before they join 93.

8. Ball's Crossing intersection improvement - see attached diagram.

9. Right-of-way acquisition; MDT should buy people out entirely; build the road; sell the remaining property; people need fair value.

10. New stop light is going in in front of Elks -- will help construction.

11. Construction phasing. Could start Somers to bypass area just north of Ashley Creek, but do not put highway on hold while waiting for bypass. Start by building on alignment of railroad, build two lanes new and leave traffic from Somers to Parker Livestock.

12. Really want the construction phasing in the FEIS.

13. Willow Glen is falling apart because of heavy truck traffic; expensive. Need to have effective phasing.

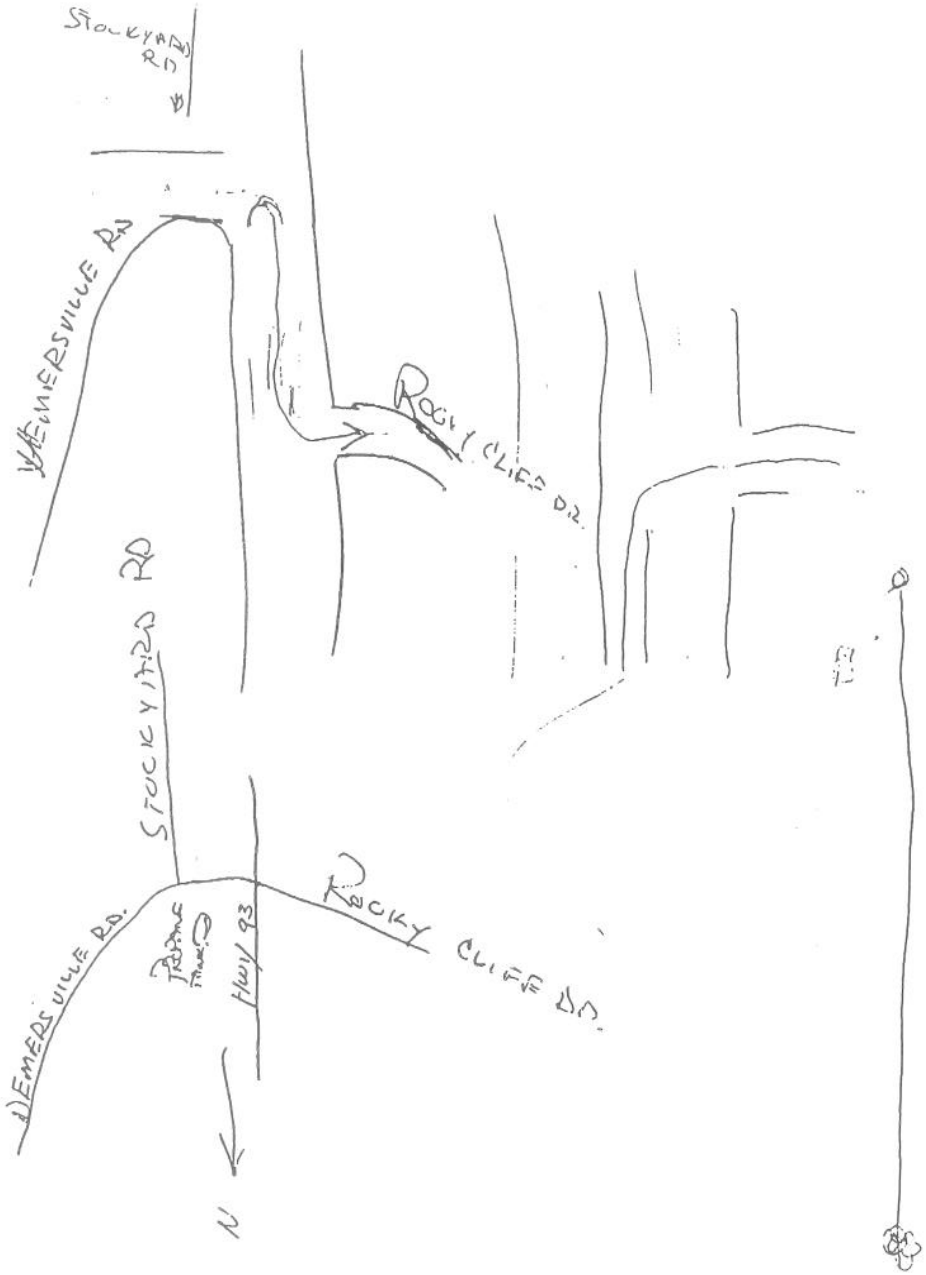
14. If we had money, frontage roads would be the best option.

15. Would the Ashley Creek bridge (new) be the same regardless of highway design.

16. North of Kalispell -- what are preferences? Stillwater north divided four lane. Happy Valley intersection needs to be addressed. Blanchard Road to Whitefish center turn lane or frontage road.

    South of Kalispell - brainstorm combined access:
    - Combine access point for industrial park and Forest Hill subdivision; frontage road from subdivision to same access point as industrial park.
    - Solberg Trucking, Caterpillar and Parker Livestock could share access from Rocky Cliff Road (into Ball's Crossing) or from bypass extension on railroad.

som0405m.3gm



Meeting Minutes
Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Meeting with Whitefish Community Development Corporation
and Whitefish Chamber
March 23, 1994

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of a meeting held on March 23, 1994 with the Whitefish Community Development Corporation and the Whitefish Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Somers to Whitefish West EIS.

Meeting attendees were:

Gina McAfee	Christy Rogers
Mary Madsen	Jeanette Lostracco
Ric Blair	Randy Schwichard
David Riegel	Way Jan
Dave White	Joe Hart
Dale Duff	John Cate
Pat Donovan	Petersen
David Miller	Dale Paulson
Sandra Hayes	Dave Stewart

Major items discussed were:

1. The document is very thorough and very well done.

2. Prefer C(COUPLET-2) or C(COUPLET-3) because of the convenience offered by the Seventh Street bridge.

3. Do the costs include landscaping? That is good.

4. Does the Highway Commission make the final decision? The Commission needs to appropriate the funds. It will be a joint decision with FHWA and the HC.

5. Like the gateway treatments for the "Village" of Whitefish.

6. Recommend looking at other street or bypass improvements in Whitefish. This will be looked at as a part of the separate Whitefish Traffic Operations Study.

7. The bridge over the Whitefish River makes a lot of sense. There is a group actively looking at a trail along the river now.

8. Can the chip trucks make the turn on Baker and Spokane or on Second and Spokane with the C(OFF-SET) alternative? Some improvement will be needed.

9. The C(OFF-SET) alternative makes sense.

10. The Seventh Street bridge will alleviate a lot of traffic from Second Street from the schools.

11. The bridge going across the river will make it easier for canoeists.

12. The wetland and wildlife impact of the Seventh Street bridge could be relatively minimal, and could be mitigated if a long-span bridge is used.

13. The turning radii for buses needs to be considered. They are all 102 feet wide.

14. Intersection improvements through town would include some turn lanes, parking removals. The A(FOUR-LANE) would have the least opportunity to add turn lanes.

15. Should look again at future traffic volumes between the river and Karrow. Do we really need four lanes?

16. Opposed to the off-set alternatives -- not as conducive to pedestrian and bicycle traffic -- not as safe.

17. Really need the Seventh Street bridge.

18. Parking removal makes the area more sterile -- would hurt the businesses along Second and Spokane.

19. Could there be an alternative that looks at including some parking also? This is similar to the Couplet alternatives.

20. Like Alternative C(COUPLET-2) the best because of traffic operations.

21. The intersections at Spokane and Second and Baker and Second are difficult now, and will be more difficult in the future. The quality of the downtown area will be diminished.

22. The bypass is needed to preserve downtown.

23. Alternative C(COUPLET-2) is cleanest. Need to make sure the turning paths are wide enough for the trucks -- may need to take more right-of-way to do this. Along Baker Avenue south -- recommend including a free right at the Seventh Street to Spokane southbound movement.

24. Should consider a separated bike path in the gateway areas.

25. Like either C(COUPLET-2) or C(COUPLET-3).

26. Like the A (COMBO) between Whitefish and Kalispell.

som0328m.4gm

Meeting Minutes
Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Meeting with Kalispell Chamber Transportation Committee
March 23, 1994

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of a meeting held on March 23, 1994 with the Kalispell Chamber Transportation Committee. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the DEIS.

Meeting attendees were:

Gina McAfee	Bryan Green
Craig Ferguson	Doug Rauthe
Dave Miller	Dale Paulson
John Agnew	Sandra Hayes
Michael Worrall	Joe Hart
Jim Sappington	

A summary of major items discussed was:

1. There are possible wetland mitigation sites that the City may be interested in pursuing with us:
   - Laurence Park Plan
   - By the City Shops

2. South of the Courthouse, the original MDT plan was to lose three trees -- the first plan was to remove those trees and that was not considered acceptable. Input from the citizens was very strongly against losing any trees.

3. Alternative B(MEDIAN) -- could consider buying enough right-of-way now for this. Should specifically discourage development along the bypass -- prefer Alternative B(MEDIAN) and the restrictive access control alternative along the bypass. Should buy access rights along with the highway right-of-way.

4. Alternative B(MEDIAN) will function better as a "true" bypass with very few access points allowed.

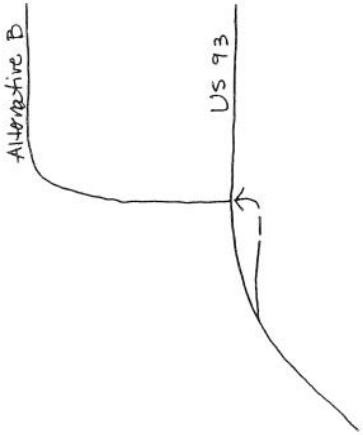
5. The depressed median is the safest and should be used wherever possible.

6. A compromise between A(MEDIAN) and A(TURN-LANE) makes sense. We need to make sure we address the combination alternative in the hearings.

7. Support the A(MEDIAN) or the A(COMBO) alternative because of aesthetic reasons and a need to look at the longer-term.

8. We need to make sure the final design for the bypass intersection with US 93 will allow for large trucks.

9. Another option is to create a cross access instead of a heavy left turn -- to prohibit eastbound to northbound left turns using Cemetery Road for this movement.



10. The funding situation is hard to predict and variable, but once these improvements are documented in the EIS, they will be in line for funding.

11. The primary difference in aesthetics is a narrower strip of pavement.

12. From a construction phasing standpoint, two lanes could be built off the original highway then traffic could be routed off to the new lanes and construction disruption would be less to businesses.

13. Would there be maintenance savings over time with the four-lane divided?

som0328m.6gm

Meeting Minutes
Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Meeting with Jim Lynch
March 23, 1994

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of a meeting held on March 23, 1994 between Jim Lynch and Kathy Bramer. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Jim Lynch's comments on the DEIS.

A summary of major discussion follows:

1. Will a five-lane be built sooner than a divided four lane? Is the funding issue still a factor in the PAC thinking?

2. Where does construction phasing fit in? Projects in corridor should be prioritized.
   - Bypasses should be first because they are the bottlenecks including the intersections; (1) Happy Valley, (2) Highway 40, (3) ins and outs of Kalispell and Whitefish, (4) truck traffic congestion south of Kalispell.
   - Help timeliness and minimize disruption.
   - Won't disrupt dedicated traffic flow.
   - What is "2-way" traffic during construction page 4-110?

3. What are other factors in prioritizing the sections? Funding availability and need.

4. Phases:
   1. Happy Valley intersection
   2. Ponderosa to Fronstad Road
   3. Buffalo Hill to Stillwater Bridge
   4. Stillwater Bridge
   5. Highway 40 intersection
   6. Somers to South of Kalispell

5. Is the highway department required to do what the EIS says regarding construction impacts/traffic?

6. Could MDT maintain a PAC after the EIS to assist in the implementation process?

7. Want a design that facilitates traffic flow during construction; make it a goal of any decision/outcome.

8. Bike paths and type should be included in PAC deliberation and FEIS.

Possibilities:

1. Commitment to development of construction staging plan to be developed with interested groups.

2. The staging plan could include performance standards -- only certain areas torn up at a time.

som0329m.5gm

Meeting Minutes
Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Meeting with Andy Feury
March 24, 1994

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of a meeting held on March 24, 1994 between Andy Feury and Gina McAfee. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Andy Feury's comments on the DEIS.

A summary of major discussion follows:

1. Need to show fully developed access plan.

2. Need to more fully draw conclusions from economic data -- why does land have value? Because people can pull in and out at will?

3. East side neighborhood impacts -- need to define the impact on Columbia? How would Seventh and Karrow be used? How would people get to school?

4. Trail on east side of river -- Seventh Street bridge should set abutment to allow for this.

5. Phasing - segmentation is a problem. Should make sure we do large usable pieces so don't create problems.

6. Definite support for bridge over Whitefish River.

som0329m.6gm

Meeting Minutes
US 93 Somers to Whitefish EIS
Meeting with the Flathead Business & Industry Association

The purpose of this is to record the questions and comments from representatives of the Flathead Business & Industry Association (FBIA) following a presentation at their meeting held on March 22, 1994. The meeting was held at the Outlaw Inn in Kalispell, Montana. The purpose of the presentation was to provide an update of the EIS and to obtain comments from the FBIA regarding the project.

Meeting attendees were:

Scott Richman, Carter & Burgess	Dallas Herron, Valcon Distributing
Mike Worrall, Carter & Burgess	Bob and Linda Harris, Tri City Quick Stop
Lary Johnson, Accountant	Chuck Lee, Lee Distributing
Ron Behrenot, Positive Systems	Ray Lybeck, Farmer
Jim Browne, Glacier Antique Mall	George Schulze, Village Greens Golf Course
Shawna Sorenson, Publisher	Linda Haroldsen, Outlaw Inn
Corey Edens, Valcon	Lyle Akelstad, Flathead V-8 Museum
Greg Ellingson, Glacier Insurance	Dale Johnson, Able Body Shop
Corbin Nickerson	Pete Neumann, Flathead Industries
Con Lundgren, Four Seasons Motel	Brad and Mary Baker, Media & Marketing
Frank Thomas, Thomas Printing	

Following a brief EIS update presentation by Scott Richman, FBIA members had the following questions:

1. How will the final decision for the design be made?

2. When will construction likely start?

3. Will the construction be phased over different sections of the highway?

4. What is the first section that will likely be improved?

5. What is the difference with this study that will present someone (individual or group) from killing the proposed project?

som0331m.1gm

Meeting Minutes
US 93 Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Bruce Boody
April 22, 1994

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of a meeting held with Bruce Boody. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the three-lane US 93 section along Second Avenue from the river to Karrow.

Meeting attendees were:

Bruce Boody	Dale Paulson
Gina McAfee	Joe Hart
Kathy Bramer	Mike Worrall

Discussion that took place:

1. Need to meet with Herb and Bonnie Kahnig.
   - South of curves of Church Road.
   - Concerned with moving farm equipment.

2. Concern with three-lane. C&B presented difficulties with U-turn required with raised median and one-lane in each direction (4-alternatives). See attached drawings.

3. Should consider street plantings to narrow character -- street trees (difficult without curb and gutter).

4. Add curb and gutter -- would require storm drainage. Needs to be checked for feasibility.

5. Need separated sidewalk -- critical.

6. Consider textured/colored pavement
   - Differential settling.
   - Difficult with asphalt.

7. Raised median with no U-turn opportunities (median breaks) would result in more traffic on 3rd Street and too many dangerous U-turns at Karrow (at base of the hill on US 93) and at Good Avenue.

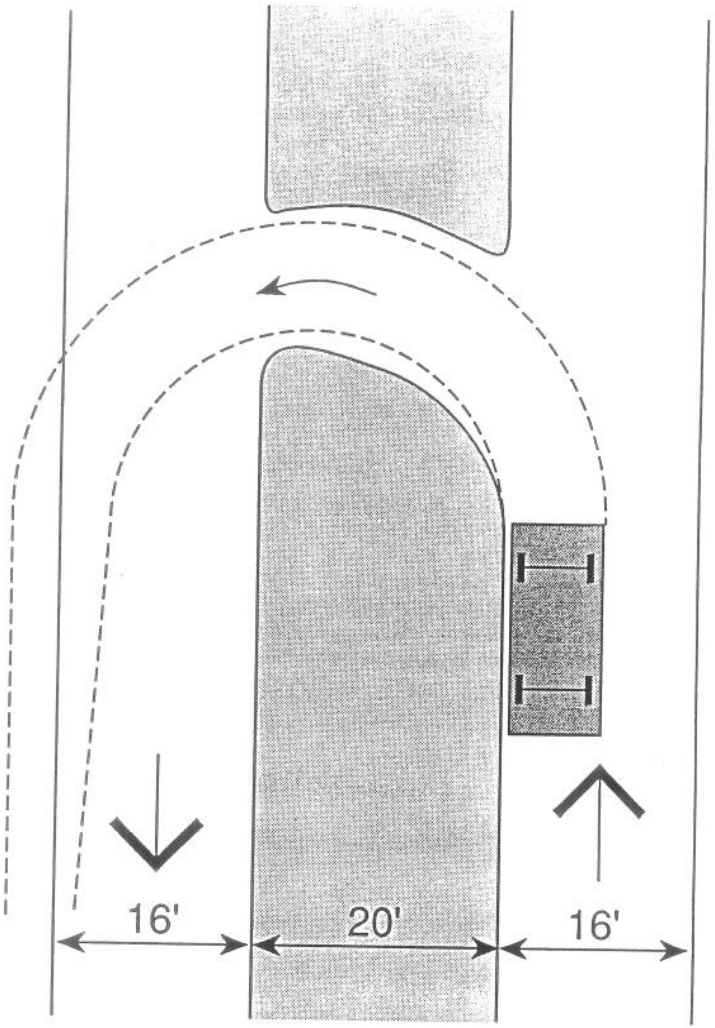
Whitefish Study

1. Proposed bike path extending west from 1st of River along road north of river to narrow crossing of river then west to underpass at Grouse Mountain.

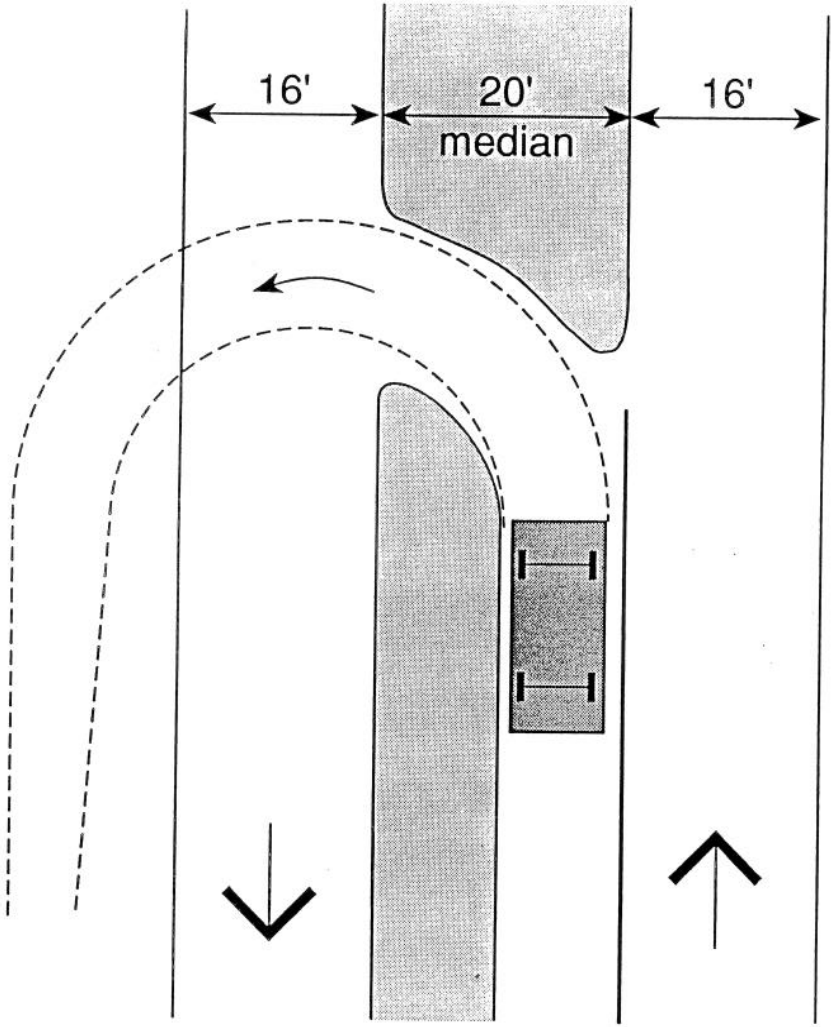
South of Whitefish

1. School district would like to meet with us to discuss US 93 improvements near Happy Valley.

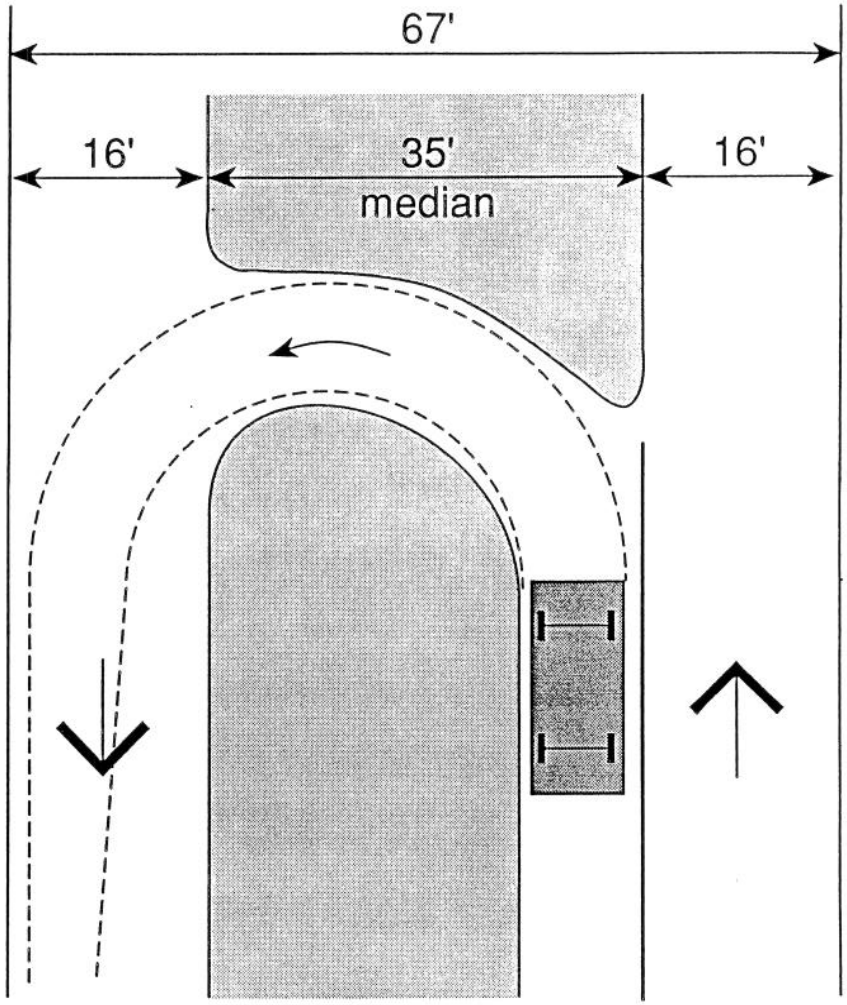
som0425m.8gm



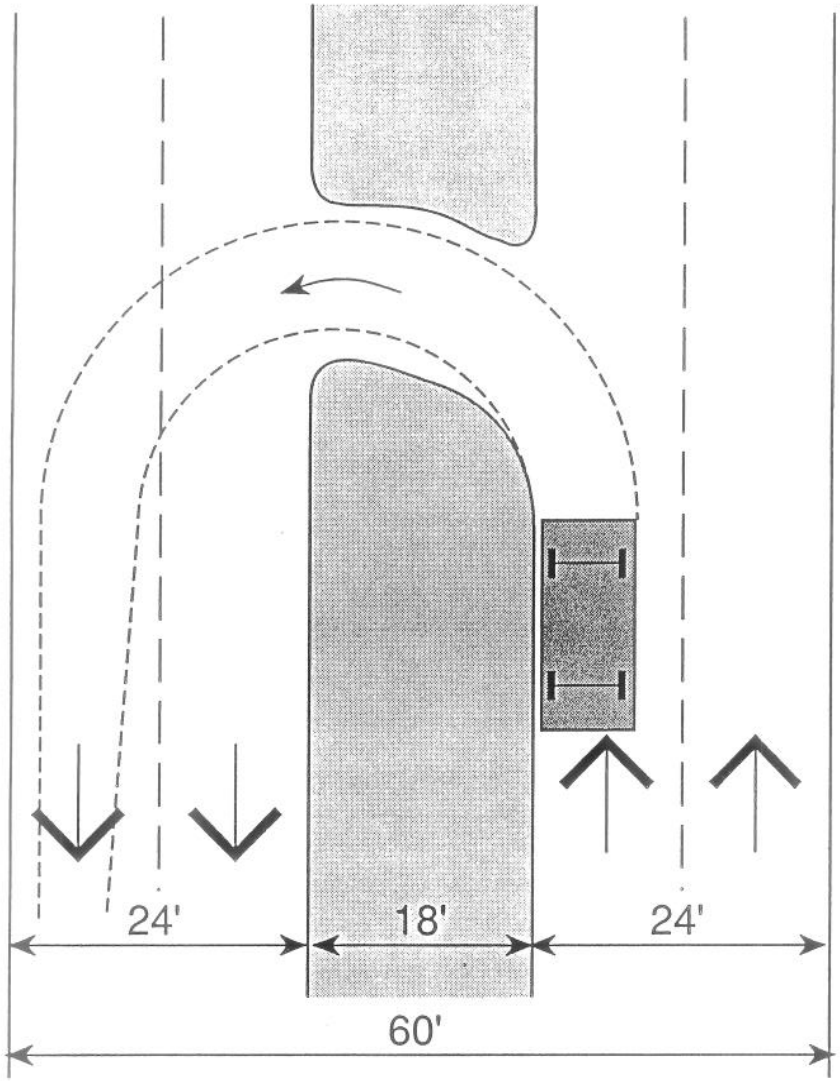
U-Turn Alternative 1
One Lane Each Direction
without Turn Lane



U-Turn Alternative 2
One Lane Each Direction with Turn Lane



U-Turn Alternative 3
One Lane Each Direction with Turn Lane
(median width required)



U-Turn Alternative 4
Two Lanes Each Direction
without Turn Lane

Public Comments
Somers to Whitefish EIS
Presentation to Kalispell Development Corporation
Kalispell: March 8, 1994

The purpose of this is to record questions asked by members of the Kalispell Development Corporation (KDC) following a KDC meeting presentation by Scott Richman regarding the US 93 (Somers to Whitefish) EIS. The meeting was held in Kalispell (at the Outlaw Inn) on March 8, 1994. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Draft EIS.

Scott provided copies of the latest project newsletter, as well as comment sheets for the meeting.

The following people were in attendance:

Jim Atkinson	Gordon Pierce	Bill Vassil	Ivan O'Neil	Bobbi Wolstein	Pamela Kennedy
Don (Lloyd?)	M. Burr	Rex Boller	Ken Yachechak	David Dittman	Lee Berger
Mike Jackson	Ken Williams	Larry Hanson	Don DuBean	Chuck Mercord	Ross Plambeck
Nick Haren	Dale Haan	Bill Heinecke	Craig Ferguson	Bruce Lutz	C. Lundgren
A.J. King	Dan Black	Wayne Saverude	Allan Aronson	Ed Gilliland	Randy (Davis?)

Scott announced the release of the Draft EIS and provided a summary of information that included the upcoming public meetings and FBIS presentation, a brief overview of the EIS and the Kalispell Bypass Alternative processes, and some of the findings contained in the EIS.

The KDC meeting attendees asked the following questions following the presentation:

- What reasonable chance is there of getting $100,000 for this project in our lifetimes?
- What is the difference between the cost estimates for the alternatives analyzed in the EIS and the estimates produced for the original design of this section of US 93 (for MDT in previous EA)?
- What are the likely order of priorities for construction between the US 93 improvements, the bypass construction, and other transportation improvements for Kalispell?
- Who makes the final decision about the proposed project?
- Who prioritizes Kalispell transportation improvement projects?
- Are both five-lane and four-lane divided designs being considered for US 93 between Somers and Kalispell, and for the bypass design?
- What happens on Reserve Drive east of US 93? Will it be improved?
- Will designs of intersections (i.e., US 93/Reserve, US 93/Kalispell bypass) be included in the Final EIS?

som0310m.1gm

Meeting Minutes
US 93 Somers to Whitefish
Citizens For A Better Flathead
March 16, 1994

The purpose of this is to record the minutes of a meeting held on March 16, 1994. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the DEIS with representatives of Citizens For A Better Flathead.

Meeting attendees were:

Gina McAfee, Carter & Burgess	Drew Paslowski
Bruce Boody	Dick Solberg
Judy Cornell	Rick Blair
Chris Gainer	

A summary of major discussion that occurred follows:

1. All members of the group are in favor of Alternatives A(MEDIAN) and B(MEDIAN).

2. The special design concepts are excellent -- they like all of them. The drawing of the one at the Whitefish River should be modified to show the new bridge over the river.

3. Medians are definitely preferred at the entrances to the cities.

4. Additional questions were asked about the issue of safety:

   a. Is it possible to quantify the number of unsignalized intersections -- how much of the overall highway is this?

   b. Need more discussion about the issue of water -- the beneficial effect of a separated median to gain control on ice and the issue of visibility during winter -- with snow, sand and a lot of darkness in the winter.

   c. About driver education -- how can this be done in the summer?

   d. What are the number of intersections with A(TURN-LANE) versus A(MEDIAN): with A(TURN-LANE) virtually every driveway is an intersection which allows for full movements.

5. Need to address air pollution problems with turning traffic in the fifth lane.

6. Need more data about turning traffic. What is the percentage of traffic that will need to turn at a driveway versus where there is a break in access versus through traffic?

7. The group prefers the restrictive access control policy.

8. Need to add text that addresses indirect effects of strip development on agricultural property and open space.

9. In the social section, need a stronger statement about the advantage of the A(MEDIAN) alternative to residents in the Happy Valley area.

10. The frontage road locations are well designed.

11. An underpass for pedestrians at the Happy Valley area is needed.

12. We need to check the vicinity of MP 120 -- is this area (including US 93) all in a floodplain? Could consider increasing the area of split alignment to encompass this.

13. We need to better address the social cost of the loss of open space -- loss of the "sense of place." The A(TURN-LANE) alternative really only serves a short-term economic need. Future congestion will ultimately degrade service with the A(TURN-LANE) alternative.

14. The economic section needs to address the potential loss of tourism dollars if there is an increase in strip development. The A(MEDIAN) alternative will serve the Valley better economically.

15. The bridge over the Whitefish River is essential. Both the Whitefish City Council and Planning Board have approved a trail along the river from City Beach to the schools. The river trail is part of a system between Kalispell and Whitefish.

16. Need to better describe that snow removal would be easier with the A(MEDIAN) alternative.

17. We need to get the most up-to-date CPC Plan and include it in the FEIS.

som0317m.2gm

Agency Coordination

The letters in this section are organized as follows:

- Federal agency letters first.
- State agency letters second.
- Regional or local agency letters third.
- Sign-off letters and documents.

THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, Montana 59855
(406) 675-2700
FAX (406) 675-2806

Joseph E. Dupuis - Executive Secretary
Vern L. Clairmont - Executive Treasurer
Bernice Hewankorn - Sergeant-at-Arms

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:
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Rhonda R. Swaney - Vice Chairwoman
Carole McCrea - Secretary
Lloyd Irvine - Treasurer
Louis Adams
Elmer "Sonny" Morigeau Jr.
Henry "Hank" Baylor
D. Fred Matt
Donald "Donny" Dupuis
Mary Lefthand

February 10, 1994

Ms. Jeanette Lostracco, AICP
Assistant Project Manager
Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, CO 80202

SUBJECT : US 93 Somers to Whitefish EIS

Dear Ms. Lostracco,

This is in response to your letter, dated January 26, 1993, to the Kootenai Culture Committee requesting us to submit to you any concerns we may identify regarding Alternative B on the subject project.

Francis Auld, Kootenai Cultural Resources, and myself have reviewed the attached photograph and description of Alternative B. Mr. Auld has indicated that he would be interested in having one of your staff assist him, and possibly others, in pointing out the alignments. You may reach him at our number (406-849-5541) to set up a date but with the understanding that Mr. Auld will not be giving your staff person any information as to any concerns that we may have in the area.

The Kootenai people has many concerns within the Flathead Valley area. At one time this area was a gathering place for the Ktunaxa Nation which consisted of the many bands of the Kootenai people. The probability of sites, which are important to us, existing within the proposed Alternatives becomes high because our people once lived in the area. One of the goals of our department is to protect the resources that are of importance to our people, but not necessarily give out that information. We would be more than happy to receive the Draft EIS so that we will have the opportunity to provide our comments regarding this project.

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FEB 14 1994
Carter Burgess
Denver Colorado

On behalf of the Kootenai Culture Committee, I want to express our gratitude for giving us this opportunity and please contact Mr. Auld to set up a time. Maybe before a member of your staff goes into the field with one of us, we could meet for a briefing of the project and Alternative B thus giving other members of the staff time to ask any questions that they may have. This can be discussed at the time you make contact with Mr. Auld.

Enclosed are business cards of individuals who work primarily in the Cultural Resource program of our department.

Sincerely,

Naida Lefthand, Assistant Director

concur: Patricia Hewankorn, Director PH

cc:

Karen Atkinson, Tribal Attorney, CS & K Tribes
Michael T. Pablo, Tribal Chairman, CS & K Tribes
Patrick H. Lefthand, Right Protection , BIA

Box 158, Whitefish, Montana 59937 (406) 862-2640

52

City of Whitefish

April 14, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th St. Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Carter Burgess:

The City of Whitefish Parks and Recreation Department is highly in favor of a divided highway with a median including all entrances to the Cities in the valley in the Highway 93 project.

Our Department also would like to see the State build a new bridge over the river on Highway 93 which would provide access for bikes and pedestrians underneath the bridge.

The Highway 93 project is very much needed, and we would like to see it completed with an emphasis on Bike and Pedestrian traffic. The City of Whitefish Parks and Recreation Department wishes you the best of luck.

Sincerely,

Jim Ponek

Jim Ponek,
Parks and Recreation Director

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APR 18 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

RAILS-TO-TRAILS OF NW MONTANA

P.O. BOX 1103 • KALISPELL, MONTANA 59903 • (406) ~~752-8879~~ 758-5241

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

April 25, 1994

Dear Gina,

Rails-to-Trails of Northwest Montana has voted to support Option B for the proposed 6f Mitigation of the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail contingent upon construction of a trailhead facility as part of the mitigation as discussed below. We feel that a grade separated trail is much safer than an at-grade crossing.

We feel that a trail re-location along the southerly side of Ashley Creek would be more advantageous than the northerly side. The advantage being that the northerly side would result in the abandonment of a brand new pedestrian bridge constructed under the ISTEA program while necessitating construction of an even newer bridge. Whereas the southerly side would result in no abandonment or new bridge construction.

Pedestrian underpasses carry some security concerns. Sufficient attention to detail should be given to providing an openness to the design. Lighting should be incorporated in the construction. Also, siting of the pedestrian underpass should be located in such a way that law enforcement officers have a line of sight for searchlights from an adjacent roadbed.

One facet of use of the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail occurs by equestrian riders. Design of the pedestrian underpass should insure vertical clearance of a mounted horse and rider.

Another facet of use of this trail occurs by cross-country skiers. Construction of an underpass seriuosly interferes with this activity due to no snow present in the underpass. Construction of a parking and trailhead facility immediately adjacent to the underpass would mitigate the interference of this activity. A trailhead would allow skiers to begin their activity here, walking through the underpass and then mounting their skis. This trailhead would be located in the area shown on your exhibit as 'PARK OR WETLAND MITIGATION'.

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MAY 09 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

We feel it will be an important element of the design to provide safe, convenient connectivity between the Ashley Creek Trail and new pedestrian facilities constructed with the Highway 93 bypass. It is also highly desirable to limit or close, through-access to the road which transects the mitigation area mentioned above.

Thank you for soliciting our input and for the attention to detail that you have shown on this project.

Sincerely,

John Hale
President

c. Flathead County Park Board
Scott Wurster, Attorney

DEPARTMENT OF STATE LANDS
FIELD OPERATIONS DIVISION

MARC RACICOT, GOVERNOR

STATE OF MONTANA

94 APR 28 A10:17

NORTHWESTERN LAND OFFICE
P.O. BOX 7098
KALISPELL, MT 59904-0098

Telephone: (406) 752-7994
FAX: (406) 752-7993

April 27, 1994

Dale Paulson
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park, Room 448, Drawer 10056
Helena, MT 59626-0056

Dear Mr. Paulson:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIS for the US 93 - Somers to Whitefish West Project.

In case you are not familiar with our operation, I am providing the following general information. We employ about 20 people on a year-round basis and add another 20 to 30 during the summer months. We normally see 15 or more visitors per day. During the summer months, our fire crews must respond to forest fires both north and south of our office location. I have the following comments on the highway design on behalf of the Department of State Lands:

1. As the agency responsible for Montana's trust lands, we prefer alternatives that can be executed within the existing highway right of way (relates to T29N, R22W, Section 36).

2. Safety is an important issue to us. From that standpoint, we would prefer to see a divided highway to the extent it is compatible with other considerations.

3. This office needs direct access to north- and southbound traffic lanes. If a divided highway option is selected, we will need a turning bay at our location. Lights need to be placed to provide realistic openings in traffic flow so that timely access/egress is possible from our location. This is especially important for fire vehicles responding to forest fires.

4. Several of our people travel to and from work by bicycle. We strongly support providing bicycle lanes at least between Kalispell and the West Reserve intersection.

5. We support the concept of a pedestrian crossway (tunnel) at FVCC.

If I can provide any further information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

William E. O'Brien
Area Manager
Northwestern Land Office
Department of State Lands

cc: cal file

KALISPELL UNIT
P. O. Box 7098
Kalispell, Montana 59904-0098
Telephone (406) 756-6575
Fax (406) 752-7993

STILLWATER STATE FOREST
P. O. Box 164
Olney, Montana 59927
Telephone (406) 881-2371
Fax (406) 881-2372

LIBBY UNIT
14096 U.S. Highway 37
Libby, Montana 59923
Telephone (406) 293-2711
Fax (406) 293-6748

PLAINS UNIT
P. O. Box 219
Plains, Montana 59859
Telephone (406) 826-3851
Fax (406) 826-5785

SWAN STATE FOREST
Swan Lake, Montana 59911
Telephone (406) 754-2301
Fax (406) 754-2864

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION VIII, MONTANA OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, 301 S. PARK, DRAWER 10096
HELENA, MONTANA 59626-0096

Ref: 8MO

April 28, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter-Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, Colorado 80202

Re: Comments on Preliminary Wetland Mitigation Plan for U.S. Highway 93-Somers to Whitefish, Montana

Dear Ms. McAfee:

We have reviewed the preliminary wetland mitigation plan for the U.S. Highway 93-Somers to Whitefish DEIS, and your April 8, 1994 correspondence with Mr. Charles Van Hook of the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), and April 14, 1994 correspondence with Dale Paulson of the Federal Highway Administration. Our comments follow:

1. Without more detailed local on-site knowledge and information on the potential wetland mitigation sites shown in Table 3-22 we cannot meaningfully comment on the potential mitigation sites. It appears from the correspondence with Charles Van Hook and Dale Paulson that Kalispell's Lawrence Park wetland mitigation site is favored by MDT, but it is not clear why the Lawrence Park site is favored over the other sites. Also, it seems premature to us to proceed with wetland mitigation at Lawrence Park, when a preferred alternative has not been selected for the Highway 93 Somers-Whitefish project, and the magnitude of wetlands impact is unknown.

2. The goal of mitigation stated in the preliminary wetland mitigation plan is: 1) acre-for-acre replacement; and 2) replacement of the functions and values of the impacted wetlands. We feel these mitigation priorities should be reversed. It would be more appropriate to say that the goal of mitigation is to replace the functions and values of the unavoidably lost wetlands, in areas adjacent to or as close as possible to the area of wetlands loss, with an adequate margin of safety to reflect the expected degree of success of mitigation.

Acre-for-acre replacement is supposed to be used as a surrogate for replacement of functions and values when we lack definitive information on functions and values. It may be that

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Carter Burgess
Denver, Colorado

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we are relying too much on acre-for-acre replacement without adequate consideration of replacement of the functions and values of the wetlands that are being lost, and of a margin of safety to reflect the success of mitigation. This is an issue that is pertinent on a larger scale than the Somers-Whitefish highway project, and will hopefully be addressed in the Statewide Highway-Wetland Mitigation Program Evaluation being carried out by Wetland Training Institute, Inc. This topic should probably be discussed at our next Montana Interagency Highway/Wetlands Committee meeting.

The EPA is not against wetland mitigation at the Lawrence Park site, but we feel that there should be interagency agreement that mitigation at the Lawrence Park site is the most appropriate and practicable means of replacing the functions and values of the variety of impacted wetlands on Highway 93 between Somers and Whitefish.

In regard to this issue the total wetland losses for each highway segment between Somers and Whitefish, and each alternative are shown in Table 4-30 (page 4-66) of the DEIS. We found it difficult, however, to identify and quantify the impacts to the individual wetlands that comprise the accumulated total wetland losses (i.e., 28 individual wetlands in the highway corridor, and it is not clear which, and to what extent, each wetland will be impacted). We would like to see a clearer display and quantification of individual wetlands impacts, at least for the preferred alternative (which is to be identified in the FEIS), in order to better quantify the functions and values of impacted wetlands, and to better assess the adequacy of the wetlands mitigation plan at replacing lost functions and values.

Functions and values of affected wetlands should be assessed using an acceptable method. One method of replacing functions and values is to presume that if the plant communities and arrangements in the mitigation wetlands closely approximate those that were present in the lost wetlands, the functions and values of the lost wetlands will be replaced. Accordingly, minimal criteria suggested for measuring success of wetlands mitigation efforts are as follows:

a. Percent vegetative cover within the mitigation wetlands should be equal to or greater than the percent vegetative cover of the lost wetlands within a five year period.

b. Vegetative species composition and diversity should closely approximate the composition and diversity of lost wetlands within a five year period. This close approximation shall be evaluated by comparison of plant numbers and vegetative species lists at the lost wetlands and the mitigation wetlands.

3. We agree with the preliminary plan that adequate performance criteria, monitoring methods, reports and schedules will need to be developed and defined in the mitigation plan. There should also be a clear commitment to take corrective actions if the pre-established criteria for success are not being met. These corrective actions will more than likely involve revegetation and/or additional efforts at successfully establishing wetland hydrology, and/or potentially carrying out wetland mitigation work at other sites.

If you have any questions please feel free to call me in Helena at (406) 449-5486.

Sincerely,

Stephen Potts, P.E.
Environmental Engineer

cc: Dale Paulson, FHWA, Helena
Gordon Stockstad/Charles Van Hook, MDT, Helena
Kevin Shelley, USFWS, Kalispell
Jeff Herbert, MDFWP, Helena
Doug McDonald, COE, Helena
Rob Hazelwood, USFWS, Helena
Bob DeSpain, EPA, Denver, 8WM-EA
Gene Reetz/Dave Ruiter, EPA, Denver, 8WM-WQ
John Peters, EPA, Denver, 8WM-WQ
Jeff Ryan, MDHES-WQB, Helena

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION VIII, MONTANA OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, 301 S. PARK, DRAWER 10096
HELENA, MONTANA 59626-0096

Ref: 8MO

May 2, 1994

Mr. Dale Paulson
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park, Room 448, Drawer 10056
Helena, Montana 59626

Re: Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Statement, U.S. Highway 93-Somers to Whitefish, Montana

Dear Mr. Paulson:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VIII, Montana Office (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the U.S. Highway 93-Somers to Whitefish project.

We want to commend the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and your consultant for the DEIS's organization and analysis. We believe this document facilitates decision making based on understanding and evaluation of environmental consequences, and recognition of the need for actions to be protective of the environment as intended by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The FHWA proposes to widen and reconstruct 46.18 kilometers (28.7 miles) of U.S. Highway 93 between Somers to west of Whitefish in Flathead County, Montana. The DEIS states that the project is needed to reduce congestion, provide for planned growth and development, improve safety, and provide for improved intermodal facility connections and enhanced scenic values. A range of various highway alignment and design alternatives were initially evaluated including: various alignments for a new parallel corridor to the existing US 93; bypasses of Kalispell and Whitefish; design alternatives to improve capacity of US 93; improving mass transit; implementing measures to reduce traffic on US 93; and the no build alternative.

The build alternatives which were advanced for further evaluation include one overall alignment alternative to improve US Highway 93 along the existing corridor (Alternative A); an alternative to provide a bypass for Kalispell (Alternative B);

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alternative routes through Whitefish using one-way couplets of Spokane Avenue for northbound traffic and Baker Avenue for southbound traffic (Alternative C); and design alternatives including a 4-lane highway with center median with maximum highway corridor width and controlled highway access (Median Alternative); a 5-lane highway with center turn lane with minimum highway corridor width and maximum highway accessibility (Turn Lane Alternative); and combinations of the Median and Turn Lane Alternatives for particular segments (Combo Alternative).

We offer the following comments for your consideration as you complete the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS):

AIR QUALITY

1) We concur with the findings in the DEIS regarding compliance with the emissions-related tests for compliance with the EPA/DOT Transportation Conformity rule published in the Federal Register on November 24, 1993. It should be noted that the project's compliance with the emissions budgets in the Kalispell PM-10 SIP is largely due to the use of more recent, lower emission factors for PM-10 than those that the SIP was based on, and not due to any particular features of the project. Use of the new emission factors is permitted under EPA's rule.

2) In Whitefish, the emissions increase from the project over the no-build scenario in the future years must be mitigated in order for the project to conform. The DEIS suggests several potential mitigation strategies. The final EIS must identify a specific mitigation strategy, quantify its emission benefits, include written commitments to carry out the mitigation measures from the agencies which will be responsible for implementation, and include a schedule for implementation of the mitigation measures. These commitments must be obtained prior to making a conformity determination for the project.

