

Montana Transportation Commission

October 28, 2015 Meeting
Helena, Montana

IN ATTENDANCE

Rick Griffith, Transportation Commissioner, Chairman
Barb Skelton, Transportation Commissioner
Carol Lambert, Transportation Commissioner
John Cobb, Transportation Commissioner
Dan Belcourt, Transportation Commissioner
Mike Tooley, Director MDT
Dwane Kailey, MDT Engineering
Lori Ryan, Commission Secretary
Ed Beaudette, MDT Legal
Lynn Zanto, MDT
Patti McCubbins, MDT
Kevin McLaury, FHWA

Please note: the complete recorded minutes are available for review on the commission's website at http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/trans_comm/meetings.shtml. You may request a compact disc (containing the audio files, agenda, and minutes) from the transportation secretary Lori Ryan at (406) 444-7200 or lrayn@mt.gov. Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided upon request. For additional information, please call (406) 444-7200. The TTY number is (406) 444-7696 or 1-800-335-7592.

OPENING – Commissioner Rick Griffith

Commissioner Griffith called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item 1: TCP Concurrence

Commissioner Griffith addressed a small error in one of the projects in District One. A \$62,000 project that was supposed to be in 2016 was put in 2017. He wanted to include that change in the TCP Concurrence.

Dwane Kailey explained the project was for flashing beacons for pedestrian crossings at the Arlee School. It meets warrants. We approved it and have been working on it. It is eligible to be done in 2016 and there is funding available. We just simply erred and put it in 2017. We thought it was appropriate to request that it be moved up to provide protection to the school kids accessing the school.

Commissioner Griffith said the Commission spent the last two days on a planning session the Department prepared. He said he appreciated that the job was well done and well organized and thanked everyone who worked on it.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the TCP Concurrence including the correction for the Arlee Amendment. Commissioner Belcourt seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 2: Functional Classification/System Designation Reserve Place – Kalispell Old Reserve Drive – Kalispell

Lynn Zanto presented the Functional Classification/System Designation to the Commission. The Transportation Commission gives concurrence on functional classification recommendations for public roadways at the state level with final approval by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Functional classification

is a method of classifying roads by the service they provide as part of the overall highway system.

In May of 2015, MDT conducted a functional classification review of Reserve Place (U-6737) in Kalispell. The purpose of this review was to determine if the functionality of the roadway had changed due to the construction of the Kalispell Alternate Route. As a result of the review, MDT is now advancing the following functional class recommendation for this roadway: Local Road.

With this change in functional class, MDT is recommending that Reserve Place be removed from the Urban Highway System (since it is no longer eligible to remain on the system). In its place, the Kalispell Technical Advisory Committee is proposing to add Old Reserve Drive (from Reserve Place to US-93) to the Urban Highway System. Justification for this change is based primarily on promoting system continuity and maintaining overall system mileage in the Kalispell Urban area.

Summary: MDT is requesting Transportation Commission approval of a functional classification revision – from Major Collector to Local Road - for Reserve Place (U-6737) in Kalispell. Additionally, staff is requesting that Reserve Place be removed from the Urban Highway System (since it is no longer eligible to remain an urban route). Lastly, MDT is recommending the addition of Old Reserve Drive (X-15995) to the Urban Highway System to promote system continuity and maintain overall system mileage in the Kalispell Urban area.

Staff recommends the Commission approve the following items:

1. Functional Classification Revision:
 - a. Reclassify Reserve Place (U-6737), between Old Reserve Drive and the Kalispell Alternate Route, to a Local Road. (0.46 miles)

This functional classification revision is subject to FHWA approval.