   In correspondence dated March 21, 1994 from Carter- Burgess to Dale Paulson, FHWA, street sweeping is included as a mitigation strategy for Whitefish, and its benefit is quantified. Subsequent correspondence dated April 7, 1994 between Carter-Burgess and Dale Paulson, FHWA, deletes this measure and includes a park and ride, and bicycle/pedestrian projects in the design of the project to eliminate the need for mitigation measures. We believe the proposed sweeping strategy would be much more effective than the projects proposed in the April 7, 1994 letter. If the April 7, 1994 mitigation approach is eventually chosen, the EIS must include quantification of the effectiveness of these projects in reducing emissions below the no-build level, as well as a schedule and commitments for implementation.

3) In the revised air quality analysis in the above referenced April 7, 1994 letter the Kalispell analysis has been deleted. This should be restored for the final EIS. The public should have access to the emissions information upon which the record of decision is ultimately based, and the conformity rule requires the conformity determination to be accompanied by its supporting documentation.

WATER RESOURCES/WETLANDS

1) We are pleased to see it stated on page 3-44 that delineation of wetlands using the 1987 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual will be carried out for the preferred alternative.

2) We support the proposed design concept of a double span bridge at the crossing of Ashley Creek to minimize disturbance to riparian habitat. Similarly we support use of bridge designs which reduce encroachment upon rivers and provide for sediment and bedload transport for the crossings of the Whitefish and Stillwater Rivers.

3) Section 3.10 identifies and discusses wetlands directly along US 93, the bypass corridor, and the alternate route. Wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas within reasonable proximity to the alignments and bypass routes, however, should also be identified and described. This is necessary to better evaluate indirect effects regarding induced development or changes in patterns of land use, population density and growth rate, that are associated with the alternative highway alignments and design concepts.

   For example, it is stated on page 4-27 that additional development southwest of Kalispell will "displace additional agricultural land uses and adversely affect wetlands and wildlife habitat". What types and quantities of wetlands and wildlife habitat are likely to be adversely affected? We believe an improved analysis of the indirect effects or induced land use and population growth changes potentially associated with the Kalispell bypass (Alternative B) should be carried out, particularly if Alternative B is likely to be selected as the preferred alternative.

   Similarly an improved analysis of wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas within reasonable proximity of the Alternative A alignment may assist in identifying and selecting highway access locations that discourage induced development in wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas.

4) The total direct wetland losses for each highway segment and alternative are shown in Table 4-30 (page 4-66). We found it difficult, however, to identify and quantify the specific impacts to the individual wetlands that comprise the accumulated total wetland losses shown in Table 4-30 (i.e., 28 individual wetlands are located in the highway corridor, and it is not clear which, and to what extent, each wetland will be impacted). We would like to see a clearer display and quantification of individual wetlands impacts in the FEIS, at least for the preferred alternative that will be identified in the FEIS. We feel this is important in order to quantify the functions and values of impacted wetlands, and to assess the adequacy of the wetlands mitigation plan in replacing these lost functions and values. The EPA's comments regarding proposed wetlands mitigation will be sent under separate cover.

5) It is technically incorrect to say in item c on page B-8 of the 404(b)(1) Evaluation in the Appendix of the DEIS that "no discharge shall be permitted if it causes significant environmental impacts". Rather it would be more appropriate to state that "no discharge is permitted if it causes or contributes to significant degradation of the waters of the United States".

6) The most significant wetland fills are associated with the Kalispell bypass (Alternative B), yet these wetland fills are not included in Table B1-2 on page B-12 summarizing Section 404 acreage fill for the alternatives. The draft 404(b)(1) evaluation should address Alternative B wetland filling, since the majority of potential wetland filling (4.32 acres) would occur with this alternative.

7) It is stated on page B-14 of the draft 404(b)(1) evaluation that "avoidance of stream discharges in waterways supporting viable aquatic habitat during spawning and migration periods will be considered". Section 404 program requirements are that stream discharges; shall not disrupt the migration or other movement of those species of aquatic life inhabiting the water body; and shall not occur in spawning areas if practical alternatives exist. This involves giving more than "consideration" to avoiding discharges to streams during spawning and migration periods.

8) It is stated on page B-25 that "between 1.44 and 5.63 acres of wetlands would be disturbed by construction depending on the alternative selected (see Table B1-3)". We did not find Table B1-3 in the draft 404(b)(1) evaluation, and it appears to us that the maximum total wetlands impact that could occur would be 6.23 acres of wetlands rather than 5.63 acres.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

1) We believe that utilization of the Alternative A alignment of the existing US 93 corridor through Kalispell, would be environmentally preferable to the Alternative B Kalispell bypass. Our rationale is that:

* Both alternative alignments appear to comply with the air quality conformity requirements;

* Alternative A through Kalispell involves no stream crossings, and removes no wetlands or less than one acre of wetlands (depending upon highway design width), whereas Alternative B is stated to remove 4.32 acres of wetlands, and involves two new stream crossings (Ashley and Spring Creeks);

* Alternative B, by creating a new alignment and improved road access through presently open agricultural lands south and southwest of Kalispell, has the largest direct impact on Prime and Unique farmland (page 4-31), and may indirectly effect (through induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate) or result in displacement of additional agricultural land uses and additional adverse effects on wetlands and wildlife habitat (pages 4-27, 4-36).

2) We also believe that it would be environmentally preferable to utilize the Situational Access Control Alternative (page 4-30) to discourage development in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and wildlife habitat. We believe that, in general, the Median Alternative is environmentally preferable to the Turn-Lane Alternative, since the control of the location and number of highway access points, available with the Median Alternative, can be used to encourage more environmentally compatible and coordinated development, and can assist Flathead County in implementing its Comprehensive Plan to encourage new development within existing communities and discourage development in rural agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas. The Combo Alternative, to the extent that highway access locations can be used to discourage development in agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and wildlife habitat, would also protect the environment.

Based on the procedures EPA uses to evaluate the adequacy of the information in the EIS and the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives, the DEIS for the U.S. Highway 93-Somers to Whitefish project will be listed in the Federal Register in category EC-2 (environmental concerns, insufficient information). This category indicates that EPA has identified areas of potential impacts, specifically concerning air quality and the preservation of wetlands and environmentally sensitive

5-8

areas, which should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Also, the EIS requires resource information in order to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided.

The EPA appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the DEIS. If we may provide further explanation of our concerns please contact Mr. Steve Potts of my staff in Helena at (406) 449-5486 ext. 232, or if you have questions regarding the air quality issues please contact Mr. Jeff Houk in our Denver Regional Office at (303) 293-1766. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John F. Wardell, Director
Montana Office

cc: Gene Reetz/Dave Ruiter/John Peters, EPA, 8WM-WQ, Denver
Bob DeSpain/Phyllis Williams, EPA, 8WM-EA, Denver
Jeff Houk, EPA, 8ART-AP, Denver
Bob McInerney/Doug McDonald, COE, Helena
Galen Rasmussen, COE, Planning Division, Omaha
Dale Paulson/Dave Miller, FHWA, Helena
Gordon Stockstad, MDOT, Helena
Kevin Shelley, USFWS, Kalispell
Rob Hazelwood, USFWS, Helena
Jim Vashro, MDFWP, Kalispell
Jeff Herbert, MDFWP, Helena
Jeff Chaffee/Gretchen Bennitt, Montana AQB, Helena

Box 158, Whitefish, Montana 59937 (406) 862-2640

City of Whitefish

May 6, 1994

Cart/Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, CO 80202

After consideration of the six alternatives presented in the Somers to Whitefish EIS for the Baker Avenue through Whitefish portion of the project, the Whitefish City Council has chosen Couplet C-3 as it's preferred alternative.

When the issue was discussed at our April 4 meeting there was some concern expressed by Baker Avenue residents regarding an increase in large truck traffic on Baker. As a result we would like you to explore mitigation options that could reduce that impact. One possible suggestion was, in addition to the two north bound lanes on Spokane, a single south bound lane that could continue to carry truck traffic.

We would also support the replacement of Spokane Avenue bridge. The culverts that exist under the current structure will not allow the City to construct the planned recreation path that will parallel the river on the north and east side.

As a government body we are very sensitive to project costs. While Couplet C-3 is one of the more costly alternatives it is our belief that the long term benefits justify the expenditure. The Seventh Street bridge, which represents a good share of the additional cost, will provide for the safe movement of car, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic from the growing Southwest portion of Whitefish to and from the schools.

We thank you for our opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Mayor Jim Welsh

RECEIVED
MAY 09 1994

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

ER-94/0173

MAY 11 1994

Mr. Henry D. Honeywell
Division Administrator
Montana Division Office
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park Street
Helena, Montana 59626-0056

Dear Mr. Honeywell:

This responds to your request for the Department of the Interior's comments on the draft environmental statement\Section 4(f) evaluation for U.S. Highway 93 (Somers to Whitefish West), Flathead County, Montana.

SECTION 4(f) STATEMENT COMMENTS

While no preferred alternative is indicated, the Department of the Interior would have no objection to Section 4(f) approval of either the No-Build Alternative or Alternative A (in Kalispell and West of Whitefish), both of which would not impact any Section 4(f) properties.

Alternative A plus B(Median) or A plus B(Turn-lane) in the Kalispell area would use land from three Section 4(f) properties, [two historic and one recreation property, the Ashley Creek Recreation Trail, which is also protected by Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (L&WCF)].

We note the detail regarding impacts to the Section 4(f) properties and possible mitigation measures provided for these alternatives, and the on-going consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, but we cannot support B(Median) or B(Turn-lane) at this time because no information is provided to substantiate that the selection of Alternative A is not feasible or prudent.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

The Department of the Interior has no objection to Section 4(f) approval of either the No-Build Alternative or Alternative A in the Kalispell area. If another alternative is selected, we would be willing to provide an expeditious review of any revised Section 4(f) documentation that may be circulated for review and comment.

As this Department has a continuing interest in this project, the National Park Service is willing to cooperate and coordinate with you on a technical assistance basis in future project evaluation and assessment. Please contact the Regional Director, Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service, 1709 Jackson Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, telephone (402) 221-3431.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

for Willie R. Taylor

Jonathan P. Deason
Director
Office of Environmental Policy
and Compliance

cc:
Mr. David S. Johnson, P.E.
Preconstruction Engineer
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, Montana 59620

FLATHEAD COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION
225 Cemetery Road - Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 758-5800
CONRAD ATHLETIC COMPLEX 758-5805

May 12, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Gina:

The Flathead County Parks and Recreation Board is in support of the recommendations made by Rails-To-Trails of Northwest Montana as stated in their letter to you dated April 25, 1994 (copy enclosed).

It is the Park Board's intent to support Rails-To-Trails in the development of the trail along Ashley Creek as evident in our committment to provide nearly $12,000 in matching funds for the completion of the eastern end of the Great Northern Trail, which has qualified for ISTEA funding.

Sincerely,

Kim Cheff

Kim Cheff, President
Flathead County Park Board

lw

Enclosure

cc: Rails-To-Trails

RECEIVED
MAY 19 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION VIII, MONTANA OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, 301 S. PARK, DRAWER 10096
HELENA, MONTANA 59626-0096

RECEIVED
MAY 17 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Ref: 8MO

May 16, 1994

Mr. Gordon Stockstad, Acting Chief
Environmental & Hazardous Waste Bureau
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

Re: Wetland Mitigation for U.S. Highway 93-Somers to Whitefish, Montana

Dear Mr. ~~Stockstad:~~ Gordon

This is to follow-up our meeting of May 11, 1994 regarding the above referenced topic. I have discussed the proposal to create mitigation wetlands at Kalispell's Lawrence Park with Mr. Dick Blodnick, EPA, and Mr. Kevin Shelley, USFWS. Dick and Kevin visited the Lawrence Park site last Thursday with Mr. Doug McDonald, COE. I did not talk to Doug McDonald since he is out of town this week.

Dick and Kevin have advised me that they have concerns about mitigating the loss of wetland functions and values that would occur at the twenty impacted wetland sites along the US 93 Somers-Whitefish Highway corridor (collectively comprising a total of 6.05 to 6.23 acres), with construction of one 6 acre pond at Lawrence Park. They believe there are good functioning wetlands already at Lawrence Park, and they question whether addition of one new 6 acre pond within the city park would adequately replace the various wetland functions and values being lost at the twenty wetland sites along the 28 mile highway corridor. They are also concerned that construction activities at Lawrence Park may disturb the already established wetland habitat at Lawrence Park. They do not know the exact location of the MDT's new proposed wetland pond at Lawrence Park.

I recommend that your staff discuss details of MDT's wetland creation plans at Lawrence Park with Kevin, Dick, and Doug. Kevin Shelley has also suggested that there may be other more appropriate wetland mitigation sites in the Flathead area. Until these concerns are resolved, I believe the MDT should withhold a final decision on wetland mitigation for the US 93 Somers-Whitefish Highway Project.

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If you have any questions please feel free to call me in Helena at (406) 449-5486 ext. 232.

Sincerely,

Stephen Potts, P.E.
Environmental Engineer

cc: Dale Paulson, FHWA, Helena
Kevin Shelley, USFWS, Kalispell
Jeff Herbert, MDFWP, Helena
Bob McInerney/Doug McDonald/Larry Robson, COE, Helena
Rob Hazelwood, USFWS, Helena
Bill Engle/Dick Blodnick, EPA, Helena, 8MO
Bob DeSpain, EPA, Denver, 8WM-EA
Gene Reetz/Dave Ruiter, EPA, Denver, 8WM-WQ
John Peters, EPA, Denver, 8WM-WQ
Jeff Ryan, MDHES-WQB, Helena
Gina McAfee, Carter-Burgess, Inc., Denver

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
AIR QUALITY BUREAU

COGSWELL BUILDING
1400 BROADWAY

STATE OF MONTANA

(406) 444-3454
FAX (406) 444-1374

PO BOX 200901
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-0901

May 17, 1994

Gina McAffee, AICP
Carter-Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Gina:

The Air Quality Bureau has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for US Highway 93 - Somers to Whitefish and has the following comments.

General Comments

Page S-4: There should be an additional bullet under major unresolved issues stating that mitigation is needed for conformity purposes, specifically, in Whitefish. Also, transportation conformity should be included under Other Federal Actions Required.

Page 1-4: Under secondary benefits it is stated that carbon monoxide will decrease. Since no analysis was completed to determine if the carbon monoxide emissions will decrease, this general statement should not be made, especially since the department is not assured that carbon monoxide will necessarily decrease with the completion of this project.

Page 1-16: The second bullet under Social Needs does not necessarily hold true for PM-10, the pollutant responsible for the redesignation of the area into nonattainment.

Page 2-3: In Section 2.1.2 the reference to the "Montana Air Quality Board" should be the "Montana Air Quality Bureau." The same holds for the reference to the Montana Water Quality Board.

Figure 2-2: An addition should be made to the constraints under Kalispell - it should be stated that it is in nonattainment for PM-10.

Figure 2-3: Similarly, a constraint should be added that Whitefish is also in nonattainment for PM-10.

Page 2-46: In Section 2.4.3, the Air Quality Bureau would like to recommend that limited accesses are paved.

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Page 4-54: Any TSM or alternative modes of travel promoted should be enforceable, possibly through a memorandum. Additionally, any mitigation necessary should also be quantified in order to demonstrate conformity.

4-55: It is stated that the mitigation measures in section 4.8.6 are only to be considered. Will the Air Quality Bureau have any assurances that these mitigation measures will be enforced? Once again, the Air Quality Bureau recommends that the measures chosen be committed to in some sort of memorandum of agreement or other such binding contract; also, emissions reduced from any mitigation be quantified.

Comments on Regional Analysis

Whitefish Analysis:

Since conformity was not demonstrated, mitigation measures must be quantified and enforceable. As stated above, the mitigation measures must be committed to before a conformity determination can be realized for the project.

Kalispell Analysis:

Although the Air Quality Bureau has informally commented on the regional analysis for Kalispell, the bureau would like to reserve its final comment until the bureau has the opportunity to examine the data used to develop the analyses. The bureau recommends that emission factors and further definitions of road classifications be included in the final document.

The bureau would like to rescind its earlier requirements for an annual analysis. EPA Region VIII personnel have recently stated that if an area did not exceed the annual standard, then a conformity determination for the annual standard is not required.

The Air Quality Bureau appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the DEIS. For any further explanation of our comments, please contact me at 406-444-3454.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Bennitt

Gretchen Bennitt
Supervisor, SIP Development

GB:tjl

cc: Dale Paulson, FHWA Montana Office
Jeff Houk, EPA Region VIII

The City of Kalispell

Incorporated 1892

Telephone (406) 752-6600
FAX (406) 752-6639
Post Office Box 1997
Zip 59903-1997

Douglas Rauthe
Mayor

Bruce Williams
City Manager

City Council
Members:

Gary W. Nyslul
Ward I

Cliff Collins
Ward I

Barbara Moses
Ward II

Dale Haarr
Ward II

Jim Atkinson
Ward III

Lauren Granmo
Ward III

Pamela B. Kennedy
Ward IV

M. Duane Larson
Ward IV

May 23, 1994

Gina McAfee, Environmental Manager
Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 Sixteenth Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202-5131

Re: Highway 93 DEIS and Kalispell Bypass

Dear Gina:

I have been asked to respond to Joe's letter of April 26, requesting input on the bypass alignment in the vicinity of US Highway 2. This letter is a compilation of comments received from the directors of the Public Works and Parks departments.

First with the easy decision. Our preference for the realignment of the Rails to Trails trail is the underpass concept. Pedestrian safety is the obvious concern.

A general preference was expressed for the original bypass alignment at US 2, west of the beer distributors. We would prefer not to see the reconfiguration of Appleway and Corporate Way. However, the new alignment is acceptable if your analysis shows that construction through the old mill pond is not feasible.

With respect to the Greenbriar alternatives, we generally prefer the less developed western route. The eastern alternative would be squeezed in between the moderate density housing of Greenbriar and the high density housing of the Two Mile Vista and Westwind Village Apartments. Also, all of the right of way for the eastern alternative between US 2 and Two Mile Drive must be purchased from one landowner. Although that may seem convenient, this particular property owner could be a challenge. We expect him to require special considerations and be very tenacious about a high purchase price.

A separate issue to be addressed is the lack of sheltered left turn bays on Highway 93 at Oregon, California, Nevada and Wyoming Streets. Left turns by north and south bound cars at each of these intersections cause significant disruptions to traffic flow. We suggest that your final report should include a recommended solution for this problem.

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MAY 25 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Please give us a call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

John C. Wilson
Assistant City Engineer

cc: Joe Hart, Carter & Burgess
Dale Paulson, Federal Highway Administration/Helena
Steve Herbally, Flathead Regional Development Office

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, OMAHA DISTRICT
215 NORTH 17TH STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-4978

May 27, 1994

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
1520 East 6th Avenue
P.O. Box 202301
Helena, Montana 59620

Dale Paulson
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park, Room 448, Drawer 10056
Helena, Montana 59626

Dear Mr. Paulson:

This is in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the U.S. Highway 93-Somers to Whitefish project. The following are a compilation of comments from the Omaha District office and Helena Regulatory Office.

a. Section 4.11.1.2 Somers to Kalispell on page 4-65, 1st paragraph top of page, last line, it states that "It may be possible with further taper design considerations to avoid this wetland altogether."

COMMENT: This action, if it is practical to do so, should be incorporated into design and plans as it would further reduce adverse impacts to wetlands.

b. Kalispell Area Including Bypass B on page 4-65, last line of the paragraph, states that "Wetlands 14-17 are all riparian except for 14. There are no differences in impacts between the build alternatives for any of these areas."

COMMENT: The statement is made that impacts are not different, however, a description of the impacts is not given. The extent of the impacts should be clarified.

c. Section 4.22 Permits Needed on page 4-120, 2nd line, states that "Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for filling in wetlands or streams" is needed.

COMMENT: Department of the Army authorization is required as indicated, however, it should also be made clear that authorization is also needed for any discharge of dredged or fill material associated with bridge and pier construction or bank stabilization work.

d. Appendix A, Exhibit 2 and 3 of 29.

COMMENT: Are the wetlands shown existing (that would be affected) or are those proposed for mitigation ? Please clarify as to which type of wetlands these are which appear on the maps.

e. Potential mitigation sites with development plans should be identified in the DEIS also. Approved plans should be identified in the FEIS and approved before Department of the Army authorization is provided.

f. Mitigation funding source(s) should be identified.

g. An on-site field trip to review the potential mitigation sites should be completed prior to the release of the FEIS.

If you have any questions on the contents of this letter please contact our District office in Omaha or call our office at (406) 444-6670.

Sincerely,
doug mcdonald for
Robert E. McInerney
State Supervisor
Helena Regulatory Office

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
WATER QUALITY BUREAU

STATE OF MONTANA

ROOM A-201
1400 BROADWAY
~~Room A-206~~

PHONE: (406) 444-4549
FAX: (406) 444-1374
Phone 2: (406) 444-2406

PO BOX 200901
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-0901

May 31, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter-Burgess, Inc.
216 16Th. St. Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, Co. 80202

Subject: Comments on preliminary wetland mitigation plan for U.S. Highway 93-Somers to Whitefish, Mt.

Dear Ms. McAfee:

Our comments on the subject project literally "mirror" Steve Potts',EPA comments of 4/28/94 to Gina McAfee,Carter-Burgess. In addition though, we are involved with a small potential wetland mitigation project in Kalispell which may be of interest to you.

The project, which has been submitted to The Montana Department of Transportation and conceptually approved for Intermodal Surface Transportation (ISTEA) funding, would involve the construction of several wetland cells at the Kalispell stormwater outfall that currently allows city street water to enter Ashley Creek without any treatment. Since these constructed wetlands would provide the function of treating highway runoff, a function at least partially impaired by the subject highway project, a mitigation project of this nature might be appropriate partial off-site compensatory mitigation for the subject project. Approximately one acre of constructed wetlands appear possible based on very preliminary design information.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. Don't hesitate to contact me at 444-4626 if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,
Jeff Ryan
Jeff Ryan
State Wetlands Coordinator

cc: Steve Potts,EPA, Helena
Jack Thomas,DHES, Helena
David Martin,DHES, Helena
Dale Paulson,FHWA, Helena
Jeff Herbert,MDFWP, Helena
Rob Hazelwood,USFWS, Helena

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JUN 03 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

"AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER"

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

JUN 09 1994

1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

June 6, 1994

Gina McAfee, AICP
Project Manager
Carter•Burgess
216 -16th Street Mall
Denver, Colorado 80202

Re: Section 6(f) Land and Water Conservation Fund
US 93 - Somers - Whitefish

Dear Ms. McAfee:

Upon receipt of your letter dated May 23, 1994, I contacted Bob Norwood, Flathead County Parks Director. Bob represents the county as sponsor of the LWCF project known as Ashley Creek. Since the County is the project sponsor all 6(f) mitigation must also meet with their approval. The county fully accepts as mitigation the offer under the present proposal which includes the underpass and the 1:1 replacement of land which is immediately adjacent to the land being converted.

To comply with the Section 6(f) requirements the portion of the Ashley Creek trail that will be taken out of recreation will need to be appraised to determine today's market value. In order to fulfill the 6(f) requirements, the 1:1 replacement lands you propose as replacement must be also appraised to determine if they are of at least equal or greater value.

If the proposed replacement property is of equal value and the environmental studies done indicate the proposed highway project will not negatively impact the remainder of the trail, and the new property has a positive impact to the existing trail, the LWCF federal requirements will have been met and should be acceptable to National Park System.

Please consider this my concurrence with the present proposal provided the above federal requirements are met and feel free to call be at 406-444-3750 in Helena, if you have questions or want to discuss the above.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen McDonald

MARY ELLEN McDONALD
Program Officer
Resource & Recreation Bureau
Parks Division

cc: Bob Norwood, Flathead County Parks & Recreation
225 Cemetery Road, Kalispell, MT 59901

MMC

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, OMAHA DISTRICT
215 NORTH 17TH STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-4978

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF

July 22, 1994

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
1520 East 6th Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

Gina McAfee, AICP
Project Manager
Carter Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Ms. McAfee:

This is in reference to your letter of July 1, 1994, which enclosed a summary of the basic wetland mitigation plan for the proposed US 93 Somers to Whitefish project, Montana.

Our office concurs with the strategy outlined in the summary. It is understood that documentation will be provided which substantiates the position that unavoidable wetland losses need to occur. It is also understood that all mitigation measures are subject to final approval/rejection pending review of final plans and evaluation of wetland functions and values. In reference to paragraph 4.11.3.4 "Wetland Finding", our office considers it premature to concur with the statement at this time.

If you have any questions on this letter, please contact me at (406) 444-6670.

Sincerely,

doug mcdonald

Doug McDonald
Project Manager
Helena Regulatory Office

RECEIVED
JUL 25 1994

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, OMAHA DISTRICT
215 NORTH 17TH STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-4978

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF

August 4, 1994

Planning Division

Ms. Gina McAfee, AICP
Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear ~~Ms. McAfee~~ Gina:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for US Highway 93, Somers to Whitefish West. We offer the following comments.

In reference to Mr. Doug McDonald's letter dated 21 May 1994, he made a comment about the lack of detail on the impacts of wetlands 14 through 17. The EIS states on page 4-65 that "...there are no differences in impacts between the build alternatives for any of these areas," but fails to clarify what the impacts on these wetlands might be.

The source of funding for wetland mitigation should be documented in the EIS. Is mitigation part of the project cost or are additional funds needed to complete the mitigation requirement of the project?

The wetland maps referred to in Mr. McDonald's letter (Exhibit 2 and 3 of 29) have been removed from the report. Are these maps being updated in response to the comment 'which type of wetlands are these represented on the maps? - existing or proposed for mitigation?'

All other previous comments have been adequately addressed.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Jeanette Conley of our staff at (402) 221-3133. Thank you again for the opportunity to review this proposal.

Sincerely,

Dick

Richard D. Gorton
Chief, Environmental
Analysis Branch
Planning Division

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION VIII
999 18th STREET - SUITE 500
DENVER, COLORADO 80202-2466

Ref: 8ART-AP

MEMORANDUM July 21, 1994

SUBJECT: U.S. Highway 93 Draft Final Environmental Impact Statement

FROM: Jeff Houk
Air Programs Branch

TO: Steve Potts
Montana Operations Office

I have reviewed the draft Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Highway 93 project, along with the Whitefish Regional Analysis provided in a letter from Dave Miller of Montana FHWA on July 13, 1994. I have no comments on the Whitefish Regional Analysis. I have the following comments on the draft FEIS:

1) **Emissions Analysis:** No comments, except that the statement on page 4-54 that emissions from the preferred alternative are less than one percent higher than the no-build alternative is incorrect.

2) **Mitigation:** In Whitefish, the emissions increase from the preferred alternative over the no-build scenario in the future years must be mitigated in order for the project to conform. The DEIS suggests several potential mitigation strategies, which are different from the mitigation strategies in the Whitefish Regional Analysis. The mitigation strategies in the regional analysis are adequately quantified, but if other measures are chosen before the FEIS is issued, the benefits of those measures must be documented. The FEIS must also include written commitments to carry out the specific mitigation measures from the agencies which will be responsible for implementation, and include a schedule for implementation of the mitigation measures. These commitments must be obtained prior to making a conformity determination for the project.

If you have any questions on these comments, please contact me at (303) 293-1766.

cc: Gretchen Bennitt, Montana AQB
Gina McAfee, Carter & Burgess
Dave Miller, Montana FHWA
Robin Smith, FHWA

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION VIII, MONTANA OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, 301 S. PARK, DRAWER 10096
HELENA, MONTANA 59626-0096

Ref: 8MO

July 22, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter-Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, Colorado 80202

Re: Comments on Draft Wetland Mitigation Plan for U.S. Highway 93-Somers to Whitefish, Montana

Dear Ms. McAfee:

We have reviewed the July 1, 1994 draft Wetland Mitigation Plan for the U.S. Highway 93-Somers to Whitefish, Montana project.

The preferred U.S. Highway 93 construction alternative will include impacts to wetlands at twenty locations between Somers and Whitefish, involving a total loss of 6 acres of wetlands. The Wetlands Mitigation Plan has been developed to replace the functions and values of the unavoidably lost wetlands, and thus, meet our Nation's goal of no net loss of wetlands.

The Plan includes three elements as follows:

1. Replacing or enhancing wetlands at "two or three on-site locations adjacent to the area of impact". Locations for these will be determined during final design.

2. Enhancement of 8.2 acres of wetlands in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) on the north end of Flathead Lake. This work will include removal of logs and debris which have accumulated over the years in this WPA (significantly reducing open water habitat in the wetlands), and construction of a berm and headgate to prevent entry of new logs and debris, and to allow control of water level in the wetlands areas.

3. Creation of an approximately 6 acre deep water pond with shallow vegetated edges and islands at Lawrence Park in Kalispell, in cooperation with the Kalispell Parks Department. A boardwalk with interpretive signs will be constructed to provide public access and educational value

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to the area. The boardwalk would be located well away from the eastern edge of the wetland to provide a buffer area, and signs and enforcement will also be used to reduce human impacts to the area. Implementation and enforcement of a pet control ordinance will be used to control disturbance and predation of pets on wetland wildlife.

We also note that there is an effort underway between the Montana Water Quality Bureau and Department of Transportation to construct wetlands at the Kalispell stormwater outfall adjacent to Ashley Creek. These wetlands would provide some treatment (i.e., filtering, clarification, nutrient retention, etc.) to Kalispell's urban stormwater runoff prior to discharge to Ashley Creek. While this wetlands creation effort was not included in the above referenced Wetland Mitigation Plan we think it would be appropriate to include these proposed Ashley Creek stormwater treatment wetlands in the mitigation package since they would help compensate for the function of treating highway runoff.

We believe this collection of wetland mitigation efforts will adequately compensate for the unavoidably lost wetlands impacted by the U.S. 93 Somers-Whitefish highway construction project.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me in Helena at (406) 449-5486 ext. 232, or Mr. Dick Blodnick at ext. 231. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Stephen Potts

Stephen Potts,
Environmental Engineer

cc: John Peters/Dave Ruiter, EPA, Denver, 8WM-WQ
Jeff Herbert, MDFWP, Helena
Jeff Ryan, WQB, Helena
Dale Paulson, FHWA, Helena
Bob McInerney/Doug McDonald, COE, Helena
Kevin Shelley, USFWS, Kalispell
Rob Hazelwood, USFWS, Helena
Gordon Stockstad, MDT, Helena

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION VIII, MONTANA OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, 301 S. PARK, DRAWER 10096
HELENA, MONTANA 59626-0096

RECEIVED
AUG 05 1994

Ref: 8MO

August 3, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter-Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, Colorado 80202

Re: Comments on Draft Final Environmental Impact Statement for U.S. Highway 93-Somers to Whitefish, Montana

Dear Ms. McAfee:

We have reviewed the Draft Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for U.S. Highway 93-Somers to Whitefish, Montana.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) propose to reconstruct and widen 46.18 kilometers (28.7 miles) of U.S. Highway 93 to relieve traffic congestion between Somers and Whitefish in Flathead County, Montana. The preferred alternative involves:

1) a 4 lane divided highway with center median and controlled highway access for various segments totaling 12.5 miles;

2) a five lane highway with center turn lane and uncontrolled highway access for various segments totaling 8.1 miles;

3) a new approximately 8.5 mile U.S. 93 Highway bypass west of Kalispell;

4) a one way couplet for U.S. 93 through Whitefish, with Spokane Avenue providing for northbound traffic and Baker Avenue southbound traffic; and

5) a separated bikepath for feasible portions of the highway corridor.

Our comments follow:

1. The preferred highway construction alternative will involve impacts to wetlands at twenty locations involving a total loss of 6 acres of wetlands area. In order to meet our Nation's No Net Loss of Wetlands goal, a wetlands mitigation plan has been developed to replace the functions and values

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of the unavoidably lost wetlands. EPA commented upon the proposed wetlands mitigation plan in a separate letter on July 22, 1994 (see copy enclosed).

2. In regard to the air quality emissions analysis on page 4-54 the statement that emissions from the preferred alternative are less than one percent higher than the no-build alternative is incorrect.

3. In Whitefish, the air quality emissions increase from the preferred alternative over the no-build scenario in the future years must be mitigated in order for the project to meet Clean Air Act conformity requirements. The draft FEIS suggests several potential mitigation strategies, which are different from the mitigation strategies in the Whitefish Regional Analysis. The mitigation strategies in the regional analysis are adequately quantified, but if other measures are chosen before the FEIS is issued, the benefits of those measures must be documented. The FEIS must also include written commitments to carry out the specific mitigation measures from the agencies which will be responsible for implementation, and include a schedule for implementation of the mitigation measures. These commitments must be obtained prior to making a conformity determination for the project.

4) We suggest noting in Section 4.20 of the FEIS that construction involving discharges to streams supporting aquatic life shall not occur in spawning areas if practical alternatives exist, and that construction will be timed to prevent disruptions to migration of aquatic species.

5) In our comments on the DEIS we indicated that utilization of the Alternative A alignment of the existing U.S. 93 corridor through Kalispell would be environmentally preferable to the Alternative B bypass west of Kalispell. The FHWA's and MDT's preferred alternative in the draft FEIS, however, includes the new Alternative B bypass highway west of Kalispell. While we recognize that there are many factors involved in selecting the preferred alternative, we do not agree with the decision to override the environmental considerations and select the Kalispell bypass as the preferred alternative.

EPA remains concerned about the potential for the Kalispell bypass alternative to induce or hasten changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and to result in adverse effects to air and water, wetlands and wildlife habitat, and other natural systems, in the rural areas west and southwest of Kalispell. We disagree with the statement in the last sentence of the 2nd paragraph on page 4-24 that implies that the secondary or indirect land use changes and growth hastening effects of the Kalispell bypass will be minimal (i.e., it is arguable whether such impacts will occur regardless of the implementation of the Kalispell bypass).

It is stated on page 4-24 that implementation of the bypass alternative will accelerate displacement of agricultural land uses southwest of Kalispell. We are also concerned that implementation of the bypass alternative will accelerate displacement and loss of wetlands and wildlife habitat and other environmentally sensitive areas, west and southwest of Kalispell. There is incomplete analysis and disclosure of the potential for the bypass alternative to induce or hasten displacement and loss of wetlands and wildlife habitat, and other environmentally sensitive areas west and southwest of Kalispell.

If you have any questions on these comments, please contact me at (406) 449-5486 ext. 232; or regarding the air quality issues you may want to contact Mr. Jeff Houk in Denver at (303) 293-1766.

Sincerely,

Stephen Potts,
Environmental Engineer

Enclosure

cc: Bob DeSpain, EPA, Denver, 8WM-EA
Gene Reetz/Dave Ruiter/John Peters, EPA, Denver, 8WM-WQ
Jeff Houk, EPA, Denver, 8ART-AP
Jeff Chaffee/Gretchen Bennitt, AQB, Helena
Dale Paulson/Dave Miller, FHWA, Helena
Gordon Stockstad, MDT, Helena
Kevin Shelley, USFWS, Kalispell
Galen Rasmussen, COE, Omaha
Bob McInerney/Doug McDonald, COE, Helena

GM

Carter : Burgess

Consultants in Engineering, Architecture, Planning and the Environment

August 12, 1994

Mr. Stephen Potts
Environmental Planner
US EPA
Region VIII, Montana Office
Federal Building
301 South Park, Drawer 10096
Helena, Montana 59626-0096

Dear Steve:

Attached is a slightly revised response to Question 1. Please review this and call me at 303/820-5232. Assuming this revision adequately responds to your comments, we would like a letter to that effect.

1. EPA disagrees with the presumption that indirect impacts to resources will occur regardless of the implementation of the Kalispell bypass.

   Response: The following additional information will be added to the Final EIS:

   The land use effects of beltways (or bypasses) have been extensively studied, including a landmark study by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development which analyzed land use effects of beltways in numerous United States cities. The findings of these analyses are that beltways do not attract development to a region where a market for growth does not already exist. Beltways do, however, influence the location and timing of development within a region. This basic supposition is consistent with the opinions of the land use planners and other local development experts who served on the US 93 Land Use Subcommittee. These land use planners and others agreed that development is currently occurring in the west Kalispell area, is programmed to continue in the west Kalispell area, and will be accelerated upon completion of the bypass of the west Kalispell area.

2. EPA feels there is insufficient disclosure of the potential for the bypass to hasten displacement of wetlands and wildlife habitat.

   Response: Additional information will be added to Sections 4.11.1.2, 4.12.1.3.2, 4.10.1 and 4.3.1.3 which indicates that the bypass has the potential to accelerate loss of wetlands, wildlife habitat and farmland as well as potentially contributing to degradation of water quality.

3. EPA feels there is insufficient disclosure of the negative environmental impacts of the bypass.

   Response: Additional information will be added to Section 2.6.2.2 which acknowledges the negative direct impacts and the potential to accelerate loss of wetlands, wildlife habitat and farmland as well as potentially contributing to degradation of water quality which will occur as a result of implementation of the bypass.

Please provide a written response to let us know by the end of August at the latest if this response adequately addresses your concerns.

Very truly yours,

Gina McAfee

Gina McAfee, AICP
Project Manager

cc: Dale Paulson

som0810m.1gm

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION VIII, MONTANA OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, 301 S. PARK, DRAWER 10096
HELENA, MONTANA 59626-0096

Ref: 8MO

August 18, 1994

Mr. Dale Paulson
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Building
Drawer 10056
Helena, Montana 59626

Dear Dale:

In the absence of Steve Potts who is not available, I have reviewed the August 12, 1994 letter from Gina McAfee of Carter Burgess containing revisions to a previous letter from her to Steve Potts. It is my belief that the revisions as outlined in the letter are acceptable to EPA.

If you have any questions, please call me at 449-5486 ext 241.

Sincerely,

William E. Engle

William E. Engle
Chief
Water Branch

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United States Department of the Interior
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

ER 94/173

AUG 3 1994

Mr. Henry D. Honeywell
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
301 South Park Street
Helena, Montana 59626-0056

Dear Mr. Honeywell:

This responds to your Consultants' (Carter & Burgess, Inc.) request for the Department of the Interior's comments on the Revised Section 4(f) Documentation for US-93 (Somers to Whitefish West), Flathead County, Montana.

We concur that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the proposed use of Section 4(f) properties discussed in the revised document. We also concur with the measures to minimize harm.

The Department of the Interior has no objection to Section 4(f) approval of this project.

Sincerely,

Jonathan P. Deason, Director
Office of Environmental Policy
and Compliance

cc: Mr. David S. Johnson, P.E.
Preconstruction Engineer
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue, P.O. Box 201001
Helena, Montana 59620

Ms. Gina McAfee, AICP
Project Manager
Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, Colorado 80202

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Carter & Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Advisory Council On Historic Preservation

The Old Post Office Building
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, #809
Washington, DC 20004

Reply to: 730 Simms Street, #401
Golden, Colorado 80401

July 11, 1994

Mr. Dale W. Paulson
Environmental Coordinator
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division
301 South Park Street, Room 448
Helena, MT 59626

REF: Proposed Reconstruction of U.S. Highway 93, Somers-Whitefish Segment, Flathead County, MT

Dear Mr. Paulson:

Thank you for notifying the Council of the above referenced project. Given the number of historic properties to be affected, the Council concurs with your finding of adverse effect and elects to participate in the consultation process.

In order to comment on the undertaking, however, we will need to review documentation which addresses the types of properties to be affected and the reason why these properties are significant. Please provide the Council with site maps, photographs, information on possible alternative routes and any comments of the Montana State Historic Preservation Office. If the information is readily available, it would also be helpful to have copies of any past coordination and the 1991 Memorandum of Agreement. Although we have this information, it has most likely been archived and will require some time to retrieve.

We look forward to receiving this additional information in the near future. If you should have any questions or comments regarding this matter, please contact Andrew Lewis at (303) 231-5320.

Sincerely,

Claudia Nissley
Director, Western Office
of Review

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES
100 N PARK, SUITE 320
HELENA MT 59601

IN REPLY REFER TO
M.17 FHWA (I)

June 17, 1994

Mr. Dale Paulson
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park, Rm. 448, Drawer 10056
Helena, Montana 59626

Dear Mr. Paulson:

This is in response to your request for comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the U.S. Highway 93 - Somers to Whitefish, Montana highway project. At this time we have no additional comments beyond which we have previously made to you through the coordination and planning of this project.

Sincerely,

Kemper M. McMaster
Field Supervisor
Montana Field Office

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES
100 N PARK, SUITE 320
HELENA MT 59601

IN REPLY REFER TO

M.17 FHWA
HWY 93 Somers-Whitefish

August 8, 1994

Ms. Gina McAfee, AICP
Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Ms. McAfee:

This is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) response to your July 1, 1994 request, received July 5, 1991, for comments on Volumes I and II of the Preliminary Final Impact Statement for the U.S. Highway 93 - Somers to Whitefish, Montana highway project. In particular, we have reviewed the wetland mitigation efforts described in your July 1 letter (section 4.11.3) which was a result of our June 17 conference call.

Based on our review of the above documents, the Service believes that your proposed wetland mitigation plan will adequately compensate for unavoidable wetland losses associated with any of the build alternatives for the Somers to Whitefish Highway 93 improvement project.

Sincerely,

Kemper M. McMaster
Field Supervisor
Montana Field Office

cc: Kalispell Suboffice

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AUG 11 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
AIR QUALITY BUREAU

COGSWELL BUILDING
1400 BROADWAY

STATE OF MONTANA

(406) 444-3454
FAX (406) 444-1374

PO BOX 200901
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-0901

August 8, 1994

Gina McAffee
Carter-Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Gina:

The Department of Health and Environmental Sciences' Air Quality Division (AQD) has reviewed the US Highway 93 Draft Final Environment Statement (EIS), Volumes I & II and has the following comments.

1) As of July 1, 1994 the Air Quality Bureau is now known as the Air Quality Division.

2) Figures 2-2 and 2-3: Air quality was not mentioned in the constraints.

3) Page 2-40: AQD concurs with the Kalispell and Whitefish regional emissions analysis for the currently chosen alternative. However, should the alternatives change, AQD would need to reserve its comments until a review of a revised regional emissions analysis is complete.

4) Page 3-38: A third control strategy for Kalispell was adopted by the Board of Health and Environmental Sciences on May 20, 1994. The mandatory use of liquid deicer will be implemented if the PM-10 standard is exceeded after December 31, 1994.

5) Page 3-38: An additional control strategy being considered for Whitefish is either the mandatory or voluntary control of residential wood burning.

6) Page 4-54: The statement that the emissions from the preferred alternative are less than one percent higher than the no-build alternative is incorrect.

In general, the amount of work that you and your staff have accomplished and the detail in which you have addressed all of the Air Quality Division's comments should be commended. It was a pleasure to work with you and your staff.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Bennitt, Supervisor
SIP Development

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Denver, Colorado

"AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER"

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

June 21, 1994

Gina McAfee, AICP
Project Manager
Carter•Burgess
216 -16th St. Mall
Denver, CO 80202

Re: Section 6(f) LWCF Project #30-00375
U.S. 93 - Somers - Whitefish

Dear Ms. McAfee:

Consider this my concurrence with your suggested language to be included in the Final EIS on the above project as stated in your letter of June 15, 1994.

Today, I discussed the contents of your letter with Bob Norwood, Flathead County Parks Director. Bob indicated that he has been working closely with you throughout this environmental process and is also in agreement.

Let me know if you need any further information and please keep me informed as the project progresses.

Sincerely,

MARY ELLEN McDONALD
Program Officer
Resource & Recreation Bureau
Parks Division

cc: Bob Norwood

MMC

RECEIVED
JUN 27 1994

State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
1410 8th Avenue • PO Box 201202 • Helena, MT 59620-1202 • (406) 444-7715

June 22, 1994

Gordon J. Stockstad, Acting Chief
Environmental and Hazardous Waste
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Re: Sommers - Whitefish
AES - STPP 0002(68)

Dear Gordon:

Thanks for your patience and the excellent cooperation of your consultants and staff in helping us finish review of the many properties recorded for this undertaking. Kathy McKay's supplemental look at questionable properties and areas was invaluable, as was Jon Axline's availability to answer questions and assistance in difficult evaluation calls. Where my recommendations differed with those presented in the report, Jon was consulted. I believe the eligibility judgements presented here are consensus ones as a result. However, if there are problems, please do let me know.

In order to make this as simple as possible, I have copied tables from the GCM report with their recommendations, and added either **Concur** to indicate agreement, or changed the call as a result of evaluation and/or further consultation. Notes have been added as necessary.

I will try to address the other bits and pieces of this project as cogently as possible below:

1. MDT letter of June 7, 1994:

Kalispell Main Street Commercial District: We, too, agree with the recommendations McKay made for the district, including boundaries and evaluations. **We are happy to concur.**

Kalispell Courthouse Historic District: As discussed with Jon on 6/7/94, McKay has revised this district based on additional work completed recently. The building list in your letter of 6/7/94 is, in fact, based on the later body of work, **and we concur both that the District is eligible and with McKay's revised evaluation recommendations.** Both of these districts have been approved for National Register listing by the Montana Historic Preservation

June 22, 1994
Page 2

Review Board.

2. MDT letter of 6/10/94 transmitting McKay addendum of 6/6/94:

Thank you for the record of Bowser's Spring Creek. It is an interesting irrigation feature.

We understand Smithsonian numbers will follow for the three historic residential clusters Kathy recorded, as well as for the creek. In the interim, **we concur that the Scott House, the Frach House and the Thorvilson House will not qualify for listing in the Register.**

3. Finally, a quick note on other districts proposed or considered in the main GCM report. First, we agree that no districts other than those proposed appear to be present in the project area. That includes districts based on landscapes. We do, however, believe it would be best to take another look at the boundaries of the Whitefish Historic Residential District. Additional consultation has altered evaluations within the proposed district in ways which may help clarify where boundaries might best be drawn. We will be happy to sit down with Jon once the dust has settled for another look at the issue.

Attached are the rest of the evaluation sheets. Please call if you have questions. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Katherine M. Huppe

Katherine M. Huppe
Archaeologist/Historian

cc: Dale Paulsen, FHWA
Jeanette Lostracco, Carter-Burgess

Sunset Boulevard, Kalispell. The current alignment of US 93 in north Kalispell follows Sunset Boulevard northwest from North Main Street to the intersection with North Meridian. South of Sunset Blvd the highway has been previously studied by Kathy McKay (1993) and to the north there are no historic sites along the alignment to the end of the segment at the US 93 / Reserve Street intersection. Most of the historic residential sites recorded within the boundaries of the corridor were built prior to the construction of the road. Sunset Boulevard was constructed through the north side neighborhood relatively recently (around 1936). As a result, there is little historic commercial or residential development fronting Sunset Boulevard. Thirteen sites were recorded, only one was recommended as eligible for the NRHP. The sites are listed in Table 4 and are described in Section A.

Table 4. Historic sites recorded along Sunset Boulevard in Kalispell.

ADDRESS	NAME/DESCRIPTION	STATUS/	SITE NO.	SHPO 6/94
569 N. Main	Melby House	N	24FH661	Concur
575 N. Main	Goldizen House	N	24FH652	Concur
27 W. California	Marcy House	N	24FH653	Concur
567 1st Ave WN	Kaiser House	N	24FH654	Concur
596 1st Ave. WN	Billsborough House	N	24FH655	Concur
663 1st Ave. WN	Wills House	N	24FH656	Concur
687 1st Ave. WN	Vick House	N	24FH657	Concur
115 West Wyoming	French House	H	24FH658	Concur
49 W. Wyoming	Eslick House	N	24FH659	Concur
666 Sunset Boulevard	Haberdash Shop	~~N~~	24FH660	ELIGIBLE
685 2nd Ave. WN	Miller House	~~N~~	24FH661	ELIGIBLE
318 W. Utah	Tichbourne House	N	24FH662	Concur
300 Colorado	Robertson House	N	24FH663	Concur

H = Recommended to be eligible for the NRHP
N = Recommended not to be eligible for the NRHP

Alternate B, Kalispell. Alternate B follows the Kalispell - Somers Railroad Spurline (24FH350) from where it leaves the existing right of way approximately 3 miles south of Kalispell to a point where it crosses Valley View Dr. west of Kalispell. To the north the route crosses Montana Highway 2, 2 Mile Drive, 3 Mile Drive, and curves to link up with Stillwater Road. The route follows Stillwater Road from a point to the north of 3 Mile Drive to the intersection of Stillwater and Reserve Street. From the corner of Stillwater and Reserve, the route turns east to rejoin US 93 at US93 and Reserve. Of the 15 sites recorded along the route four have been determined by the Montana SHPO eligible for the NRHP, another is recommended to be eligible, and the remaining nine are not considered eligible. One site, the Railroad Spurline, was previously recorded and determined to be eligible for the NRHP. Table 5 lists the historic sites recorded along Kalispell Alternate B and the sites are described in Section B.

Table 5. Historic sites recorded along Alternate B in Kalispell.

ADDRESS	NAME/DESCRIPTION	STATUS	SITE NO.	SHPO 6/94
Somers to Kalispell	Railroad Spurline (recorded prev.)	H	24FH350	Concur
105 Valley View	Simones House	~~H~~ N (McKay 6/94)	24FH491	Concur N
335 Valley View Drive	McDonnell Place	H	24FH496	Prev. Det.
405 Valley View Drive	Bastam Place	N	24FH664	Concur
1433 Highway 2	Wager/Martin Place	~~I~~ N (McKay 6/94)	24FH665	Concur N
505 2 Mile Drive	Sprenger Place	N	24FH666	Concur
510 2 Mile Drive	Smith House	N	24FH667	Concur
524 2 Mile Drive	Thorvildson Cabin	N	24FH492	Prev. Det.
577 2 Mile Drive	Angus House	N	24FH668	Concur
611 2 Mile Drive	Stufft Farm (Byrne - McKay 6/94)	H	24FH493	Concur[1]
720 2 Mile Drive	Frach Place	N	24FH669	Concur
212 3 Mile Drive	McGlenn Place	N	24FH670	Concur
236 3 Mile Drive	Nonemacher Place	N	24FH671	Concur
327 3 Mile Drive	Don Schultz Place	H	24FH494	Concur
245 Stillwater Road	Hill View Stock Ranch	N	24FH495	Concur
605 Stillwater Road	Grosswiler Dairy	N	24FH672	Concur

H = Eligible or recommended eligible for the NRHP
I = The site as a whole is not recommended to be eligible for the NRHP; however, individual feature(s) are recommended to be eligible.
N = Recommended not to be eligible for the NRHP nor contributes to a historic district.

Kalispell to Whitefish. This corridor follows the current alignment of US 93 and has been previously surveyed. Six sites were recorded, but historic research revealed that they had not yet reached the requisite 50 years required for the NRHP. Two previously recorded sites that were revisited had suffered substantial degradation. These site are the White Log Cabin (24FH312) and the Oasis Cabin (24FH371). Alterations to the sites are discussed in Section C.

1. Byrne - Eligible House does not contribute.

Spokane Avenue, Whitefish. From the southern city limits of Whitefish to 2nd Street East, the existing alignment of U.S. Highway 93 runs along Spokane Avenue. Spokane Avenue is historically significant for the large number of cottages and bungalows dating from the 1910s and 1920s that still exist and retain their integrity. Relatively intact historic residential developments flank Spokane Avenue on the west and east so that the highway route separates the eastern and southern neighborhoods of the Whitefish Historic Residential District. Along Spokane Avenue 27 historic sites were recorded with an additional three sites along Riverside Street. Of these 30 sites, four are recommended to be eligible for the NRHP and 21 sites (including two of the NRHP eligible sites) contribute to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District. Only seven sites are neither recommended to be eligible for the NRHP nor contribute to the Whitefish Historic Residential District. The sites are listed in Table 6 and described in Section D.

Table 6. Historic sites recorded in Whitefish along Spokane Avenue. These sites are within the Whitefish Historic Residential District.

ADDRESS	NAME/DESCRIPTION	STATUS	SITE NO.	SHPO 6/94
335 & 345 Spokane Avenue	Methodist Church and Parsonage	H/CR	24FH499	*
405 Spokane Avenue	Rygg Cottage	CR		Concur
406 Spokane Avenue	Hospital	H	24FH519	Concur
411 Spokane Avenue	Village Square Realty	~~CR~~		would contrib
422 Spokane Avenue	Carter cottage	CR Marginal integrity		Concur
429 Spokane Avenue	Bowden Cottage	CR (p. 27d - NC)		Concur N
432 Spokane Avenue	Atchison Bed and Breakfast	CR		Concur
444 Spokane Avenue	Wicks Cottage	CR		Concur
445 Spokane Avenue	Gilliland Bungalow	CR		Concur
504 Spokane Avenue	Garden Wall Inn	H/CR	24FH520	Concur
505 Spokane Avenue	Big Mountain Insurance	N		Concur
511 Spokane Avenue	Fern Nelson Cottage	~~CR~~ Changes overwhelm		NC
514 Spokane Avenue	Mace Bungalow	CR		Concur
519 Spokane Avenue	Barnett Bungalow	CR Not "Primary" Window		Concur
527 Spokane Avenue	Wagner Cottage	~~CR~~ Changes overwhelm		NC
533 Spokane Avenue	Smith Cottage	CR		Concur
538 Spokane Avenue	Frasier Bungalow	CR		Concur
543 Spokane Avenue	Reimer Bungalow	CR		Concur
547 Spokane Avenue	The Landlord	~~CR~~ (p. 65d - NC)		Concur
550 Spokane Avenue	Ost House	~~CR~~ (rept. - NC)		Concur
560 Spokane Avenue	Sargent Cottage	CR		Concur
565 Spokane Avenue	Benda Cottage	CR		Concur
566 Spokane Avenue	Sparks Cottage	CR		Concur
567 Spokane Avenue	Charlie Cooke Cabin	N		Concur
570 Spokane Avenue	Russell Bungalow	CR		Concur
737 Spokane Avenue	Cyrus Nelson House	N	24FH521	Concur
615 Riverside Drive	Foundation	N	24FH522	Concur
633 Riverside Drive	Linn House	N	24FH523	Concur
639 Riverside Drive	Gordon Cottage	N	24FH524	Concur
647 Riverside Drive	Willoughby House	H	24FH525	Concur

H = Eligible or recommended t eligible for the NRHP
CR = Recommended to be contributing to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District
N = Recommended not to be eligible for the NRHP nor contributing to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District.

* Parsonage CR. Church N

Baker Avenue, Whitefish. This alternative route for Highway 93 extends from a point on Spokane Avenue just south of 9th Street to the corner of Baker Avenue and East 2nd Street. The route runs through a relatively recent commercial development and a gravel pit on the south end and a residential area on the north. North of the Whitefish Bridge on the east side of the street, the historic dwellings have been removed to make room for a new post office and the new Whitefish Credit Union building. Along this route 21 historic structures have been recorded. The Ray E. Taylor House (24FH449), more commonly known as the "Castle", was previously recorded and is listed on the NRHP. Two sites are recommended to be eligible for the NRHP. Nine sites (including the one of the recommended NRHP eligible sites) contribute to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District and 12 sites are not recommended to be eligible nor do they contribute to the Whitefish Historic Residential District. Sites are listed on Table 7 and described in Section E.

Table 7. Historic sites recorded in Whitefish along Baker Avenue. Baker Avenue north of the 800 block is within the Whitefish Historic Residential District.

ADDRESS	NAME / DESCRIPTION	STATUS	SITE NO.	SHPO 6/94
221 Baker Avenue	Old Firehall / Flathead Travel	N	24FH561	Concur
239 Baker Avenue	Harry Hotel Garage	N	24FH562	Concur
305 Baker Avenue	Alpine Chiropractic	CR		Concur
315 Baker Avenue	Arndt (Nelson) Bungalow	CR		Concur
331 Baker Avenue	Winton Cottage	CR		Concur
500 Baker Avenue	Riverside Park	CR		Concur
550 Central Avenue	Dr. William Taylor House	H/CR	24FH563	Concur C.R. to
577 Baker Avenue	Bill Hoppe House	N		Concur
580 Baker Avenue	Hansen Cottage	~~N~~		Eligible CR
583 Baker Avenue	Jan Bell House	CR		Concur
603 Baker Avenue	Frank Feeney House	N		Concur
604 Baker Avenue	Larry Meirsma Bungalow	CR	(Very Marginal)	Concur
612 Baker Avenue	Dick Gaertner House	CR	(Marginal)	Concur
704 Baker Avenue	Moen Residence	N		Concur
722 Baker Avenue	Thompson House	N		Concur
728 Baker Avenue	Jungs House	N		Concur
734 Baker Avenue	Johnson House	CR		Concur
109 Eighth Avenue	Cheff Cabin	N	(Lounge?) 24FH564	Concur
841 Baker Avenue	Gordon House	N	24FH565	Concur
847 Baker Avenue	Wicen Cabin	N	24FH566	Concur
844 Baker Avenue	Hennessey House	H	24FH567	Concur *
200 Eighth Street	Ray E. Taylor House (prev recorded)	H	24FH449	Prev. Det.
9th and Baker Avenue	Tacheny Shop	N	24FH568	Concur N'

H = Eligible or recommended t eligible for the NRHP
I = Recommended to have one or more features individually eligible to the NRHP.
CR = Recommended to be contributing to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District.
N = Recommended not to be eligible for the NRHP nor contributing to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District.

* We recommend considering this as a contributing element to the Ray E. Taylor House (24FH 449).

1. Conflicting recommendations in rept., p. 70e

East 2nd Street, Whitefish. The existing alignment of Highway 93 turns west in downtown Whitefish at the corner of Spokane Avenue and East 2nd Street. The East 2nd Street segment continues from the corner to where the highway crosses the Whitefish River. The route goes through the heart of the Whitefish business district. The commercial core of Whitefish was found to lack integrity and is not recommended as meeting the criteria of the NRHP as a historic district. All buildings along the route were evaluated individually and several sites on the eastern end of the route were within the Whitefish Historic Residentail District and are considered to be contributing elements to the WHRD.

On the East 2nd Street segment, 17 historic structures were recorded. Of these, eight are recommended to be eligible for the NRHP. Three of the NRHP recommended sites also contribute to the proposed WHRD and nine sites were both non-eligible and non-contributing. Sites are listed on Table 8 and discussed in Section F.

Table 8. Historic sites recorded in Whitefish along East 2nd Street. The 200 block of East 2nd Street is within the Whitefish Historic Residential District.

ADDRESS	NAME / DESCRIPTION	STATUS	SITE NO.	SHPO 6
628 East 2nd Street	Central High School	H	24FH546	Concur
540 East 2nd Street	Glacier Garage	H	24FH547	Concur
205 Central Avenue	Orpheum Building	N	24FH548	Concur
147 Central Avenue	Robinson Building (south)	N	24FH549	Concur
148 Central Avenue	Haines Drugstore	N	24FH550	Concur
429 East 2nd Street	Central Hotel	~~H~~	24FH551	N'
419 East 2nd Street	Whitefish Meat Market	N	24FH553	Concur
418 East 2nd Street	Whitefish Credit Union	N	24FH552	Concur
410 East 2nd Street	Tillet Building (Grannie Annie's)	N	24FH554	Concur
Baker and East 2nd Street	City Hall	N	24FH555	Concur
336 East 2nd Street	Great Northern Bar (Glacier Cyclery)	N	24FH556	Concur
304 East 2nd Street	Masonic Temple	H	24FH558	Concur
301 East 2nd Street	Duncan Samson Block	H	24FH559	Concur
223 East 2nd Street	J. A. Samson House	H/CR	24FH560	Concur
226 & 233 East 2nd Street	Campbell Funeral Home & LaBrie Bungalow	~~H~~/CR	24FH557	N/CR
220 East 2nd Street	Ron Wright House	N		Concur
212 & 214 East 2nd Street	Holy Trinity Episcopal Church & Rectory	~~H~~/CR	24FH565	N/CR

H = Recommended to be eligible to the NRHP
CR = Recommended as contributing to the proposed Whitefish Historic Residential District
N = Recommended as not eligible for the NRHP nor does it contribute to a historic district

West 2nd Street, Whitefish. From the Whitefish River Bridge to a point west of the Whitefish Golf Course where the road bends to the southwest at State Park Road, the present alignment of Highway 93 follows West 2nd Street. Primarily a residential street, 40 of the 41 historic sites recorded were dwellings. Because most of the dwellings are within the larger Whitefish Historic Residential District, they have been evaluated in terms of their contribution to the District. Of the 40 residences, three were recommended as eligible for the NRHP, 29 contributed to the proposed WHRD (including one of the NRHP recommended sites) and only nine were neither recommended to the NRHP nor contribute to the WHRD. The only non-residential site, the Whitefish Country Club, was also recommended as eligible for the NRHP. Two residences, the Northern Silver Fox Farm and the Whitefish Country Club were not related to the WHRD development and were evaluated individually in terms of the NRHP. Several structures such as those at 33 and 37 2nd Street West appear to be old enough for recordation, but futher research revealed that they were moved onto their present location after the construction of Hungry Horse Dam in the early 1950s. The sites are listed on Table 9 and discussed in Section G.

* Conflicting recommendation in rept. p. 23f.
1. Central Hotel - This building could contribute, but modifications too severe to stand alone as eligible.
2. "234" (funeral home) retains little integrity and is not the original funeral home [illegible] from 1905 [illegible]

Table 9. Historic sites recorded in Whitefish along West 2nd Street. West 2nd Street is within the Whitefish Historic Residential District.

ADDRESS	NAME / DESCRIPTION	STATUS	SITE NO.	SHPO 6/94
11 West 2nd Street	Morgan Bungalow	CR		Concur
20 West 2nd Street	Brennan House	CR		"
25 West 2nd Street	Edmundson Bungalow	CR		"
38 West 2nd Street	Murphy House	CR		"
40 West 2nd Street	Stewart Bungalow	CR		"
50 West 2nd Street	McGrath House	N		"
114 West 2nd Street	Babcock Cabin	CR		"
118 West 2nd Street	Hennessy Log Bungalow	H/CR	24FH569	"
121 West 2nd Street	Monk Bungalow (Windows?)	CR		Concur
124 West 2nd Street	Cookingham House	CR		NC
133 West 2nd Street	Purves House	CR?		Concur
134 West 2nd Street	Best Cottage	CR		Concur
144 West 2nd Street	Hair Connection	N		NC
214 West 2nd Street	Dugan House	CR? (Changes Overwhelm)		Concur
224 & 226 West 2nd Street	Tibbits Cottages	CR		"
225 West 2nd Street	Hogan House	N		"
244 West 2nd Street	Karstetter Cottage	CR		"
245 West 2nd Street	Markus Cottage	N		"
305 West 2nd Street	Littlefield Bungalow	CR		"
314 West 2nd Street	Harris Cottage	CR		Concur
315 West 2nd Street	Franklin Bungalow	CR (Changes Overwhelm)		NC
322 West 2nd Street	Aylesworth Cottage	CR		Concur
327 West 2nd Street	Josephson Bungalow	CR (lost integrity)		NC
336 West 2nd Street	Dunham Shanty	CR "		NC
340 West 2nd Street	Dunham Shanty II	CR (±)		Concur
414 West 2nd Street	Kastella Bungalow	H	24FH570	Concur
415 West 2nd Street	Harlow House	CR (lost integrity)		NC
424 West 2nd Street	Loomis Cottage	H	24FH571	Concur
427 West 2nd Street	Midby Bungalow	CR (Marginal)		Concur
435 West 2nd Street	Lodinaff House	N		Concur
438 West 2nd Street	Geddes House	N		Concur
514 West 2nd Street	Steury Cottage	CR?		NC
526 West 2nd Street	Namst Cottage	CR		Concur
527 West 2nd Street	Search House	N		Concur
532 West 2nd Street	Hamlin House	CR		NC
640 West 2nd Street	Hanson Bungalow	N		Concur
702 West 2nd Street	Funk House	CR		Concur
714 West 2nd Street	Knapton Cabin	CR (Marginal)		Concur
724 West 2nd Street	Storkson Cottage	N	24FH572	Concur
205 Parkhill Avenue	Northern Silver Fox Farm	H	24FH573	Concur
	Whitefish Country Club			

H = Recommended to be eligible to the NRHP
CD = Recommended to be contributing to the proposed Whitefish Historic Business District
CD? = Recommended to be marginally contributing to the proposed WHRD
N = Recommended not to be eligible for the NRHP nor does it contribute to a historic district

Highway 93 West of Whitefish. This portion of Highway 93 runs through the wooded hills to the west of Whitefish, beginning at the west end of the Whitefish Country Club and ending at MP 135. Twelve historic sites were examined along the project corridor. Only one site, the Patton Mattress Factory at 2055 Highway 93 West, is recommended eligible for the NRHP. The other nine sites are not recommended to be eligible nor do they contribute to any historical district. The sites are listed in Table 10 and discussed in Section H.

Table 10. Historic sites recorded in West of Whitefish along the current alignment of US 93.

ADDRESS	NAME / DESCRIPTION	STATUS	SITE NO.	SHPO 6/9
1735 Highway 93 West	Soft Scissor	N	24FH574	Concur
1975 Highway 93 West	Sletten Cottage	N	24FH575	Concur
2055 Highway 93 West	Patton Mattress Factory / Wehr	H	24FH497	Concur *
2100 Highway 93 West	Orsua House	N	24FH576	Concur
2145 Highway 93 West	Torgison House	N	24FH577	Concur
2475 Highway 93 West	Corrals and Tackroom	N	24FH578	Concur
2626 Highway 93 West	Westermark Place	X	24FH579	Eligible •
2860 Highway 93 West	Woodsman Cottage	M ??	24FH580	Eligible A
3980 Highway 93 West	Lich Farmstead	N	24FH581	Concur

H = Recommended to be eligible to the NRHP
M = Modern, but recorded to preserve unique cultural information.
N = Recommended not to be eligible for the NRHP nor does it contribute to a historic district

* These two properties have the same Depression-era associative significance, and each is eligible. We recommend separating the properties (2 forms, 2 #s). Our evaluation of the Wehr place assumes enough of the land/farm environment remains to illustrate setting.

• Westermark - Again, Depression-era flight from drought to refuge in Flathead. We believe this property retains sufficient integrity to qualify under A.

Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena MT 59620-1001
Marc Racicot, Governor

June 28, 1994

JUL 18 1994
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

Hand carried 6/28

MASTER FILE COPY

Marcella Sherfy
State Historic Preservation Office
1410 8th Avenue
P.O. Box 201202
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Subject: AES - STPP 0002(68)
Somers - Whitefish
Control No. 2374

Enclosed is the Determination of Effect (DOE) for the above project. We have determined that the proposed project would have **No Effect** to the NRHP-eligible properties located on Sunset Boulevard, Baker Avenue and to the Kalispell Main Street Commercial District. There would be **No Effect** to the Westermark Place (24FH579) and the Woodsman Cottage (24FH580). There would be **No Adverse Effect** to the McDonnell Place (24FH496), Don Schultz Place (24FH494) and the NRHP-eligible properties located on Spokane Avenue, East Second Street and at the Patten Mattress Factory/Wehr Place (24FH497) on U.S. Highway 93 west of Whitefish. There would be an **Adverse Effect** to the Somers Branch of the Great Northern Railway (24FH350) and twenty-four NRHP-eligible properties located within the potential Whitefish Residential Historic District.

The proposed MDT Somers - Kalispell project is included within this expanded project. Effects to the Somers Branch of the Great Northern Railway (24FH350), Altenberg Farm (24FH276), McCormack Farm (24FH277) and barn at the Mellem Farm Site (24FH286) would remain the same and the existing Memorandum of Agreement would still apply to those properties.

For the purposes of expediting the DOE, the Patten Mattress Factory (24FH497) and the Wehr Place will be retained as a single unit. Jon Axline, however, will begin work on amending the site record as suggested in your letter of 22 June 1994. We believe, however, that the proposed project would have **No Adverse Effect** to the Wehr Place.

To mitigate proposed impacts to the Whitefish Residential Historic District, the FHWA and MDT is proposing to define the district boundaries and prepare a nomination of the

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Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

potential historic district to the NRHP. This would, we believe, clarify the issues raised by Kathy Huppe in her correspondence.

The Advisory Council has not yet responded to our request for consultation. Once their role in the process is known, we will forward the Memorandum of Agreement to your office for your signature.

If you have any questions, please contact Jon at 444-6258.

Gordon J. Stockstad
Gordon J. Stockstad, Acting Chief by Jon
Environmental & Hazardous Waste Bureau

GJS:JA:D:ENV:192.gg

Enclosure

cc: James Weaver, P.E., Missoula District Engineer
Carl S. Peil, P.E., Preconstruction Bureau
Dale Paulson, FHWA
Jeanette Lostracco, Carter-Burgess

CONCUR
MONTANA SHPO
DATE 7/15/94 SIGNED L. Huppe

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES
100 N PARK, SUITE 320
HELENA MT 59601

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

IN REPLY REFER TO:

January 10, 1994

Ms. Jeanette Lostracco
Carter-Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Ms. Lostracco:

This is in response to your letter of December 22, 1993, received on January 4, 1994, requesting Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) concurrence for the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) proposed highway improvement project from Somers to Whitefish along US Highway 93.

The Service has reviewed the Biological Assessment and concurs with your determination that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect the endangered bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus), the endangered peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus) and the proposed water howellia (Howellia aquatilis).

In addition, the Service does not anticipate any incidental take of listed species as a result of the proposed project. Therefore, pursuant to S402.13 (a) of the 50 CFR, formal consultation is not required. If, after public review and comment, the final project design is changed so as to have effects on threatened and endangered species other than those described in the December 1993 Biological Assessment, a revised Assessment will need to be prepared. The Service will then issue a concurrence-nonconcurrence letter addressing the revised Biological Assessment.

We appreciate your efforts to ensure the conservation of these endangered species as a part of MDT's responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act, as amended.

Sincerely,

Kemper M. McMaster
Field Supervisor
Montana Field Office

cc: Kalispell ES Suboffice

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The City of Kalispell

Incorporated 1892

Telephone (406) 752-6600
FAX (406) 752-6639
Post Office Box 1997
Zip 59903-1997

Douglas Rauthe
Mayor

Bruce Williams
City Manager

City Council
Members:

Gary W. Nystul
Ward I

Cliff Collins
Ward I

Barbara Moses
Ward II

Dale Haarr
Ward II

Jim Atkinson
Ward III

Lauren Granmo
Ward III

Pamela B. Kennedy
Ward IV

M. Duane Larson
Ward IV

July 13, 1994

Ms. Gina McAfee, A.I.C.P.
Carter-Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, CO 80202

RE: U.S. 93 Landscape Agreement

Dear Gina:

I received your additional information regarding the U.S. 93 Landscape Maintenance Agreement.

The description of the"gateway" areas for the preferred alternative plan is acceptable.

In addition I think it is necessary to merge this agreement with the original Hwy "93" beautification commitment from the Montana Department of Transportation which appropriates a $100,000.00 dollars each for the North and South entrance gateways.

It would be the logical move to cover all areas of beautification landscaping with one maintenance agreement. The City of Kalispell will be responsive to a maintenance agreement identifying these areas.

In addition, as per your letter of June 7, you stated the mediums may not be wide enough to accommodate trees. I feel if at all possible I would like to see trees designed into the "gateway landscape" and mediums. Hopefully, we can work this out during the design stages.

Again, it is essential that the City of Kalispell have a review authority for the project.

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Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. If any concerns or questions should arise, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Michael Baker, C.L.P.
Director of Parks & Recreation

cc: Mr. Bruce Williams, City Manager

Box 158, Whitefish, Montana 59937 (406) 862-2640

City of Whitefish

28 June 1994

Gina McAfee, AICP
Project Manager
Carter-Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Gina:

Pursuant to our recent telephone conversation regarding the draft sample agreement for maintenance of landscaping along U.S. Highway 93 in Whitefish, this letter will confirm the willingness expressed by the Whitefish City Council at their 20 June meeting to enter into such an agreement with the Montana Department of Transportation. The Council believes there will be sufficient interest on the part of community groups or the Park Board to undertake required maintenance responsibilities, but is willing to act as the responsible party.

If you have any questions regarding the Council's response, please call or write.

Sincerely,

DALE A. ENNOR
City Manager

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JUN 30 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Box 158, Whitefish, Montana 59937 (406) 862-2640

City of Whitefish

9 August 1994

Carter-Burgess
Gina McAfee
Project Manager
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Gina:

At a special meeting on 8 August the Whitefish City Council considered your request of 1 August pertaining to the three alternative designs of Highway 93 from the Whitefish River to Karrow Avenue. The Council's was unanimous in their support for the three lane urban section denoted as "Alternative 1," which has a twelve foot center turning lane, and separated walks on both sides of the roadway. If you have any questions regarding the Council's choice, please call or write.

Sincerely,

DALE A. ENNOR
City Manager

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Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Sign-Off Letters

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FIN copy

U.S.Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway
Administration
Montana Division

301 South Park Street
Room 448
Helena, Montana 59626

July 21, 1994

HPM-MT

Patricia A. Saindon, Administrator
Rail and Transit Division
Montana Department of Transportation
Helena, Montana 59620

Subject: Whitefish Regional Analysis and Conformity Finding

Dear Ms. Saindon:

In accordance with the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, a conformity finding of the transportation plans and programs in a nonattainment area is required of the U.S. Department of Transportation. Based on our evaluation of the State's finding of conformity and related documentation, in coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), we have determined that the Kalispell, Montana rural nonattainment area has met the requirements of the conformity guidance issued November 24, 1993. A finding of conformity is hereby made with respect to the analysis contained in your July 6 memorandum.

This conformity determination is in effect until such time as a new determination is required either by new regulatory requirements, major revision of the network assumptions, or a State Implementation Plan (SIP) revision.

Sincerely,

Louis F. Mraz, Jr.
FTA Regional Administrator

Hank D. Honeywell
FHWA Division Administrator

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION VIII
999 18th STREET - SUITE 500
DENVER, COLORADO 80202-2466

Ref: 8ART-AP

MEMORANDUM July 21, 1994

SUBJECT: U.S. Highway 93 Draft Final Environmental Impact Statement

FROM: Jeff Houk
Air Programs Branch

TO: Steve Potts
Montana Operations Office

I have reviewed the draft Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Highway 93 project, along with the Whitefish Regional Analysis provided in a letter from Dave Miller of Montana FHWA on July 13, 1994. I have no comments on the Whitefish Regional Analysis. I have the following comments on the draft FEIS:

1) **Emissions Analysis:** No comments, except that the statement on page 4-54 that emissions from the preferred alternative are less than one percent higher than the no-build alternative is incorrect.

2) **Mitigation:** In Whitefish, the emissions increase from the preferred alternative over the no-build scenario in the future years must be mitigated in order for the project to conform. The DEIS suggests several potential mitigation strategies, which are different from the mitigation strategies in the Whitefish Regional Analysis. The mitigation strategies in the regional analysis are adequately quantified, but if other measures are chosen before the FEIS is issued, the benefits of those measures must be documented. The FEIS must also include written commitments to carry out the specific mitigation measures from the agencies which will be responsible for implementation, and include a schedule for implementation of the mitigation measures. These commitments must be obtained prior to making a conformity determination for the project.

If you have any questions on these comments, please contact me at (303) 293-1766.

cc: Gretchen Bennitt, Montana AQB
Gina McAfee, Carter & Burgess
Dave Miller, Montana FHWA
Robin Smith, FHWA

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MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration, Montana Division (FHWA), proposes to approve funding for the proposed reconstruction of U.S. Highway 93 in Flathead County, Montana, (Project No. F 5-3(27)104) (the undertaking) and has determined that this undertaking will effect a portion of the Somers Branch of the Great Northern Railway and the Kalispell Courthouse Historic District and may effect rural farm properties eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, e.g., the Altenberg Farm and the McCormack Farm, and has consulted with the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Council) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S. C. 407f) and

WHEREAS, the Montana Department of Highways (MDOH) participated in the consultation and has been invited to concur in this Memorandum of Agreement;

NOW, THEREFORE, the FHWA, the Montana SHPO, and the Council agree that the undertaking shall be implemented in accordance with the following stipulations in order to take into account the effect of the undertaking on historic properties.

Stipulations

The FHWA will ensure that the following measures are carried out:

Property Monitoring and Recordation

A. In order to provide comparative data for the better assessment of effects by future, similar highway projects on adjacent historic properties, the FHWA will ensure that the properties comprising the Altenberg Farm and the McCormack Farm are monitored prior to and following completion of the undertaking with the following objectives in mind:

1) Monitoring shall be planned in consultation with the SHPO and designed to assess the degree of change, if any, of the undertaking's visual and audible impacts upon the nearby historic rural properties. In planning the method of documenting such changes, if any, the FHWA and SHPO will consider how best to record and assess, as applicable, any visual and audible impacts from the vantage points of an observer positioned within the historic property (regarding audible and visual impacts) as well as the historic view as seen by a person traveling along the highway.

2) A written report detailing the methodology and results of the monitoring program will be provided to the SHPO and the Council within 18 months of the completion of the construction. Included in the report will be FHWA's assessment of the utility of using its monitoring approach in other similar applications concerning the preservation of historic landscapes and the assessment of highway improvement projects on nearby historic rural properties.

B. In consultation with the SHPO, FHWA shall ensure that all historic properties covered by this Agreement are recorded to document their present appearance and historic significance. The level and type of documentation shall be determined by the FHWA in consultation with the SHPO, and unless otherwise agreed to by the SHPO, all documentation shall be completed and submitted to the SHPO or other parties designated by the SHPO prior to the initiation of any aspect of the undertaking involving ground-disturbing actions.

1). The FHWA will obtain written approval of the SHPO before initiating any undertaking-related activities which could affect the historic properties prior to the completion and acceptance of the documentation by the SHPO.

2) If the FHWA and SHPO are unable to agree upon an appropriate level of documentation for the historic properties covered by the Agreement, the FHWA shall contact the relevant office of the Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, and request HABS guidance about an appropriate level of recordation. Upon receipt of HABS guidance, FHWA will ensure that the properties covered by the Agreement are documented to the standards and level determined by the HABS and that the SHPO or her designee are provided copies of the completed documentation. Unless the HABS agrees otherwise, all recordation shall be completed and accepted by the HABS prior to the initiation of any ground-disturbing activities which could affect historic properties covered by this Agreement.

Landscape Plantings

The FHWA shall ensure that any trees removed within the Kalispell Courthouse Historic District as a result of the undertaking covered by this Agreement shall be replaced in kind, unless the SHPO agrees in writing to an alternative action.

Historic Marker Placement
The MDOH, in consultation with the SHPO, shall design and erect a historic marker at an appropriate place alongside of U.S. Highway 93 which relates to the public the history and significance of the Somers Branch of the Great Northern Railway. The MDOH will provide the SHPO with a copy of the proposed marker text for the SHPO's review and approval prior to creating and installing the marker.

Dispute Resolution
Should any signatory to this Agreement or a member of the public object to any actions provided for in this Memorandum of Agreement, the FHWA and MDOH shall consult with the objecting party to resolve the objection. If the FHWA determines that the objection cannot be resolved, the FHWA shall request the further comments of the Council pursuant to 36 CFR Section 800.6(b). Any Council comment provided in response to such a request will be taken into account by the FHWA in accordance with 34 CFR Section 800.6(c)(2) with reference only to the subject of the dispute; the FHWA's responsibility to carry out all actions under this Memorandum of Agreement that are not the subjects of the dispute will remain unchanged.

Failure to Carry Out the MOA's Terms
Failure to carry out the terms of this Agreement requires that the FHWA again request the Council's comments in accordance with 34 CFR Part 800. If the FHWA cannot carry out the terms of this Agreement, it will not take or sanction any action or make an irreversible commitment that would result in an adverse effect with respect to the historic properties covered by this Agreement or that would foreclose the Council's consideration of modifications or alternatives that could avoid or mitigate the adverse effect on those properties until the commenting process has been completed.

Execution of this Memorandum of Agreement and implementation of its terms evidence that the FHWA has afforded the Council an opportunity to comment on the undertaking and its effects on historic properties, and that the FHWA has taken into account the effects of the undertaking on historic properties.

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

By: Robert D. Bush, Executive Director Date: 6/13/90

Federal Highway Administration

By: for Montana Division Administrator Date: 5-23-90

Montana State Historic Preservation Officer

By: Marcella Sherfy, SHPO Date: 5-23-90

Concur:
Montana Department of Highways

By: Gregory G. Jackson Date: 5-23-90

ELV:Q:ENV:1.cm

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
SOMERS - WHITEFISH AES
FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA
AES - STPP 0002(68)
Control No. 2374

WHEREAS the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) proposes to assist the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) in funding the Somers - Whitefish highway project;

WHEREAS FHWA has determined that the undertaking will have an effect on the Somers Branch of the Great Northern Railway (24FH350) and twenty-four properties located within the potential West Second Street Historic District, properties eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, and has consulted with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Council) pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 USC 470) and its implementing regulations, "Protection of Historic Properties" (36 USC 800);

WHEREAS MDT participated in the consultation and has been invited to concur in this Memorandum of Agreement; and

NOW, THEREFORE, FHWA, the Montana SHPO, and the Council agree that the undertaking will be implemented in accordance with the following stipulations in order to take into account the effect of the undertaking on historic properties.

Stipulations

FHWA shall ensure that the following measures are carried out:

1) The MDT will install a wooden highway historical marker describing the history and significance of the Somers Branch of the Great Northern Railway (24FH350) on Alternative B of the Somers - Whitefish project. The marker text will focus on the contribution of the railroad branch line on the agricultural development of the upper Flathead Valley.

2) By September 1, 1997, the MDT will prepare and submit a National Register of Historic Places nomination with all required materials (i.e. USGS mao, photographs, etc.) for the Whitefish Residential Historic District to the Montana SHPO and the Stumptown Historical Society. In consultation with the Montana SHPO, the MDT will establish the district's boundaries and record those properties located within the potential district that have not yet been inventoried. The MDT will assist the Montana SHPO with the listing and notification process for the historic district when the nomination has been prepared. After the district is listed, the MDT will also provide a National Register of Historic Places marker describing the district to the local historical society.

3) To aid in the preparation of the National Register of Historic Places nomination, the MDT will photo-document West Second Street prior to the initiation of construction activities and again when construction has been completed.

4) If a dispute arises regarding the implementation of this Agreement, FHWA shall consult with the objecting party to resolve the dispute. If any consulting party determines that the dispute cannot be resolved, FHWA shall request the further comments of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation pursuant to the Council's regulations.

EXECUTION OF THIS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT and implementation of its terms evidences that FHWA has afforded the Council an opportunity to comment on the Somers - Whitefish highway reconstruction project and its affect on historic properties, and that FHWA has taken into account the effect of the Undertaking on historic properties.

Federal Highway Administration — (Date) 8-29-94

Montana State Historic Preservation Office — (Date) 8-29-94

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation — (Date) 9-1-94

Concurring Party:

Montana Department of Transportation — (Date) 8/29/94

Telephone Conversation Comments

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
Feb. 28	Carol Burnet 857-3136	Attended a couple of the meetings on 93 and still say it should be a four-lane divided highway for safe left-hand turn lanes. The five-lane is no good because you can't see the lines in the winter.
March 2	Rex Boller 756-1343	Curious to know in the EIS where you projected or suggested and what the priorities were for the bypass route. Please call. Has the bypass study, so he is wondering if we had changed that directions or made recommendations, without him having to try to run down the document. Will be gone during the March meetings. Would appreciate a call back.
March 2	Al Berken Midway Rental 862-7665	Has comments on the highway: please call. *Returned call March 16: Mr. Berken, who owns a business on US 93 between Whitefish and Highway 40, offered the following comments:* *1. He is in favor of a five-lane design over the four-lane divided design. A raised median design is even less desirable from a safety perspective (vehicles can collide with it). His reasons against the four-lane design are that maintenance would be more difficult, access would be more inconvenient and large trucks have difficulty making U-turns.* *2. He favors landscaping along the side of the new road and the installation of sidewalks.* *3. He wants costs to be kept down and wants the road to be built soon.*
March 3	No name.	Don't want to leave my name or number. Just want to tell Bruce Boody and his d--- ____ to take a hike, build the d--- road before someone else gets killed.
March 3	Judy Cornell	Checking to make sure the line was still on.
March 15	Patricia Jan Markuson 2307 Houston Point Drive, Whitefish , MT 862-2452	In favor of the divided highway with median including all entrances to the city and valley, and want to see all the special design concepts included, preserve and enhance the character of the valley and long-term solution never do again, etc.
March 16	Daryl Bradshaw PO Box 4494 Whitefish, MT 862-7633 bus.	Currently reside on Highway 93 and Karrow Road. Resident in valley for the past 5 years. Comment on Highway 93 EIS: prefer, and most people would, that the divided highway would be a much more suitable use for the highway as opposed to the straight 5-lane.
March 17	Leslie Forester 1007A Columbia Avenue Whitefish, MT	In favor of the divided scenic highway with the median, not the five-lane highway.
March 18	Dave Ritter	Interested in the divided highway and I can be reached 862-5200 in the evenings.
March 18	R. D. Dizzy, Jr. 862-3720 -- office	Is for Alternative B, thinks it should have been done 10 years ago. Thinks Mr. Baucus is going to find an awful lot of voter backlash from it at election time. Hope that is the concept put forth -- you are welcome to call.
March 21	Jan Metzmaker 915 Dakota Whitefish	Safety should be the utmost concern in the design of the highway. In favor of a divided highway with a median. Would like all the special design concepts included. It is really important to preserve the character of our county.
March 21	Pam Gerwy 862-0621	Has a comment on US 93. Please call in the evening. *Returned call March 29. Pam is gone for the week.*
March 21	Mike Muldown Whitefish 862-1655 business 862-3994 home 119 Goat Trail Homeowner in Happy Valley	Giving his vote of confidence in favor of a divided highway with a median, including all entrances to the cities in the valley. Wants to see all special design concepts included. Like most people he wants to see the valley enhanced, as opposed to turning into a five-lane eye sore.
March 21	Richard Haney 862-0320	Please call. *Returned call on March 29: Would prefer a divided highway. The five-lane highway is fine during the summer. Based on driving on US 2 during the winter -- have no idea where the lanes are -- especially when the wind is blowing with white-outs. With the center divider, know where the lanes are. Also, with the divided highway, there appears to be additional security so people won't come over and cause a head-on collision. The divided highway will have a barrier to the head-on collisions. Also prefer fewer intersections -- better access control. Aesthetics is important.*
March 22	Mike Jopeck 862-0621	Interested in a scenic divided highway 93 with maybe trees planted in the middle, and making it look scenic and nice that way.
March 23	Ben Janeck 862-3720	Thinks the four lane highway should have been done 10 years ago. Holding it up like these people have, they ought to be sued for it, including Baucus. He thinks it should be two lanes each way with a fifth lane in the middle for turning. He doesn't know what the hold up is, or why it has been held up, but four people have lost their lives because it has been held up. Relatives of the victims should sue whoever has held it up.

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
March 24	Paul Gill	Lives on Highway 93, lives in Greenwood trailer court and goes by it every day. Favors the four-lane with the fifth lane as an optional turn. No divider Alternative B. It should have been done a long time ago, and he is real upset about it.
March 25	Barb Antone in Whitefish 862-2135	She was at the meeting last night. She asked a question but doesn't feel that her question was completely answered. She wanted to expound on it, but didn't want to tie up the meeting. She would still like to obtain an answer. Please call her. *Returned call March 29. Requested further clarification about who will be making the final decision and when it will be made.*
March 28	Jeanie Parson 756-6694	In favor of a divided highway.
March 28	Pam Eliason 752-0092	Don't need a call back unless you want to call her back. Comment on Highway 93. In favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities, don't like the five-lane concept. Would like to see the special design concepts included. Thinks that we have a beautiful place to live here. Thinks we should restrict rampant growth between the two cities -- it feels that with a five-lane that would happen. Thinks the passageway between the cities should be as pretty as the surrounding area, and this is the way to do it. She is a taxpayer, and does not mind paying more taxes to do it.
March 29	Bill Crawford 752-5224	Emphatic comment in favor of a divided highway with limited access onto that highway for the Kalispell to Whitefish 93 project. He drives the road about 12 times a week and has quite a few horror stories to tell relative to unlimited access onto that highway with the amount of traffic on it, conditions arise having only two lanes side-by-side.
March 30	Tom Fitzpatrick M&T Auto body 756-3060	Heard they are talking about putting a divider down by our place. My personal opinion is that it's probably not going to work that great.
April 1	Andrea Brew Box 4638 Whitefish	Definitely in favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley. Would like to see all the special design concepts included as well.
April 6	Jeanie Tawman Mountain Mall	Definitely in favor of a divided highway with a median, including the entrances to the cities in the valley. Want all the special design concepts included. I just feel that for long-term this is the way to go. I travel a lot and was just in North and South Carolina. Almost all the highways down there are divided with a median, and it's beautiful. The same in the new England states -- wherever I travel it seems that that's what they use, and don't see why we are even having a problem with it here. I guess a lot of people don't do the traveling. Good luck, and thanks for all the hard work you've done, and let's get that highway with a median.
April 8	Matt Mosteller PO Box 4391 Whitefish, Montana 59937 406/862-2908	In favor of a divided highway with a median. Want to see all the special design concepts included. Preserve and enhance the character of the valley. We want a long-term solution, and this must be done.
April 11	Laurie Goram PO Box 1642 Whitefish	In favor of the divided highway with the median, only because I think it will impact the way that development occurs in the Valley. At first I wasn't for it, but if it is going to impact how things are developed along the highway I am for that. If you could include a walking and bike lane that would be great too.
April 11	Ann Reaker	Do you possibly have a copy of the EIS statement that we could borrow for a couple of days, because we want to take a really good look at it, and it's hard to get to it either at the school or at the library. Please call back. *Returned call - mailed EIS.*
April 12	Carol Hopwood	In favor of the divided highway with the median in the middle because I think it will be safer and will look nicer. It would be wonderful to have a bike path there for pedestrians, to make it safer for them too.
April 13	Joe Schlutz 752-5555	It is extremely important that we have very adequate bicycle lanes. It just seems insane to me to build a highway without an adequate bicycle lane because people will try to ride it anyway, it's dangerous, and bicycles are good for ecology, on and on and on. It just doesn't make any sense not to have adequate bicycle lanes at the initial stage of building a highway.
April 13	Joe Manley 648 Woodland Pl. Whitefish 862-0579	In favor of the divided highway with a median, including all entrances to the cities in the valley. Want to see all the special design concepts included. Preserve and enhance the character of the valley, let's try to keep it the way it is. My long-term solution would be to never do this again.
April 13	Amy Young Box 4524 Whitefish 862-0778	In favor of a divided highway with a median. Do not want a five-lane highway looking like LaSalle. Would also like to have the special interest things included later on, like a bike path, things that would make Whitefish look like a mountain community rather than like a suburb any other place in the world.

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
April 14	Bruce Boody	Phone Conversation with Joe Hart, C&B: 1. Bruce is concerned about a three-lane cross-section between Karrow and the Whitefish River bridge with a center two-way left-turn lane. His main concern is regarding winter traffic conditions and potential redevelopment of the area which will create additional turning movements and operational problems along the corridor. Bruce would like to meet with us on Friday afternoon, April 22, to look at potential options for some sort of raised median treatment. Bruce is most concerned that we would be constructing a roadway cross-section similar to that which exists south of Whitefish with all of its potential traffic operational problems. 2. Bruce wanted to relay a conversation he had recently with Mark Van Nueyes (862-6275). Mark was concerned with the C(COUPLET-3) and its traffic operations through Whitefish. Bruce explained the benefits of the couplet to Mark. Mark suggested a preference for one lane in each direction on an improved Baker and Spokane. Mark was in favor of the Baker extension but is opposed to the 7th Street bridge due to his concerns regarding grades at the bridge connections at the Baker and Spokane intersections and of the excessive cost for such a structure.
April 14	Bill Brown 545 ____ Creek Road Whitefish	Totally in favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley -- that's absolutely the only way to go.
April 14	Darlene McDermott 752-0101	Please call. *Returned call April 28. Calling to see about the property owner meetings, will call back to schedule a meeting*
April 14	Marcia Huys 862-7270 PO Box 4015 Whitefish, MT 59937	Definitely in favor of a divided highway with a median. Love all the special design concepts -- think that's really necessary. They are major for safety and thinking a couple of generations at least down the road, so to speak.
April 15	Jim Brown 756-1690	Concerned about the highway. *Returned call:* *1. Jim Weaver said there will not be funding for 30 years. There is not nearly enough money to build this. It sounds like we will not get a highway for 30 years. Does Flathead County have to pay for this?* *2. Will there be openings in the median between the Stillwater Bridge crossing and KM Road?*
April 15	Kent Frampton, Best Bet Casino (406/862-4718)	Phone conversation: 1. Kent said that it is his understanding that the roadway connecting Spokane to an extended Baker Avenue is a dead issue. Dale Ennor approached the Best Bet Casino regarding the City's concept for a roadway between the Safeway and the Best Bet several months ago. Kent was concerned about effects to the entryway and parking of the Best Bet and hired Bruce Boody to look at concepts for redesign of the building entry and parking. Bruce's estimate for reconstruction of the building front entrance to the back and parking modifications is $130,000. This cost estimate was submitted to the City of Whitefish and Kent has not heard back from them since. 2. The Best Bet paved the area west of the building in the rear of the building operation but it is very underutilized since it is in the back of the building. Most of the parking occurs along the south side of the building which would be removed with the connecting roadway construction. 3. A full-turn movement entrance to the Best Bet Casino, combined with entry to the Safeway, would be feasible opposite the Columbia Avenue intersection with US 93. Alternative access to the Best Bet may be from Baker Avenue west of Spokane. 4. Kent plans to continue to lobby with the Advisory Committee members and the city for no roadway between the Safeway and the Best Bet and for access options from Spokane to the casino. 5. I mentioned to Kent that the extension of Columbia between Safeway and the Best Bet was only a part of one of the one-way couplet scenarios and not part of the one-way couplet endorsed by the City Council. An extension of Columbia under the C(COUPLET-3) scenario would be the responsibility of the City of Whitefish.