2. System Actions:
 - a. Remove Reserve Place (U-6737), between Old Reserve Drive and the Kalispell Alternate Route, from the Urban Highway System. (0.46 miles)
 - b. Add Old Reserve Drive (X-15995), between Reserve Place and US-93, to the Urban Highway System. (0.86 miles)

These actions are subject to FHWA approval of the functional classification revision.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Functional Classification/System Designation, Reserve Place – Kalispell, Old Reserve Drive – Kalispell. Commissioner Cobb seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 3: Construction on State Highway System Pedestrian Overpass – Reserve Street (Missoula)

Lynn Zanto presented Construction on State Highway System, Pedestrian Overpass – Reserve Street in Missoula to the Commission. The Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) is proposing to construct a pedestrian overpass on Reserve Street (N-92) at Old Highway 93 in Missoula. After evaluating numerous options, MRA has

determined that the pedestrian overpass is the preferred alternative for linking the Missoula trail system to US-93 corridor trails (most notably the Missoula2Lolo Trail).

In addition to the pedestrian overpass, MRA is proposing to add trail mileage along Old Highway 93 (from Reserve Street to McDonald Avenue) to complete the trail network connection (as stipulated in the Tiger Grant agreement). The project will be 100 percent funded by MRA and the City of Missoula – with MRA covering costs associated with the overpass (estimated at \$4.8 million) and Missoula being the responsible party for trail connections on both sides of the crossing.

MDT staff has participated in project planning activities and has provided guidance during project development (including a requirement that the overhead structure be removable to allow for passage of oversize loads). Consequently, normal height loads will not be affected by the installation of the pedestrian overpass.

Further, MDT headquarters and Missoula District staff are reviewing design details to ensure compliance with MDT requirements (prior to advancing a permit for the project). Also, MDT is drafting a formal agreement outlining specific roles and responsibilities (for all parties) relating to construction, operation and maintenance of the structure.

Summary: The Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) is proposing modifications to the state highway system to promote trail connectivity in the Missoula area. Specifically, MRA is requesting approval to construct a pedestrian overpass on Reserve Street (N-92) at Old Highway 93 in order to link the Missoula trail system to US-93 corridor trails (most notably the Missoula2Lolo Trail).

Staff recommends that the Commission approve these modifications to the state highway system and delegates its authority to let, award, and administer the contract for this project to the Missoula Redevelopment Agency / City of Missoula, pending concurrence of MDT's Chief Engineer.

Lynn Zanto said this item was on the agenda at the last Commission meeting and we are bringing it back to the Commission per your instructions. The Commission had some questions relating to the removal costs, time it would take to remove, the 10-minute rule, and alternate routes. The staff recommendation still stands but legal may want to weigh in. The Commission's statutory authority for this particular project is that you prioritize work on the state system. This is a National Highway System route so therefore it is within your authority to approve any construction or reconstruction in its right-of-way. You also have the authority to let contracts on the State Highway System, however, state law does say you can delegate that authority to a local government.

Commissioner Griffith asked if there were two portions to the request: (1) to approve the project; and (2) to approve them to let, award, and administer the contract. Lynn Zanto said that is correct. Ed Beaudette, MDT Legal Counsel, said that is correct. There are two motions: (1) a motion with regard to constructing the overpass, and (2) the second motion is to delegate authority to let and construct the project – giving the development agency that authority. Lynn Zanto said it is contingent on review by the Chief Engineer.

Commissioner Griffith said the Commissioner's had various questions they needed answered. He asked if the Commission was satisfied with the answers given. The Commissioners said yes and asked for clarification on the 10-minute rule.

Ed Beaudette said he had done some research to see if the 10-minute rule applied to removal of the pedestrian overpass structure over Reserve Street. Based on my analysis, the 10-minute rule does not apply to the removal of the structure. The 10-minute rule essentially applies to the actual movement of an oversized load down the

highway and does not apply to the removal of structures or other things along the route. Lynn Zanto said we now have the full plan. Reserve Street is five lanes and the center portion of the overpass structure is the only portion being removed so traffic could still use the outer lanes.

Commissioner Skelton said the plans don't address the detour route. Can mega loads go on that detour route? Mike Tooley said there were a number of potential routes depending on the configuration of the load. Wayne Williams said he had driven some of the routes and talked to several carriers. It is really the decision of the carrier as to which route they use. As the carrier decides to move through an area there are so many different things they weigh. It isn't one-size fits all. While one detour route may work for one carrier and one configuration, another carrier may choose another route. There are so many different variables that come into play, i.e., the type of trailer, some can turn sharp and some can't, one detour route that may work for one rig but not for another.