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
April 18	Phil Lauman	Phone conversation with Joe Hart, C&B: 1. Phil made a comment at the April 12th Advisory Committee meeting regarding frontage roads shown in the A(MEDIAN) alternative south of Kalispell. Specifically, Phil is concerned that the frontage road extending between Forest Hill Drive and Fir Terrace Road along the west side of US 93 is not necessary. The frontage road would serve five single family homes and small businesses that would not typically have large truck traffic turning to or from US 93. Phil's recommendation would be for each of the drives to have a right-turn-only access directly to US 93 requiring a U-turn either north or south at the next intersection. This modification would save the additional right-of-way required for the frontage road and expense of construction of approximately 1,000 feet of frontage road. 2. Phil also felt that the intermediate intersection between Fir Terrace Road and the access shown at Demersville to Patrick Creek and Airport Road at Ball's Crossing was not necessary. This intersection is shown on the Exhibit 4 of 29 for the A(MEDIAN) alternative along the east side of US 93 just north of the livestock auction barn.
April 18	Mark Van Nyhuis	Phone conversation with Gina McAfee, C&B: 1. What was the decision made by Council? 2. The businesses south of Whitefish are very concerned about the access plan and medians. Who will maintain the area from a landscaping standpoint? Will there be additional drifting?
April 18	Joe Fischer 407 Ashley Court Kalispell, MT	In favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley with all the special design concepts included. This Valley is growing, we can control the growth, there is no need to grow just willy-nilly for growth's sake.
April 18	John Heverling 745 S. Main Kalispell	In favor of a divided highway with a median, would prefer to have some bushes and grass between the lanes. Include all the entrances to the cities in the valley. Particularly like to see that to limit the amount of commercial strip growth that would occur -- there's too much of that already. Would like to see the special design concepts included. Believe this would preserve the character of the valley to the extent we can. Very much in favor of a divided highway and think it would be safer also -- fewer left turns than the other kind.
April 19	Michael _____ PO Box 4224 Whitefish 862-6278	Support a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities. I think that is the best alternative even though it is more expensive just because otherwise we are going to have a 30-mile long strip mall from Somers to Whitefish.
April 19	Tony Ganjimmy 862-6278	Agree with keeping it the way it is, no five-lane highway.
April 19	Barbara Lewis 664 Armory Road Whitefish	In support of a divided highway with a median, and in favor of all the special design concepts. Really interested in keeping the valley beautiful and want a long-term solution.
April 19	Ben Cohen 862-4381	Would like to know how to get my written comments to the members of the Advisory Committee before the meeting on April 23. Please contact me. *(List with addresses was fax'd to Mr. Cohen on Wednesday, April 20).*
April 19	Allen Rosenberg PO Box 44 Kiowa Montana 59920 755-8400	In favor of a four-lane divided highway because of development to contain the development and keep out the strips and keep the Flathead Valley looking like it did years ago before we had that much traffic out there.
April 19	Kalispell Resident	In favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley with all the special design concepts included. Just hope the valley doesn't expand to the point where the reason people came here in the first place was to get away from commercialism and unfortunately we see this happening in the Flathead Valley. Don't believe you have any say in the matter of billboards, but personally the billboards are getting worse and are a total eye sore. The reason people come here for vacation is because of the beauty of the area and it's being spoiled.

opinions, on 3 very important issues. We all live or have businesses on Highway 93 south of Whitefish.

Petition circulated prior to EIS process.

1. Highway design, with or without medians.

2. Zoning, kept the same, or change to depths of 300 feet, 425 feet, or deeper.

3. Mail delivered on both sides of the highway.

AME & ADDRESS	MEDIAN FOR	MEDIAN AGAINST	ZONING AS IS	ZONING 300'	ZONING 400'	ZONING DEEPER	MAIL & Papers BOTH	MAIL & Papers AS IS
James Kane Box 3		✓				✓	✓	
Rebecca Kane Box 3		✓				✓	✓	
Doug Bauer		✓						
R R Bell		✓				✓	✓	
Jim E Bauer		✓					✓	
Amy Mary Rodkewich		✓			425		✓	
6255 Hwy #93 S						[redacted]		
Deirdre Kade						✓	✓	
Box 1799 W.F.								
Wm H HAMMILL 1320' DEEP - GAC.		✓				✓	✓	
(Sough & GALLERY)								
Harold A. Dalen		✓				✓	✓	
Mike Benson		✓			425		✓	
CARQUEST PO BOX								
David W Morris		✓			425		✓	
Helen M. Morris		✓			426		✓	
Al Burkes		✓				✓	✓	
Carlie Burkes		✓				✓	✓	
Bonnie West		✓				✓		✓
Robert West		✓				✓		✓
THE GALLERY	✓					✓		✓
Arnold Sandefur		✓				✓	✓	✓
EDWARD WOOD		✓				✓		
SEIGHTS FURNITURE								
Bob Wright		✓				✓	✓	
Gerald R. Duston		✓						
John A. Duston		✓						
Dave Ramey		✓		✓			✓	
(Hometown Properties								
6050 Hwy 93S)								
Larry Kositsky		✓				✓		✓
Austin Funeral Home								
P.O. Box 65 - Whitefish								
Western Building Center		✓				✓	✓	
6490 Hwy 93 So								
Douglas G Shanks								

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
April 19	Mitch Tanner	Phone call with Joe Hart, C&B: 1. Mitch is a former FHWA employee and worked with Ted Wirth on preparation of the previous access plan for the South Whitefish area of US 93. He has recently talked to Hank Honeywell at FHWA and wanted to express his concerns regarding the discussion in the EIS on safety and on the segment of roadway adjacent to his property west of Whitefish. 2. Mitch feels that the EIS should have more background/history on the purpose and benefits of divided freeways and expressways. He feels there is a significant decrease in severe accidents with a four-lane median separated facility. The discussion in the EIS leaves the reader with the impression that it is a fairly even comparison between the four and five-lane alternatives. The EIS should stress that accident severity is significantly decreased with a four-lane facility with median separation. 3. Mitch could not find discussion in the EIS regarding weather-related issues on the five-lane alternative when fog and snow cover make it difficult to see lane lines and a median would better define the edge of roadway. Mitch indicated that when he and Ted Wirth were putting together the access plan for South Whitefish, he had a copy of a Minnesota study addressing this issue. 4. Mitch owns property just west of Milepost 132 along the north side of US 93 near Spencer Lake. He is concerned that widening to the north side away from Spencer Lake will impact the access to his property that is about 500 to 1,000 feet east of Twin Bridges intersection. Alternative widening to the south side of the roadway would impact Spencer Lake which is a trophy lake. I mentioned to Mitch that there may be potential modification to the typical cross-section in this vicinity to avoid the severe rock cut to the north or impact to the lake. Mitch was concerned that the EIS may not have addressed the significant constraints in this vicinity and the cost of the severe rock cut. Mitch was also interested in any details we may have for how access to his property would be affected.
April 19	Terry Schend	Phone conversation with Joe Hart, C&B: 1. Approximately two years ago Terry lead a "campaign" to obtain signatures from property owners south of Whitefish regarding opposition to a raised median in this roadway segment. Terry obtained 39 signatures of 47 landowners contacted. All opposed to a raised median (this is attached). 2. Terry will call several property owners to let them know about the 5:00 p.m. meeting on April 22, 1994 at the Mountain Mall to discuss the raised median concepts for the South Whitefish segment of US 93. Terry will call on Wednesday, April 20, to let us know who he has contacted.
April 19	Richard Sonju	Phone conversation with Gina McAfee, C&B: 1. There is a public meeting on April 20 at 7:00 at West Valley Fire Hall on Whitefish Stage Road. 2. Purpose for meeting is to abolish the divided highway. 3. None of the landowners have been involved so far -- all are concerned. The primary impetus for the concern are the headlines in the papers last week. 4. Other members of the Advisory Committee who have been invited are: Mike Stocklin, Bill Hedstrom, Jim Weaver, Jim Lynch 5. Major concerns are: • Where is additional right-of-way needed. • Safety. • Loss of access; where are median breaks? • Loss of property value. • Need for additional out-of-direction travel.

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
April 19	Dale Ennor	Phone conversation with Joe Hart, C&B: 1. Dale was provided with an update of several of the recent meetings we have had regarding the US 93 project, and the upcoming meetings regarding median concepts south of Whitefish. 2. Dale mentioned that following receipt of the $124,000 estimate from the Best Bet Casino for modifications to their property necessary to accommodate the extension of Columbia Avenue west of US 93 to the Baker Extension, no further efforts have been made on this roadway extension. The City's approach to the Baker extension now calls for Baker to be extended south to the roadway connection opposite the main entrance to the Mountain Mall and another potential extension between US 93 and the Baker Extension located between the Safeway and the Pin and Cue. 3. City Council indicated that they may acquire the entire Best Bet property rather than pay a $124,000 restitution for impacts to the property. I mentioned to Dale the concept we have identified for realignment of the Baker intersection with US 93 to the north of the spruce trees in the landscaped area just south of the Conoco station which may provide an area for additional parking for the Best Bet. 4. Dale indicated that he was initially opposed to a 7th Street connection between Baker and Spokane because of the visual impacts for the proposed future linear park along the Whitefish River. Dale noted that an interesting and pleasing bridge design could be an attraction and he noted several recent bridge construction projects, one in British Columbia that he has recently seen that were very attractive and could be a landmark for the community if well designed.
April 20	Louis Ruiz National Golf Association	Not in favor of Highway 93 being divided. Favors five-lane design.
April 20	Nancy Lynch 862-3181	Would like to comment on the proposed design alternatives for Highway 93. *Returned call April 28: In support of a divided highway.*
April 20	Lisa Buckwalter Editor, Whitefish Magazine PO Box 152 Whitefish, 59937 862-8129	My husband runs the Flathead Festival. Support a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley. I've seen this valley grow. I've lived here for the past six years and it is so important that we preserve and enhance the character of the valley. This is a long-term solution, we will never be doing this again, and I think it is imperative. Also support all special design concepts included.
April, 20	Helen Pilling 752-4766	Support a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley but limited access. Want all the special design concepts included. Believe that this is the better way to go, not necessarily the most economical but the long-term solution and keeping the character of the valley and beauty of the area is most important.
April 20	Betsy	I've seen the latest plans. Really like having a divided highway as much as possible, that's really what I'm most interested in, including all the entrances to Whitefish and other parts of the County. Also really interested in bike paths, would like to see those by the highway as much as possible. A divided highway will be part of the tourist attraction to the city, it is important to enhance the general view of the county to keep it with divided medians as much as possible. If we make it a really nice highway with four lanes divided it will be a parkway that will really attract people and will be nice, we won't have to keep redoing it – it will just be done. As to the Whitefish couplet idea, I'm also in favor of that but I really don't like that 7th Street Bridge. Would rather have Baker go down to where it is now as a one-way street and have a lane that you can turn left on somewhere near Safeway to go back into town if you want to go around. But realistically people will think that is too much out of the way to have to go that far before they can turn left. It just seems a waste of money and a lot of construction to ruin that marsh area to make a huge bridge across there. Appreciate all the really good work that your company is doing, I've been to a lot of the meetings, and I think you are doing this in a really good way. Lots of luck with it and thank you.
April 20	Fred 862-4031	Concern about Highway 93 project. Basically I would like to voice my support for a divided highway with a median. We are very concerned about preserving the character of the valley, and preserving the future character of the valley. We feel that what is done to that highway will have a big impact on how things are going to look and we don't want to see another big strip like we already see around Kalispell going into Whitefish. So if you would please take our concern and consideration we appreciate. Thank you and have a great day.
April 20	Ben Cohen 862-4381	Have 16 copies of a letter which I would like to get to the Advisory Committee members before their next meeting. All I have are telephone numbers, I need addresses. *(List with addresses was fax'd to Mr. Cohen on Wednesday, April 20).*

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
April 20	John Kramer 862-3815 711 Wisconsin Ave, Box 1431	Our family is in favor of a divided highway through the valley with a landscaped median and would like to see all the special design concepts included. This is better for the safety of the valley as well as more complimentary to our spectacular setting that we have here. Thank you very much and good luck with your project and thank you for passing my comments along.
April 20	Sheryl Boksenbaum 2013 Whitefish 59937 862-4994	Support a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley with all the special design concepts included. Please preserve and enhance the character of the valley with a long-term solution, and never do it again, etc.
April 21	Joan Vetter 862-1954	Calling to find out when the public comment period is over. Letters need to be postmarked by May 16.
April 21	Susan Mulldown 119 Goat Trail 862-3994	In favor of the divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley. I think aesthetically it would be very pleasing, and as the years go by it would be more pleasing. I know from experience, trying to turn off that highway into Happy Valley is a terrifying experience, and I can only see it being worse with a center turn lane, it just gives me the shivers to think about it.
April 21	Vicki Birdrank 387-5004	Very much in favor for the median to divide a highway versus just a 5-lane, We don't need any airports through our lovely valley.
April 21	Susan Mulldown 119 Goat Trail 862-3994	In favor of the divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley. I think aesthetically it would be very pleasing, and as the years go by it would be more pleasing. I know from experience, trying to turn off that highway into Happy Valley is a terrifying experience, and I can only see it being worse with a center turn lane, it just gives me the shivers to think about it.
April 21	Vicki Birdrank 387-5004	Very much in favor for the median to divide a highway versus just a 5-lane, We don't need any airports through our lovely valley.
April 21	Michelle Dauenhauer 161 Highland Drive 756-7457	Worried about school buses being able to get back on 93 from Highland, Church Drives. This area is dividing line for Whitefish, Kalispell school districts. Need to look at the bus routes. Solution would be underpass at Highland. Would work for bus, farm equipment, pedestrians. Cost should not matter -- it would be worth it for the safety.
April 22	Chris Moritz Bigfork, Montana 59911 837-4950	In favor of as much divided highway as possible. Why: • Scale of pavement -- must less pavement. • Easier to change, adapt a divided highway in the future. • Maintenance of medians is not a problem. Do not need high maintenance landscaping. Can use native grasses, flowers cheaply as MDT has done on other roads in Montana. Bike path -- favor separated path.
April 22	Phil and Neoma Anderson 120 Highland Drive 752-1576	Want five-lane. Period. Concerns: • Safety • Keep up with future traffic demand. • Access on and off • Snow drifts • People will drive faster on divided highway • Need to preserve farmland. Don't use farmland for frontage roads. • Willing to give a few more feet of right-of-way for bikepath, but not median. • Do not divide the road to go around those trees. • Need underpass at Church Road for sure, maybe at Tronstad too. • Cost doesn't matter.
April 22	Jim Syvertson 135 Highland Dr Kalispell, 59901 756-7871	Personal Visit. Divided or undivided does not matter -- safety is the key. Vital to have underpass at Church Drive for crossing traffic -- especially school buses. This is the dividing line for Whitefish, Kalispell school districts. Also very much needed for farm equipment. Herb Koenig told Jim he would be willing to donate the land for the underpass.
April 22	Bruce Christiansen 367 Deer Trail Whitefish,59937 862-4981	Owns 500 feet of frontage property right across from Church Drive. Concerned that his access he negotiated with the state will be taken away. People keep telling him it will be taken, and he has no access to any other road besides 93. He must be able to get on and off his property. Also -- underpass at Church Road should be looked at if cost would not be too high. Wants a call from Carter & Burgess regarding the access question. *Returned call on April 26. Set up meeting on May 4*

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
April 22	Harold Clapper PO Box 2851 Kalispell, Montana 59901 862-0547	Personal Visit. Property is 4255 Highway 93 – right across from KM Road. Fought with MDT for 18 months last go around. • Does not want to lose any more land to right-of-way. • Does not want his access changed. Last time state tried change it so it was across from KM (now on other end of property). Will not stand for this. • Don't try to stop commercial use with highway design. • Wouldn't mind commercial development, stoplights all along Highway 93. • Wants call from Carter & Burgess to find out how much additional right-of-way is being looked at on his property. *Returned call on April 26. Set up meeting on May 5.*
April 22	Sam Kalada 979 Eastman Drive Big Fork, MT	Think a divided highway is definitely the way to go, not only because of the planning concepts that are involved in it, I think the cost is insignificant compared to the larger picture that concerns all the development that would go along with a five-lane road.
April 22	Trish Brock 1255 Smith Lake Road Kalispell	Do support a four-lane divided highway with a median from Somers to Whitefish, and that would be including all entrances to the cities in the valley. So that it would be limited access to the highway, for developmental reasons.
April 22	Heather Mull Whitefish 862-5049	Support a divided highway. I would prefer to see it landscaped rather than cement, I think it would be easier to maintain.
April 22	Chris Moritz	Prefer divided highway as much as possible; also prefer the Kalispell bypass.
April 22	Bob Reilly	Bob Reilly is three times Kalispell City Councilman. He called to protest the divided highway and advocated a five-lane design from Somers to Whitefish. "Kalispell hasn't moved an inch in years. All we have to do is get there from here (meaning Lakeside) and a five-lane would be one we could afford to build."
April 22	Sam Kalada 979 Eastman Dr Big Fork, MT	Think a divided highway is definitely the way to go, not only because of the planning concepts that are involved in it, I think the cost is insignificant compared to the larger picture that concerns all the development that would go along with a five-lane road.
April 22	Trish Brock 1255 Smith Lake Road Kalispell	Do support a four-lane divided highway with a median from Somers to Whitefish, and that would be including all entrances to the cities in the valley. So that it would be limited access to the highway, for developmental reasons.
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April 24	Pat Quartel 246 West Whitefish Montana	If you must have a highway, a divided highway would definitely be the answer here.
April 24	Jack McCarthy Live between Somers and Lakeside 857-2211	I have been driving in this area for a long time, since 1959 and I have been driving from Somers to Kalispell almost daily. This new design is going to be with us for a long time. Therefore, I support the four-lane divided highway with a median, including all entrances to the cities and the valley, including all special design concepts. Yes, its going to cost more, but we should do it right for the sake of the future of our valley.
April 24	John Healy Susan Craig 1492 McManeme Draw, Kalispell 752-1029	Both in favor of a divided highway, preserve the valley as much as possible, let's be progressive about this, that's pretty much how we feel. Preserve the beauty that we have.
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April 25	Susie Janek 862-2141 1029 1st St. East Whitefish	Support a divided highway with a median. It's the only long-term solution that we should go for. Support all the special design concepts.
April 25	Ted Schlagel 303 6000 West Kalispell	I want to go on the record as opposing the median. I think we already have zoning between Kalispell and Whitefish, and the extra $10 million dollars isn't worth it. There is no reason that we can't just do a five-lane -- we already have that area zoned.
April 25	Wendy KOSI Radio 755-6690	Would like to get a little interview with someone about the appointments they are going to be setting up with people about the highway and about extending the comment period on US 93. *Returned call on April 26 -- was interviewed.*
April 25	Helen Marshall 50 Grandview Drive	Just voting for a new highway between Kalispell and Whitefish.
April 25	Ed Marshall 50 Grandview Drive Kalispell	I would like to voice my support for the divided lane concept for the highway to Whitefish. However, virtually anything would be an improvement on the disaster we presently have. I hope this organization can do something to promote that. Thank you very much.
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April 26	Carol Santa 755-0940	Don't need a return call. I just want to say that I want you to hang tight to the divided highway concept. I just think it is too valuable in the long run. In the short run it might be a battle, but in the long-run it is very important our valley that it occurs. I am a strong supporter of that. Just want you to hang tight on your recommendations.
April 26	Linda Mulestein Lakeside 844-2204	Understand the widening is from Somers to Whitefish, so it won't extend down to Lakeside with a divided highway, but could someone call me regarding putting an Angel Point Road sign on the highway. It is a county road. There is no sign even indicating that it is down here.
April 26	Don - Whitefish 862-3609	Please call me. I would like to record my comments on the 93 project. *Returned call on April 26: Best possible plan for now and for the future is a divided highway. Five-lane may be most expedient, but it is not very aesthetic. In the Calgary area, there are a number of divided highways.*
April 26	Jeff Whitefish	Calling in support of divided highway. Resident of the area for 15 years. Good for valley and for long-term.
April 26	Carol Santa 755-0940	Don't need a return call. I just want to say that I want you to hang tight to the divided highway concept. I just think it is too valuable in the long run. In the short run it might be a battle, but in the long-run it is very important our valley that it occurs. I am a strong supporter of that. Just want you to hang tight on your recommendations.
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April 26	Jeff -- Whitefish	Calling in support of divided highway. Resident of the area for 15 years. Good for valley and for long-term.
April 26	Jane Lopp 257-6886	I certainly think the divided highway is better for the longer-term solution between Kalispell and Whitefish, that it preserves the open space, and I like the idea of safety with limited access. I really oppose the idea of a five-laner. I've seen it other places, and it really seems like a threatening approach as far as safety is concerned.
April 26	David Burk 752-3362 or 752-6002	I live up on Hagerman Lane and I'm just curious about what kind of access I'm going to have to my street with your highway design.
April 26	Denise Davies 857-2629	Support a divided highway with a median in order to preserve the character of the valley.
April 26	Gene Lee 257-2233	I've got property along Highway 93. I guess you people can call me back, I would like to talk to you. I'm strongly in favor of a five-lane highway, just because it would just mean too much driving for me to go down and make the corner and come back to get into that place every time. That's just something I want to talk about, you can call me any time.
April 27	John Huey 752-1029	My wife and I live up here in McMinime Draw. I have called before and left a message on your machine in support of a divided highway and want to preserve the Flathead, but as I find out more it sounds like a little special interest is involved in the divided highway. I am for a divided highway the entire length of 93 from Somers to Whitefish. I am not for leaving Pack and the college and all that in the ugly five-lane. I don't believe that is preserving the Flathead, I believe that is serving some special interest. Divided highway all the way, or don't bother. We have enough special interest problems in our country.
April 29	Glen Sojourner 659 Loon Lake Rd, Big Fork, MT 59911	I hope that the decision will be for a divided highway with a median for that strip of the highway. Thanks for your work on this study.
April 29	Megan Foley 233 Woodland Pl Whitefish, 59927 862-2438	I am in favor of a divided highway with a median, including all entrances to the cities in the valley. I want to see the special design concepts included.
April 29	Gary Huckabone 1765 Hwy 93 W	Support a divided highway concept between Whitefish and Somers.
April 29	Donna Gans 862-0900	I'm calling to tell you that I am interested in a divided highway with a median.
April 29	Jeff & Caroline Rummel 862-5838 work 862-8182 home	Would like to speak to someone to express our strong interest. We both strongly favor a divided highway basically for safety as well as aesthetic reasons. *Called back May 3. Definitely prefer a divided highway for aesthetic and safety reasons -- primarily a probable reduction in head-on collisions.*
April 30	Cindy White Whitefish Box 872	Support the divided highway with a median and I'm hoping to preserve and enhance the character of the valley through that decision. Thanks for taking my input.
May 1	Rosella 862-5015	My comments on Highway 92 would be to keep it the way it is between the two cities with a no-passing, and in the cities make it a divided highway with a landscaped median.
May 1	Henry Frank Whitefish 862-2681	Lived in Whitefish since 1972 and I am very much in favor of a divided highway. I've come back from vacation in the east. Whenever you have a five-lane highway eventually they're going to end up with a 3-foot high concrete block divider in the middle. So if you are going to put in a five-lane highway, you might as well include the cost for a concrete divider. And besides that thing really looks ugly. A five-lane highway by itself is definitely dangerous. A divided highway with a center strip would be the best way to go.
May 1	Phil Lewis 862-6837 664 Armory Road	I would like to see a highway with a divided median between Whitefish and Kalispell, and I would like to see the special design concepts incorporated, such as a bridge over the Whitefish River to allow for a bike path and any other special design projects that have been initiated and talked about. Thank you.
May 1	Ann Marks 862-5109	I would like to see a divided four-lane all the way into the cities on both ends.

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
May 1	Maureen Jouskey 19 Mill Avenue Whitefish 862-2834	I am for a divided highway with a median including all the entrances to the cities in the valley.
May 2	No name.	Calling in support of a divided 93 -- with all the pretty median areas.
May 2	Mary Lynn Hedstrom 756-7262	Want to make an appointment to talk with you. I'm a land owner. But I'm not where you can reach me. You're going to have to call me after 5:00. *Returned call May 3.*
May 2	Mark Heider 862-0736	Don't need a return call. I would vote for a divided highway as close into Whitefish as possible with a combination of five-lane where needed to support local properties lines in between Highway 40 and Reserve.
May 2	Karen Vongontard 862-0339 1020 Park Avenue Whitefish	In favor of a divided highway with a median, particularly in the entrances to the cities. I am very concerned about safety. I've been away for the winter, and in my travels I saw the results of some undivided highways and they are frightening. I would like to talk about it, if someone would call me back. Thank you.
May 2	Barbara Taylor 33 Snowshoe flats Whitefish 862-4526	Very much prefer the divided highway option with a median, both for aesthetics and safety. I think it is really important. It would also be nice to have pedestrian and bike access under Baker Avenue. I know that's one of the special improvements.
May 2	Charles Taylor 33 Snowshoe Flats Whitefish 862-4526	In favor of a divided highway with a grass median.
May 2	Michael Berman 862-9542 19 O'Brien Whitefish, MT 59937	Support the two-lane , the two divided highway. I would also support a bike path completely through, or outside of Whitefish. I know that's not an option, but it should be. I don't live in another Standpoint, Idaho with a highway driving right through the middle of town. I think that's the best plan for the next 20 years.
May 2	Andy Zemit 862-8160	Support a divided highway with a median. I would like to see all the special design concepts included. Thank you.
May 2	Laura Kochis 12 Willowbrook Whitefish 862-5910	Have been a resident of Montana for 18 years. I am in favor of a divided highway, with a median, including all entrances to the cities in the valley. I oppose strongly a five-lane highway for safety reasons and also for aesthetics. I would also like to see the special design concepts included in your plan, and feel that this would preserve the beauty of this area that we have had. Don't want to make this into a Los Angeles freeway here. This would be a long-term solution, rather than a short-term interim answer.
May 2	Keith Bolin 862-4555	I have a business on the highway. Whatever is done with the highway is going to affect me. This has gone on long enough. I have been on hold for five years while they decide what to do with the highway, and it affects my business. I'm tired of delay after delay. The more investigation I do I could live with a median. In some cases it might be better. A five-lane is fine with me too. This has gone on long enough and I'm willing to sue anybody that gets in the way if they prolong this project any further.
May 2	Barbara Lloyd 2114 Houston Drive Whitefish	I am in favor of a divided highway with a median, and do not want to see a highway that is five lanes. It would be environmentally ugly, and very unsafe. I don't mind the fact there would be $73 million as opposed to a $71 million, if we are going to do it, we should do it right. So please, please consider my message, and please go with the divided highway with a median, otherwise we are going to have spot zoning in that area and it will make that road uglier than it already is.
May 2	Jackie Clemens 405 8th Street West Whitefish	Think the very best plan for 93 that will serve us now and in the future, safely and aesthetically is the divided highway with a median strip, the whole length of it. Since we are only going to be done once, we should do it the best way to start with. Regarding the Proposed bridge across 7th Street in Whitefish as part of this plan-- that is too dangerous. Trucks coming down to that bridge in the winter will slip on the ice when they are going around the corner to get on the bridge. Also when trucks break they release diesel fuel into the air and this would compound our already terrible air quality problem. The bridge would ruin that stretch of river with all the ducks and nesting grounds there. I am really against it. There is no one in my neighborhood who wants that bridge there. The best thing is to have a one-way continue out to the end of Baker Avenue to where it joins 93. Don't build a bridge across the river, that would be a very, very expensive mistake.

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
May 2	Marcia Karikoe 93 South Whitefish 862-4460	She and her husband are both in favor of a five-lane highway with a turn-lane in the middle. There isn't enough land for anything else. If there was a median, snow would pack up against it. She is very concerned about the maintenance of a median. It collects trash and weeds grow in it. It looks terrible. It all sounds nice to have a median, but when it comes to getting the work done, there's no one to do it.
May 2	Dave Hattan	Support a divided highway. Would like to see the present character of the valley preserved as much as possible. Also, include the special design concepts as well.
May 2	Lisa Hoakman 324 Boone Road Somers 59932 857-3799	Don Dryer and myself support the divided highway with a median and all entrances to the cities in the valley, including all special design concepts, and we would really like to preserve the character of the valley, and not have to do this highway again.
May 2	Kermit Kvigne 334 West 9th Street PO Box 202 862-3318	Concerned about the alternate and I prefer Alternate B and I would like to see a truck route later on off 93 going over to 93 west and turning off in the vicinity of possibly near the Baptist Church. I'm opposed to having a truck route on West 7th Street. The money saved on building that bridge could later be used on a truck bypass. I am favor of a frontal road from Whitefish down to Highway 40 and also I would like to see a divided highway most of the way between Whitefish and Somers. That covers most of it. Thank you.
May 2	Suzanne Booker 752-0258	My husband and I are definitely in favor of a divided highway with a median going from Kalispell to Whitefish. I would love to make some more comments, if you would like to call I would be delighted.
May 2	Caroline Jacobs East Evergreen Kalispell	I support a divided highway with a meridian. Hopefully this will preserve and enhance the character of the valley as a long-term solution.
May 3	Bill Carpenter Box 1876 Whitefish	In favor of a divided with entrances and exits and special design concepts included. Think that is the best way to go for safety, scenic appeal and flow of traffic.
May 3	David Evans Mini Mart 721-4222	Curious about what decisions have been made on this corridor and if I can talk to someone about our complaints and our worries. *Returned call May 4. What is the status? Supportive of Spokane being one-way south, because traffic would be going by two other convenience stores before the Mini-Mart if it is one-way north.*
May 3	No name 756-6228	Where can I send a comment? *Returned call May 4 -- gave address*
May 3	Linda Gregwire 862-4588	Think that we should go with the five-lane, what the state originally designed. I don't know about a corridor with a divided highway and then transitioning to a five-lane with a suicide lane in the middle. I can't visualize it. Are people going to be confused with a transition from one kind to another? We need something desperately. Don't want to wait five to ten years to do it. Don't need grass growing in the highway. Concerns about maintenance of a median. It is very expensive to have a median. It is pretty for the tourists, but the people who live here are the ones who pay for the maintenance. I've seen medians in other areas and in the winter they are ugly -- vegetation is dried up, there are weeds, and it gathers trash. I just wish they would get the show on the road. If you would like to call her with more comments, she would welcome that. She and her husband work odd shifts, so call any time, maybe leave a message on their message machine.
May 3	Annie Reiker Crenshaw House	Re Meetings: Ben Cohen will be bringing in my faxed information and he will be speaking for the both of us. Please listen to him and know that what he says is my opinion also.
May 4	Larry Lottery 862-2336 Pastor, Whitefish Community Church of God	Concerned about traffic flow kinds of things and how they will be addressed in that location. Please give me a call. *Called back May 9. If a divided highway, would need to have a median break in front of the church. Traffic coming from Whitefish would have to make a U-turn -- we are dealing with 150 to 160 vehicles now. Definitely need good access. Request continuing involvement during design process.*
May 4	Mirene James 5075 Hwy 93 N Whitefish	Support a divided highway design.
May 4	Art Bollen 4670 Hwy 93 South 862-5235	I want the highway to proceed as fast as possible and any of these people who are fighting the highway, if they don't let the highway go I think I'm going to proceed legally to shut them up too.
May 4	Harold Bucher 120 Prk Knoll Ln 862-0047	Support a divided highway with a median over the entire distance of 93 and I would like to see special design concepts included as this is our one chance to do this right.

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
May 5	Jan Kellogg Whitefish	Very much in favor of a divided highway with a median down the middle the majority of the highway, just as much as we can have, just for the safety factor. Also like the idea of a bike path, that is important also. Also have concerns for kids crossing over from the west side of town to get to the schools, we need a safe way for kids to cross whatever design we end up with. I live off of Baker Street, I'm not sure this relates to what you're doing, but I am real concerned about Baker not being designated as going south only, unless there is a bridge that goes across on 7th Street.
May 5	Clyde Peterson 862-9292	Against the medians on the highway.
May 5	Lyle Davis 2563 Hwy 93 N	Unable to make meetings. I would prefer a five-lane highway out through this way versus the four-lane.
May 5	Donna Brunner 6010 Hwy 93 S Whitefish 862-3685	Against the median and would like to have a chance to voice my opinion. *Called back May 6 -- against the median because of loss in access and difficulty with maintenance -- they don't keep it maintained.*
May 5	Lail Diehn Hwy 93 North of Whitefish 862-5295	Just calling in response to the letter. Gone most of the day. Please call back. I am interested in the divided highway not the five-lane and it has to do with my property north of Whitefish. Please call me and let me know what you are thinking about. *Called back May 6. Lives west of Whitefish. A bikepath west of town would be great and much safer. Not supportive of a Seventh Street bridge. Supportive of a median between Karrow and Grouse Mountain. Supportive of a median between Somers and Whitefish.*
May 5	Don Jenson Happy Valley Storage Holiday Plaza Whitefish RV Park 862-3551 or 862-0311	Want to talk to you about that. Especially when you get farther south. We have already talked to you about the Holiday Plaza and RV park. But farther on south we've got some problems out there too. Please call whenever it's convenient. *Called back May 6. Definitely against the median highway because customers need to be able to turn into their property.*
May 5	Larry Krzyewski Funeral Home Whitefish on 93	Against any medians on the highway in front of my place. Thank you.
May 5	Marie Shaw 505 Lakewood Court Whitefish	I am in favor of a divided highway with a median concept I agree with the editorial in the Missoulian -- don't skimp on US 93.
May 5	Randy Napa Auto Parts Whitefish	Not able to attend a meeting. I am in favor of the five lane design. No medians whatsoever in the Whitefish business area here and on 93.
May 5	Newton Conklin Own two properties on 93 756-8281 home 752-1555 office.	*Called May 6. Was able to make the landowner's meeting on May 5. Biggest complaint was the lack of professionalism exhibited by MDT previously. Would not address loss of valuation.*
May 5	Kathy Kramer 862-0341	Live on west 93. Would like someone to call her. Please call me on Monday. *Returned call May 4. We live a quarter of a mile west of Grouse Mountain. Please send information. Also really support a divided highway between Kalispell and Whitefish even though it is going to cost more money. Every city is the same: the strip into Helena is so ugly. We have a unique downtown -- we have been planting trees now -- a solid expanse of pavement will encourage strip development.*
May 5	Greg Beesen 755-5437	I missed my date, evidently, on the meeting announcement here. But I would like some information, any information if you would like to call me back, that would be nice. *Called May 6 -- he is on 11th on Main Street and has a question about what is proposed in that area. He will be sent a map.*
May 6	Greg 1117 South Main 755-5437	Talked to you earlier and you said you were going to mail me the appropriate information. I would like to see that as soon as possible, and would maybe be willing to come to you and pick it up in person, if that is viable. *(Note: this was mailed on May 6, 1994.)*
May 9	Bobbie Wolstein	Phone conversation with Gina McAfee, C&B: Bobbie read an article that we had been having landowner meetings. Golf course and residential development approved just north of the Cemetery on the east side of US 93. Need access to this property. Desire to be placed on mailing list for any meetings held during the design process to discuss access: LHC, Inc., Box 7338, Kalispell, Montana 59904

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
May 9	Marcia Yarbrough 862-6224	Have a question regarding the article in the April 14 Pilot. I have been out of town and have just returned. I'm curious about the parking that is going to be removed by C3 alternative. *Returned call on May 10, 1994. Removal of parking through downtown Whitefish is of critical concern. Parking is the downtown economy. Removal of parking in the downtown area will kill retail businesses that require a high parking turn-over. Bike lanes through town are not as important as on-street parking provision for local area businesses. Bicycles can use adjacent parallel local streets which would provide a safer route for bicyclists while maintaining as much on-street parking as possible. Definitely need to consider a bypass of Whitefish to accommodate through traffic. Very opposed to a one-way couplet of streets on Baker and Spokane, particularly with impacts of increased traffic on Baker impacting the park north of the Whitefish River and residential areas adjacent to Baker. Marcia talked to Dale Ennor regarding the city's plans for replacement parking. Dale indicated that the city has no plans for replacement parking and Marcia suggested that the US 93 EIS should address this in its final version. Parking is of critical concern along 2nd Street where no adjacent city street parking is available. From Baker to the Whitefish River, parking is of critical concern particularly near the Sampson Block (two-story brick building across from the Whitefish Pilot.) The upper floors of the Sampson Building are condominiums and there is no parking available on the adjacent side streets or in the lot in the rear now that the bank has increased their drive-through facilities. On the north side of 2nd, there is no off-street parking provided for the building that contains the Whitefish Pilot and previous tenant, Whitefish Furniture (next door to the Pilot). Marcia indicated this is a 4,000 square foot building with no on-street parking provided. It was noted to Marcia that the US 93 EIS will be modified to illustrate a three-lane alternative from the Whitefish River to Karrow and that this three-lane cross-section could possibly be extended between the River and Baker under the C3 alternative with two lanes eastbound and one lane westbound. The segment of 2nd from Baker to Spokane would need to be two lanes westbound and perhaps only one lane eastbound. These modifications would allow for parking along the south side of 2nd between Baker and Spokane and along the north side of 2nd west of Baker to the Whitefish River. It was also mentioned to Marcia that the bypass of Whitefish will continue to be studied in the Whitefish Traffic Operations Study and in particular improvements to Twin Bridges intersections and paving of Lodgepole to encourage trucks to use the Farm-to-Market route. Marcia indicated that improvements to Karrow to fix the 90-degree turns at the southern end with a realignment to intersect US 93 opposite MT 40 would encourage local traffic to utilize Karrow (but she did admit that this would not be a good truck route). Marcia noted an item that has not previously been addressed, that being that a one-way couplet will increase traffic on Columbia and Kalispell Avenues between 2nd and 7th for traffic accessing residences in the eastern neighborhoods that wish to travel south on Spokane. This traffic would utilize Columbia and Kalispell to travel the five blocks or so south in order to avoid out-of-direction travel west to Baker then south then across the 7th Street bridge back to Spokane. It was mentioned to Marcia that the one-way couplet would have some impact on local city streets but that these impacts need to be weighed versus the benefits of potential improvements to US 93 traffic operations. Marcia asked that these comments be included in the consideration of alternatives through Whitefish given that the public response on the EIS has been extended through May 16.*
May 9		This phone number is for Brian. This is Joyce from the Dept. of Transportation with the Carter & Burgess phone number 862-1388.
May 9	Bobby Wolstein LHC 755-9166	Would like to set up an appointment to talk to you about the access to our property. The property is owned by Roger Claridge and LHC, Incorporated between Kalispell and Whitefish. We have a golf course development we have been approved for there and wanted to discuss the access to that with you. *Note: Discussed the project with her later in the day. She requested more involvement during the design phase of the project.*
May 9	Gary Elliot 862-7048	Want some further information on the Highway 93 project. *Called back May 10, 1994. Wondering if it is ever going to be built. When will construction occur? 1995 or 1996 would be great -- let's get it built before more children get killed.*
May 10	Jack Frasier, owns Jack's Diamond Back 6155 Hwy 93 S 862-4855	My comment on the proposed Highway addition would be a four-lane with a middle turning lane, which would consist of five lanes. If you put a divided highway in, traffic going south would be unable to turn into my business and it would deprive me of the income I need to continue in business. So I recommend a five-lane, with a middle-turn lane. Feel free to contact me if you want additional input from me.
May 12	Kent Frampton An owner of the Best Bet Casino 862-4718	Wonder what is being planned for right out in front of my building. Please call me. *Returned call.*

Date (1994)	Name	Comment
May 12	Rick Kramer 8620341	Interested in the west design of highway 93 west of Whitefish. I'm wondering about the actual -- there's a truck climbing lane there, I'm wondering about the existing center line of the highway, the actual dimensions either side of that line to the north and to the south for that cross-section, if you could give me that dimensions, including the powerline setbacks from the existing center median line. *Returned call - provided with dimensions.*
May 12	Elaine Vandenberg 450 Ramsfield Rd Big Fork, 59911	Phone conversation with Dale Paulson: Favors a five-lane raised - medians are hard to see. Elaine asked to have Brenda Miller put on mailing list: 260 Fox Farm Drive, Whitefish 59937.
May 12	Al Vandenberg 450 Ramsfield Rd Big Fork 59911	Favors a divided four lane - safer section.
May 12	Carolyn Thompson 70 Krause Lane Kalispell, 59901	Favosr a five-lane section - no reason given.
May 12	Cynthia Blake 334 Harrison Blvd. Kalispell 752-1080	Favors a five-lane section for safety reasons.
May 12	Duane Carlson 862-3116	Favors a five-lane - issues are cost and the added amount of land that is required for a divided section.
May 12	Mark Carlson 844-2293	Favors a five-lane -- issues are cost and safety.
May 12	Calvin Dyck	Favors a five-lane -- issues are cost and safety. Mr. Carlson runs heavy equipment.
May 16	Karen Lundgartard 862-0339	Please call -- has comments.
May 16	Karen Lundgantard 862-0339	Please call -- has comments. *Returned call on May 16, 1994: We traveled this last winter in France. There was an undivided highway south of Arles, France with a center turn lane, and at the beginning of this stretch of highway there was a sign that said "Caution: 17 deaths on next 12 kilometers in 1992" -- now that's only deaths, that's not injuries or accidents. That's more than two a mile. That bears looking at for any highway design where they are considering a center turn lane. People constantly use the center turn lanes as a passing lane, and all kinds of other things except a turn lane. We obviously have not got enough county, city or highway patrol people to patrols these roads, because there are violations daily of speed limits and all kinds of other regulations in our area. We obviously do not have the proper law enforcement to ensure proper use of a center turn lane. We travel considerably and I have never seen a worse traffic problem or worse situation than we have here in Flathead County.*
May 16	Lydia Daley 560 Somers Ave Whitefish, 59937 406/862-4389	I support a median all the way from Somers to Whitefish and I support a median from Route 40 all the way to State Park Road by Lion Mountain in Whitefish. I also support all the special design concepts and I support C(COUPLET -3) for the Whitefish area as far as the bridge and Baker Avenue, etc. Call me if you have any questions.
May 16	Kent Frampton 862-4718	Called earlier. I'm one of the owners of the Best Bet Casino owners in Whitefish. I want to talk to someone about what's going on right out in front of me. *Returned call June 2: He was wondering what the status is in front of his property. There is a median recommended by the Advisory Committee, pending City approval of maintaining the median. In front of Best Bet Casino, would be ending and transitioning to couplet. He has no real problem with access with or without a median.*
May 17	Marcie Kariko 406/862-4460	Please call me. *Returned call on May 19. Just went to Massachusetts -- should consider sound barriers between MT 40 and Whitefish if more land will be taken in this section. In favor of the five-lane highway.*
May 19	Wendy, KOFI Radio 755-6690	Want to talk to someone about Advisory Committee recommendations. Please call. *Returned call May 25.*
May 19	Charles Stews at Somers 857-3464	If we are going to have a divided highway by Somers to Rocky Cliff Road, we would like to know how we are going to get to our business. Thank you. *Returned call May 25. They have a shop and a duplex right across from the industrial park (on the west side) -- right beside Forest Hills Trailer Park. Do not support the median. Would like to meet during the design process to discuss access. Add to mailing list: Charles Stoos, 147 Pavilion Hill, Somers.*

May 23	Ken Smith Whitefish KOA (Diamond K Campground) 3 miles south of Whitefish on 93	Have concerns regarding the proposal for the meridian and we would like to talk to someone, 449-4045 or at the campground on Tuesday, 862-4242. *Returned call May 25. Concerned about a median break -- would need to allow enough room for trailers to stacks to turn. A five-lane would be preferable.*
June 20	Richard Atkinson 406/862-3480	Wish to comment in the Whitefish area. Preferred alternative looks generally good in Whitefish. The bridge for Seventh Street does not seem necessary. There are three drawbacks: • There will be increased traffic on Seventh west of Baker. • It is expensive. • For trucks going south on Baker and needing to take a turn onto the bridge, it will not be safe. Recommend looking again at the couplet alternative that routes traffic on the Baker Street extension.
June 16	Ron Trippet 752-9000	Received newsletter. Is curious about number 8 from mile 117 to 124 a divided highway section a. Please give me a call. *Returned call June 20, left message*
June 16	Scott Cleminger 755-0917	Have a business on Highway 93 south of Kalispell. I need to talk to someone about the proposed plan in front of my business which I do not like and we can talk about it then. Thank you. *Returned call June 20. Our property is between MT 82 and Rocky Cliff Road, Demarsville Mercantile and Cycle House (2 votes) -- my major concern is safety. We have two accesses now -- we need to have room for motor homes to turn around. My main concern is my motorcycle customers -- rear-ending is a big problem now. We should just build a five-lane road and get on with it.*
June 16	Eugene Lee	I have written to you people and been to your meetings at Cavanaugh's and at Somers. I just got the new highway corridor improvement study sent out June 10 and I received it yesterday. I thought the comment period was over, but it says that the Advisory Committee recommends this preferred alternative. Well, my main concern is the divided highway south of Kalispell. I have commented before. We people with farm machinery and big semis and stuff, there is just absolutely no way that we can live by a divided highway. So I have tried calling the committee members, you've got 14 of them listed and I called seven people before I finally got an answer and that was Pam Kennedy. She is obviously in favor of the thing because of the beauty and everything to the approach to Kalispell. Finally was able to get hold of two more people. I can't see how the Advisory Committee can be in favor of this when I find out that its only three people that are actually in favor of this divided highway and the rest are evidently against it. My main concern is, my property is at 4058 93 South. Drift Exploration & Drilling is in there with 40 some trucks and Don Patterson the owner says his trucks just cannot do down the highway get into the left turn lane and swing that semi around and come back and get in our driveway. The man I talked to at Cavanaugh's agreed. I don't know who has made up all these decisions, but Pam Kennedy said that about 100 percent of the people were in favor of this, she is wrong. If you go right down the highway and call those people you will find out that the majority of the people are against the divided highway. I have the time to go with somebody if they want me to contact these people. Tom Little who lives south of town says he is totally against the divided highway, but I understand he wasn't at the last meeting. You are just going to have the poll your people on the Advisory Committee. Take some hints from the highway department, because I found out this morning that the state highway department and county highway department is against a divided highway, and who has more expertise in deciding where a divided highway should be than those people. And looks are nice, but looks are only skin deep, and we have to be practical and set this thing up so that people can use it. Unless we have a frontage road or service road or something, we just absolutely have to be able to go straight cross the highway from our approach. If you want to call me my number is 257-2233. *Returned call. There will be a frontage road planned in this area.*
June 16	Robert Altenberg 857-3652	We were interested in finding out more of what the proposed plan is here on 93 south near the 82 junction.
June 16	Frank Thomas Kalispell News 755-6767	I got your recent newsletter and I would like to get some timelines involved in this. *Returned call June 20, 1994.*
June 16	David Burt 752-3362	Live on Hagerman Lane and I was just wondering what kind of access I'm going to have to the highway from my street. *Returned call June 20, 1994. Left message.*
June 17	Everett Slater 752-1040	I think you are taking away some of my parking and I would like to talk to somebody. *Returned call June 21, 1994.*
June 17	Glover	I received your transportation improvement study and what is a one-acre park-n-ride at Montana 82. What is that thing anyway?
June 20	Carol Lietz	Please return my call. *Returned call June 20. Have questions about a property north of MT 40, west side of road. We have a garage on this property -- would like to know how close to their property the new road will be (how it relates to existing centerline). How will we be able to get out of our property to go north? The previous MDT proposal was to consolidate access with the owners to the south.*