Commissioner Skelton said there are mega loads that move down those roads. We went through quite a process to make that happen. Those refineries are in Billings and we're upgrading them again now. That's a safety issue for my district. Is there a safe detour route to move those mega loads in your opinion? Wayne Williams said if a mega load were to move through Missoula, it probably would pay to move the structure. Some of the detour routes with the trees and utilities and the amount of money it would cost to move the load around some of those, it would probably be beneficial to actually lift the structure for loads like the ones coming out of Billings. Commissioner Skelton asked if he knew the additional cost. Commissioner Griffith said \$19,000. Wayne Williams said he asked the carrier that question. The carrier I talked to is getting ready to submit an application to go through Missoula and they figured they would double that cost for planning purposes. Depending on what type of utilities they move, the bottom line would be somewhere around \$3,000 - \$5,000 for them to lift a utility. Commissioner Griffith said it isn't just the structure, it is also other utilities. Wayne Williams said that is correct. It depends on the type of load, some loads are square and some are round. The carriers look at a route with trees and utilities and weigh how much it would cost to move utilities. The carrier also weigh how easy it will be to get a permit. They want to do "one-stop-shopping". They know they can get permission through the Department of Transportation and that is a value to the carrier.

Commissioner Cobb explained his reason for approving items one through nine and leaving number ten as a separate voting item. The Department said they would include ten but I thought it would be polite to ask if this Commission wanted to put their name on the record that they want Missoula to pay for moving this structure. He asked Ed Beaudette to explain what he'd prepared. Ed said he prepared a list of nine conditions that the Department thought was important for the Commission to consider in approving the construction of the overpass over Reserve Street. Those nine conditions are:

1. The pedestrian structure be constructed in such a manner that will allow for the passage of oversized loads including, but not limited to, over high and over wide loads.
2. The Department of Transportation shall be responsible for determining when the structure must be open to allow for the passage of oversized loads.
3. The structure cannot be altered without prior approval of the Department of Transportation and the Transportation Commission.
4. The Missoula Redevelopment Agency and City of Missoula shall be responsible for any liability associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of the structure.

5. That the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and the City of Missoula shall be responsible for all maintenance of the paths and structures placed in the Department of Transportation's right of way and shall maintain sufficient bonding for that purpose as determined by the Department of Transportation.
6. That the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and City of Missoula shall be responsible for all costs of removing the structure at the end of its service life.
7. That the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and City of Missoula shall maintain sufficient insurance as determined by the Department of Transportation and shall name the State of Montana and Department of Transportation as additional insureds.
8. That the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and City of Missoula will enter into a formal agreement with the Department of Transportation prior to construction of the structure.
9. That the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and City of Missoula will obtain all necessary permits.

Commissioner Cobb said this list is clear and it protects everybody here. I would also like to make a motion that we add number ten as a condition that the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and the City of Missoula would be responsible for all costs associated with the opening of a structure to allow for the passage of oversized loads. I would like that to be voted on separately.

Jean Curtis, Missoula County Commissioner

Jean Curtis said that this is a big burden to place on the city. For one of the last big loads that went through the city of Missoula, I rode with the company that transported them through Missoula in order to make sure everything was lifted and secure and baracades were up, etc. That company, Harris Thermal, was responsible to lift the signs along the highway. One sign on the Interstate, the Orange Street exit sign, was too low for them to go under and they were responsible to pay for all of that. So my question to you is why would this be any different than any other raising or removing of structures. The company asking for the permit would have to pay to raise the lines, move street signs, signals, and signs on the Interstate. This seems to me to be an unfair burden to put on a city.

Commissioner Cobb said \$26,000 is a lot different than just utility lines or signs. It's a bigger amount to move all these signs and that's why I put it in there. It's just a judgment call. Commisisoner Griffith asked Dwane if they were moving something coming from Lewiston, Idaho going to Billings, what the overall cost would be absent the bridge cost. Dwane Kailey said I know what it would cost to get a permit from the state but as far as the overal cost to move, I don't know. Some companies have spent a million dollars to move across the state. There is such a different scale depending on what type of move it is – moving across the state costs quite a bit of money to move large loads versus smaller moves like moving a house across town or a grain bin from Point A to Point B.