June 20	Linda Christensen 2755 Highway 93 West	Linda lives out by Skyles Lake and would like a detached bikepath considered west of Whitefish. It is very definitely needed for safety reasons. Linda was told that the preferred alternative is to include a detached bikepath as much as possible, including the area west of Whitefish.
June 22	Jeff Fleming Montana Chain Saw Carving	I am a business on the highway south of Kalispell near the intersection of Fir Terrace Road and would like some information on access once the highway is built, whether it is going to be a frontage road or if it is going to be access off the four-lane divided highway. Please call me back. *Returned call June 23. Sent a concept plan for this area on June 29.*
June 23	Steve Galaherd, Country Stores	Please call me. *Returned call June 23. Live on Hagerman Road. Just wanted to make sure a full-turning movement access will be provided there (it will). You have done a marvelous job, and have done a lot of work. Keep going.*
June 23	Ron Trippet	Calling about the 117 to 124 section. Own property about a mile north of the Stillwater Bridge and by the race track. Just requested clarification about how often median breaks are planned and when will construction begin.
June 24	DJ Walker, Remax Land and Lake	Regarding the highway frontage that's being bought between Glacier Memorial Park and the junction of Highway 93 and Highway 40. The question is, if it can even be answered, is: is there any more land that is going to be bought? I think that's all we need to know is just have all the purchases been completed on that particular project. Please call 257-8900 and ask for DJ Walker. *Returned call June 29 and mailed a letter.*
June 28	John Wilson, City of Kalispell	John Wilson with the City of Kalispell Public Works Department called to ask if a sidewalk/bikepath would be required under FHWA standards for the segment of US 93 from Wyoming to Reserve Drive. The City is considering building tennis courts at the FVCC and Council has been questioned on how pedestrians/bikes will get there from the residential areas to the south. *Dean Bradley spoke with Dale Paulson, FHWA, and the following information was relayed via telephone on July 5, 1994: FHWA does not require a bike path or sidewalk along a higher – this is a local decision and FHWA could participate. ADA does require ramps at intersections with sidewalks/curb and gutter -- which will be required along US 93 south of Wyoming to Idaho when the median is rebuilt.*
June 30	David Evans, Mini Mart	Have a store in Whitefish. Would like to talk to somebody about the US 93 corridor, about traffic patterns in and around my store. Newsletter #6 is a little confusing to me. Please call. *Returned call on July 1. David was confused by the description of traffic lanes on Spokane between the Whitefish River and 7th Street. It was explained to David that there would be two lanes in each direction, parking removed, with no widening proposed and no center turn lane provided. David thanked us for the explanation.*
July 1	Tim Grattan, Grouse Mountain Lodge	Concerned with left-turn access to/from Grouse Mountain Lodge and development. *Sent copy of concept plan showing left-turn lane and median opening at Lodge access point.*
July 22	Gary Howard	A shift in alignment to the west would be a major problem to them. We sold the right-of-way under one pretense – that the centerline would be on the existing alignment. As the approach comes into our property, we still need to get into the horse pasture.
August 1	Herbert W. and Lavonne M. Koenig	Have land south of Fenders on Church Drive. We would like to know what is going on. We have not been contacted. We get vibrations that they're going to take a hunk of land, and we would like to know. We have a house that's right along the highway and we would like to know what is going on. Please call. *Returned call August 2: Conversation with Michael Worrall. Herb is a resident living on the proposed Somers to West of Whitefish project site. He lives on west side of the highway just north of Tronstad Road. Herb explained that he is planning on addition to his house which is located on the proposed project site. He wanted an update on the plan of action and whether it would affect his house. Mike responded by stating that the recommendation from the Advisory Committee was for a median which is shifted west. Herb then questioned why the median was not shifted east instead. Mike responded that there would be greater impacts if the east shift were implemented. Herb expressed concern that he will get paid much less than other land per acre since it is agricultural land and not commercial. Herb suggested a grade separation at Church because of high traffic volumes and pointed out that he has an irrigation line under the road at Church and 1/2 mile south of that. Herb's primary concern was whether his house would be taken when the project begins. His house is located ten feet from the existing right-of-way line. Mike responded that the necessary right-of-way along his property would be between 25 feet and 80 feet in width, and therefore yes. Herb asked when work on the project would begin and Mike responded that no time frame for this section has yet been established. Other sections are likely to be constructed next year.*

Written Public Comments

We The Undersigned oppose raised medians on 93 in Whitefish

Charles Nordrum	Valley Inn
Mindy Curtiss	Mail Boxes Etc
Amelia Anderson	Amelia's Bakery
Jack West	Radio Shack
Scott Dryer	Dwyer's Framing Gallery
[illegible]	Investment Center of America
[illegible] Hood	Investment Center of America
Myra McCurdy	Wedgewood, Inc.
Robert Haffner	Wedgewood Properties
Patricia A Nordrum	Valley Inn
Johnnie Nader	Valley Inn
[illegible]	Valley Inn

Comment Sheet
Jeff Cornell
3859 Hwy 93 W
Whitefish, MT 59937
862-5083

I am in favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley. I would like to see all the special design concepts included.

Comment Sheet
John Clayton
PO Box 393
Waitsfield, VT 05673
802/496-5866

I am in favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley. I want to see all the special design concepts included. Please preserve and enhance the character of the valley.

Comment Sheet
Jack Whitehouse
3859 Hwy 93 N
867-5083

I am in favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley. I want to see all the designs included.

Letter Received February 14, 1994

Sirs: I am a resident of Whitefish, Montana who values my town the way it is and I am doing everything I can to see that it not ruined like Aspen, Colorado and Park City, Utah were ruined. Therefore, I would like to register my strong preference (and that of all my neighbors) for the four-lane divided. It is by far the safest idea and the one that will involve the least ripping and tearing at our town. Please do not consider the 5-lane highway!

Thank you, Sincerely, J. Mclemens

Letter dated March 11, 1994
Received March 14, 1994

Letter from
Pat Amone
Thomas Amone

My husband and I are for the Maximum Capacity (four-lane divided) design for Highway 93 north of Kalispell. If they can do it in New York why not here. We do not need another B-52 runway designed road. Growth in the Valley doesn't also have to mean ugly.

The people against the four-lane divided are letting dollar signs get in the way of good judgment.

Letter received March 21, 1994

Letter from

Bebe Kezar
903 Wisconsin
Alpine Village Centre
Whitefish, Montana 59937
406/862-5156

Thank you for the work you've done for the Flathead Valley and no doubt extending into other corridors. I'm in favor of a divided highway with a median, including the entrances to Whitefish and other cities here. I want all the special design concepts used, this to insure our important resources here and to keep that value for us who live here and our visitors. Thank you.

Letter received March 21, 1994

Letter from
Colin C. Andrews
State Farm Insurance
445 South Main
Kalispell, Montana 59901
406/752-2116

Gina, we need a highway now! To me a five-lane makes sense because of expense. A four-lane will require more time and additional land which to me is ridiculous. How many people died on this short road in 1993 (3)?

We also need a bypass but this is secondary to reconstruction of Highway 93.

22 March 1994

Ms. Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess
216 16th Street - Suite 1700
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Ms. McAfee:

Thank you for the information you sent me on the Highway 93 Draft EIS. As a resident of the Flathead Valley, I am very interested in this project because I believe that it has an important bearing on how our communities will need to address change in the future. It will set the trend for defining design quality and integrating it into the built environment of this region for many years to come.

I am in favor of Alternative A (Median) as a concept for the design of the highway. I feel that this type of design is best from a functional, safety and aesthetic standpoint. It will cost more, but I believe that the safeguarding the scenic and economic values of the valley are worth it. I think that the EIS could have been much stronger in recognizing and assessing visual quality values, since I feel that they represent the key differences between the alternatives.

The process by which we arrive at the decision on this issue is an important one to me also. I believe that the Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT) did a poor job of analyzing alternatives and involving the public in the earlier decision to construct a five-lane highway. While it is unfortunate that we had to go through the time and expense of the EIS, I feel that Senator Baucus was right in requiring that. In the future, the MDOT should be more proactive in seeking and using public input.

Thanks for your efforts in conducting the EIS, and for keeping me informed.

Sincerely,

Bob

Robert Dunkley
2435 Middle Road
Columbia Falls, Mt. 59912

cc: Senator Max Baucus
Governor Marc Racicot
Commissioner Sharon Stratton

RECEIVED
MAR 25 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

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APR 04 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

March 26, 1994

Greetings

As I was unable to make the public hearing on the HWY 93 design I am writing to ask you to please include as many of the special design features in the final plan as possible. While I realize that the cost of a divided highway may be higher than a five lane. Cost should not be the main criteria, rather they should be safety and aesthetics. The long range cost benifit of safety and aesthetics to our community will far out weight short term cost savings. Let's do it right the first time.

Additionally I would urge you to include design options that would remove culverts where 93 crosses the Whitefish river to install a bridge that would allow bike and pedestrian travel to schools and neighborhoods under the bridge. I also feel the 7th street bridge is probably the prefered options to allow use of Baker street bypass most effectively.

7-3

PAGE 2

Somers to Whitefish Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMMENT SHEET

I have the following comments or questions about the US 93 Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

THE BRIDGE ACROSS THE WHITEFISH RIVER SHOULD BE REBUILT TO A 4 LANE DESIGN EVEN IF THERE IS NO 4 LANE OR 5 LANE CONSTRUCTED ON THE PRESENT DESIGN & CONST. I BELIEVE THE 5 LANE SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT WEST OF WHITEFISH AT LEAST TO TOP OF LION MOUNTAIN WITH 4 LANE OR VERY WIDE 2 LANE ON TO SPENCER LAKE.

PURCHASING OF ADDITIONAL RIGHT-OF-WAY IN SOME AREAS ADJACENT TO OR IN CITIES OF WHITEFISH WILL HAVE TO BE A MUST. IT WILL NEVER BE ANY CHEAPER. THE REMOVAL OF BLVDS, AND TREES ON SPOKANE AVE COULD ALSO BE REMOVED TO FACILITATE THE 4 OR 5 LANE DESIGN.

LETS GET GOING ON THIS ENTIRE PROJECT IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE 25 YRS. AGO. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.

Name WILLIAM J. HEBERT

Address 315 8TH ST. E. KALISPELL, MT. 59901

Phone (406) 257-2295

(above information is optional)

Somers to Whitefish Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMMENT SHEET

I have the following comments or questions about the US 93 Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

I AM IN AGREEMENT WITH THE FIVE LANE DESIGN. SOME MODIFICATIONS WILL HAVE TO TAKE PLACE THROUGH THE CITIES OF KALISPELL AND WHITEFISH OF COURSE. THE THREE BLOCK AREA SOUTH OF THE COURT-HOUSE IN KALISPELL BE WIDENED BY REMOVING TREES AND BLVDS. THE AREA IS MOSTLY COMMERCIAL. THIS WOULD GIVE A WIDTH OF SOME 80 FT. OR MORE. CLIPPING THE CORNERS AROUND CT. HOUSE WOULD HELP ALSO.

I THINK THE SCHEME THRU THE CITY OF KAL. SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT ALONG WITH THE PLAN AND CONST. OF THE WEST BY-PASS. THE WILLOW GLEN DRIVE BYPASS ON EAST SIDE SHOULD BE ALSO PLANNED AND CONSTRUCTED EVEN IF IT HAS TO BE EAST OF THE HOUSING. THE 93 CONCEPT THRU WHITEFISH IS COMPLICATED BUT SHOULD BE USED. (CONT.)

Name WILLIAM J. HEBERT

Address 315 8TH ST. EAST, KALISPELL, MT. 59901

Phone (406) 257-2295

(above information is optional)

RECEIVED

MAR 28 1994

Carter Ru...

CHRIS G. MORITZ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

March 28, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess
216 16th Street, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Gina:

With this letter we want to express our preference for the Alternative A (Median) for U. S. Highway 93 for the entire length under study from Somers to Whitefish. Our reasons for this preference are as follows:

1. We definitely feel that it would be a safer highway. We always hesitate making a left hand turn onto a highway with a center turn lane, even if there are only three lanes. The five-lane design, especially with the anticipated increased traffic flow, would just present more of a problem.. We would rather enter a divided highway with a right hand turn, go to the next median cut and then make a U-turn. Snow conditions in the winter would just make this situation worse, since lane markings are not visible. Many people probably feel the same.

2. We would rather wait for the construction of the best highway for this beautiful valley, than rush and build the most expedient highway now. In a few years we may regret it, if the wrong decision is made now. It is more pleasant and less stressful to travel on a highway with a dividing median. Such a roadway has a more human scale. As traffic volume increases this will become more and more obvious.

3. The design with the dividing median requires less asphalt paving than the design with a continuous turn lane. The divided highway allows independent vertical and horizontal alignment, permitting the reduction of cut and fill and fitting the highway better into the landscape. These are two factors that would reduce costs.

4. We already are experiencing a lot of strip commercial development along Highway 93. A continuous turn lane would facilitate a continuous commercial strip all the way from Somers to Whitefish that would be hard to control. We are making every effort to direct growth in the valley as much as possible to established communities and to avoid commercial sprawl. The median alternative would help in this effort.

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MAR 31 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

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5. During the time of highway construction there would be less disruption of traffic, in our opinion, with the median alternative than with the widening of the existing highway to five lanes.

6. We believe that a separate independent bicycle path would be better than one that uses the highway shoulder adjacent to traffic lanes. It would be safer and more pleasant to travel on. If the width is at least 8 feet, maintenance of such a bike path should be no problem.

7. The cost of the median alternative may be somewhat higher, but we feel that this is good use of the tax money we are sending to Washington anyway. Since approximately 80% of the construction costs are federal funds, we think that we deserve getting some of our money back, rather than supporting with it construction in other states, that decide to construct the best highways rather than the least expensive ones.

Sincerely,

Chris and Cas Moritz

March 28, 1994

Gina McAfee: A short note to give my strong approval for a scenic divided highway with the median strip down the center for Highway 93 between Somers and Whitefish, Montana. The Flathead Valley has unparalleled beauty and this highway plan must be designed to prevent strip development between the three towns in the valley.

Thank you
Jan de Weeve
Montana resident of 23 years.

March 29, 1994

Dear Mr. Burgess:

I am definitely in favor of a divided highway with a meridian, including all entrances to the cities in the valley. This is something that will not be able to be changed in the future and should be done correctly now. I would like to see all the special design concepts included.

Sincerely,
Anne Callind

RECEIVED
MAR 29 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

1003 9th Street East
Whitefish, MT 59937

March 25, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess
216 16th Street - Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms. McAfee;

I want to compliment you and your staff on a professional and excellent job. Your staff always listened and noted, always exhibited diplomatic manner and never appeared biased on this project.
Your work is immeasurably superior to previous efforts.
Thank you.

My comments are biased in that I have long supported the idea of a divided and limited access route between Whitefish and Somers. My reasons are simple: the Federal Highway System was developed to move people and goods from on population center to another in a manner that promotes safe and efficient traffic flows. US 93 is a part of that federal system and the prime concern of physical improvements to the route should be safety and efficiency. Businesses, residences and property owners along the road have an interest in its design, but their "rights and access" should never take precedents over the major objective of a federal highway - movement through an area. US 93 should NOT be treated as a secondary highway, a county road or an urban street. It should be designed and maintained as a transportation route between small separated communities.

The "Turn-lane" formate will no doubt move traffic better than the existing surface for a few years, but the design encourages development along the corridor - the history of the design in other areas notes exactly that. With development will come a need to slow the traffic by speed limits and by stop signals. In a matter of years (likely less than a decade) the roadway will fail in its primary objective of moving traffic safely and efficiently. Don't use this design! At the very least,

minimize its use in the "Combo" concept.

I encourage you to include as much of the special design concepts of varying road elevations, scenic turnouts and landscaping as can be accommodated in the construction budget. Make this a truly scenic highway.

The Whitefish area alternatives listed are all improvements over the existing situation, but "Couplet - 2" appears the best alternative. There will be some longer loops as opposed to two-way streets, but safety is a prime issue again and the smooth flow of traffic with minimal crossing of opposite flow traffic. The inclusions of the 7th Street bridge would aid the congestion at Baker/93 and the downtown intersections by allowing East/West movement in a centralized area of the community.

Finally, I highly encourage the inclusions of Kalispell Alternative B in the plan using medians to encourage traffic flow. It's a good location which fits with other study findings. Excellent.

It is obvious in your summary, that only Median or Combo alternatives allow the inclusions of all design concepts. These are the natural candidates for final consideration, simply because they include all the special criteria developed in your work.

Finally, please know it is very important for the local population that both pedestrian and bicycle use be seriously addressed and incorporated into the final design. These forms of travel are much used in the area and need accommodation with improved auto flows.

Thank you for an excellent study which worked very hard to address many diverse viewpoints. Hopefully our state planners will see the worth of addressing EIS questions honestly and with accurate information, with true public input and unbiased administration of the study. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Thomas K. Harding

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMMENT SHEET

RECEIVED
MAR 30 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

I have the following comments or questions about the US 93 Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

I am in favor of the divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley.

I want to see all the special design concepts included. These are excellent! And remember to include the pedistrian/bike path under the bridge in Whitefish.

As much as possible, bike trails should be included and be separated from the roadway.

To ensure community centered growth and discourage strip development, I am in favor of the most restrictive ROW acquisition.

Preservation of visual resources, safety and

Name JUDY CORNELL

Address 3859 HWY 93 N. WHITEFISH, MT 59937

Phone 406 862-5083

(above information is optional)

land use impacts are critical. Only the 4 lane divided highway can encourage long term growth that will benefit the valley. Thank you

7-8

Therese Fox Hash
490 Kookoosint Trail
Kalispell, MT 59901

30 March 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Ste 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Re: Public Comment for Highway 93 DEIS, Montana

Dear Mr. Burgess:

I am strongly in favor of a divided highway with a median for Highway 93 from Somers - Whitefish; this design should extend to all the entrances of the affected cities. As a member of the Kalispell City-County Planning Board and Zoning Commission, I view guided development as critical to preserving the integrity of this valley and the way of life which makes not only Montana special, but our valley in particular. The March 13, 1994, editorial in the Missoulian, a copy of which I've enclosed (although I'm sure you have numerous copies of this same editorial), points out that it's the development which has already occurred and will surely accompany the highway project which should define the highway design which will ultimately be chosen.

If one looks at the various issues considered important by the public which have elicited in the process of rewriting the County-wide Master Plan, it is apparent that the public wants to protect the land and the life-style which we now enjoy. I strongly urge you to submit the divided highway with median design, with all the special design concepts included.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Therese Fox Hash

Therese Fox Hash

RECEIVED
APR 01 1994
Carter Burgess
Denver, Colorado

MISSOULIAN EDITORIAL (March 13, 1994)

Don't skimp on U.S. 93

Cost of best highway design offset by positive effects

A good decision about how best to upgrade Highway 93 between Somers and Whitefish should be easier to make now that the Federal Highway Administration has prepared a comprehensive review of the proposed project.

Controversy over the highway's design forced state transportation officials to postpone the project in 1992. The state Highway Commission had planned to upgrade the 29-mile segment of highway through the Flathead Valley with an economical and utilitarian five-lane thoroughfare. Complaints from many Montanans who felt the state hadn't fairly considered other highway designs prompted intervention by the federal agency that distributes money to states for transportation projects.

The federal environmental impact statement, a draft of which was published in late February, doesn't make any recommendations. But in its factual, unbiased analysis, it clearly shows that a four-lane highway divided by an attractive median would be the best design for the new highway, even though it also would be the most expensive of several possible designs.

The least but not insignificant advantage of a four-lane divided highway is that, as a kind of parkway, it is better suited to the beautiful countryside it would transect.

The effect different highway designs would have on future land use creates the strongest argument for a divided, four-lane highway.

The Flathead Valley is one of the fastest-growing places in Montana. For obvious reasons, people want to live there. While population growth is difficult to control, it can be managed — guided in desirable directions.

A five-lane design (two lanes in each direction with a turning lane in the middle — like Missoula's Reserve Street) allows virtually unlimited access to and from adjoining land. Such a design, so common in Montana, makes development of land adjacent to the highway easier and more practical.

By contrast, a four-lane highway divided by a median strip limits access to and from adjoining land. Such a design makes strip development along the length of the highway less appealing than development of land near major intersections.

Here's how the environmental impact statement puts it:

"The divided highway alternative ... favors concentration of new commercial and industrial uses at city intersections .... A divided highway design will encourage denser and more coordinated commercial land development on U.S. 93 in south Kalispell and along Spokane Avenue in Whitefish. This will be consistent with the community's stated desire to create a gateway to Whitefish. A center-median design also will advance south Kalispell industrial development near intersections and along frontage roads. ... (This design) will encourage expansion of existing commercial land uses at intersections and turning areas between Kalispell and Whitefish ... (and) also favors new residential development along nearby county roads.

"The presence of a center median will discourage investment in residential, commercial and industrial land uses located in mid-block areas. The presence of the center median will reinforce the implementation of the city/county planning objectives to preserve agricultural lands and restrict new development along the U.S. 93 corridor."

On the other hand, if a five-lane highway including center turning lane is built, the study predicts the result will be "random development of businesses in unzoned areas north of Somers." This design "will not reinforce the implementation of the planning objectives to preserve agricultural lands and restrict new development" in rural areas along the highway.

So, the choice is not really what kind of highway people want. Rather, it's what kind of development people want — what they want the Flathead Valley to be like in the future. The kind of development associated with a divided highway design would be far better than the alternative.

Of course, the divided highway would be expensive — $73.1 million, some $9.6 million more than the five-lane design, according to the environmental impact statement. A third alternative, a combination of the five-lane and divided-highway designs would cost $71.4 million. It would combine the least desirable aspects of the other alternatives — higher cost and more scattered development, at least on the outskirts of the cities.

The cost of this highway project won't be limited to the price paid for gravel and asphalt and labor. There also is a value that is more difficult to calculate associated with the effects — good and bad — the new highway will have on the Flathead Valley in general. Whatever the value of doing the job right, it has to far exceed the $9.6 million that might be saved from doing it wrong.

Bottomly Law Offices

Attorneys:
Joe Bottomly
Anne Biby

Lori M. Wiley,
Legal Secretary

1108 South Main, Suite 4
P.O. Box 1976
Kalispell, MT 59903-1976
(406) 752-3303
Fax: (406) 755-6398

#18 Sixth Street North
Suite 201
Great Falls, MT 59401
(406) 771-0073

March 30, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Burgess:

I am writing concerning the proposed widening of Highway 93 from Somers to Whitefish in northwest Montana. I reside here in the Flathead Valley, and I travel from Bigfork to Kalispell every day, so I am very aware of the need to widen the highway. I am an attorney, as you can see by the letterhead, but I am writing not in that capacity but simply as a citizen.

I am concerned that the widening of Highway 93 be done in a way which best enhances the character and beauty of our valley. Therefore, I hope that you will recognize that a divided highway with a median will be far superior to a five-lane highway. Many of us would like to see roadside development clustered as much as possible, rather than spread out as appears to be happening now. I believe that a divided highway will further that goal.

In addition, I hope that the special design concepts which have been recommended will be factored into the highway plans. Nothing is more important than protecting, as much as possible, the rural nature of this beautiful valley. Please recommend these designs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anne G. Biby

RECEIVED
APR 01 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

JOHN B. COLLINS
3080 E. LAKESHORE DRIVE
WHITEFISH, MONTANA 59937

March 30, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Re: Highway 93 DEIS

I strongly support a 4-lane, divided highway between Whitefish and Somers.

A 4-lane design is much safer than the 5-lane alternative. One only has to experience Highway 93 south of Whitefish during peak traffic periods to appreciate the danger inherent in a 5-lane, center turning lane, design.

Another major issue is the unsightly, "strip" appearance presented by a 5-lane roadway. While a 5-lane highway may be less expensive to construct, a four lane, limited access, landscaped design will be a great improvement and, along with appropriate zoning, could preserve what is left of the natural beauty of the Whitefish to Somers corridor.

Sincerely,

John Collins

JBC/vjm

RECEIVED
APR 01 1994
Carter Burgess
Denver, Colorado

7-10

30 March 94

I am writing to comment on the Highway 93 DEIS. I am in favor of a divided highway with a median, especially at the entrances to the cities. The type of development that follows from this type of construction is what I want the Flathead Valley to enjoy in the future.

I'm also pleased & in favor of the one-way designs you have recommended for Baker & Spokane in Whitefish — I actually don't have strong feelings about which design is better!

Thanks for all your hard work!

RECEIVED
APR 04 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Carol B. Atkinson
355 Blanchard Lake Dr.
Whitefish, MT 59937
(406) 862-7591

Valerie J. Meinhardt
2190 Houston Drive
Whitefish, Montana 59937

March 30, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

RE: Highway 93 DEIS

Please consider this a strong recommendation for a <u>four lane, divided highway</u> between Whitefish and Somers.

The four lane design would be far safer than the five lane alternative. I have seen abuses of the center lane that were bone chilling. Only with luck have we avoided some very serious accidents due to that existing situation.

Aesthetically the four lane would be far superior to the five lane. I have considered the cost factor since it is major. However, I would compare the difference to constructing a new home of sheet metal or wood construction. In terms of years we will have the highway, the cost is not as expensive as it first appears.

Sincerely,

Valerie J Meinhardt

RECEIVED
APR 04 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

ROBERT HURLY
Attorney at Law
234 Fifth Street South
P. O. Box 1170
Glasgow, Montana 59230

(406) 228-2641

March 14, 1994

Carter-Burgees Engineering
% Whitefish City Engineer
Whitefish City Hall
Whitefish, Montana 59937

Gentlemen:

Newspaper announcements tell us that you've completed your proposals for various highways south of Whitefish.

We own property on the west-side of the highway as follows:

Tract A - 6020 Highway 93 south, identified by the Highway Department when they were trying to buy right-of-way for this road a couple years ago as parcel #205 from Station 664 plus 20 to 666 plus 30 in the SWNE of 12, 30 North Range, 22 West.

Tract B - Steir property being sold to Dorothy Hurly on contract at 5878 Highway 93 south, identified as Highway Department right-of-way numbers parcels 281 and 282 from Station 645 plus 90 through 649 plus 20, all in the SWSE of 12, 30 North Range, 22 West.

Tract C - 5650 Highway 93 South, highway right-of-way parcel 169 from Station 616 plus 28 through 619 plus 52 in the SWNE of 13 and 30, 22.

The existing right-of-way from the center line appears to be 75 feet in front of Tract A, and it appears to be 125 feet in front of Tracts B and C.

Please tell us how your proposed alternate effects each of our 3 properties, both as to how much additional right-of-way you are proposing with each, and as to changes in grade - cuts or fills which you are proposing in front of each of our 3 properties.

Thanks in advance for this information.

Cordially yours,

ROBERT HURLY
RH/cs

GINA
2 PAGES
Pic

ROBERT HURLY
Attorney at Law
234 Fifth Street South
P. O. Box 1170
Glasgow, Montana 59230

(406) 228-2641

March 31, 1994

Mr. Dale Paulson
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park, Room 448
Drawer 10056
Helena, Montana 59626-0056

Mr. Marvin Dye
Director
Montana Department of Transportation
Montana Highway Department Building
Helena, Montana 59626

Gentlemen:

We own several properties along Highway 93 south of Whitefish, Montana.

We have seen newspaper articles telling us that you are proposing three alternatives.

We have seen newspaper articles telling us that the alternatives will require removal of several homes or business properties along the right-of-way, and inviting us to submit comments.

We have called at the Whitefish City Hall to find out what your plans are and nothing there sheds any light on how your plans may affect any of our properties.

We have written to your engineers to find out that same information; copy of that letter is attached; and we have received no response whatever.

Please tell us how your proposed project, in each of its alternate, will affect our properties, all as described in detail in the letter to your engineers.

Please give us this information soon.

Cordially yours,

ROBERT HURLY
RH/cs
Enc: letter of 3-14-94

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Burgess,

I would like to register my support for a 4-lane, median divided highway on U.S. Highway 93 through the Flathead Valley between Somers and Whitefish, Montana, including the entrances to those 2 cities. I agree that the special design concepts, especially those that accomodate bicycles, should be built.

With the ongoing, and expected, human population growth in the Flathead Valley, a divided highway would be an important management tool to control rampant, blightful strip development. A landscaped, median divided highway is consistent with the collected wishes of the valley's citizens, as expressed through the current Cooperative Planning Coalition's efforts, to maintain an aesthetically attractive environment.

The restructuring of Highway 93 is a one-time public works opportunity that will establish the trend for future developments in the Flathead Valley, be it a future sensitive, respectful, and worthy of the inherent beauty of our Valley or a blatent expression of the collective greed and apathy of a community that killed the goose that laid the golden egg for selfish, short-term gain. The 15% increase in the cost of the project, as projected in the Environmental Impact Statement for a median divided highway, is a paltry sum when amortized over the life of the highway, which could indeed be centuries. This is a pitance to pay for both the tangible and intangible benefits to be realized with a thoughtful highway design.

Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

LAEL DIEHM

Lael Diehm
2555 Hwy 93 W
Whitefish MT 59937

RECEIVED
MAY 09 1994
Carter Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

353 Antelope Trail
Whitefish, MT.
59937

RECEIVED
APR 28 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

R. B.
2602 S 7th West
Msla MT 59801

RECEIVED
MAY 02 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

Brenda King
Missoula, Mt.

RECEIVED
MAY 02 1994

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

Carol Junkert
2828 S 7th W.
Missoula, MT 59801

RECEIVED
MAY 02 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

Deborah Hopkins
31646 Eaton
Polson, MT 59860

RECEIVED
MAY 02 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

Debbie Strick
18 Panorama Dr
Kalispell, MT 59901

RECEIVED
MAY 0 2 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

Vernon T Childers
344 Ponderosa St.
Kalispell Mt. 59901

RECEIVED
MAY 0 2 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Burgess,

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

Darlene Childers
344 Anderson St.
Kalispell, MT 59901

RECEIVE
MAY 02 1994
Carter-Burg
Denver, Col

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

Betty R. Fairchild
Betty R. Fairchild
120 Dennis Rd. Kalispell

RECEIVED
APR 29 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Burgess,

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely, Michael W. Fairchild

Michael W. Fairchild
1122 Whitefish Stage Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

RECEIVED
APR 29 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

Gerald M. Hayes

RECEIVED
APR 28 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Burgess,

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

Laurena Hayes

RECEIVED

APR 28 1994

Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

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Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

Karen E. Black
P.O. Box 1675
Columbia Falls, MT 59912

RECEIVED

MAY 16 1994

Carter Burgess
Denver, Colorado

GINA MCAFEE
CARTER & BURGESS
216 16TH ST. SUITE 1700
DENVER, CO. 80202

4/1/94

RE: COMMENTS ON U.S. 93 DESIGN-SOMERS TO WHITEFISH.

MY HOME IS ON U.S. 93 SOUTH OF WHITEFISH ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY. IT WAS EXCITING WHEN THE INFORMATION WAS RELEASED TO BUILD A 5 LANE HIGHWAY FROM SOMERS TO WHITEFISH. THESE HOPES WERE SHATTERED WHEN A HAND FULL OF PEOPLE, MOST OF WHOM ARE IMPLANTS FROM OUT OF STATE, AND PROBABLY NEVER HAVE TO USE THE ROAD ON A REGULAR BASIS OR NEVER HAVE TO EGRESS OR EXIT IN OPEN AREAS. TO THESE MINORITIES, THE PRACTICALITY AND COMMON SENSE IN HIGHWAY DESIGN IS DISCARDED. IF A VOTE WAS TAKEN, IT WOULD SHOW THAT 95% OF THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE APPROVED THE ORIGINAL 5 LANE. WE WOULD NOW BE USING AND ENJOYING THE ROAD. INSTEAD, WE ARE FIGHTING THE TRAFFIC, READING ABOUT ALL THE ACCIDENTS AND LOSS OF LIVES, AND BECOMING A RESENTFUL COMMUNITY BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR VALLEY TRAVEL.

THE MEDIAN DESIGN WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE FOR ANYONE LIVING ALONG THE ROAD AND HAD TO TRAVEL IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION TO REACH A TURN AROUND. THIS DESIGN IS FOR OPEN COUNTRY WITH NO RESIDENCES THAT NEED TO ACCESS THE ROADWAY. THE MEDIAN WOULD ALSO RESULT IN MORE ACCIDENTS DUE TO CARS AND TRUCKS TRYING TO CHANGE DIRECTION AT THE TURN AROUNDS.

THOSE WHO WANT BEAUTY INSTEAD OF COMMON SENSE PRACTICALITY, NEED TO USE THE SECONDARY ROADS. THE GRASS WAYS WOULD REQUIRE MORE MAINTENANCE, PROVIDE FEED FOR DEER, AND CAUSE MORE ROLL OVER ACCIDENTS FROM THE LEFT LANE.

IF A VOTE WAS TAKEN, THE RESULTS WOULD BE A 90% EXCEPTENCE FOR THE 5 LANE AS ORIGINALLY PREPOSED. IT WILL BE BUILT SOONER, COST LESS MONEY, DISPLACE LESS LAND AND PROPERTY, AND IN MY OPINION BE A SAFER DESIGN.

PLEASE PUT ON RECORD MY STRONG FAVOR OF THE 5 LANE DESIGN, AND MY STRONG DISAGREEMENT FOR THE MEDIAN PREPOSAL.

SINCERELY,

Don Heppner

DON AND JUDY HEPPNER
HWY 93 SOUTH RESIDENT
WHITEFISH, MT.

RECEIVED
APR 07 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Burgess,

I would like to register my support for a 4-lane, median divided highway on U.S. Highway 93 through the Flathead Valley between Somers and Whitefish, Montana, including the entrances to those 2 cities. I agree that the special design concepts, especially those that accomodate bicycles, should be built.

With the ongoing, and expected, human population growth in the Flathead Valley, a divided highway would be an important management tool to control rampant, blightful strip development. A landscaped, median divided highway is consistent with the collected wishes of the valley's citizens, as expressed through the current Cooperative Planning Coalition's efforts, to maintain an aesthetically attractive environment.

The restructuring of Highway 93 is a one-time public works opportunity that will establish the trend for future developments in the Flathead Valley, be it a future sensitive, respectful, and worthy of the inherent beauty of our Valley or a blatent expression of the collective greed and apathy of a community that killed the goose that laid the golden egg for selfish, short-term gain. The 15% increase in the cost of the project, as projected in the Environmental Impact Statement for a median divided highway, is a paltry sum when amortized over the life of the highway, which could indeed be centuries. This is a pitance to pay for both the tangible and intangible benefits to be realized with a thoughtful highway design.

Thank-you for this opportunity to register my opinion.

Sincerely,

Brian S. Wood
P.O. Box 4386
Whitefish, Mt. 59937

RECEIVED
MAY 06 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

WESTERN STATES INSURANCE AGENCY
255 Bridge Street · P.O. Box 160
Bigfork, Montana 59911
406/837-5281
Fax 406/837-3540

April 1, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess
216 - 16th St. Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Re: Somers to Whitefish West
Draft EIS

Dear Gina:

I have attended two of the public hearings on this matter and read your draft EIS. I am also a member of the Kalispell Area Transportation Committee and have been in attendence on several occasions when you and others from CRSS and C & B have addressed the committee.

Thank you for your work thus far on the project.

I am not writing to offer any solutions as I am not "qualified" to do so. I do have concerns regarding the related impacts. My primary interest in the projects is what end results in the rural areas along the corridor for the segments you have described as:

1) Somers to Kalispell

2) Kalispell to Whitefish

I am chiefly concerned with your L.O.S. issues of safety, land use, and visual.

I would like to see as a final product what you have described as the A (combo); that is

1) use the A median (depressed) where practical

2) use the A turn lane where practical

Which ever is chosen and where should coincide with the master plan which is currently under study by C.P.C.

Very truly yours,

John Agnew

RECEIVED
APR 04 1994

Comment received April 1, 1994
From Bill Horf
2585 Dillon Rd.
862-3117

Make it a turn lane highway (5 lane) highway.

April 5, 1994

David Shaner
Clayartist
7135 Montana 35
Bigfork, MT 59911-6114
406/837-4388
Ms. Gina McAfee:

As a long time Flathead Valley resident I am writing to urge adoption of a scenic four-lane highway with median for Highway 93 between Somers and Whitefish, Montana. I firmly believe it is worth the extra cost to preserve the beauty of this area and thus control growth in an aesthetic way.

Thank you.

Note from Jim & Linda Babiak
Box 1987
Whitefish, MT 59937

April 7, 1994

Dear Ms. McAfee:

Just wanted to let you know that we support the A(MEDIAN) design for Highway 93 and also we favor the special design concepts. For Whitefish we prefer the one-way couplet using Baker and Spokane with the 7th Street bridge. Thanks for a great job.

Letter from Tom Edwards
April 7, 1994

I am in favor of the divided highway concept. Long term I know this will work best and look as the vision we want to project for our town. Let's do it right!

Thank you,

Tom Edwards
2060 E. Edgewood
Whitefish, Montana 59937

Western Building Center
6130 Highway 93 South
Whitefish, Montana 59937

April 7, 1994

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to voice my support for a divided Highway 93 with a center median.

Having grown up in the Flathead Valley and worked in the tourist industry I know that the rural and wilderness character of the valley is what attracts people to it. Anything we can do to preserve that character and regulate development is a positive thing no matter what the cost.

A divided highway with a median and all of the special options outlined in the plan will help keep the Flathead the kind of place that will continue attracting people into the next century.

Please choose the divided highway plan.

Sincerely,

Kristin Zwida

ProvidentFinancial

Investments that hold your interest.

7-22

April 8, 1994

Carter Burgess
216-16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Re: Highway 93 Somers to Whitefish, Montana

To Whom It May Concern,

I have read with pleasure your final report on the above highway project, and congratulate you on the professional nature of the report.

As a resident, just off Hwy 93 in Whitefish and with my office in Kalispell, I use the roadway at least twice a day. I strongly urge a recommendation of a divided highway for as much of the system from Somers to Whitefish, as possible. I would also like to have as many "special design concepts" included in the final plan.

I look forward to perhaps one day driving on the new highway which will be safer and less congested.

Sincerely,

Bob Rocchi,
President

301 1st Ave. E.
P.O. Box 2900

Kalispell, Montana
59903

Tel: 406/756-1000
Fax: 406/756-1005

April 8, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Burgess:

I am writing to voice my support in favor of a four-lane highway divided by a median. I live in Whitefish and work in Kalispell and drive highway 93 every day - rain, snow, sleet or ice. I have witnessed numerous accidents and think the five lane design would not have avoided any of these. The four-lane design would definitely be safer and much more pleasant to drive.

I have lived in this valley for over 12 years and feel it is a very special place to be and certainly deserving of any added expense a four-lane highway might bring.

I hope you will be responsive to the caring people who take the time to let you know of their concerns for a better, safer highway design for this area of northwest Montana.

Sincerely,

Leslie J. Rogers

Leslie J. Rogers
2060 Houston Drive
Whitefish, MT 59937

(406) 862-3236

RECEIVED

APR 11 1994

Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 8, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

RE: Highway 93 DEIS

Dear Gina:

I would like to reiterate :

1. I am in favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley.

2. I want to see all the special design concepts included.

3. It has been proven that a divided highway is safer than a 5-lane.

4. As a lifelong resident of the Flathead Valley, I want to see as much of the aesthetic quality of our beautiful area preserved as possible.

5. This would be a long-term solution. The initial cost may be more, but the long-term effects will be well worth the cost.

After traveling extensively in the New England states and North and South Carolina in the past few months, I am surprised that a 5-lane design is even being considered for Highway 93. Divided highways are the preferred designs everywhere. Let's get this approved and build that highway!

Very best regards,

Jeanne

Jeanne Tallman
965 Packrat Lane
Whitefish, MT 59937

RECEIVED
APR 18 1994
Carter Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Letter from Karen C. Zwisler
April 8, 1994

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing with comments concerning the proposed Highway 93 construction plan. I have lived in Whitefish for 14 years and drive Highway 93 daily to work in Kalispell. It is very important to me to see this construction of 93 done with a divided highway and a median from Somers to Whitefish. I moved to western Montana 20 years ago because of the beauty of this place and the recreational opportunities. Aesthetically it is more pleasing to me to see a divided highway with a grass strip in between instead of one wide slab of asphalt.

Let's build a highway that is going to be suitable for the long run not just the next 10 years. A 5 lane is not looking to the future growth of this valley. A divided highway with controlled access will prevent this stretch of road from turning into one long commercial strip. The Flathead Valley is not the place for one more strip.

I would appreciate you taking these factors into consideration when you make your final decision.

Thanks.

Karen C. Zwisler

som0415m.2gm

Montana State Senate

SENATOR BOB BROWN
HELENA ADDRESS:
CAPITOL STATION
HELENA, MONTANA 59620
PHONE: (406) 444-4650
HOME ADDRESS:
333 COUGAR TRAIL
WHITEFISH, MONTANA 59937

The Big Sky Country
Dean of the Senate

COMMITTEES:
JUDICIARY
TAXATION
EDUCATION

Whitefish, Montana
April 8, 1994

Carter Burgess
216, 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Folks,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my in-put with you regarding the design for Highway 93. I am most familiar with the highway from Kalispell north to Whitefish, and so will focus my comments on that segment.

The Flathead Valley is growing and the growth trend is likely to continue and probably to accelerate. A five-lane design, with little or no control on access, will inevitably result in strip development and a gauntlet of traffic lights between Kalispell and Whitefish. A divided highway design, based on the interstate highway model, would avoid the commercial strip, and so better facilitate the efficient flow of traffic -- particularly in the long term. It is better to implement a far-sighted design now, than to have to redesign the highway, or construt a by-pass, at great cost and disruption in the future.

Specifically, I would begin the divided highway in the vicinity of the Stillwater River Bridge north of Kalispell and continue it to about the turn-off to the county land-fill six miles or so south of Whitefish. Perhaps a divider could be built down the center of the highway form the land-fill to the Highway 40 intersection. The five lane design would be acceptable to me from Kalispell to the bridge, and from Highway 40 into Whitefish -- perhaps even from the land-fill into Whitefish. But we should certainly preserve the rural character and avoid the commercial strip between the bridge and the dump.

Sincerely,

Bob Brown

Bob Brown

RECEIVED
APR 13 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

4-8-94

Dear Mr. Burgess:

I write to lend my voice to others in favor of preserving the rural character of the corridor along U.S. Highway 93 between Somers and Whitefish Montana.

It is essential that we receive a divided highway with a "green belt" median strip. It is essential that we include all the special design concepts in the proposal. It is essential that we receive a design that will PREVENT strip development along the highway. Intersections must be well spaced to prevent random pullout to roadside glut. I also favor roadside vegetative screening and a complete ban on any roadside bulletin boards and advertisement/commercial signs.

In short, this is a crucial highway to preserve. Locals want this done right. We don't want what every other community has in the way of hurried expressways that can be seen anywhere USA.

Thanks for the opportunity comment.

Gratefully,

Michael J. Ober

Michael J. Ober

54 Buffalo Hill Drive
Kalispell, MT 59901

RECEIVED
APR 13 1994

Letter from Carl E. Wetzler
April 11, 1994

Dear Ms. McAfee:

I'm writing to voice my support for the divided Highway 93 with median concept. I believe it to be the most aesthetic and safe alternative and will help our beautiful valley here into the 21st century. Having been a resident of the Flathead Valley for 17 years (and hoping to be for many more years) I truly want the beauty of our scenery here preserved. We're changing quickly and the quality of our lives here is being impacted in many ways. The median alternative, I believe, will lessen the impact.

Sincerely,

CEW

som0415m.2gm

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMMENT SHEET

I have the following comments or questions about the US 93 Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

As a mother of 2 young boys and a person who walks for exercise quite often I would like to see a pedestrian trail rather than a wide shoulder on highway 93. Since there are no sidewalks in this area I believe keeping pedestrians as far from the traffic as possible increases pedestrian safety. This highway is notorious for people passing and inspite of the eventual 4 lanes we are to be getting motorists will continue to use the shoulders to go around, pass or whatever. Therefore, I believe a pedestrian trail would be much safer than a wide shoulder.

Name Vangie Wolfe

Address P.O. Box 2045, WF, MT

Phone

(above information is optional)

Somers to Whitefish Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMMENT SHEET

I have the following comments or questions about the US 93 Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

I strongly support the Alternative "A" Median highway for U.S. 93. It is a very treacherous stretch of road, which is only going to be busier as the population increases. With a median, either concrete or divided, there is a much less chance of being hit head-on - a very expensive and life-threatening situation.

Please - let us divide the lanes - even if it could save one life - it would be worth it.

Thank You.
Mary A. Sands

Name Mary A. SANDS
Address 978 Colorado, Apt. A (P.O. Box 1207)
Phone Whitefish 862-6465

(above information is optional)

7-26

915 Dakota
Whitefish, Montana 59937
April 11, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th St. Mall
Denver, Co. 80202

Dear Carter Burgess,

I am writing in support of the scenic divided highway option with the median for Highway 93. this is a much safer alternative than the 5 lane option and would be more effective in protecting the scenic attributes of Flathead Valley.

In addition, I would like to see all the special design concepts included. It is especially important to provide bike and pedestrian pathways to promote alternatives to motor vehicle use.

We need to preserve and enhance the character of Flathead Valley and halt strip development. Highway 93 must be built right because we will not have the opportunity to go through this process again.

Sincerely,
Jan B. Metzmaker

RECEIVED
APR 14 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 11, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Gina,

First of all I want to say that you and Carter Burgess have done an outstanding job of presenting the facts and getting input from the citizens of Flathead County. I felt that what I had to say was really listened to and considered and that my questions were answered thoroughly.

I am very much in favor of the 4 lane design with median because it is safer, it will discourage strip development and it is more aesthetically pleasing. I am also for the special design concepts including gateways to Kalispell and Whitefish, the scenic overlook, the tourist information center, and split alignments in the two locations selected. It bothers me a great deal that we have only one approach to Kalispell that is not ruined with strip development and many too many billboards. The 4 lane/median design is critical to maintain the northern approach to Kalispell and to preserve the beautiful countryside as we drive on highway 93, especially between Kalispell and Whitefish. The impact of the highway design will be with us forever. Even though the median alternative is more costly to build, I feel it will prove to be the safest, sanest, and certainly the most aesthetically pleasing not only for the near future but in the long run also.

Sincerely,

B. J. Carlson
375 Sandalwood Dr
Kalispell, MT 59901

RECEIVED
APR 14 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

230 Missy Lane
Whitefish, MT 59937
12 April, 1994

Carter-Burgess
216 16th St. Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to urge you to choose a divided four-lane highway both for the approach to the city of Whitefish and for as large a portion as possible of U.S. Highway 93 elsewhere in the Flathead Valley. Whitefish is my home. It faces poorly controlled, sprawling growth, and I have no doubt but that an undivided highway will spur strip development throughout the area. Beyond that, an undivided highway is less safe. It is also less pleasing to the eye, and that counts for a great deal in this lovely area.

I for one have no wish to save a few dollars now, only to bequeath a more crowded, unsightly, mall and subdivision-lined transportation corridor to my children. Everyone thinks his or her town is special, but surely you realize that this town of Whitefish, at the foot of the Whitefish Range, and this valley, bordered by the Swan Mountains, the Bob Marshall Wilderness, and Glacier National Park, are truly and uniquely beautiful. How can anyone want to do anything that would risk turning them into Anywhere, U.S.A.?

It is time that we for once go beyond mere efficiency and measure progress in its larger sense, giving the highest consideration to the special qualities of life here. Please recognize that the majority of people in the valley moved here for those qualities and wish to preserve them. We want a divided, landscaped, four-lane highway, and we want to have a continuing voice in the future of our hometown. I thank you for all the efforts you are making to consider local desires, and I appreciate your willingness to consider alternatives to the usual highway schemes, which always seem to remove the character of communities rather than enhance them.

Sincerely,

Douglas H. Chadwick

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APR 18 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

RE/MAX Above the Crowd!®

each office independently owned and operated

April 12, 1994

Carter Burges
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Burges:

There's nothing I can think of to say in this letter that hasn't been said before, and better, by others. But I still want to add one more vote in favor of a divided highway 93 south of Whitefish.

The March 13th editorial published in the Missoulian expresses some of my thoughts. My main wish is for the road to add to the visual beauty and orderly development of the valley. My other concern is safety. I know you've driven through Whitefish and watched how drivers use the 3 lane highway we have. It's disorderly and dangerous to have people coming into the highway from wherever they are. People dart across one lane of traffic and duck into the middle lane so they can ease themselves into traffic across the road, others are pulling into the lane to turn left, sometimes long before the need too, and it's utter chaos.

I think everyone appreciates all the time and effort that's gone into this project, and it's going to be interesting to see how it develops. I just hope it turns out to be beautiful and safe.

Sincerely,

RE/MAX of Whitefish

Suzanne Royer

RECEIVED

APR 14 1994

Carter Burges
Denver, Colorado

RE/MAX of whitefish
sixth and spokane
whitefish, montana 59937
phone: (406) 862-3577
fax: (406) 862-0383

RE/MAX Above the Crowd!®

each office independently owned and operated

April 12, 1994

Carter Burges
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Burges:

There's nothing I can think of to say in this letter that hasn't been said before, and better, by others. But I still want to add one more vote in favor of a divided highway 93 south of Whitefish.

The March 13th editorial published in the Missoulian expresses some of my thoughts. My main wish is for the road to add to the visual beauty and orderly development of the valley. My other concern is safety. I know you've driven through Whitefish and watched how drivers use the 3 lane highway we have. It's disorderly and dangerous to have people coming into the highway from wherever they are. People dart across one lane of traffic and duck into the middle lane so they can ease themselves into traffic across the road, others are pulling into the lane to turn left, sometimes long before the need too, and it's utter chaos.

I think everyone appreciates all the time and effort that's gone into this project, and it's going to be interesting to see how it develops. I just hope it turns out to be beautiful and safe.

Sincerely,

RE/MAX of Whitefish

Suzanne Royer

RECEIVED

APR 18 1994

Carter Burges
Denver, Colorado

RE/MAX of whitefish
sixth and spokane
whitefish, montana 59937
phone: (406) 862-3577
fax: (406) 862-0383

KIM D. SANDS
P.O. BOX 1285
WHITEFISH, MT 59937

April 12, 1994

Ms. Gina McAfee
Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

RE: Public Comment for Highway 93 Draft EIS.

Dear Ms. McAfee:

The Flathead Valley is experiencing rapid change. Highway 93 is the chief route for transportation through the valley. It is of central importance in determining the direction of future development, as well as being key to citizens and visitors safety and mobility.

I am in favor of the divided highway concept, including the special design concepts as presented at the public meetings. I feel the divided highway design should continue into the entrances of the cities.

A four lane divided highway with median will provide citizens and visitors to the Flathead Valley with the greatest level of safety while preserving the visual quality of this special place. By limiting access it will promote more clustered development, following in line with local development goals.

As work proceeds in developing a new Master Plan for Flathead County there is a vital need for vision. Without vision we will find ourselves continually dealing with problems after they arise. The Highway 93 project provides us with an opportunity to anticipate and DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME.

Sincerely,

Kim D. Sands

Kim D. Sands

RECEIVED
APR 15 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Law Office of
AMBROSE G. MEASURE
33 Second Street East
Kalispell, Montana 59901

Ambrose G. Measure
Bruce A. Measure
Attorneys at Law

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 918
Kalispell, MT 59903
Phone: (406) 752-6373
FAX: (406) 752-7168

April 12, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

RE: Highway 93 Design Review

Dear Sirs:

I greatly appreciate the effort you folks went to in conducting the hearings. I followed it as closely as I could and would urge the Montana Highway Department and all others involved to build:

A fully divided highway with a median from Somers to Whitefish, including the entry and exit to Kalispell and the Whitefish City entry, to include all 11 design concepts proposed, and to include separated bike paths between Somers and Whitefish.

The Highway 93 Corridor is certainly a regional and perhaps a national treasure and in order to preserve the valley character, we must build a highway that will serve our future needs and not need to be redesigned in a few years. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Measure

BAM:af

RECEIVED
APR 15 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Note from Bebe Kazar
April 12, 1994

I'm passing on a quote I feel pertains to the work you've done for the study of Hwy 93 DEIS. Considering the international award given the "Trails of the Great Bear," the judges said "benefits of thorough planning with the balance between business and environmental considerations are essential to success." I hope that's the value chosen for the final EIS. Prefer divided highway with median.

Sincerely,

Bebe Kazar

Letter from Edith S. Wilson
933 4th Avenue East
Kalispell, Montana 59903

April 13, 1994

Dear Sirs:

As I have lived in the Flathead Valley for thirty-four years and have used Highway 93 for all of those years, I would like to express my preference for a 4 lane divided highway when Highway 93 is changed. I feel that with the increasing population of this Valley, the divided highway would be safer and allow a faster, smoother flow of traffic.

Yours truly,

Edith S. Wilson

4/13/94

94 APR 18 A10:11

Federal Highway Adm
301 S Park Rm 448
Drawer 10056
Helena, Mt 59626-0056

Sirs:

I'd like to make a comment about the design of the highway from Sommers to Whitefish.

I have attended some of the meetings and came away quite dissatisfied with the responses I received from the consulting not feel that they took into account what the traffac pattern will be in say 2030. Because they threw out the Spring Creek route as probably not having enough use. I feel that the Mt Highway dept did a good job in the design of the road from Sommers to Whitefish as 5 lanes with turning lanes, that that would be the way to go. The consultant continuously tried to say that Washington abandonded these as unsafe. But fellows we aren't Washington. Ithink that to be practical their design was right. Lets get a road built.

We have the right of way thats necessary to build a 5 laner with turnouts. A Median in the center will require more R of W. I have a friend who willingly gave the right of Way, but he said if they want more for a fancy Median it will be by condemnation only. This probably will be the general attitude.

Recap build it like the dept origionally designed it.

Bernard W. Alt
97 Northern Lgts Blvd
Kalispell, Mt 59901

GM

Midway Rental
equipment center

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION

94 APR 19 AM 10:58

PHONE 862-7665 • 6194 HIGHWAY 93 SOUTH • WHITEFISH, MONTANA 59937

MISSOULA

RECEIVED
APR 18 1994
MONTANA DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION
KALISPELL, MONTANA

April 14, 1994

Mr. Jim Weaver
Montana State Highway Dept.
5th Avenue EN & Montana
Kalispell, MT 59901

Gentlemen,

Trying to get to the various meetings to comment on the Highway 93 project is about a full time job.

Being as brief as possible in as strong a language as possible I would like to offer my input.

We at Midway Rental think a divided highway or a meridian would be an impossible situation, not to mention more dangerous. The section of Highway 93 I am talking about is from Highway 40 junction into Whitefish. We would like to see the 5 lane design with some landscaping as originally proposed. This seems to be the design of choice in any number of towns around the country that are every bit as impacted by aesthetics and tourism as Whitefish.

Please don't let the vocal minority bully your decision.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Allan H. Burken

Allan H. Burken

AHB/cb

April 14. 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver. CO 80202

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing with regard to the decision on how best to upgrade Highway 93 from Somers, Montana, to Whitefish, Montana.

As a third generation native of the Flathead Valley, I have seen for 48 years, and in particular the last 20, how uncontrolled growth and rapid development have destroyed the pristine beauty and quality of life in this area. Small slip-shod fly-by-night businesses have cropped up along our highways and some of most scenic corridors to tap the growing tourist trade. This is especially apparent along Highway #2 from Columbia Falls to West Glacier--the scenic corridor to Glacier Park, littered with 1001 shanties that purport to be commercial enterprises, there one day gone the next and replaced with another.

I feel Highway 93 should be reconstructed to limit the ease of access. I strongly urge you to support a divided highway with a median all the way from Somers to Whitefish, including city entries and exits--to include all 11 special design concepts. I believe that to spend the millions required for highway reconstruction--the job should be done as a long-term solution, rather than a short-term fix. A divided highway with a median is the only long term solution that addresses the most pressing current and future problems of our community.

I urge you to recommend a divided highway with median and all 11 special design concepts. Thank you for your consideration.

Susanne M. O'Connor

Susanne M. O'Connor
845 7th Avenue East
Kalispell, Mt. 59901

RECEIVED
APR 18 1994
Carter Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 14, 1994

RECEIVED
APR 18 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Gina McAfee:

We wish to take this opportunity to express our comments regarding the proposed US 93 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Specifically, we are involved with the West side Bypass proposal that circles Kalispell and passes through land owned by Charles H. and Wynona M. O'Neil as Trustees and Montana Forest Products.

The latest alignment that has been proposed seems to be satisfactory as it passes to the East side of the large tract of land owned by the O'Neils and does not cut their parcel into two separate pieces. As the proposed alignment continues through Montana Forest Products, we feel your current placement of the bypass is somewhat well planned. Because of the heavy industrial zone designation of Montana Forest Products, we will require the proposed feeder roads as you have them shown. These feeder roads will come off the roadway in two directions (East and West) to access Montana Forest Products' property on both sides of the bypass. These feeder roads should enable truck traffic to turn off either to the East or West whether they are approaching from the North or South. Truck traffic should also be able to enter the bypass roadway from our industrial site and continue their route either to the North or South.

Mr. Richard Hain and Mr. Joe Hart visited our mill site in March, 1994. We appreciated the effort they made to view our property on the ground. We discussed several ideas regarding the proposed alignment including moving the roadway further to the East, closer to the RR tracks as it passed through the mill site. As it stands, we feel that this would not be as beneficial to the Montana Forest Products' mill site as having useable land on either side of the roadway as truck traffic exits and enters either direction. As we discussed with Richard and Joe, there are a variety of options available for the alignment of the bypass through Montana Forest Products. We want to continue to have input as this project progresses on our property.

At the public hearing/open house at Cavanaugh's on March 22nd, we noticed our mill site labeled on the aerial photographs as a hazardous waste site. We feel this is unfair labeling for private property owners when there is no proof given for this designation. Your explanation was that since the land had been used as an industrial site, there was a potential for hazardous waste. In the future, we feel that to be fair to landowners, property should not be labeled as hazardous waste sites if there is only a possibility for this to be the case.

Again, thank you for the time taken to actually come on the ground to view our land. We remain open to suggestions in order to reach a conclusion to the US 93 Westside bypass DEIS.

Very truly yours,

Charlene M. O'Neil

Charlene M. O'Neil for
Montana Forest Products Limited Partnership and
Charles H. and Wynona M. O'Neil as Trustees
P.O. Box 7038
Kalispell, MT 59904-0038
406-755-6432

cc: Richard W. Hain, P.E. Carter & Burgess
Federal Highway Administration, Helena, MT
Advisory Committee c/o Mike Stocklin
Joe Hart Carter & Burgess

The Light House
3575 HIGHWAY 93 NORTH
KALISPELL, MONTANA 59901

4/15/94

To Whom it May Concern

As a property owner and a business owner on Hwy. 93 North, I would like to express my strong concern about placing a median from Stillwater Bridge to KM Ranch Road.

There are a number of serious reasons to warrant reconsideration of this proposal. I will voice just a few:

Safety: U-turning on a highway where vehicles are traveling 55 mph (or more!) is risky. Maintance of any landscaping between two lanes of 55 mph (or more!). traffic is unsafe.

Cost: It is more costly to put in a median (and then remove it once it is determined that it causes more accidents!). It is also very costly to adequately maintain the median strip.

Maintance: Do you remember what the median strips in Evergreen have looked like more often than not? Whenever funding gets tight that type of maintance is the first to go.

Difficult access: Those of us affected by the median strip will suffer loss of business and deflation of our property values.

I frequently travel US. 2 between Kalispell and the north valley and feel the five lane highway there is safer, more functional and there is nothing aesthetically unpleasing to that highway. (except the awful billboards!)

The people who live and own property on this highway need to be heard and considered.

Sincerely,
Carol E. Fitzpatrick

Somers to Whitefish Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMMENT SHEET

I have the following comments or questions about the US 93 Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

although not fully educated to all the concepts alternatives special features etc. involved in the Hwy 93 project, I know that safety is number one + enhancement of the beauty of the valley Not Detraction from it is what is important here.

therefore I put in my strong support for a divided highway with landscaped median + all the special Design concepts included.

This includes all the city entrances in the valley.

I believe that separating traffic flows will make 93 a much safer place to drive as there are so many head on collisions especially between Kalispell + Whitefish + my Dear wife drives that section often.

thank you

Name Tom Meagher

Address 2015 E. Lakeshore Dr #10 Whitefish, MT 59937

Phone

(above information is optional)

RECEIVED
APR 15 1994
Caner-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 15, 1994

To: Mike Stocklin

From: Jim Browne

Mike, Highway 93 extends from Mexico to Alaska, not one mile is divided.

Zoning along highway 93 was to retain a scenic route, to create a 70 mph speedway is counter to the zoning intent.

According to Mr. Jim Weaver funding for improved Hwy 93 in Flathead County will not be available for 30 years.

Where does the Advisory Committee hope to secure funds to build a divided highway?

Jim Browne

April 16, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th St. Mall,
Suite 1700
Denver, Co. 80202

Dear personel.

I very much favor a divided highway with a median for Highway 93 S & N. Safety is of utmost importance; then strip development makes our beautiful valley look like down town Chicago, which will happen with a five-lane.

I appreciate your diligence & hard work on this matter.

Sincerely,

Dianne Grove
586 Hidden Valley
Whitefish, Mt. 59937

RECEIVED
APR 20 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 16, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess
216 16th Street - Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Re: U.S. Highway 93 South of Whitefish

As a resident on the portion of U.S. Highway 93 South between Highway 40 and Happy Valley, I am writing to express our concern over a divided highway with a median in this area. We own a small business, which we operate from a small shop on our property. We are against a divided highway for this portion of the road. There are many small businesses that are home-based in this area with many driveways leading out onto the highway. We feel the impact of a divided highway would be extremely detrimental to these businesses, since people would be required to drive several miles out of their way just to turn into many of these businesses.

With two teenagers in high school sports and various other activities, we drive the highway at least five or six times a day. We will be required to go up to Happy Valley and make a U-turn, which will add at least 25 to 30 miles a day just to get back home from Whitefish. We feel it is quite dangerous to have people making U-turns while traffic is coming toward you at 55 MPH. Winter conditions will make this even worse.

As a taxpayer, we understand a divided highway will cost about $3 million more than a five lane. We object to our tax dollars being used for a project that would cause much hardship for those who actually live on this stretch of highway.

Sincerely,

Pete Forthofer
Deborah Forthofer

Joseph & Deborah Forthofer
5535 Highway 93 South
Whitefish, MT 59937

RECEIVED
APR 20 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

45 E. Wyoming Street
Kalispell, Montana 59901
April 17, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Carter Burgess:

I have lived in the Flathead since 1959. There have been many changes and the change happening now is overwhelming. Because of the rapid interest in our area, I urge you to adopt a highway design that is aesthetically conscious and also safety minded. I favor the divided highway with trees or a meridian like the highway north of Seattle. This would preserve the beauty of the area and also eliminate head on collisions.

I thought the recent proposal in the local newspaper sounded pretty reasonable. I abhor strip development like we see already. The more we can confine that, the better. The idea of funneling all traffic into the intersection at 93 and 2 is archaic (100 years old). Let's have some by-passes for the commercial trucks and commuters.

I lived in Honolulu for two years. Someone with foresight prevented tall billboards as a way of attracting businesses. Although this isn't exactly your issue, what I'm getting at is that people find businesses without having them right along a highway and without big ugly tall signs.

I am so glad that the first proposal by the highway commission was reconsidered. Please don't skimp on Highway 93. Our future depends on it!

Sincerely,

Johanna Bangeman
Johanna Bangeman

RECEIVED
APR 20 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Comments from
Signa Schuster
Box 1386
Whitefish, Montana 59937

Received April 18, 1994

Thank you for your efforts.

In favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley. Want to see all the special design concepts included if possible. It is important to preserve and enhance the character of the valley. Please consider long-term solution -- never do this again. Please preserve the beauty and current status of our county-country -- it's why we live here. I am definitely against a five-lane plan with center turn lane. I appreciated the editorial in the March 13, 1994 Missoulian entitled "Don't Skip on US 93".

Following are comments in it that I agree with. A four-lane highway divided by an attractive median would be the best design for the new highway, considering its effect on future land use. A five-lane design makes development of land adjacent to the highway easier and more practical, and I do not want this. The presence of a center median will discourage investment in residential, commercial and industrial land uses located in mid-block areas. It is important to preserve agricultural lands and restrict new development along the US 93 corridor. It is important to consider the following statement: "There also is a value that is more difficult to calculate associated with the effects -- good and bad -- the new highway will have on the Flathead Valley in general." Do the job right.

som0418m.1gm

Somers to Whitefish Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMMENT SHEET

I have the following comments or questions about the US 93 Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

I am opposed to the five-lane design based primarily on safety issues — I see how, in Whitefish and on Hwy #2, the turning lane is constantly used as a merging lane. A center median would prevent this potential danger, as well as reduce risk of head-on collision. Aesthetics are also a concern for me, making me in favor of a divided highway. I think a compromise of designs, where existing buildings pose a problem, is appropriate.

There seems to be a high rate of accidents between Happy Valley and Hwy. #40, which warrants special consideration of safety.

Name Ann Swanson

Address 215 Antelope Trail, WF

Phone 862-0312

(above information is optional)

RECEIVED

APR 18 1994

Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 18, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Gina,

I am concerned both about the safety of highway 93, and preserving the beauty of this valley. The four lane divided highway is definitely the best alternative even though it is more costly to build. This is a one time only expense and an opportunity to do the job that will best suit our current and future needs.

In addition I would like to see the special design concepts included, particularly the bike path separate from the highway shoulder.

Sincerely,

Jackie Wildgis
691 Grandview Drive
Kalispell, Montana 59901
phone 406-752-1573

RECEIVED
APR 25 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Comment sheet from D. Diquett
1234 6th Avenue West
Columbia Falls, MT 59901

Received April 18, 1994

I strongly support the alternative A(MEDIAN) highway. The reason being safety. I work in an ortho clinic and am always confronted with trauma and the tragedies of faulty highways. If the current plan that a large concrete slab is placed between the highways goes into effect. We are talking about higher death tolls more head on which statistically cause more deaths. Also if it is designed with more space on the side of the road athletes can ride their bikes in safety. I certainly hope you will consider all the aspects of this highway. You're holding lives in your hands. Choose the appropriate highway, lives are at stake.

som0418m.1gm

R.N.T., Ltd. • Trippet's Quality Printing
323 Main Street • Kalispell, MT 59901 • (406) 752-9000

7-38

4/18/94

Mike Stocklin
FBIB.

Mike.

as a business owner and a landowner on Hwy 93 North of the Stillwater bridge. my wife and my self are against the proposed 5 line with frontage roads. The original plan before all the added cost was right, 4 lane plus middle lane for turns and that is the best one.
There will be no need for addition land or moves.
Please express our concerns to the highway Comm. to make sure our voice is heard and the right choice is made since we have to live with it for the next 50+ year.

Thanks
'Ron Trippet

'Asta Bowen
(911 Montello • Hood River, OR 97031 • 503/386-3686)
234 Old Highway 93 South • Somers, MT 59932 • 406/857-3745

Public Comment Re: Highway 93 DEIS, Flathead County, Montana

Carter Burgess
216 16th St. Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

April 18, 1994

Dear Mr. Burgess,

Ten thousand years from now, when future archaeologists excavate the remains of our society, we will be known as the "Car People." In this century, our lives have come to be structured around the automobile: the ways in which we live and work and relate to one another are all shaped, in large part, by the private automobile.

The highways are the arteries by which our social and economic lifeblood flows. In Flathead County, the main vessel is US Highway 93. As a resident of Somers who has worked chiefly in Kalispell, I've logged tens of thousands of miles on that road; I have an interest in the highway, and more importantly, I have an interest in the valley through which it runs.

Please register my opinion in favor of a divided highway with a median extending through city entrances, including all special design concepts.

My chief concerns for the improvement of 93 are safety and aesthetics. An old bumpersticker says it best: "Pray for me: I drive US 93." I cannot count the number of times my life has been threatened by a driver who decides that the double yellow line doesn't apply to him/her. A physical barrier, namely a median, is the only solution to this problem.

The larger issues of ecology and aesthetics, valley-wide, will be influenced by the eventual design of this highway arterial. It is crucial that the road design incorporate the concepts which will encourage healthy, attractive development, and discourage get-rich-quick strip development. The Flathead is an extraordinary place, but it must be given an extraordinary backbone, if it is to fulfill its potential.

Specifically, I am in favor of a design which supports two special considerations:
--designated bike paths
--mass transportation (rail, bus or other)
These may cost extra now, but they will pay incalculable dividends in the future.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

'Asta Bowen

RECEIVED
APR 22 1994
Carter Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 19, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, Co. 80202

Dear Carter Burgess:

First, I think your company has done an excellent job in allowing public involvement in the scoping & comment periods. It was so handy to comment when I voted at the car dealership.

I am in favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances of the cities in the valley. This adds to safety concerns & visual esthetics. Another item I strongly support is a separate bike path. If it is possible have the bike path located off the highway, if not make it clear to vehicle drivers that a bike path is designated.

Thanks for this opportunity to share my views.

Sincerely,

Becky R. Smith-Powell

Becky R. Smith-Powell
135 Wilderness Lane
Whitefish, MT 59937

RECEIVED
APR 21 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 19, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to comment on the DEIS for US Highway 93 in Northwestern Montana.

Having attended many of the public forums and meetings on this topic; I must first compliment you on what I feel has been a thorough and professional undertaking on your part, of what is certainly a difficult and controversial project.

I am most interested in seeing the divided highway design; with vegetated medians, utilized to the greatest degree possible throughout the project. I feel that this is in the best long term interests of not only of the residents of the Flathead Valley, but of all Americans that would have the opportunity to visit this very special part of our country. The goal of maintaining and possibly enhancing the visual character of the valley is, I feel, attainable with the divided highway design. Certainly given the combination of Summer traffic counts and Winter driving conditions that are common in the Flathead, the importance of constructing the safest highway possible cannot be overstated. Also, as the valley will inescapably continue to expand and evolve; it is imperative that we utilize the divided design to assist in providing a direction for the future growth along the highway 93 corridor.

As a resident of Whitefish, I am interested in seeing the special design concepts utilized at the entrance to not only our city, but at all of the rural/urban interfaces along the length of the project. As an avid cyclist, I am also in favor of establishing a bicycle lane that would be separate from the highway itself. Finally, I would like to state my preference for the one way traffic couplets through Whitefish. Widening the present highway to four lanes through town would be a major mistake with long lasting repercussions. With the addition of both the Seventh Street bridge (which I am marginally in favor of) and the Baker Avenue extension, the disruption of traffic flow (due to the one way streets) through town would be minimal.

Thanks for the opportunity to offer my input on the this critically important project to the future of the Flathead Valley. Please keep me informed on the progress of the EIS.

Sincerely,

Brian Carper
106 Montana Ave.
Whitefish, Montana 59937

RECEIVED
MAY 23 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

7-40

April 19, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th St. Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear People,

As long-time, long-term residents of Flathead County in Whitefish, we are in favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley. We would also like to see all the special design concepts included.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely
Karen Crittenden
Kerry Crittenden
525 W. 9th St.
Box 1723
Whitefish, MT 59937

RECEIVED
APR 21 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 19, 1994

Memo to: Carter Burgess

Subject: Comment on US93 EIS proposals-Kalispell to Whitefish section

INTRODUCTION

Judy and I operate a small B&B along the Whitefish River and I'm actively involved with the CPC on the County Master Plan Update and am also a member of the Whitefish City/County Planning Board. With all the land-use planning activities and the Highway 93 efforts evolving at the same time we have the opportunity, if not the obligation, to seek out optimum, synergistic results from all these efforts--a once in a lifetime opportunity. My comments will focus from that perspective.

KEY CRITERIA

From my perspective (wearing 3 hats) I believe our evaluation criteria at this point should include:

1. What's right for the long-term future of this valley.
   - Traffic and safety Impact
   - Scenic (visual) impact
   - Importance to the emerging Master Plans in the County and Whitefish
   - Economic Impact

   (PLUS INTERDEPENDENT RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ALL OF THE ABOVE)
2. Consciously excluded is COST--a totally disruptive consideration *at this point in the process.*

Except where noted, I will try to address each of my suggested criteria from Kalispell North to Whitefish as I am somewhat more familiar with that section of the highway.

TRAFFIC AND SAFETY

This addresses the whole effort. I believe these criteria are best served if the recommendation is for a divided highway. I'm convinced that either a 4 lane divided or 5 lane could handle traffic, however there is no comparison from a safety perspective. Judy and I have both experienced near-misses in the center (turn lane) of a 5 lane highway. In fact that has become an annual event. In the winter that lane is most often obscured by show and ice further detracting from safety. I have some difficulty imagining the rationale for a recommendation other than a divided highway for safety and for traffic (ignoring costs, as I am).

RECEIVED
APR 25 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

This design alternative definitely carries a responsibility to provide good access and turning control as well as safe crossing points for pedestrians. This design also has a direct impact on Scenic Values, Master Plans and Economic Impact which I will discuss with those topics.

SCENIC (VISUAL) IMPACT

Preserving our scenic values and enhancing them wherever possible takes on an important role in all the Valley Master Plans (County, Kalispell, Whitefish, Columbia Falls). A divided highway--particularily with a landscaped median and the special design effects you've suggested--compliments those plans very well. It also indirectly helps to control strip development--definitely a no-no in the emerging plans along 93 between the cities of Kalispell and Whitefish (excepting where it already exists). Even with it 'zoned out', and 'grandfathered in', we need all the help we can get to keep it from spreading.

Scenic values have a definite positive economic value to the community as well.

IMPORTANCE IN THE EMERGING MASTER PLANS IN THE COUNTY AND WHITEFISH

Transportation plans are an important element of these plans and need to compliment the focus on:

-Controlling and directing development --both commercial and residential is important. A divided highway helps us direct and control where we want commercial clusters to occur along the highway--a 5 lane solution doesn't.

-A divided, landscaped highway enhances the visual qualities we're trying to promote and support along our highways--a 5 lane design does nothing or is a negative impact. the County has built a GIS map addressing visual and scenic values as input to that Master Plan effort.

-It addresses traffic volume and safety issues that are a growing concern. I believe a divided highway is better.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

A challenging topic and the answer depends on what economist you ask. I'm convinced that all the people working on the Master Plan efforts would support the view that a divided, landscaped highway will enhance the economic attractiveness of our valley. That group included people from all sectors of the local economy with a thorough knowledge of this area.I am also convinced it will have a direct and positive impact on development activities here. This is one element in a 'Quality of Life' evaluation. In a recent study done by Montana Sate University "quality of Life" was a key decision factor in moving small businesses to Montana. Our Master Plans are trying to find ways to enhance 'quality of Life' and entice more non-polluting business to this area. Growing a more sustainable economy is one of the objectives.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Judy and I have had the pleasure of hosting hundreds of guests at our B&B over the past 2 years and the responses to our area are consistent. They love the scenic beauty, the open spaces and the water. They dislike the signage (billboards and business), strip development, congested and unsafe roads. They want us to fix all these problems and preserve this as a special and attractive place. A very unscientific survey but consistent responses from visitors from around the world.

WHITEFISH RECOMMENDATIONS

I want the entrances to Whitefish divided and landscaped. I prefer a couplet approach with one-way traffic North on Spokane from the Baker/Columbia/93 Intersection to Second Ave. and one-way South on Baker from Second Ave. to the same intersection.

After some thought I also favor the Seventh St. bridge to provide cross traffic flow between the SW and SE sections of town. Additionally children in the SW section of town with no busses would have safer and easier access to and from School. The SW area is also ripe for further residential development if roads can support that growth.

Additionally at the West edge of town at the Golf course and State Park Rd., a creative design is called for at the US93 intersection as it is dangerous today and a lot of additional development is scheduled in that area.

WHITEFISH TRAFFIC STUDY

I was disappointed that a Bypass was not selected in the Whitefish work and would like to see a recommended route for a Bypass identified in your follow-on Whitefish work effort. We would like to identify such a route in our Master Plan update even though it would not occur for some time. These are log-term efforts and sooner or later we will need a bypass.

CONCLUSION

Please be visionary in your recommendations. Please complement our land-use plans. Remember that this is a unique opportunity to provide a synergistic long-term solution for this valley. and lastly exploit that quality we all possess but don't use often enough--Common Sense.

Thank you for your consideration of my long-winded response.

Don Spivey
51 Penney Lane
Columbia Falls, MT 59912
257-0724

NVR INC
NORTH VALLEY REFUSE
BOX 1175
WHITEFISH MT 59937
(406) 862-4381

April 19, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess
216 16th Street Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Gina,

re: Draft EIS Highway 93

The purpose of these comments is to specifically address the proposed design for the stretch of Highway 93 from Hodgson Road to Highway 40. NVR Inc. conducts its operations from a site on the East side of this highway segment. The present site of operations was formerly the location of a dog kennel. Currently there is a full service pet grooming and kenneling facility about 100 yards to the South on the same side of the highway. To the North there is a Bed and Breakfast, a gunsmith and a contractor. Across the highway there is a trucking contractor, a heavy equipment repair center and a houselog mill. All but the gunsmith were already in place when I built my first shop in 1982.

North Valley Refuse sends a commercial truck into town seven days per week. We also send a commercial truck out three times per week on the same route to collect cardboard. The cardboard truck returns directly to the recycling shop from town. A median, as proposed, will require that this truck will detour to a turn around for over 100 miles during a year. The seven employees at North Valley Refuse all come to work from the North. The proposed median will result in over 5,000 additional miles driven just for these seven employees to come to work. Every trip to the parts house, container delivery or special customer service call will also result in additional miles driven.

When data was being gathered for the EIS I was experimenting with a drop box in the Safeway parking lot for local residents to drop off recyclable material. It was a very expensive operation to maintain. The local governments refused to contribute to its maintenance. I pulled that box from operation and now pick up recyclables from my customers when I collect their trash. I have invited the rest of the community to bring their recyclable material to my shop for processing.

RECEIVED
APR 22 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

There is a steady stream of vehicles into NVR 's yard. The volume of material we collect daily indicates that there are now hundreds of families and many small businesses that bring their recyclables to our shop. Almost all of these businesses and homeowners live to the North and would have to detour to reach the shop. Since the public meeting in Whitefish I have documented over 20 vehicles a day between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM. Material left after the shop closes indicates additional traffic bringing in material. Many of these people are on the way to Kalispell. I believe that the inconvenience of a couple of miles detour for these people will significantly reduce the volume of material brought in for recycling.

North Valley Refuse bought the property at 5445 Highway 93 and built Shop 1 where it is located to have the natural visual screening provided by the timber along the edge of the right of way. For many years residents drove by without being aware that there was a building on this site. The space between the timber buffer and the shop was and still is an excellent location for temporarily storing unsightly material. Even with the new Recycling shop and an increase in the 'break' at the drive, the timber strip still provides an important visual buffer of our parking area and activities. The proposed median design will require additional right of way that will remove this visual buffer. I negotiated with the previous right of way technician to preserve this buffer. I still believe that an adequate visual buffer must be provided if a design alternative is selected which results in this buffer being removed. I believe that any design would be improved by restoring the right of way alignment along the property to the South of me and preserving the timber buffer along that stretch of road.

My reading of the median design criteria was that turn arounds for trucks would be provided every mile and visual buffers were to be preserved. It was also my understanding that existing businesses and subdivisions were to be treated fairly with adequate access, including frontage roads where appropriate. The proposed median alternative does not treat existing businesses fairly.

Hodgson Road provides access to an area that the Whitefish School District has identified as the fastest growing area for school populations. The many homeowners in Country Lake Homes, Taylor Road, Whitefish Stage and the many subdivisions that access the Stage Road all use Hodgson to access Highway 93 when going south. Hodgson is also a paved and well-aligned river crossing allowing excellent ease of access to the Airport area. Businesses are already established at this intersection and it should be developed as a turn around intersection. Routing traffic through a residential block in Happy Valley is a poor decision for the homeowners on Antelope Trail and for those who need acess to Hodgson Road.

The next 'turning opportunity' on your draft is at an access road to a largely undeveloped area with a private road. While developers and subdivision law evaders have been actively at work in this area there are only 8 full time homes presently served by this road. One member of the advisory committee is also a consultant for the developer with the largest holdings accessed by this road. I hope that this committee member identified his conflict of interest in the discussion leading up to the selection of this turn around site only one half mile from a logical major intersection.

One mile north of the Hodgson Road intersection is the area where the first cluster of small businesses occurs. From here to the 'B' Broadcasting studios there are nearly 30 businesses, churches and other activity centers along the highway. I would suggest that an equitable 'combo' alternate would allow a center turn lane from the Four Paws kennel on the South to the 'B' Broadcasting studio on the North.

An alternate allowing for a median would be to skip the turn around at mile 123.4 and place a turn around between mile124 and 124.2 with two short frontage roads. The road on the east side could end at the NVR site. The road on the west side could end on the North at Glacier Log Homes or at the church next door.

This area of small businesses along the Highway developed because none of the municipal governments provided suitable commercial development sites with heavy hauling access. The county commissioners amended the county zoning code and checked with the businesses along this stretch before putting zoning in place. **It does not seem right to take away by road design property rights that the County Commissioners sought to preserve through a zoning amendment.**

From Bee Broadcasting North a divided highway with a landscaped intersection leading into an Entryway to Whitefish could be designed. By placing a frontage road on the west side of Highway 93, a turn and crossover won't be needed until JP Road. Proper planning could provide Par 3 on 93 a landscaped parking area with access from JP Road that would significantly upgrade their site while contributing to an attractive entryway to Whitefish.

Thanks for the opportunity to coment on these alternatives.

Respectfully,

Ben Cohen
President, NVR Inc.

Note: This comment is addressed in Section 6.6.6.8 of the FEIS.

Mr. Carter Burgess
216 16th St. Suite 1700
Denver, Colorado 80202

April 20, 1994

Dear Mr. Burgess,

My wife's family arrived in Whitefish about 50 years ago, and we now live in the family home as permanent residents. My opinions are based on being a Montanan since 1950.

To build anything other than a divided highway with a median would be tragic. It has been argued that businesses would suffer. Analyses of other communities in the U.S., or other countries (my wife and I recently spent 2 months in the small villages of New Zealand) would prove otherwise. In fact it is my belief that an attractive stretch of highway, with the safety features that a divided highway provide, enhance business. Case in point....when we venture south, we make sure that we do all of our business on the west side of Hiway 93 first, and make stops on the east side only on our return to Whitefish. Why? For many months of the year it is impossible to find the turn lane!!!!!! And when we find it we feel like sitting ducks in a shooting gallery. A five lane situation would only make the matter worse.

In 50 or 100 years, can anyone really argue that a divided highway was a mistake....that it inhibited business.....that it fits the valley worse than a five lane thoroughfare? We must not only plan for a present day convenience of economy of construction. We must boldly plan for the generations of people who are yet to be born, are yet to arrive in the valley, and are not yet narrow minded in their views of a few feet of privately owned land, the supposed inconvenience of not being able to turn left 100% of the time while driving.

A divided highway with a median meets a vision of beautiful Montana. A 5 lane slab meets a vision of downtown Los Angeles.

RASolberg

Richard A. Solberg
Box 187
Whitefish, Montana 59937

cc: Gina McAfee
Bruce Boody

RECEIVED
APR 25 1994
Carter Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Cris C. Gayner
80 Montana Ave.
Whitefish, MT
59937

4/20/94

Carter Burgess:

In regards to the DEIS on Hwy. 93 I would like to see a divided highway with a median on all stretches of the highway, including ~~the~~ the entrances to the cities, (ie. Hwy. 40 to Baker, etc.). I would also like to see all of the special design concepts included. Especially the bridge at Whitefish River to allow bike and pedestrian traffic underneath the roadway. Also any measures toward safety for bicycles and pedestrians, seperating them from traffic by something other than a line stripe.

I strongly feel the 15% additional cost to build the highway correctly the first time around is well worth the added expense. It will be the safest design, discourage strip development, and be a long term solution to moving traffic no matter what amount of growth the valley experiences.

Thank You - Cris C. Gayner

KALISPELL
STREET TREE COMMISSION
P.O.Box 1997
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-756-6600

TO: Highway 93 Advisory Committee
Pam Kennedy, Councilwoman

FROM: Kalispell Street Tree Commission

DATE: April 20, 1994

RE: Trees between 900 and 1200 South Main

Bill Wright
Pat Thomas
Georgia Otten
Bette Albright
Steve Perrone
Patrick Berry
Jim LeKander

Councilwoman Kennedy,

The Kalispell Street Tree Commission met on April 19, to discuss the Highway 93 options on South Main between the 900 and 1200 block.

After lengthy discussion it was unanimously voted on to oppose any effort to remove the existing trees. The commission felt that any additional widening of the street would negatively impact the trees and would eventually result in removal and loss of the only existing entrance canopy to Kalispell.

Please relay our concerns to the Advisory Committee. Thank you for your interests and opportunity to comment. Also, we are available to meet and discuss this further if you so wish. Good luck with the project.

Sincerely,

Kalispell Street Tree Commission

Bill Wright
Pat Thomas
Georgia Otten
Bette Albright
Steve Perrone
Patrick Berry
Jim LeKander

TREE CITY U.S.A.

7-45

April 20, 1994

Gail Leonard
514 Pine Place
Whitefish, MT 59937

Gina McAfee
Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Ms. McAfee,

I would like to comment in favor of a divided highway for US 93, between Kalispell and Whitefish , Montana. I feel that it is important to preserve and enhance the chararcter of our valley and I feel that it is much safer.

I would also like to see all the special design concepts included, including landscaping and medians at entrances to the cities in the valley.

I have lived in the Flathead Valley for 12 years and plan to continue doing so. We will not be redesigning this road again , so I would like to see us do it right , just this once. The valley is growing at such a phenomenal pace that it will never again be the place that I moved to. WE have the opportunity to preserve some of it's character by building a less obtrusive road, and I would like to see us take that course.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours truly,

Gail Leonard

RECEIVED
APR 22 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

April 20, 1994

Randy Gayner
80 Montana Avenue
Whitefish, MT 59937

Carter Burgess:

I am writing to express my support for a divided highway with a median on all stretches of Hwy 93, Somers to Whitefish. This includes the entrances to the cities. I also support the special design concepts. I feel this is a long term solution to traffic flow in the valley and also preserves the character of the Flathead. The development of the Hwy 93 corridor will set a precedent for all future growth in our area. The Flathead's scenic value is worth much more than the additional 15% cost of the divided highway.

April 20, 1994

Dear Sir - I strongly support the construction of a divided highway with a median to include entrances to all cities in the Flathead Valley, MT. I would also like to see the special design concepts included. I hope all of these people and businesses moving into our area would stop and take the time to realize why they want to be here (other than economic growth). For the same reason my family is here -- the peace and beauty of the area; a concept that is becoming fragile. Help us to preserve the character of our valley! Thanks! Sue Jacobson

Letter from Laura Joe Measure
Dated April 20, 1994

I urge you to recommend a divided highway with median and all the special design concepts for Highway 93 from Somers, Montana to Whitefish, Montana.

Sincerely,
Laura Joe Measure

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMMENT SHEET

I have the following comments or questions about the US 93 Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

being a avid bicyclist, I enjoy biking, but I'm afraid to cycle on the Highways around here. When cycling on the Hwy's around here, you take your own Life into your own hands. I support a seperate biking path and not making a wider shoulder. Motorists don't care about bikers, and show them no respect on the road, as a result, a wider biking Path wouldn't buy you anything, because motorist wouldn't care. The safety factor is greater by having a seperate path. my biggest fear while riding is a drunk driver or people being jerks, its much easier to hit someone on the shoulder of the road, then it is to hit them on a seperate biking path.

Name

Address

Phone

(above information is optional)

RECEIVED
APR 21 1994
Carter Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Letter received April 21, 1994 from Gene Glover, Somers Stage

Seems a wake up call has been sounded. Now we find out that a petition with 3,000 signatures in favor of a five lane highway is more than 800 signatures for a divided highway. It cost $850,000 to prove the point with money coming from a secret hiding place in Washington, D.C. Its regrettable that our higway engineers came up with the safest and least costly highway only to be shot down by a political engineer.

To build a no-man's wasteland in the middle of the road is ridiculous. Consider the land owner who loses not the stranger who travels through. Fo one, I am in full agreement with Ms. TenEyck, where is the need and who will maintain?

The State Highway Dept built Highway #2 five lanes north of the Airport. That is as close to getting anything accident and maintenance free as can be and all at minimal cost.

With the intervention of a US Senator now the finish date is speeded up to be only five years later than predicted. Suggest we let highway engineers build highways and political engineers do whatever it is they do. As perfect as we all are it isn't unlawful to admit a mistake, even a Senatorial Mandate. Thank you.

FBIA
FLATHEAD BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 222
Kalispell, Montana 59903
Phone: 756-8023 FAX: 755-3716

MICHAEL J. STOCKLIN *President*
CHUCK LEE *Chairman*
DALLAS HERRON *Vice Chairman*
LINDA HAROLDSEN *Treasurer*
KIT HOLDER *Director*
GEORGE SCHULZE *Director*
FRANK THOMAS *Director*
LARRY JOHNSON *Director*
BUCK TORSTENSON *Chairman Emeritus*

4-21-94

MR. DALE PAULSON,
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
301 SOUTH PARK
ROOM 448
DRAWER 10056
HELENA, MT. 59626

DEAR DALE:

THIS LETTER SEEKS TO CLARIFY THE POSITION ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE FLATHEAD BUSINESS & INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION IN REGARD TO THE DESIGN FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF HIGHWAY 93, SOMERS TO WHITEFISH.

A RECENT SURVEY OF OUR MEMBERS SHOWS THE MAJORITY IN FAVOR OF A FIVE-LANE HIGHWAY AND IN OPPOSITION TO EITHER THE DIVIDED OR COMBO CONCEPTS.

A FEW OF THE F.B.I.A.'s REASONS FOR SUPPORT OF THE FIVE-LANE HIGHWAY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(1.) THE FIVE-LANE CAN BE CONSTRUCTED AT A LOWER COST.

(2.) THE FIVE-LANE PROTECTS THE PROPERTY RIGHTS OF LANDOWNERS ALONG THE ENTIRE SECTION.

(3.) THE FIVE-LANE DESIGN IS AS SAFE, IF NOT SAFER, FOR MOTORISTS THAN EITHER OF THE TWO OTHER DESIGNS.

(4.) FURTHER, THE LANDSCAPING CALLED FOR IN A DIVIDED HIGHWAY CONCEPT IS TOO EXPENSIVE TO MAINTAIN AND THE IDEA OF ASKING SERVICE CLUBS TO MAINTAIN THE LANDSCAPING IS IMPRACTICAL.

(5.) A DIVIDED HIGHWAY , IN OUR OPINION, WOULD ALSO LEAD TO EXCESSIVE SPEEDING, SIMILAR TO THAT EXPERIENCED ON MOST INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEMS.

(6.) WE BELIEVE THAT THE COMBO ALTERNATIVE IS A WEAK ATTEMPT AT A COMPROMISE AND IS NOT PRACTICAL AS IT WOULD BE EXCESSIVELY EXPENSIVE TO CONSTRUCT AND TO MAINTAIN AND IT WOULD ALSO BE POTENTIALLY CONFUSING TO MOTORISTS.

ABOVE ALL, THE F.B.I.A. FAVORS THE FIVE-LANE DESIGN BECAUSE IT CAN BE BUILT WITHIN THE BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS AND IN A TIMELY MANNER. THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING OUR REMARKS.

MIKE STOCKLIN,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"The FBIA Means Business"

R. W. Blair
159 Mallard Loop
Whitefish Mt. 59937

April 21, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, Co. 80202

To Whom It May Concern,

Regarding; Highway 93 Rebuild.

We have a chance -- one chance to do it right -- let's hope that the experience and examples of other area's will serve us well. One need only drive a well designed divided highway with it's free flowing traffic, visual enhancements and feeling of safety then travel down a 5-lane highway with it's congestion, strip developments, and safety concerns to better understand why it's so important to build a divided highway in the Flathead.

Many of the quality of life advantages the Flathead Valley has enjoyed for so many years will be seriously tested and eroded as the population pressures come to bear on the valley. Each development step is crucial -- the highway will be the measuring stick by which tourist asses our area. Residents will be impacted daily. It's such an important factor, cutting through the middle of the valley, that much of the future commercial development will be determined by our choice in highway design. As your EIS points out, development pressures along undivided highways usually win out over zoning. The future growth directions in the Flathead , to an important extent will be determined by highway design selections -- IT'S THAT IMPORTANT !!! Please recommend a divided highway.

I am also in favor of all special design concepts , once again supporting their inclusion for visual, safety and quality of life reasons. In particular, the design concept for removing the culverts under highway 93 before entering Whitefish and replacing them with a bridge is an example of wonderfully far- sighted thinking. It would be a fantastic asset to the town of Whitefish by allowing for future bike/ pedestrian path thus connecting the school side of the highway to a growing area of town with hundreds of homes and school children. Also, what a great asset for everyone in the community to be able to enjoy a bike/ pedestrian path through their town! Fundraising efforts are currently in progress.

Another important aspect is the special design considerations for the entrances to our communities. Help us maintain the uniqueness of our communities by selecting landscaped entrances to each town.

Hopefully, our " one chance " will serve as a positive model for the rest of Montana ---may judgment reign over profit!

RECEIVED
APR 29 1994
Denver, Colorado

Respectfully,

R. W. Blair

P. S. I am also a landowner and business person on Highway 93.

April 22, 1994

Kimberly Eickman
P.O. Box 1814
Whitefish, MT. 59937
(406) 862-3036

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO. 80202

Dear Mr. Burgess,

I have read the Missoulian Editorial article of the March 13, 1994 issue, "Don't skimp on U.S. 93". I feel this project warrants a response. The Flathead Valley still remains a pristine environment today. I feel in order to preserve this natural beauty we (the community) need to observe the fast growth which is inevitable and take the necessary precautions to avoid random development along U.S. 93. The article states "While population growth is difficult to control, it can be managed - guided in desirable directions". This can happen if we choose the correct development strategy.

I believe the draft federal environmental impact statement analysis, which, clearly shows that a four lane highway, divided by an attractive median, would be the best solution. I understand this would cost more, however, too often budgets are skimped on and the community and natural area eventually pay a disastrous price, ie., over population, pollution of all kinds, poverty, death, landform destruction, etc, etc. It is time to think of the long term and not the short term objective.

In short, I am in favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Eickman

Kimberly Eickman
Concerned Resident

RECEIVED
APR 25 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Chris B. Miller
433 W. 3rd St.
Whitefish, Mt. 59937

Carter Burgess
216 16th St. Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, Co. 80202

Dear Carter:

I have been in the Flathead Valley for almost three years, and since I have been here it has been obvious that we need a new highway system to connect all the cities in the valley. On any given day, a drive through the cities of the valley can be an exciting and fearful experience. (And I am used to driving in larger cities)

I know that there have been many different concepts and ideas considered, but the alternative that seems the most appropriate would be a divided highway, with entrances to all the cities. Not only would this be the safest, it would also be the most scenic, the least invasive, and would best provide for the growth that will continue to encroach our valley. I realize that this is the most expensive alternative, but it is the one that should provide the valley for the longest haul, and need the least, if any, alterations in the future.

I know that you have studied this issue for years, and have listened to an incredible amount of input, and I just hope that the decision is based on the needs of the valley and its future, and not be a straight bottom line decision.

I look forward to the implementation of a new highway, and thank you for considering my reply.

Sincerly,

Chris B. Miller

Chris B. Miller

RECEIVED
APR 22 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

6585 Hwy. 93 S.
Whitefish, MT 59937
April 22, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th St. Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

To whom it may concern:

In regard to the Highway 93 DEIS, please let this letter be part of the decision process. Our business, Mike's Conoco at 6585 Highway 93 South (across from Safeway) has approximately 200 feet of highway frontage. Our business is a travel center with 40 gas hoses on a regular island with an additional cardlock island, a convenience store, laundromat, car wash, RV disposal and propane on a lot approximately 200' square.

Our business is totally reliant upon vehicles entering to obtain fuel. Our main concern on the Highway 93 project is that our customers have easy access from both directions-north and south. It is absolutely critical to our business future that vehicles have access with a turn lane if a median is installed. Furthermore, most of our cardlock business is from large vehicles, such as logging trucks, 18-wheelers, etc. We would greatly appreciate a turn lane or a break in the median adequate for larger vehicles to enter our business from Highway 93. Without a turning lane for vehicles traveling south on 93 our business would only obtain vehicles traveling north and or gas business would suffer substantially.

Please consider our request in your planning process and let us know your response. We appreciate your efforts on this project.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Robinson

Michael W. Robinson
Partner

James G. Parker

James G. Parker
Partner

Comment Sheet Received April 25, 1994

As a business located on Highway 93, we feel very strongly that a separate bike path would benefit the community much more than a widened shoulder. Our client population that we serve would be able to utilize this type of recreation because it is safer than a shoulder. Hopefully you will take this under serious consideration. Thank you.

Comment Sheet Received April 25, 1994

I would like to request that particular attention be paid to making available a separate bicycle path between Somers and Whitefish. Studies show that a separate bike path versus a wide shoulder is a much safer means of transportation and recreation.

Comment Sheet Received April 25, 1994

I would be very disappointed to see anything other than a separate bike path. A side shoulder is dangerous and would be a waste of money!

Comment Sheet Received April 25, 1994

A bikepath separate from the highway would be more desirable and safer. Citing the widened shoulder by Somers, Montana. People drive on that widened shoulder. Please take this into consideration.

som0425m.3gm

Glacier Gardens

Robert J. Lopp
52 West View Drive
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 752-7026

Gina McAfee
Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms. McAfee:

The TAC Committee review of the Highway 93 DEIS is a welcome response to a difficult issue. It is very important to the future of the Flathead Valley that a visually pleasant as well as functional highway is constructed. Driving from Coeur d' Alene to Spokane provides a good example why a divided median is important. In Idaho the highway is separated by a beautiful grove of trees and is very peaceful. In Washington all one sees is harsh concrete. Local access is provided in each state.

Please maintain the special design concepts as presented. This rebuilding of Highway 93 must be a long term solution which will preserve and enhance the character of the valley by not creating a business strip from Somers to Whitefish.

The West Side bypass is simply a side issue at this time. Funding will probably not be available for many years and the growth of the Evergreen-Central Valley area may change the bypass needs in the next five years. K Mart, Costco, Ernst, etc. are locating in the future commercial corridor for very good reasons.

Please listen to the reasonable voices as well as the loud commercial clamor in making this decision.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Lopp

Robert J. Lopp

RECEIVED
APR 25 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

RECEIVED
APR 25 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Comments on the design of Hiway 93 as a divided Hiway with a median from the Stillwater river to the K. M road turn off. This stretch of road has mostly agriculture along with some business, a subdivision and homes along the way. Agriculture now days have large equipment so they can compete with markets. To go from one field to another, having to cross the hiway or having to go a long way around would seem dangerous and time consuming, as well as for the mail carriers and school buses, rural fire departments and ambulances where time is great to get there as quick as possible, may mean saving a life or home. If a funeral coming from Whitefish and burial was to be at Glacier Memorial gardens, how would they cross the east traffic going north with a median? Also garbage trucks or anyone going to the refuse center would have to go past the entrance making a U turn and coming back. Also the ones coming from the north or Whitefish could turn in the refuse center, but when they came out, how far would they have to go before they could get to go back in the direction they came from. It seems to me its not a smooth way to move traffic. We are very much in favor of the design laid out when it was to be let out for bid, a five lane hiway.

Ervin & Marie Bauer
2284 Whitefish Stage
Kalispell, Mt. # 59901

Somers to Whitefish
Environmental Impact Statement

7-52

DEIS PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMMENT SHEET

I have the following comments or questions about the US 93 Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

I would definately recommend a separate bike path as opposed to simply a widened shoulder for this or any bike path. I live in Coram, Montana and we have a separate bike path there and that is idial - especially as a safety factor for all the kids that use the path. I enjoy walking on the path, but would not be inclined to do so if it were simply a road shoulder situation. I personally see people driving on the bike shoulders and do not consider that safe for either myself, my daughter or anyone.

Name

Address

Phone

(above information is optional)

RECEIVED

APR 25 1994

Center-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Comment Sheet Received April 25, 1994

Separate bike path makes sense!

Comment Sheet Received April 25, 1994
Jan McDonald
160 Burke Lane
Columbia Falls, Montana
257-1336

I am in complete agreement with having the bike path separate from the road. That will enable young people to ride safety as well as people who chose to jog or walk can feel safe. The bike path in Somers that is next tot he road is used by cars for passing and really wide turns. It is not a safe place for bikes!

Comment Sheet Received April 25, 1994

Currently living along a section of US 93 that has already been reconstructed, I would highly advocate for a separate bike/pedestrian path. Daily I see vehicles that use the wide shoulder to pass another car or cut a curve short. Please consider the safety of our children and individuals that will be using this path.

Comment Sheet Received April 25, 1994
Margie Piersall
536 Third Avenue East
755-0887

A separate bypass is a necessity!!! Please do it right the first time -- divided highway and bypass. Please make a separate bike path.

som0425m.3gm

Morrison & Morrison

Frank B. Morrison, Jr.
Sharon M. Morrison

236 Wisconsin Avenue
P.O. Box 1090
Whitefish, Montana 59937-1090
Telephone: 406-862-9600
Facsimile: 406-862-9611

Of Counsel:
Frank B. Morrison, Sr.

April 25, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Burgess:

I write to comment on the proposals for Highway 93 north of Somers, Montana, to Whitefish, Montana. I understand that you are preparing the DEIS.

To almost any eye, the Flathead Valley is one of the world's crown jewels. Fortunately, until a few years ago, it had escaped significant human impact. It was inevitable that it would happen, and it is happening. However, we have the good fortune to shape that impact and, hopefully, mold it to complement and enhance the natural environment.

We have such an opportunity with the Highway 93 project. The alternatives, of course, are a three-lane, with center turning lane, or a divided highway with the possibility of a landscaped median. I believe that a large number of Flathead County citizens believe that, even if the divided and landscaped alternative is a more expensive one, that is one of the costs of living in the Flathead. We have a responsibility to maintain and enhance our beautiful environment. A wide slab of concrete slashing through the heart of the north Valley would shout a statement that I don't think we want to make.

I might suggest that, even though the divided highway alternative may seem to have a higher initial cost, I believe the benefits would quickly exceed the cost, both in terms of money and human considerations. First, irrespective of what statistics might say, a divided highway has to be safer than the center-lane highway. I utilize the center-lane road all of the time, but it is always with white knuckles and clenched teeth. Almost daily, I see someone rapidly swing out of the lane when someone has pulled into it quickly from the opposite side of the road.

A beautiful landscaped roadway with opposing traffic separated by vegetation speaks of tranquility and relaxation as opposed to the frenetic atmosphere of an undivided road. That is what we sell in northwest Montana -- tranquility, relaxation and a chance to escape the stressful aspects of urban living.

RECEIVED

APR 28 1994

Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Thus, on all counts, I believe that the divided highway is a superior option. If you are tallying comments, please place mine in the divided and landscaped 93 column.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

MORRISON & MORRISON

Sharon M Morrison

Sharon M. Morrison

SMM/cph

Letter dated April 25, 1994
From Donna L. Taylor
Box 1947
255 Wilderness Lane
Whitefish, Montana 59937

Dear Ms. McAfee:

I have lived in western Montana for thirty years and am very committed to preserving the natural beauty that I love. I am also concerned with highway safety. Therefore, I support the divided highway with a median and all of the special design concepts associated with the median alternative.

I believe this to be the best solution. Thank you for the quality of the DEIS. It is extremely comprehensive and professional.

Letter dated April 27, 1994
From Sheila A. Shapiro and family of five
1-406-862-4608

I am/I:

1. In favor of a divided highway with a median, including all entrances to the cities in the valley.
2. Want to see all special design concepts included.
3. Want to see the character of the valley preserved and enhanced by the new 93!

Letter received April 29, 1994
From Sandra McCauley
A supporter for a median on Highway 93
RR 1 Box 247
Three Forks, MT 59752

Dear Mr. Burgess:

I am writing to say that I am totally in favor of a divided highway with a median between Somers and Whitefish, Montana. I believe that the development between Whitefish and Kalispell should be controlled. I also believe that considering the traffic and weather conditions, I believe a median would increase the safety factor. Montana is a precious state and I would hate to see random development destroy the beauty. Thank you for your time.

som0503m.2gm

195 N. Riding Rd
Kalispell, MT. 59901
April 26, 1994

Dear Highway Commissioners

I would like to write in support of the current proposal to build a 4 lane highway with a concrete median dividing the highway in the area of Highway 93 between Somers and Whitefish, MT.

I realize this is the most costly of the proposals, however the relatively small number of dollars this proposal would cost compared to the long range effects of lesser proposals seems unimportant.

My husband and I represent many of our friends and colleagues who are very concerned about the developments and lack of planning along this beautiful and scenic stretch of road. Please consider our support of the 4 lane highway and concrete median.

RECEIVED
MAY 02 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kathleen & Brace Hayden

April 26, 1994

Senator Max Baucus
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator,

Please note the attached letter which was mailed to the editors of numerous newspapers in the surrounding area.

I feel the only way this problem will be resolved is by the public opinion, which I hope you will consider.

The committee will never agree on which design to take. Even if they do, the landowners will not allow anymore property to be purchased without large law suits, which neither you or I would like to see to delay this project longer.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions please call or write.

Sincerely,

Arnold A. Mohl, Jr.

Arnold A. Mohl
3303 Highway 2 East
Kalispell, Montana 59901

PAY MORE -- WHAT FOR? ON HIGHWAY 93

In 1992, a special interest group managed to stall construction of the five-lane Highway 93 between Kalispell and Whitefish. Construction was scheduled to begin in October of 1992 and would have been completed by this time. Not only did they manage to stop the construction, but also lost the $16 million that was set aside for this project. That money was given to the Billings and Glendive district to use on other projects.

Two years and numerous critical accidents later, we are still driving on a narrow two-lane road. If this special interest group gets its way to build a four-lane divided highway, it will cost you, the taxpayer, the $16 million plus another $10 million more in construction costs plus whatever the outcome of the lawsuits to purchase property that landowners do not want to sell in addition to moving utilities again. This could easily amount to + or - $20 million over the construction costs listed above and delay this project indefinitely.

The Montana Department of Transportation's proposed design of Highway 93, a five-lane left turn lane, is the same as Highway 2 from Glacier Park International Airport to Highway 40, which has a very low accident rate compared to a divided highway.

The more money we spend on Highway 93 between Somers and Whitefish will only delay other critically needed projects such as Missoula to Polson or Hwy 2 from Kalispell to Libby.

If you are wondering why your taxes are so high and would like a change, please get involved by writing to the following with your choice--a five-lane highway which would cost approximately $16 million or a partially divided highway which could cost you $46 million. By the way, according to the EIS, there is no difference between these two types of roadway as far as safety. Only in cost.

Your comments will need to be submitted by May 15, 1994, to save your tax dollars or do nothing and let others spend your money. Write letters to these individuals:

Mr. Dale Paulson
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park Room 448
Drawer 10056
Helena, MT 59626-0056

Mr. Hank Honeywell
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park Room 448
Drawer 10056
Helena, MT 59626-0056

Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, CO 80202

Montana Highway Commissioners:

Roy Duff
P.O. Box 185
Whitefish, MT 59937

Patricia Abelin
1612 West Olive #4
Bozeman, MT 59715

Wally R. Bell
P.O. Box 5953
Helena, MT 59604

Ed Smith
Dagmar, MT 59219

Thorm Forseth
2037 Ridgeview Drive
Billings, MT 59105

Your Congressmen:

Senator Max Baucus
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Conrad Burns
183 Dirksen Senator Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Pat Williams
2457 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Arnold A. Mohl
3303 Highway 2 East
Kalispell, Montana 59901

Phone: Work 752-2755
Home 752-1177

Gina McAfee
Carter and Burgess

4/27/94

re: U.S. Hwy 93 Rebuild

We are writing to support the Advisory Committee recommendations regarding the divided highway concept for at least a portion of the highway between Kalispell and Whitefish.

We also support Couplet C-3 as the highway passes through the town of Whitefish. Our concern is that traffic flow smoothly through town without adversely impacting the unique character of our "small" resort community.

The advantages of C-3 in our minds are:

1. C-3 addresses "cross town" as well as "through town" traffic with the proposed seventh street bridge and continuation of seventh street.
2. Truck traffic on Baker would be minimized by allowing trucks to gain access to Hwy 93 via the 7th street bridge. One Way sections on 93 and Baker street are too long on couplets 1,2 and 4, creating excessive truck traffic on portions of Baker that does not now exist.
3. The character of our town would be enhanced by the addition of sidewalks, gutters, curbs and bike lanes in addition to landscaping on Baker and Spokane Ave.

We would also encourage removal of the "tubes" under the Spokane bridge and to allow for bicycle/walking trails to pass under both the new Spokane and 7th street bridges.

Thank You for giving us the opportunity to comment.

Cordially,

Chet & Carol Hope

Chet and Carol Hope
444 OBrien
Whitefish, Mt 59937

RECEIVED
MAY 02 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Letter from
Emerson Pottery
1205 Wikler Ave.
Helena, Montana 59601

Sir: I favor a divided highway with a median including all entrances to cities in valley. I want to enhance the quality of the valley. Ban billboards. Include all the special design concepts and get the job done right the first and only time. Get a real plan and follow it.

Letter dated April 27, 1994
From Luann A. Basirico

Dear Carter & Burgess,

I am writing in favor of a divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the Flathead Valley. I would also like to see all the special design concepts included.

I believe that this is the way to go so we won't be looking at redoing it in 10-15 years and also to enhance the appearance of our community.

When first moving to Whitefish in 1977 I rented from Bea Kraut. Bea was a retired English teacher who lived in Whitefish but had worked in Kalispell for many years. She drove US 93 then and do you know what sticker she had on her bumper? "Yes, I drive Hwy 93 please pray for me." And that was in 1977. You may recognize her name as her son is Don Kraut, then a Highway Patrolman.

The second personal note I wanted to state is that I have done a fair amount of cross country driving and whenever I drive through an area with a divided highway with a median I really appreciate the quality of the countryside and the relaxing feeling that driving on that type of road gives you versus having four lanes of traffic that you are dealing with.

Our valley is growing, please make the best choice for #1 safety and #2 quality. Thank you.

som0503m.2gm

DATE: April 27, 1994

TO: Whitefish City Council

We, the undersigned, are the inhabitants south of the Baker Street Bridge. We find it unacceptable that Baker be made part of the Highway 93 Route.

We also find unacceptable the plan of making Baker a one-way in either direction.

We further find it unacceptable for the routing of big trucks down Baker Avenue at any time.

We are a neighborhood and we want to keep it that way.

We want to keep Highway 93 on its present route and route big trucks around the town.

Bobby L. Duggan	535 W. 7TH St	862-0863
Margie Thompson	448 7th St W	862-3235
[illegible]	346 West 7th	862-4156
Helen Miscampbell	445-W 7th St.	862-2265
Maurice Miscampbell	445-W. 7th St.	862-2265
Julia J. Lamberson	540-W 7th St.	862-3192
Lloyd L Lamberson	540-W. 7th St.	862-3192
Irma G. Torgerson	835 West 7th St.	862-4052
Vernon G. Torgerson	835 West 7th St	862-4052
Dorothy M. Fredericks	505 S. Karrow	862-2786
Duane H. Fredericks		
David Young	332-7th St W. Box 1105	862-2146
Jerry Young	332-7th St. W. Box 1105	862-2146
Jacqueline Clemens	405 8th St West	862-6042
Vera Skans	430 W. 8th St	862-5063
John Skans	430 W. 8th St.	862-5063
Kenneth Kruger	P.O. Box 202	862-3318
Dorothy Kruger	Box 202	862-3318
Richard E McDowell	411 West 9th St	862-2374
Betty McDowell	315-West 9th	862-2482
James Bubke	611-West 7th St.	862-4270
Robert E. Stroup	421 West 7th Street	862-4531

DATE: April 27, 1994

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[illegible]	648 Lupfer Whitefish Mt	862-4056
[illegible]	416 W. 7th St Whitefish, MT	862-6661
[illegible]	314 W. 7th St	862-5[illegible]
[illegible]	704 O'Brien Ave	
[illegible]	227 W. 7th St	862-2410
[illegible]	227 W. 7th St.	862-2410
Nancy Chapman	213 W. 7th St	862-1307
JAMES O BAUMGARTNER	704 O'BRIEN AVE	862-5089
BRIAN BAKER	227 W. 8th St	844-4455
[illegible]	310 8th St W.	862-5699
[illegible]	412 8th W	862-7366
Gerald M. Hayes	412 8th W.	862-8891
Lannetta Hayes	412 8th W.	862-8891
[illegible]	414 W. 8th	862-6776
[illegible]	420 8th W. St	862-5799
Megan McFadden	788 West 7th	862-0417
[illegible]	786 W. 7th	862-2179
Pat Vuelker	786 W 7th St	862-2179
M. W. Bethea	710 W 7th St	862-7673
Debbie Bethea	710 W 7th St	862-7673
D. L. Blank	725 W 7th St	862-7944
Irvin F. Hertz	544 W. 7th St.	862-4645

DATE: April 27, 1994

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Norbert T. Voigt	612 Lupfer Ave Whitefish, MT.	59[illegible]
Philip C. Rumerfield	910 O'Brien Ave	59937
James F. Wilkerson	1120 O'Brien Ave Whitefish	59937
[illegible]	1115 O'Brien	Whitefish, MT 59937
Richard & Bonnie Clayton	1105 O'Brien Ave.	Whitefish, 59[illegible]
[illegible]	109 8th W	Whitefish, 59937
David J. Weichel	109 8th W.	Whitefish 59937
Lois Legris	734 Lupfer	Whitefish - 59937
Joseph A. Legris	736 Lupfer	Whitefish, Mt. 59937
John V. Nelson	315 Baker	Whitefish, Mt
[illegible] M. Nelson	315 Baker	Whitefish Mt
Lyle F. Rutherford	550 Central Ave	Whitefish Mt
Minnie Veile	312 Elk Trail	Whitefish, Mt.
Kay T. Thompson	631 LUPFER AVE	WHITEFISH.
Garnett Thompson	631 Lupfer Ave	Whitefish.
Betty J. Absalonson	555 Columbia Ave	Whitefish
Clive A. Absalonson	555 Columbia Ave	Whitefish

DATE: April 27, 1994

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[illegible]	P.O. Box 2022	WF, MT 59937
[illegible]	520 Scott Ave	WF MT 59937
[illegible]	530 Scott Ave	WF MT 59937
Pamela Dryer	341 W. 6th	Whf MT 59937
Shirley Hardwick	410 W. 5th	Whitefish MT. 59937
Sally Helbischer	403 5th St (W)	Whitefish, Mt. 59937
Kelley Lantz	427 W. 5th St	Whitefish, MT 59937
[illegible]	427 W 5th St	Whitefish, MT 59937
Charles R. McDowell	610 W 5th St	Kalispell, MT. 59937
Joe Sanderfield	830 Highland Dr	Whitefish MT 59937
Samuel A. Citron	150 W. 6th St.	WHITEFISH MT. 59937
Mary R Citron	150 W 6th St	Whitefish, MT 59937
Cynthia Gola	Box 1576	Whitefish MT 59937
[illegible]	305 Baker Ave	Whitefish, MT 59937
[illegible]	237 Baker Ave	Whitefish MT 59937
[illegible]	237 Baker Ave	Whitefish MT 59937
[illegible]	221 W. 9th St	W.F.
Linda McMaster	1145 W 7th St.	W.F.
Ralph B. Hemp	625 W. 5th St	Whitefish, MT. 59937
Julie Hemp	625 W. 5th St	Whitefish MT 59937
Mary Ann Hemp	1009 5th St	Whitefish MT 59937
[illegible]	" "	" "
Mark Van Nyhuis	415 GEDDES AVE	Whitefish, MT 59937

DATE: April 27, 1994

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Dawn Stilson	Box 282	Whitefish, MT 59937
[illegible]	280 Texas Ave	Whitefish MT 59937
[illegible]	538 Scott Ave	Whitefish MT 59937
David Kellogg	" " "	" " "
Martin [illegible]	533 Scott Ave	Whitefish MT 59937
[illegible]	P.O. Box 1706	Whitefish, MT 5993
Barbara Nicholaychuk	596 Scott	WF MT 59937

DATE: April 27, 1994

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Garrie E. L. Hansen c/o 580 Baker Whitefish Montana
Larry D. Miersma 604 B. Baker Ave. Whitefish, Montana 59937
Jerry L. Hansen 580 Baker Ave Whitefish, MT 59937
William F. Hoppe 577 Baker ave Whitefish MT 59937
Emma Hoppe 577 Baker ave Whitefish MT 59937
Craig B. Dunsen 202 W 6TH St Whitefish, MT 59937
Kelly Huggy 605 Lupfer ave Whitefish MT 59937
Philip D. Gaffey 605 Lupfer Ave Whitefish MT 59937
Eldora Morgan 622 Lupfer ave Whitefish 59937
Richard L. Gaertner 630 Baker Ave Whitefish 59937
Brenda Moen 704 Baker Ave Whitefish, MT 59937
Marc Moen " " " " " "
Gary [illegible] 722 Baker Ave Whitefish, MT 59937
Jane L. Clark 728 Baker Ave Whitefish, MT 59937
Robert A. Johnson Jr. 734 Baker Ave. Whitefish, MT 59937
Susan H. Johnson 734 Baker Ave. Whitefish, MT 59937
Frank Feeney 603 Baker ave Whitefish MT 59937
Robert T. Clawson Jr. 154 WT 6th Whitefish MT 59937
Ruth R. Clawson 154 W. 6th Whitefish MT 59937
Valeta Feeney 603 Whitefish Mont
James W. Stout 226 W 6TH " "
Jon K. Stout " " " " "

DATE: April 27, 1994

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Tracy L. DeWan 227 W. 8th St. W.F. 862-6853
Joyce S. Delap 228 W 8th St Whitefish 862-3012
Elsie Robinson 742 Lupfer Ave. Whitefish, 862-4442
Helen Hedman 205 W. 8th St. Whitefish, 862-3120
A. Holien 725 Lupfer Ave Wh. 862-7460
Becky Johnson 721 Lupfer Ave. Wh. 862-3911
Cecil Stokes 719 Lupfer ave Whitefish 5993
Clara DeVall 703 Lupfer Ave Whitefish
Debra Albright 708 Lupfer Ave Whitefish 59937
Barbara Hennessey 844 South Baker Whitefish - 8626
[illegible] Sargent 560 [illegible] Ave - Wh. 862-53
Patricia McCann 840 So. Baker Ave - Ph. 862-3295
George Johnson " " " " " " "
Bill Carpenter 220 W. 6th St, Whitefish 862-395
Samuel Carpenter " "
Henry Schneider 905 O'Brien
Harold A. McDowell 315 W 9th Whitefish, MT
Clyde A. Novak 933 O'Brien Ave, Whitefish, MT 59937
Mary Lou Field 1001 O'Brien Ave Whitefish
Albert A. Kerstes 1007 O'Brien Ave Whitefish
C. J. Lockwood 839 O'Brien Ave, Whitefish
Nicole P. Wright - 835 O'Brien ave Whitefish MT

ANDREW PASLAWSKY
P.O. BOX 4592
WHITEFISH, MT 59937
(406) 862-3634

April 27, 1994

Ms. Gina McAfee
Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

RE: U.S. Highway 93 Somers to Whitefish Final EIS.

Dear Ms. McAfee:

The purpose of this letter is to express my opinions regarding the above referenced project. Your final EIS and the roadway option selected will have great influence on present and future land use patterns in the Flathead Valley, and I hope the following comments will be useful in making your decision.

1. I am in favor of a divided highway with a landscaped median, including the entrances to Kalispell and Whitefish.
2. I would like to see the special design concepts included as they will add individual character to the roadway design as well as enhance the travel experience for tourists and the local residents.
3. The selection of a divided highway with landscaped median and controlled access provides the best solution for being able to better plan and structure growth, and at the same time maintain the roadway's capacity to carry inter-city traffic. In the long run this option will have the *least* negative impact on the community.

Whitefish and Kalispell as communities must take pride in the infastructure built as it will influence the look, feel, and character of the towns. The divided highway gives us that option, the five lane does not. So many other areas of the country have town entrances with five lane highways and one commercial building after the next with asphalt in between. This type of development is ugly, is very hazardous and unpleasant for non-motorized users, and only benefits the commercial landowner. So, please specify the divided highway with landscaped median concept.

The initial added cost of the divided highway option is small compared to the benefits it will provide to the communities for years to come.

Sincerely,

Drew Paslawsky

Drew Paslawsky

RECEIVED
MAY 02 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

MAY 16 '94 14:32 FLATHEAD COUNTY P.1/1

West Valley Volunteer
Fire Department

RECEIVED
MAY 6 1994
COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

April. 28, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess
216 16th Street, Suite 1700
Denver, CO. 80202

Dear Committee Members,

We the undersigned members of the West Valley Vol. Fire Dept. STRONGLEY oppose any and all ideas or construction of a 4 Lane with a Median Hiway from Kalispell to Whitefish. We do however promote the better and more beneficial 4Lane and 1 Turn Lane, as is on Hiway #2 by the Glacier Int. Airport, from Kalispell to Col. Falls.

The roason for our opposing the 4 Lane and Median propposal, as has been suggested, is that our Dept!s response time from the East side of our District to the West side for Fire or E.M.S. calls or West to East would greatly affect our residents in our district. So we GREATFULLY urge you all to consider our request for the sake of the people we serve.

Sincerely,
West Valley Vol. Fire
Dept. Members

James W Fremark
Wade Shelp
Wacken Waehus
Myron V. Boulden
DM Burgess
Kurt Carda
Bruce Wheeler
Tom Noel - Big
Charles Carda
Frank Bond
Randy D Hedges

US 93 Somers to Whitefish West EIS
Comments Received April 28, 1994

Anna Jones
549-2980

How will we get farm equipment to the different parts of our property? Can't come to meetings on May 4 or 5. Would like to meet with someone from Missoula Office. Mike Worrall will call her back.

Nancy Lunch
862-3181

My husband and I are against the five-lane design. The primary reasons are:

- Safety -- people who use the center lane as a merge lane or an acceleration lane. In town they are going 35 mph -- I can't imagine what it would be like at 55 mph.
- Aesthetics -- a five-lane would just be a concrete strip.
- More strip development -- most people do not want to see more strip development.

The five-lane has been outlawed in many states. There are much more modern, safer way of building highways.

We have one time to do this right.

som0428m.3gm

Starshine
704 First Street
Helena, MT 59601-5360
(406)449-6663

28 April 94

To Whom It May Concern:

Sunday I drove from Whitefish to Polson, one of the most scenic routes in Montana. With mountains, Flathead Lake and streams too numerous to count, highway 93 is a feast for the eyes.

I understand that a five lane road with easy access is planned. I feel such a road would be less safe than the current two lane one! With cars able to turn off the road at any place, both people and animals would be at risk.

Surely a four lane road with restricted turn-offs would be both cheaper and safer for the local residents as well as tourists.

Sincerely,

Dr. Starshine

D. Starshine, Ph.D.

RECEIVED
MAY 06 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Randy K. Schwickert
ATTORNEY AND COUNSELLOR AT LAW
6336 Highway 93 South
Whitefish, Montana 59937

Telephone (406) 862-5302
Telefax (406) 862-1447

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess
216 16th Street Mall - Suite 1700
Denver, CO. 80202

RE: Highway 93 Design/DEIS

Dear Ms. McAfee:

I would first like to compliment you on the quality and depth of the DEIS. I learned more than I ever thought I would want about the highway and the project alternatives. Thank you for the fine job.

My comments are influenced by two overriding factors: First, the design should provide a safe and efficient travel corridor through the Flathead Valley; Second, the project should enhance rather than devalue the natural and scenic attributes of the valley while considering the economic impact on the areas essential commercial development;

I believe the divided highway with a median satisfies these concerns best of the various alternatives discussed.

The turn-lane alternatives, based on my experience, is unsafe, unattractive and likely to encourage a undesirable strip development along the corridor. The median reduces opportunities for drivers to confront each other in either the use of the turn lane or the dash across the highway from one side to the other during periods of peak traffic flow.

On median-divided highways that I have driven, I have been impressed with their comparative attractiveness. The inconvenience created by restricted access to all parts of both sides of the highway has been minor. As an owner of a business on Highway 93, I am not troubled by the impact the median will create on clients accessing my office.

I believe that commercial development will not be adversely affected. People live here because of the quality of our life and our environment. Owners of businesses will want to settle here for those same reasons and because there is a growing customer base which requires more services and generates more employment.

The additional cost of the median alternative will seem small in the future when the benefits are more fully appreciated. We must look to a long term solution rather than one based on short term financial considerations.

As a consequence, I support all of the special design concepts discussed and associated with the median alternative.

RECEIVED
APR 28 1994

Finally, within the Whitefish area I prefer the Alternative C (Couplet-2) with a new Seventh Street bridge and the extension of Baker Avenue. My only concern with this alternative is the loss of parking which Whitefish can ill afford to lose. Perhaps some more thought can be given to a way of preserving more of the lost parking spaces. I was originally concerned with the prospect of the bridge's impact on the wetland and scenery. However the wetland impact seems miniscule while the benefit of the bridge seems on balance greater than the negative impact on scenery..

Thank you once again for your fine work and your consideration of this comment.

Sincerely yours,

Randy K. Schwickert

April 28, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Gina,

I would like for your organization to consider these items for the development of Highway 93 from Somers to Whitefish in Northwest Montana:

- If we rebuild Hwy 93 with the divided Hwy with a median, Hwy 93 will then have more of a chance to become a Scenic Byway and receive Federal funds for construction. Hwy 93 is certainly a scenic road and with proper planning, billboard mitigation and the addition of visitor information centers this Hwy can be up for classification as a Scenic By way. Currently Governor Racicot has a task force working on implementing Scenic Byways in Montana.

  I support designating Hwy 93 as a Scenic Byway - and know several others that would too-

  I support the divided highway with a median, including all of the entrances to each community.

- I support all of the special design concepts.

- We need to preserve and enhance the character of the Flathead Valley.

  If we rebuild Hwy 93 so that the entire state, valley and visitors from around the US can enjoy driving here we will all benefit through a boosted economy in tourism dollars. Tourism generates millions of dollars in this community year round and the residents and businesses are thankful for that push. We should all not suffer because a few folks who live on the highway are selfish and do not want to give anymore of their land for a median. These people are unreasonable. If anyone chooses to live on the major highway that brings 3 million visitors to this valley, they should be prepared for growth and expansion, it comes with the territory.

RECEIVED
MAY 23 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

- Five lane highways are unsafe. I have spoken with many that take their life into their hands trying to make a turn on Hwy 93. If we have pull offs and tea cups we will create a safe highway for all to enjoy. Although this may mean more work, we will all benefit in the long run.

- Five lane highways promote strip development which is contrary to the popular support of controlling and slowing growth in the Flathead Valley, shown in the survey conducted by the Cooperative Planning Solution.

- Bike paths and wide shoulders need to be included, as this is an added form of transportation. Several folks bike along this highway and it is very dangerous. The extra expense is worth it.

- With added zoning the median design will help control the already out of control growth the Flathead is already experiencing. Development will be at intersections, and not continuos, strip development.

- The billboards need to come down with the new construction and not be replaced. This visual pollution that we are involuntarily subjected to is a sin to be blocking out the beautiful vistas along highway 93. There are 40 billboards between Somers and Kalispell - that seems like way too many, perhaps 40 too many. There is ISTEA money to assist with billboard mitigation. This should be a part of the complete package to get a new scenic safe highway.

  Thank you for including my comments. Please help us make highway 93 a safe and scenic highway through our spectacular Flathead Valley. I do not understand why narrow-minded people, and some planners, refuse to recognize what a special place the Flathead Valley is, one that should be cherished for all of the world to see, as there is no place like it in the lower 48.

Sincerely,

Joan Vetter

Joan Vetter
744 Hidden Valley Drive
Whitefish, MT 59937

Letter Received May 2, 1994
From Calvin Bay and Sandra Bay, and Brian Bay

Dear Mr. Burgess:

We would like for you to consider very carefully the planning of Highway 93 in the Flathead Valley of Montana. This is a very beautiful place which needs an improved highway system. We strongly urge you to support the divided highway with a median, including all the entrances to the cities in the valley.

We feel this would enhance and preserve the character of the valley, plus an additional road construction would not have to be done. The divided highway with controlled access would prevent the "strip look" that has developed in other parts of the state.

Thank you for helping to preserve our beautiful Flathead Valley.

Letter dated April 28, 1994
From Diane Helgath
835 Highland Drive
Whitefish, MT 59937

Carter & Burgess: Enough time and money have been spent on studying the proposed Hwy 93. Lets make a decision and go with it or construct temporary slower lanes. The traffic is terrible and getting worse. I would like the safest road between Kalispell and Whitefish with the least amount of access entries. I find it hard to believe that a 5 lane hwy is safer than a divided one. Let's get on with the construction.

Comment from
Mary Alexine
610 3rd Avenue West
Kalispell, MT 59901
756-8056

I feel it is very important to include a bike trail (wide and safe) when the highway is widened.

Letter dated April 26, 1994
From Brian and Julia Bechtold

I would like to add my support to the proposed 4-lane highway w/ a medium between Kalispell and Whitefish. The medium will help maintain the integrity and beauty of the valley as the population increases and we move into the 21st century. Don't let my grandchildren look back and say we made a mistake!

som0503m.2gm

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Suite 1700
Denver CO 80202

To Whom It Concerns:

We are writing to indicate our support for a four-lane, median-divided highway on U.S. 93 from Somers to Whitefish, Mont., especially including the entrances to Kalispell and Whitefish. We also urge you to include all the special design concepts, particularly visitor information centers and those that accommodate bicycle traffic.

A divided highway would be an important management tool for controlling unsightly strip development that will be the most likely consequence of the five-lane design and the expected future growth of the Flathead Valley. Tourism is one of the Flathead's most vital sources of revenue and tourists don't come here to see what they are hoping to temporarily escape in their urban communities. A median-divided highway will best preserve the rural character of this special place.

The 15% increase in the cost of the project, as projected in the Environmental Impact Statement, is an insignificant sum when weighed against the losses in tourism revenue that will result if we allow the unique character of this valley to be destroyed by a five-lane highway and the strip development that will result from it.

Sincerely,

Melia and Michael Biedscheid

Melia and Michael Biedscheid
455 Glenwood Rd.
Whitefish, MT 59937
(406)862-3510

RECEIVED
APR 29 1994
Carter Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Letter Received April 29, 1994
From Ann Glimner
Rm 111 Johnstone
Bozeman, MT 59715

Dear Carter & Burgess:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed 5 lane highway between Somers and Whitefish, Montana. I feel it is extremely important to control the development that is moving into the valley.

I also feel that with the amount of traffic between Kalispell and Whitefish that a divided highway would increase the safety factor 100 fold.

I hope when I move back to the Flathead Valley that travel will be safer due to a divided highway with a median.

Letter dated April 26, 1994
From Laurie Mendosa Rolsky
855 Beaver Lake Road
Whitefish, MT 59937

My family and I live in Whitefish. I commute to Kalispell every business morning and afternoon. The commute is fine -- the traffic hardly a problem. My biggest complaint rests in the laps of the many reckless drivers who pass and speed with little care or respect for others.

When looking at Long Range, Bigger Pictures it's clear to me that what this stretch of highway needs is not 4 or 5 more lanes (The cumulative effect of a mammoth expansion would forever change the complexion of our area in a negative way). Instead, get Simple. Separate the north and south bound lanes with a divider, allow for some passing zones for our slower vehicles and walk away. Use restraint create a safer road that in the long run will better our community and our corner of the planet. (Is there a reason why in 1-1/2 years of commuting I've never once seen a Highway Patrol car watching for these jerks that constantly break the law?) Bigger is not better in this case. Work with and within what we have. I am part of the picture, my family and their safety, as well as the many visitors and fellow Montanans. We need a design that will be best for the future.

4/29/1994

Mr. Dale Paulson
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park - Room 448 - Drawer 10056
Helena, Montana, 59626

RE: HIGHWAY 93 BETWEEN KALISPELL & WHITEFISH

Dear Mr. Paulson:

We believe the only highway which makes any sense is the 5 Lane Highway with a turning lane in the center. There is not enough area for a divided highway, and who, repeat who, is going to maintain this so called landscaped strip down the center? We live on the highway, and we mow the barrow pit in front of our house PLUS pick up all the debti that people throw out of their cars PLUS pick up all the garbage that flies off of the uncovered pick ups going to the dump. Also, the utility lines have been moved in accordance to the 5 Lane Highway Design.

It would appear that the people who want the divided highway are just trying to drive out strip businesses along the highway in the hopes that people will drive into Whitefish to do business.

Lastly, this isn't an Interstate Highway - it is just a road between a little berg and a small town - let'z get on with building a 5 Lane Highway as planned.

Sincerely,

James & Marcia A. Carrico
5755 Highway 93 South
Whitefish, Montana, 59937

April 30, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter and Burgess
216 16th Street, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Comments for Draft EIS -- Highway 93

I would like to take this time to commend you on your research and work so far regarding the Hwy 93 project.

I would like to state that safety should be foremost on everyone's mind on Hwy 93 and within the city of Whitefish. I feel the Alternative A (Combo) addresses the needs between Somers and Whitefish. The entire route does not need to be A (Median) or A (Turn-Lane), but a fair compromise.

I am against using Antelope Trail (Happy Valley) as a frontage road. This street is narrow with a high number of kids and pedestrians and is not suited for such traffic. I do not see a need to add this traffic to this sub-division.

From the Whitefish River heading west to Lion Mtn exit I feel this stretch of Hwy 93 (2nd Ave) needs to as wide as possible with suitable bike and pedestrian lanes.

Within the Whitefish limits, I am in favor of Alternitve C (couplet-3) as I feel Spokane Ave needs to remain 2 way to 7th St.. 7th St. bridge is a very good idea and long overdue to connect our cities east and west sections.

Sincerely,

Dave

Dave White
P.O. Box 1468
215 Timber Ln
Whitefish, MT 59937

RECEIVED
MAY 04 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

5/1/94

Dear Carter Burgess staff,

I am very concerned about the design of highway 93 in the Flathead Valley.

I find roads with a center turn lane terrifying to negotiate when I am in my car or on a bicycle or on foot. It becomes a giant game of chicken when there is snow pack on the road and none of the lines are visible. That is often the case here for weeks and months at a time.

I prefer a divided highway with a median, including entrances to cities. All the special design concepts should be included.

The best option would be to leave the roads the way they are and put the money into public transportation.

Sincerely,

D. Linnell Blank

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MAY 06 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

D. L. BLANK
P. O. BOX 953
WHITEFISH, MT 59937

5/2/93

Dear Carter Burgess,

We are writing to indicate our strong support that Hwy 93 be built as a divided highway with a median, including all entrances to cities in the valley. This design is the only way to preserve and enhance the character of the valley by discouraging strip development.

Sincerely,

Andrew Zimet
Flo Chrusciel
845 Park Ave.
Whitefish MT 59937

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MAY 09 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

May 2, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th Street Mall, Suite 1700
Denver, Colorado 80202

RE: Highway 93 DEIS - Flathead Valley, Montana

Dear Mr. Burgess:

I have reviewed the DEIS for the Highway 93 upgrade in the Flathead Valley, and want to express my support for providing a divided highway with a full median. This makes sense from the land use planning and safety aspects of the project, as well as being smart from a long term point of view. With use increasing so rapidly in the valley, full emphasis must be placed on implementing government development which will aid in reasonably controlling that ~~development~~ increased use. The full median, including entrances to all the valley cities and towns, will do that.

The issue is not only one for local debate. All residents of Montana and indeed the nation have an interest in doing this project right and preserving the beauty and special qualities that we can for the valley area. The decision makers in this case should not respond to local politics, but should base the decision on the merits. The merits clearly point towards the divided highway with a full median.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

D. Henry Elsen
806 Holter Street
Helena, Montana 59601
406 442-1409

RECEIVED
MAY 04 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Letter Received May 3, 1994

Mr. Dale Paulson:

I have the following suggestion to make that should improve this Draft EIS for US 93 between Somers and West of Whitefish.

1. Mitigation
Para 4-8-6 as well as other mitigation paragraph do not make specific commitments. Terms like can be considered . . . ., will be considered during construction, . . . should be watered, ... should be stacked. . . are used instead of simply stating that it will be done.

2. 4(f) Properties
I don't believe table 5-1 and its discussion belongs in the Section 4(f) evaluation, or at least the table 5-1 heading should be "parks and recreation areas" and not "4(f) properties." These properties are also listed in table 4-34. If its 4(f) properties 4(f) applies and I don't believe it does. Mr. Ponek (page C-14) indicates no effect to wfsh parks. Letters from other park and recreation administration seems to also indicate either "no effect" or "no adverse" effect to the areas listed.

3. 4(f) Evaluation
Since the 4(f) evaluation is suppose to be a separate document (should be able to be processed separately) all correspondence concerning 4(f) coordination as well as meetings should be documented and included in this chapter. I also note that the historic site review and/or 4(f) coordination doesn't seem to include the ACHP or the owners of the site. Shouldn't their comments be obtained?

The SHPO's letter of January 11, 1994 (page C-18) to the sate raises several questions that needs responses. It appears that the SHPO is taking a position of "constructive use" on eligible property. The response letter to the SHPO should have been included in the 4(f) evaluation.

4. Recipients of DEIS
I don't understand that if this is an FHWA document prepared for MDT by the Consultant why is Mr. Paulson, the Environmental Coordinator for this project, on the mailing list or for that matter if its an FHWA document why should the other offices of FHWA be on this mailing list. I'm also not sure why MDT people responsible for this EIS being on this list. Why are some people listed twice?

Why wasn't the Water Quality Division of Montana Dept. of Health and Environmental Sciences include on the list when they comment to the Prel. DEIS.

Since historic sites are involved in this DEIS - 4(f) evaluation why not get comments from the ACHP? Isn't this required under 4(f)?

5. Agency Letters Received
It is extremely difficult to determine whether a satisfactory response was made to each of the comments received from other agencies, organizations and the general public. The response letter from MDT or FHWA (not the consultant) should be included in the appendix or at least indicate in the margin area along side the comment as to where the answer is located in the document.

I also have the following comments to add.

1. P6-7 refers to Federal Transit Administration. Do they mean our sister agency UMTA?
2. The description for Kalispell-Somers track spur should indicate the tracks were removed by the Burlington Northern.
3. Page 1 - MDT is listed under cooperating agency, if so, why did they sign off on the document.
4. Figure 2-16(a)(b) Airport road to 9th Street have a proposed 11' lane width and it appears that with very little additional cost you could have 12' lanes with 2' added from the area between the roadway and the pedestrian walkway. 12 feet lanes are provided for most FA highways as it provides a safer roadway than the 11' width.
5. Figure 2-17(a)(b) Same comment as 4. 2 feet from the 12 ft or 14 ft curb lawn width being proposed. Or some of this width for the 12 ft. lanes could easily come from the bike lane where its proposed to use lane widths of 7', 8' or 10'. What is the standard bike lane width? And is the bike lane a given over a parking lane.
6. Don't forget the elderly and handicapped.
7. Pavement type is not discussed but I hope serious consideration will be given to PCC in the Whfsh downtown area (Baker-Spokane-2nd St.).
8. P4-17 last paragraph states that alternate C(OFF-SET) could also have increased accident potential . . . . when snow covers roadway markers. Since traffic counts are greatly reduced in the winter period why can't this roadway be returned to one lane in each direction with the middle lane as a separation area for snow removal and additional recovery area during adverse weather conditions.
9. Is there enough room, without effecting the bank, for southbound right turns from Second Street to Baker Avenue for the large logging and woodchip trucks.

Hope this helps you in preparing final EIS. Please send me a copy.

H. Kusumoto
566 1st Avenue EN
Kalispell, MT 59901

Note: This comment letter is addressed in Section 6.6.6.11 of the FEIS.

7-70

Margaret Murdoch
185 Reservoir Rd.
Whitefish, Mt. 59937
April 28, 1994

Carter Burgess
216 16th St. Mall Suite 1700
Denver, Colo. 80202

re: Highway 93 Somers to Whitefish (Montana)

Because this highway will be maintained by snow plows and sand trucks a good share of the year, let's build it with maximum safety and low cost maintenance as top priority.

Next level of priority should be minimal amount of environmental disturbance. Too much of our good land is being paved, so keep the highway straight and narrow. A highway is to drive on, not gaze at the scenery. If folks want to look around, stop somewhere and do so.

Thanks,
Margaret Murdoch

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MAY 02 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Letter received May 3, 1994
From Renee Boissecur

I'm in favor of a divided highway w/median, including entrances to the cities in the valley. We need to preserve the character of the valley and not bow to quick-fix commercialism.

May 4, 1994

Joseph E. Fisher
407 Ashley Ct
Kalispell, MT 59901

Carter & Burgess;

I would like to see a divided highway with a median all the way on highway 93 between Somers & Whitefish. Pros: less tendency for development off of intersections; safer, "suicide lane" is not safe; much more aesthetically pleasing than the other options.

This highway rebuild is really going to help determine the character of the valley. Let's not blow it!

Sincerely,
Joseph E. Fisher

HINES AUTOMOTIVE CENTRE

P.O. Box 2721
Kalispell, MT 59903
(406) 755-3666

May 4, 1994

Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 - 16th Street Mall
Denver, CO 80202

20 18 21 TR 7AAB & TR 7CC in NW4SE4

Dear Sir:

I have been a property owner and in business on Highway 93 South of Kalispell for over 28 years. I strongly urge you to support building a five lane highway all the way from Somers to Kalispell and on to Whitefish. We do not need a divided highway as it will be to costly, unsafe and to difficult to maintain. We cannot afford this kind of waste. We need more miles of new highway, not more beauty. We have plenty of that already in the Flathead. Forget the frills, lets build some roads...

Sincerely yours;

Edward L. Hines

Edward L. Hines

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MAY 09 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

7-71

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MAY 05 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

To Whom It May Concern -

For too often in our society today, we spend foolishly on projects, to "quick fix", that actually negatively effect our own well-being. Hwy 93, is just such a project. The "fear factor" syndrome, of settling for the "crumbs" given us by the federal government, based on our small population, is like allowing the people in New York and California decide about of wilderness and forest areas. Our children and their safety need to be the driving factor in considering the design of Hwy. 93. The road needs to be there for them, not like in Oregon where a five lane, lighted,

car clogged roadway that is totally stripped developed, is having to be replaced by an expensive by-pass after just 10 years. The strips that it will leave, will likely become run-down and a burden to the taxpayers as new strip development starts at the new by-pass. Poor Bend, Oregon.

I strongly support the median system and could effectively say that if expediency and a few landowners stand in the way of a safer, efficient hiway system then the democratic system doesn't work very well, and we have settled for the crumbs.

Sincerely,

Bob Ladmuller
Wfish, Mt.

Letter Received May 6, 1994

Dave Struter
Box 2031
Whitefish, MT 59937

Don't build no stinking expansion to Highway 93. You are just inviting more people to go faster. Instead subsidize a jitney or bus service for $1 million and build a few more turning lanes for safety for $1.5 million.

Since I realize I am blowing smoke into the winds of the current debate, please do not build a 5 lane demolition road. At least separate us from the idiots with a center median.

Thanks, David Struter

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MAY 06 1994

Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

a comment on the Hiway 93 design which was to be a five lane, then some people in Kalispell and Whitefish wanted a divided hiway at the last minute, but in 94 they seem to want a five lane from Kalispell south for some distance, then the same from Kalispell north to the still water river. Then a divided hiway north to the K M Ranch road. People living in that area sold their right of way with the understanding of a five lane design, now may get stuck with a divided hiway. I have lived all my life north of Kalispell, farmed leased and owned land at different times, still own some since 1931 befor hiway 93 was built.

Winter storms from Kalispell to the K. M road, I think are among the worst, and any kind of obstruction that rises much above the surface or below catches snow.

I can not see why there should be two different designs for 93 hiway. Had it been known early about, the divided design, I doubt the hiway department could of gotten the nessesary right of way land. Didi'nt the 3,000 signatures mean any thing, it seems to in an election. I'm not a new comer to this Valley. We are in favor of a five lane design

Ervin Bauer 2284 Whitefish stage Kalispell Mont 59901
Marie Bauer 2284 Whitefish Stage

May 7, 1994

Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, CO 80202

My wife and I are strongly in favor of a divided highway between Whitefish and Kalispell, Montana.

I grew up in Whitefish, will retire there this fall, own property on Whitefish Lake and Flathead Lake, and in the center of the valley--and am willing to accept the increase of taxes that will result from a divided highway.

I want to retain the beauty of the Flathead as much as it is possible to do so, given the increase in population.

Lawrence F. Rooney

Lawrence F. Rooney
P.O. Box 3245
Evergreen, CO 80439

(303) 670 3755

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MAY 09 1994

Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

7-74

94 MAY 10 A10:26

May 7, 1994

Mr. Dale Paulson
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park, Room 448
Drawer 10056
Helena, Montana 59626-0056

Dear Mr. Paulson:

My wife and I are strongly in favor of a divided highway between Whitefish and Kalispell.

I grew up in Whitefish, will retire there this fall, own property on Whitefish Lake and Flathead Lake, and in the center of the valley--and am willing to accept the increase of taxes that will result from a divided highway.

I want to retain the beauty of the Flathead as much as it is possible to do so, given the increase in population.

Lawrence F. Rooney

Lawrence F. Rooney
P.O. Box 3245
Evergreen, CO 80439

(303) 670 3755

Doug & Donna Miller
558 Somers Stage
Kalispell, Montana 59901

May 9, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess
216 16th Street- Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Re: U.S. Highway 93
South of Kalispell, Montana

Ladies & Gentlemen:

I just finished reading an article in the May 8, 1994 issue of The Daily Inter Lake in which it was indicated you sent letters to those having property along Highway 93. For over twenty years we have owned a farm and commercial property between Kalispell and Somers, and we did not receive a letter. We did read earlier there was to be a meeting in March at the Somers School, but previous commitments made it so we were unable to attend.

At this time I would like to say that we are in favor of a five - lane highway. We also drive this highway daily and definitely do not want a median. The five-lane seems to work efficiently and fine on highway two as it surely will on Highway 93.

In other words consider this a vote for getting on with the five-lane like many wish would have happened as it was scheduled. As I said, we own property along the highway and have to use this highway and hope the final decision will skip the median approach.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Donna Miller

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MAY 12 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

May 8, 1994

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MAY 1 2 1994

Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Carter & Burgess
216 16th Street
Denver, CO 80202

We want to express our concerns about the proposed design options for the reconstruction of US 93 near Somers Montana. Our farm is divided by the highway from its northern junction with Forest Hill Road to its southern junction with Forest Hill Road and we have timber land west of the highway on Somers Hill. Our family has farmed and raised livestock in this area since 1918 and we are confident that with proper planning we will be able to do so into the future but the negative impacts of a restrictive design could actually make farming some of our land impractical..To familiarize you with the requirements of our operation we want to emphasize the following points.

Our ground east of the highway is in two separate blocks both of which are divided by slough bottoms that further restrict travel. These fields have four points of access onto the highway. The southern access is very hazardous because the approach on the east doesn't align with the driveway on the west making it necessary to pull onto the road, travel about 50 yards, wait for oncoming traffic and then cross the opposite lane. Wide long and slow moving farm machinary always backs up one lane of traffic. When the road is busy this crossing can take fifteen minutes or longer until a lull in the traffic occurs. The appreaches must be opposite each other. To give you an idea of the size of machinary involved let me point out that our tractor is over twelve feet wide and twenty feet long. Pulling one impliment this unit is often 35 feet long. It is common to pull two impliments in the field so two trips must be made across the road. Our combine is over nineteen feet long and thirteen feet wide after we remove the front header which we haul on a seperate trailer. Crossing the highway isn't quick or easy and as traffic increases the problem gets worse. Other drivers are often impatient, inattentive and not respectful of the danger involved when they pass such a unit.

Moving livestock across the highway is a hazard no matter when it is attempted. Cows and horses often resist crossing the pavement or sometimes they won't cross the center line or sometimes calves get separated from their mothers and dart back into traffic or they do any one of a number of unpredictable things. To cross legally takes a crew of four people. Hauling a large herd by truck has not proven to be practical. We do have a culvert in the northern slough bottom for a livestock crossing on that end of the farm. Since it was constructed, the fill has slumped and the culvert has sagged so a person can't stand up in it. The culvert is always flooded with a minimum of ten inches of water so when it freezes cattle can no longer pass through because they can't walk on ice. Never the less it's still the best way to get cattle past the highway. Engineers for the state highway department suggested, and we agree, that two underpasses are needed. They proposed to locate one south of the slough and one in the low area behind our buildings further south. Both parcels of land would be accessable and since both areas require a fill anyway the highway grade wouldn't be affected.

We also pipe irrigation water under the road. We have irrigated on both sides of the road for thirty years and we have a considerable investment in a large siphon, a canal, a pumping station and about a mile of buried pipeline east of the highway. The slough to the west is inadequate so we pipe water with portable aluminum pipe from the east side of the highway. Presently we put the pipe through drainage culverts under the road and railroad grades and remove them at the end of the season. We enlarge our system as funds become available and our plan is to one day be able to irrigate all of our farmland. Some provisions must be made in a new highway design to allow us to continue irrigating.

Our farm is a diversified operation. We primarily produce grain, hay and livestock. The rotation of each of these crops compliments and allows for more production from the other crops and none would be adequate without the other. In the past the highway was a minor obstruction but as traffic has increased our access problems have become large. Proper highway design with modifications to accomodate our operation would actually enhance our ability to farm here. If our access problems are not addressed or if we are further impeded by a reduction of access, farming may become impractical at this site. The people have expressed a desire to maintain open veiws and protect farmland and the wildlife that also uses this open area. With proper planning this can be done. We are hopeful that your firm can help maintain this area by considering the requirements of our agricultural operation.

One final observation for your consideration concerns the intersection of highways 93 and 82. If road conditions are icy and visibility is poor as it often is in the winter, vehicles will have a difficult time stopping as they come down the hill from Somers. If one northbound lane could be constructed on the railroad grade around the hill there wouldn't be a problem and a passing lane would be possible for southbound traffic up the hill.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Richard and Robert Altenburg
650 Forest Hill Road
Kalispell, Montana 59901

Note: This comment is addressed in Section 6.6.6.8 of the FEIS.

May 9, 1994

Terry Eaton
105 Welf Lane
Kalispell, MT 59901

Dear Gina McAfee:

I'm writing this letter in regards to the studies being done on Highway 93 between Kalispell and Somers.

My residence and business address is 105 Welf Lane which borders Highway 93.

In reviewing your plans it shows that the new highway right-of-way will be right next to my house, and will be going through my septic system. Also, it will take out 9 to 10 full grown trees that are approximately 40 years old.

Due to the fact that these trees are going to be removed and the right-of-way being next to my home and going through the septic system, this will be a very devastating impact on my family, my home, and my business.

I feel that it is a waste of the tax payers money to ruin my already developed property when there is an open and undeveloped area on the opposite side of Highway 93 that could be used for this project.

In looking down the highway from my home and business, I also see that you will be affecting at least 4 to 5 more homes or businesses. On the opposite side of the highway where there is only barren undeveloped farm ground. The only thing to my knowledge that will be affected on the east side of Highway 93 will be the radio station which the noise impact will cause the need for it to relocate anyway.

The removal of the trees will impact my home by removing the only natural safety and noise barrier my home has being next to Highway 93. It will also be taking away the value and beauty, the shade and privacy the trees provide.

Going through my septic will be a major problem for I feel that there is no replacement area available to put a new one in, according to Flathead County Septic Regulations.

I'm employed with the City of Kalispell working on the Fire Department. The requirements for my job is that I have to live within 3 miles of the city limits and 15 minutes driving time from the City Hall.

I don't think I need to explain to you the cost at current market prices what it will cost to relocate my family and business to equal to what I'm currently living.

In closing, I ask that you re-evaluate the plans in my area. That you shift the highway to the east so that it does not ruin and impact my home and business.

Thank you for your time and please consider my proposal.

Terry Eaton

May 10, 1994

To: Whom it may concern
Re: Construction of Highway 93 between Whitefish and Kalispell

As property owners of 700 feet of highway frontage north of Kalispell we are very concerned with your plans to at some time to construct 93 as a divided highway. To our knowledge at this time with a divided highway we would have no access to our property from the north bound lane.

We sold a small parcel to the State for an additional right of way for the 5 lane design. At that time we also obtained assurances from Bob Olson of an access to be provided onto our property with the construction of the 5 lane design.

We would not be in favor of selling more land or being without an access. Also we want to be able to access at the point agreed to with Bob Olson and again be able to get on that access from the north bound lane.

We like the design of Highway 2 in the Blue Moon to the Airport stretch and think that it is appropriate for 93 also.

Thank You,

Floyd Quiram
Sandy Quiram

RECEIVED
MAY 17 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Gary Vallieres
125 Antelope Trail
Whitefish, MT 59937
May 10, 1994

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess
216 16th Street - Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms. McAfee

I have had an interest in the Highway 93 project since it's conception, have attended all Whitefish public meetings, and provided input on the section between Kalispell and Whitefish. I believe your company and those who have contributed during the past year have done an admirable job in trying to respond to the issues. Without trying to be over critical, I would like to express in writing, the same concerns I expressed at the last public meeting regarding the proposed A(Median) design between KM Road and JP Road.

My primary concerns are centered around the proposal to use Antelope Trail (Happy Valley) from Hodgson Road to it's proposed new intersection with Bowdish Road as a frontage road. There are a number of adverse impacts and facts associated with this proposal which have either not been considered or which appear to have been given inadequate consideration. They include the following:

- Antelope Trail is narrow (28.5'), poorly constructed, and has no drainage.

- Increased traffic, a great deal of which would not be local (Happy Valley residents) traffic.

- Increased danger to pedestrians, particularly children.

- Increased risk of vehicle accidents in a residential area caused by adding non-resident traffic to the existing traffic.

- More residents affected by noise. There are the 15 homes located in the 100 block of Antelope Trail.

- Closing and consolidating driveways between Bowdish Road and Hodgson Road will have greater adverse impacts that appears to be documented in the DIES.

- The impacts of "out of direction travel" on residents between KM Road and JP Road may not have been given adequate attention.

- Access to garages of some residences facing the highway may be eliminated.

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MAY 12 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

The maps presented at the meeting completely overlooked the block between Timber Lane and Hodgson Road for reconstruction. The DEIS states that the proposed frontage road (Antelope Trail) will be for LOCAL traffic. Since the plan is to route all traffic from Hodgson Road South on Antelope Trail to Timber Lane, there will be much more than LOCAL traffic on the 100 block of Antelope Trail. I believe this is too much traffic for this road, and the impacts on local residents has not been given consideration. This is evident when comparing the Summary of Impacts between this and all other alternatives. There is a great deal of traffic coming West on Hodgson Road to Highway 93. This traffic comes from Highway 2, and the many residences between Highway 2 and Highway 93; at least 2 or 3 miles of Whitefish Stage Road South of Hodgson Road; the Hidden Valley subdivision, North of Hodgson Road; and the Mallard Loop subdivision. These areas are growing rapidly and will contribute to what I believe will be an unacceptable level of traffic between Hodgson Road and Timber Lane. A Friday through Monday count of traffic on Hodgson Road and Timber Lane between the highway and Antelope Trail might prove to be very interesting, and factual.

Most, if not all of the residences which face Highway 93, and are excised from the highway between Bowdish Road and Timber Lane will face serious adverse affects. Some will not be able to access their garages, many of which are attached to the homes and facing the highway.

If we really need to have a divided highway in the Happy Valley area, one
consideration might be to purchase the Mini Mart store and tear it down, sell the lots, close the highway access from Timber Lane and route traffic up Antelope trail to Hodgson Road. This would allow Antelope Trail to serve as a frontage road for LOCAL TRAFFIC. Certainly this would be less expensive than the reconstruction and new construction which have been proposed to make Antelope a frontage road. One might also ask whatever happened to the proposal to locate a frontage road between the highway and those residences facing the highway.

Let's not impose serious adverse affects upon people living in the Happy Valley area in order to satisfy the needs of those who "like the looks of the divided highway", but otherwise unaffected by this proposed A(Median) design in this area.

Sincerely,

Gary K. Vallieres

Gary Vallieres

7-78

May 11, 1994

Carter + Burgess Inc.
216 16th St. Mall
Denver, Co. 80202

Dear Carter + Burgess,

I'm writing you to express my extreme opposition to the proposed 4-lane divided hwy. 93 with the medians into Whitefish. The whole state is comfortable with the D.O.T.'s average 5-Lane w/left turn lane, because it actually is much safer, + saner!

Look at Missoula, which had to remove its medians, at an additional future cost + inconvenience, not to mention the additional property aquirement costs from landowners who are unwilling to sell. Whitefish is beautiful as is. Thats why everyone likes it. It is a reasonable place with reasonable folks, lets please keep this project within our reason + save our hometown tax-payers from having to leave it and watch it die, as the whole town is nearing a precarious position.

Thank you so much for your help in this problem, lets have a big heart.

Sincerely, Jan Sandefur

RECEIVED
MAY 16 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

May 12, 1994

Dear Sirs,

Please vote for the 5 lane highway on Highway 93 between Somers, Mt. and Whitefish, Mt.

On the west side of the rocky mountains in Montana, we have lots of foggy days - plus large snowpack and low clouds. Consequently, lots of ice. We also experience sudden white-outs. We feel the concrete median is dangerous.

Besides, after a winter of severe, icy road conditions, these medians are covered with gravel and are ugly. And any vegetation planted has been killed off.

Sincerely
CAROL RADICE
600 Wolf Creek Dr
Bigfork, Mt. 59911

RECEIVED
MAY 16 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

May 12, 1994

Dear Mr Paulson,

Please vote for the 5-lane highway on Hwy 93 between Somers to Whitefish.

As a fellow Montanan, you know about white-outs and on the west side, we have lots of cloudy and icy conditions. We fear the concrete center, sometimes we have only the metal posts to guide us along the road. We feel safety should be a factor in your decision.

Besides, after all the gravel and plowing (from high icy and snow pack conditions) the divider is ugly and the vegetation is dead!

Sincerely,
CAROL RADICE
1600 Wolf Creek Dr
Bigfork, Mt. 59911

May 15, 1994

Gina McAfee
Project Manager
US Highway 93 Somers to Whitefish
DEIS
Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms. McAfee:

First, allow me to congratulate you on the fine job Carter & Burgess, Inc. did in conducting the work that went into the DEIS. You and your staff provided excellent assistance to the Flathead area in helping the community come to terms with this important transportation issue.

I am responding to your invitation to comment on the DEIS.

Please register my opinion as being in support of the Alternative A (Median).

This option, that of a divided four lane highway with a center median, will allow for the community to retain a high degree of scenic value, and perhaps even serve to improve what already exists. The alternative offers the best opportunity to reduce traffic accidents and inhibit unwanted rural commercial "strip" development along the highway corridor. It is the best option available to us at this time, and should be implemented.

The other primary alternative, that of the five lane highway, will exacerbate safety problems, unplanned and haphazard growth, and create an unsightly visual mess that would be inconsistent with the surrounding beauty of the area.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Cordially,

Mark Holston

104 Northern Lights Blvd.
Kalispell, Montana 59901

406.752.8959

RECEIVED
MAY 17 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

MARYANN FIELDER STUDIO · 436 - 7TH ST. WEST · WHITEFISH, MT 59937-3216 · (406) 862-1070

Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess
216-16th St. Suite 1700
Denver, Co 80202

May 16, 1994

Dear Ms. McAfee -

Please forgive my last minute entry into the debate on the alternatives for Whitefish.

The building of a new road has many merits all the way from Somers through Whitefish, and for the most part will greatly enhance the movement of traffic as well as provide more safety for bicyclists and walkers. I am in agreement with much that has been recommended, especially the consolidation of driveways.

I am writing to you today because of my concern over some of the alternatives for Spokane and Baker Avenues and the building of a 7th St. bridge.

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Denver, Colorado

Spokane Avenue has been the main thoroughfare through the city, with Baker acting as a secondary road, and largely used by local residents. The whole of this portion of the city is characterized by open space, larger lots, and a "rural" feel. It is true it has developed greatly in the last five years; but still retains the same character. Baker Avenue is an important access route for residents to both downtown and Highway 93 south. I feel making Baker and Spokane one-way streets would be a mistake. In order to move more traffic through town, local traffic would have to reroute to get to off-streets.

To reroute, the recommendation for a 7th St. Bridge has been ~~recommended~~ suggested. I am greatly concerned with a new bridge for the following reasons:

- Encroachment and loss of wildlife habitat and flood plain
- De-valuing of property next to the bridge
- The creation of new, more heavily trafficked intersections at 7th and Spokane, 7th and Baker, 7th and Karrow, and Karrow and Hwy 93. The alternative seems to only create more traffic congestion through residential neighborhoods

At this time, 7th ST. West is heavily used by walkers, joggers, and cyclists from Baker to Karrow. It is posted as a 25mph road, largely ignored by traffic and under-patrolled (it is a county road). It is a route for school children on foot and on bikes. It is without question an access road to Karrow, as well as to the Grouse Mountain subdivisions, and to Karrow and Hwy 93. It's main use is local, and my recommendation is that it remain a local access road and not a by-pass.

My other objection to a 7th ST. Bridge is the changing of the nature of Baker Ave. It is now commercial to the corner of 4th ST., then passes through a park area, then is residential to Hwy 93 (with the exception of the Moose Lodge and the Castle Bed and Breakfast, both located off Baker nearer the highway intersection.) I am hugely worried about all of Baker becoming a commercial zone. I believe commencial use should not be encouraged.

My recommendation is this: keep both Spokane and Baker avenues 2-way routes, with widening necessary for sidewalks and bicycles. Drop the bridge alterative. A traffic light at 5th and Spokane would allow better access between Spokane and Baker.

Please remember that building highways and access routes should first support local use. Tourism is seasonal and an undetermined entity. A smooth flow through timed traffic lights would do much to help traffic flow. Safety-first, of course!

I appreciate your time to review my comments.

Sincerely,

Maryann Fielden

7-81

7-82

May 16, 1994

Gina Mc Afee
Carter & Burgess
216 16th St. Suite 1700
Denver, Co. 80202

Re: Draft EIS - Somers to Whitefish

Gina:

Your crew recently concluded what was, unquestionably, the most comprehensive public involvement endeavor ever brought to the Flathead. In this day of protests and petitions, tax revolts and general distrust of anything "Government", to have managed without major loss of decorum is a credit to your collective skills and professionalism. Our thanks and appreciation.

If our perspective of the process is as accurate as it should be and the exercise were to be repeated, we would make a couple suggestions for added educational effort in the public contact portion.

1. For perhaps too many, a perception exists that design (or template selection) by popular vote has become accepted practice. Highway officials certainly need an accurate read-out of public sentiment; not necessarily the disruption generated by irate groups who's "vote" is finally found secondary to more direct considerations.

2. It would be most helpful if there were a way of bringing the public up to speed in an understandable manner on the highway programming, budgetting and the scheduling path the improvement process must follow. Contray to many thinking otherwise, the Government is "us" and like us, cannot always afford or justify what we want or prefer. Nor is it necessarily immediately attainable. If the choise is to defer until an item can be afforded, again like ourselves it may be off the market or the price has risen in the interim. Of all the aspects involved, programming and funding is probably the one aspect of highways both most misunderstood and frequently forcing compromise.

3. Inspite of other reasons offered, from day one the underlying press for the devided median has been fueled largely by its promise of "development control". The question whether template selection for this purpose is or is not a legitimate use of highway funding remains unanswered. Our contention is that it is not. Dumping it back in the lap of the Highway Commission is bound to generate another round of controversy.

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Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Now the ultimate irony and frustration:

This EIS process has cost us X years of delay and the price of a mile of first class highway. Unfortunately, it fails to deliver what is most needed for prompt, controversy-free resumption of the design and construction process.
1. A clear-cut consensus of template preference; and
2. A decisive answer to the comparitive safety question.

These were the central need in getting projects promptly rescheduled and successfully through condemnation courts. The Highway Commission is saddled with responsibility for spreading limited resources over projects state-wide. They correctly tend to prioritize on the basis of sufficiency (first) and then honor projects with the least prospect for expensive delays and court costs. Considering their past experience, it should be no surprise if broad-based area support of a specific proposal is found to be the price of promptly getting US 93 back on track.

3. After being instrumental in blocking project advertisement a couple years ago, Whitefish residents have failed to follow through with an alternative that effectively addresses their urban traffic problem. This is most unfortunate both for Whitefish and US 93 users.

4. With selected spot improvements and a simple four lane, the bulk of safety issues could have been resolved long ago. In the interim, several lives could have been saved.

For and Against:

1. The alternate routing alternative for Kalispell appears to have generated the most positive response with least prospect of significant delay. Project initiation should start as soon as possible.

2. Regardless of template selected, go with the most restrictive right of way and encroachment control appropriate to the one selected.

3. Assuming the availability of unlimited funding, provided that the four lane with split median (do it right the first time) approach can be offered on the basis of buying out encroachment rights and providing frontage roads to dedicated public throughfares, both safety and development control objectives can be met and supported.

4. It appears that the increased benefits to be derived from a split median facility wil not justify the expense of moving utilities twice.

5. Frequent shifts from one template to another disrupts smooth traffic flow, is distracting and causes hazardous confusion. Pick a template (urban or rural) and stick with it.

6. To the extent that it be limited to funding specifically dedicated to that purpose, we support enhancements serving pedestrian/bicycle traffic. Beyond that, use motor fuel tax dollars to serve motorized traffic.

7. Similarly, provided it is not distracting to vehicle operators and can be maintained without a disproportionate drain on routine highway maintenance funding, beautification appropriate to the facility can be a positive step. If its objective extends to enhancing tourism, etc., then it should necessarily be a function of the tourism industry, the various Chambers, or other private enterprise. Montana's legitimate highway improvement demand so far exceeds current funding prospects, there's no way a diversion of funding for such purposes can be justified. However we could heartily support coop funding in this respect.

James T. Dedman
Flathead County Safety Council
1310 Montana 208
Somers, Mt. 59932

May 16 1994

Dear Mr. Paulson,

Here are the signatures of the people who oppose the use of Bakes ave as Highway 93. We will continue to resist any effort that would make an intrusion of trucks, noise and extra traffic into our neighborhood. Highway 93 presently runs through mostly WB-3 General Business. We don't want that encroachment. We prefer that 93 stay on its present path and that trucks be diverted around Whitefish.

Thank you

Garnet L. Hansen

7-84

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MAY 16 1994
Commissioner's Office

ATTENTION:

We, the undersigned, are opposed to the Proposed Median-Design Highway and we believe that the 5-lane Highway would be sufficient.

Steve Dawson	5/11/94	Jerry Lipp	5/14/94
Loyd D. Foster	5/11/94	Joe Perry Foster	5/11/94
Barbara Lipp	5/11/94	Peter G. Jensen	5/11/94
Jeri K. Talcott	5-11-94	Donna Dawson	5-12-94
James E. Smith	5/11/94	Kenneth Clothier	5-12-94
Paula Carder	5/11/94	Beulah R. Clothier	5-12-94
Irene Jensen	5/11/94	Pat M Cranaman	5-12-94
Wayne H. Wondzell	5/11/94	Helmuth Krause	5-12-94
[illegible]	5/11/94	[illegible]	5/12/94
Gene Fincher	5/11/94	Jim Dutton	5/12/94
Jeanette Vandtome	5-11-94	Danny Siderius	5/12/94
[illegible]	5/11/94	Don Connors	5/12/94
[illegible]	5/11/94	Bastus Taylor	5/12/94
[illegible]	5/11/94	Carol Levin	5/2/94
Bob Anderson	5/11/94	Dorothy L. Chenault	5/12/94
Roy C. Jason	5-11-94	[illegible]	5-12-94
Helmut L. Flemy	5/12/94	Pam Tourville	5/11/94
Herbert A. Mayhew	5/12/94	Teddy Dunn	5/14/94
Milo C. Roberts	5/13/94	[illegible]	5-14-94
[illegible]	5-13-94	Thelma Brandt	5-14-94
[illegible]	5-13-94	Randy Brandt	5/14/94
Corey L. Rasch	5-13-94	Margaret Brandt	5/14/94
Donna Eickert	5-14-94	Leo Brandt	5-14-94
Robert Eickert	5/14/94		

Mr. Hank Honeywell
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park, Room 448, Drawer 10056
Helena, MT 59626-0056

94 MAY 24 A11:24

Dear Mr. Honeywell:

I am writing in opposition to the four lane divided highway proposed for highway 93 between Kalispell and Whitefish.

I am in favor of a 5 lane plan similar to Highway 2 between Glacier National Park and Kalispell and Highway 93 in Missoula.

Our tax money must not be waiste on a divided highway. We also do not need ornamental plantings such as the $90,000 plantings between Coram and Glacier Park.

Sincerely yours
Bernard Clenger
1120 5th Ave. W.
Columbia Falls, MT 59912

Lily G. Nelson
205 Meadows Road
Whitefish, MT 59937

Carter + Burgess
216 - 16th St. Mall
Denver, Co. 80202

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JUN 07 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

Dear Persons:

We would like the 4-lane divided highway, all 9 members of our family.

Yours truly
Mrs L. G. Nelson

Received
June 20, 1994

I am opposed to any more highways with "medians". Just look at the problems turning left onto the "Strip" from any business on either side!! Why not 5-lane all the way? Kalispell is not a pretty town anyway so let's at least make it handy! Otherwise - fine. Merrill F Riley

MONTANA CHAIN SAW CARVING
By
Jeff Fleming
Custom Sculptures & Signs, Bear Furniture, Etc.

7/5/94

Dear Gina,

Thank you for the Map of the possible Highway Access near my Business

I'm pleased with the intersection between my Business and Across the Highway to K&B Concrete

I have several questions regarding the Frontage Road on my side of the Highway

1) Will there be any Right-of-WAY for the Frontage Rd. TAKEN from my side of Highway (West side)

2) what type of Median will seperate the Highway and Frontage Rd

I'm planning Future Parking + handscaping and sure Appreciate the Info you've sent me

Thanks again

Jeff Fleming

RECEIVED
JUL 08 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

P.O. Box 7071 • Kalispell, MT 59901 • (406) 752-6735

MONTANA CHAIN SAW CARVING
By
Jeff Fleming
Custom Sculptures & Signs, Bear Furniture, Etc.

July 28, 1994

Ms. Gina McAfee, AICP
Carter & Burgess
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms. McAfee:

Thank you for your letter with more detailed information. I was very surprised that 25 feet of right-of-way would be needed for the frontage road. My impression, from all I've read, was that all of the right-of-way for the Somers end of highway would come from the railroad right-of-way.

I really have to oppose the idea of a frontage road that would take 25 feet of my property for the following reasons:

1. I own about 1 acre with just a small amount of that being usable, workable space for my business.

2. My showroom log cabin would have to be moved back or off the property. My retail business revolves around this small cabin.

3. The road that circles my shop and cabin would be cut off and I couldn't move my equipment.

4. My parking area would be cut in half. I can park only 4-6 cars now.

5. The big overhead power lines would be set back almost over my work area which could cause health risks.

6. The frontage road would probably bring more theft and vandalism.

For these reasons, I feel a frontage road that takes 25 feet of my property would really hurt my business. However, I think that I could live with a frontage road if it did not take any of my property.

P.O. Box 7071 • Kalispell, MT 59901 • (406) 752-6735

MONTANA CHAIN SAW CARVING

By
Jeff Fleming
Custom Sculptures & Signs, Bear Furniture, Etc.

I have thought of a few other possible options or alternatives that might save my existing business set-up.

1. Is individual access (no frontage road) possible?

2. Could the frontage road be squeezed into the current highway and railroad right-of-way without taking any of my property?

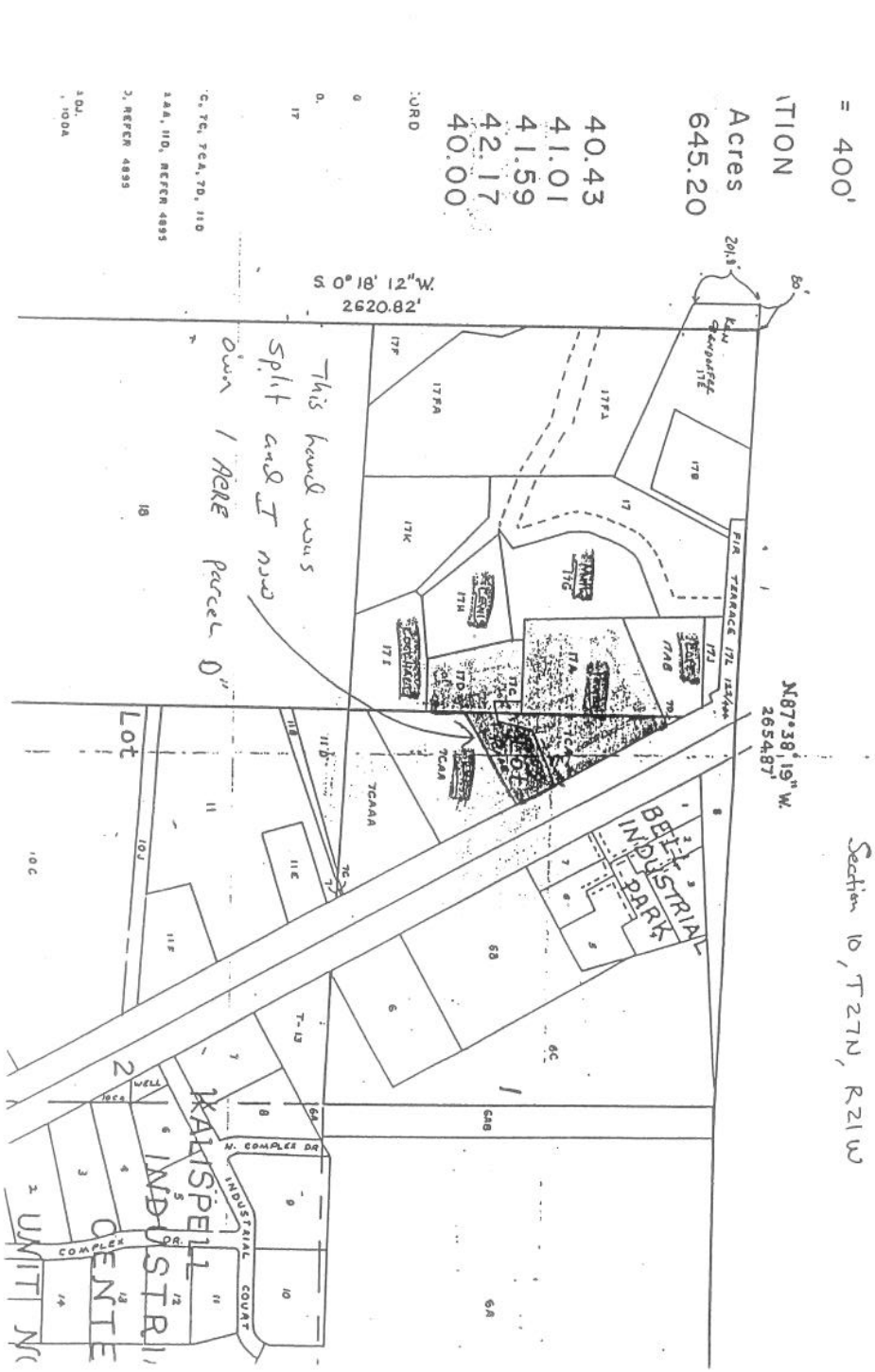
I would like to personally talk with a representative from Carter & Burgess about ideas that might minimize the effect of a frontage road that takes some of my property. Could you send a representative here to talk with me?

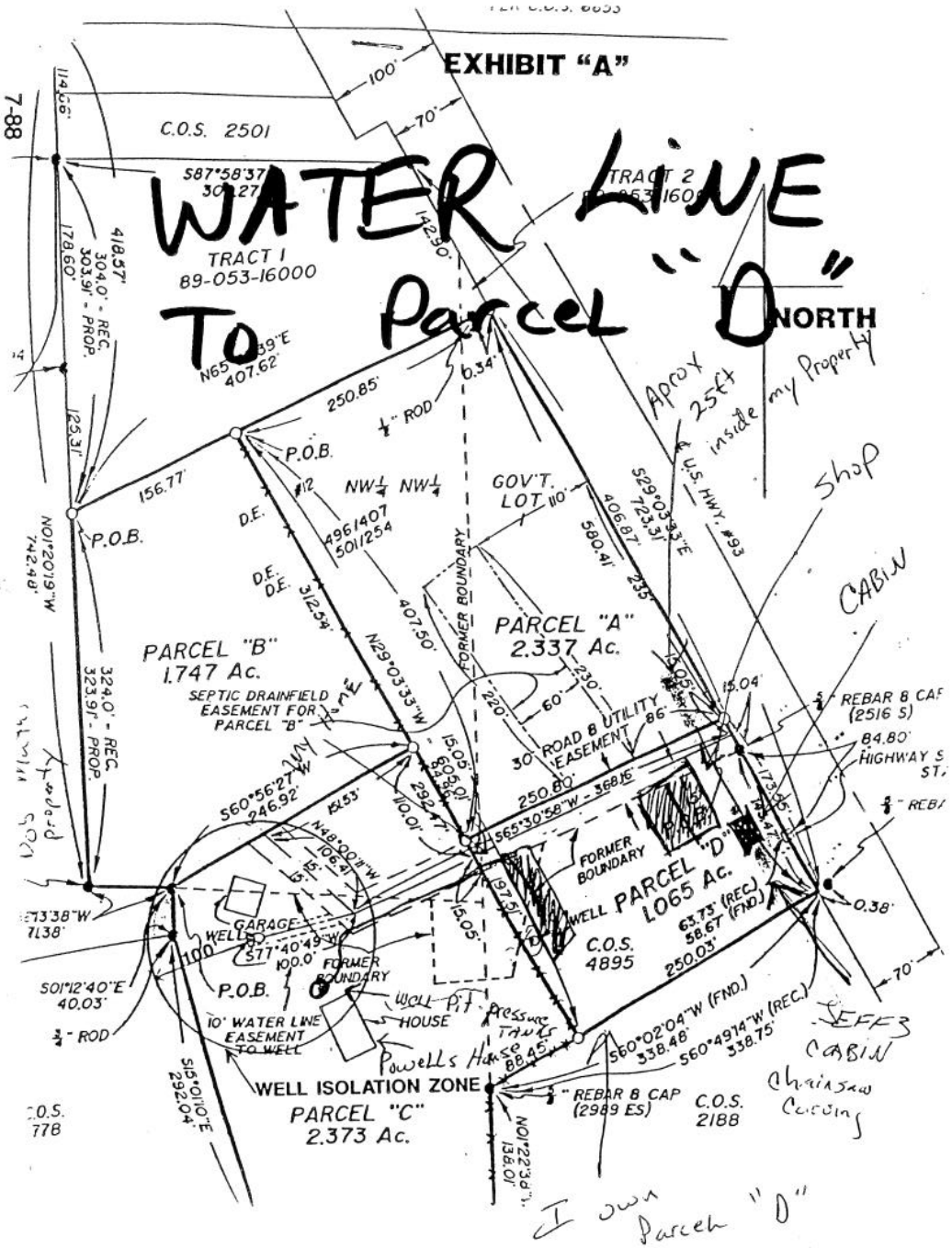
I hope that I can be involved in this planning process and that we might come up with an idea for this access that might even improve my business location. Please call (406) 752-6735 or write, I'm open to all ideas.

Sincerely,

Jeff Fleming

P.O. Box 7071 • Kalispell, MT 59901 • (406) 752-6735





7-88

29 July 1994

Subject: U.S. Highway 93 Corridor Study

To: Gina McAfee
Carter & Burgess
Denver, CO

I wish to make the following recommendations concerning U.S. Hwy 93 improvements proposed for the Whitefish, Mt. area; with reference to your Up-Date of March 1994 and your Newsletter #6 of June 1994.

The proposed new bridge across the Whitefish river at 7th St., connecting Baker Ave & Spokane Ave will be very costly. It is a long distance requiring costly construction to support a high bridge and roadway over the marshy river bottom land, and meet the elevated roadways at each end. It will also require expensive traffic control signals at each end. It will not improve traffic on Baker, or Spokane, or 7th St.

It will not be cost effective in relation to the present and future size of Whitefish. Its cost could even kill the whole U.S. 93 project.

I recommend you use your Alternative C (Couplet-4) shown on page 10 of your March 94 Update. In connection with that, use the three-lane concepts shown in sections 12 and 14 on page 3 of your Newsletter # 6 of June 1994.

If necessary, or desired, it would be more economical to widen the newer bridge over the Whitefish River on Baker Ave, and replace the very old bridge on 2nd St. over the Whitefish River with a four lane bridge..

Finally, the revision of Baker Ave. so as to intersect U.S. 93 opposite Columbia Ave., with a traffic light there, is very badly needed. It should be included in any final construction plan.

Sincerely,

Dave Jamieson

Dave Jamieson
Chairman
Whitefish Board of Adjustments

Copies To:

Mr. Andy Feury
Mr. Bill Hedstrom
Mr. Bruce Boody
Ms. Shirley Schmidt

AUG 03 1994

Flathead Valley Community College
PRIDE IN EXCELLENCE
777 Grandview Drive, Kalispell, MT 59901 • 406/756-3822 • Fax 406/756-3815

August 9, 1994

Carter and Burgess
ATTN: Gina McAfee
216 - 16th Street, Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms. McAfee:

Section 7 - Grandview to approximately Milepost 117, five-lane (Section B) is incorrectly placed as rural. The campus of Flathead Valley Community College is within the city limits of Kalispell. The college has purchased the 40 acres of land to the north, and that section will become a government section annexed to the city limits of Kalispell. City utilities are connected to the campus and can be connected to any development to the north.

The college needs sidewalks along the campus property from Grandview Drive to the vicinity near NuPac Concrete. Sidewalks are almost nonexistent from Grandview Drive south to Idaho Street, and access to the campus has been restricted by the lack of sidewalks and bikepaths to it. There is a lack of access to the homes, apartments, athletic club and commercial development to the north, as well as to the south. There is a general lack of almost any sidewalks or bikepaths in the vicinity of FVCC, allowing no access from any direction.

We would like you to consider a raised median and median plantings. An interlocal agreement could possibly be made for the college to maintain the median plantings in this vicinity.

A park-n-ride concept should have facilities to connect or transfer to or from public transportation or a van pool. A transportation transfer terminal concept connected with the college could be feasible, but just a park-n-ride may not be compatible with campus regulated parking.

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AUG 12 1994
Carter-Burgess
Denver, Colorado

A transportation transfer terminal building, more centrally located to Kalispell, is also very much needed. Public transportation buses or vans, intercity public and private buses, charter buses and taxi services could use a central dispatch and transfer terminal, including restrooms, office, garages, and washing facilities.

Sincerely,

Larry Rasmussen

Larry Rasmussen
Dean
Administrative Services

LR:ps