Chris Anderson, Project Manager

Chris Anderson said along with our responses to the questions asked we included an Exhibit showing several different over-height obstructions on Reserve Street. This does not include utility work, this is strictly signals, signs, physical, vertical obstructions for an over-sized load. This is in addition to the routes we included and was one of the exhibits prepared showing the different detour routes. In addition to

the bridge, there are several traffic signals and even more utility lines that would be moved as part of moving something from South Reserve to North Reserve. That's not including the highway system beyond these two points; we just focused on barriers that would be a burden and a significant cost for a motor carrier. In my opinion we have so many additional vertical obstructions and now we're talking about one more additional vertical obstruction. We need to consider the alternative which is another signal at this location to connect the trail system which was approved by this Commission on the Tiger Project. I think the entire Tiger Project, which includes a connection from the Bitterroot Trail in Missoula to the Hwy 93 Trail south of Lolo, needs some type of crossing constructed. This is one option. The other option would be an at-grade crossing which would also have some type of a signal associated with it which would also be a vertical obstruction to an over-sized load. To say that this is just adding ... \$26,000 is an estimate we put together based on the removal of just the center portion of the structure but when considering the totality, the entire length of Reserve Street has over 23 vertical obstructions that are less than 20 feet in height. I would make the argument that the bridge does not pose much more of an additional cost to a carrier than what is present right now.

Commissioner Lambert asked if the cost of removing these things is tied to the permit, then how do you know if somebody besides the state is going to pay for it. Wayne said the cost is not tied to the permit, however, before a permit is issued, a load of that size needs to fill out an application. In the application a carrier has to identify all the obstacles and come up with a measure to deal with all the obstacles. We send that to the city for feedback and verification and then we approve the application and issue the permit. To clarify, I don't want to call it a science but the process has evolved. The loads travel at night and with traffic control are able to serpentine all the way up through Reserve. So all the traffic signals that are a hindrance they can serpentine through them. Commissioner Griffith said then there aren't 23 obstacles. Wayne said even though there are 23 obstacles, not all have to be addressed because they can serpentine around those.

Commissioner Griffith said if you walk out of this building there is a pedestrian walkway that crosses the Interstate that is less than 17 feet tall. At what point ... I don't want to stop any kind of traffic but at what point is it a hindrance. Dwane Kailey said you are hitting on the major issue we face with this proposal. Our standards say that if you are going to put an obstruction over one of our highways, we want to maintain a minimum clearance of 17 feet. The standard height we need to clear for most loads is 16.6 feet so we want a minimum of 17 feet. We have no policy or guideline that says it has to be anything greater than that. That is what this has been designed to accomplish. Commissioner Griffith said my concern is we're setting a standard higher than what we can perform with our own Department. Commissioner Cobb said regardless of what happens here today we need to identify certain corridors ahead of time to make sure these big loads can go through the state. Mega loads are not normal loads and need a lot more than 17 feet, they need 22 feet. The width of the load stops all traffic. Hopefully that is not something that will be coming through here on a regular basis because it is very disruptive. Commissioner Griffith said we need to establish a corridor policy.

Barry Spoke Stang, Executive Vice President of the Motor Carriers of Montana

Mr. Stang said welcome to the last 30 Legislative Sessions since I've been around here for 30 years. Originally when we started moving buildings up around St. Regis, I believe the Power Company had to pay 75% of the cost of moving the power lines

but through the years that percentage has changed. I think whatever the policy is for the power lines, whether the Power Company has to pay 50% or the people moving the buildings have to pay 50% or 100%, the Commission should be consistent with the policy of the State of Montana. I'd be perfectly happy to have the city of Missoula pay but that's not consistent. Commissioner Griffith asked who paid the other 50%. Mr. Stang said the mover pays 50% and the Power Company pays 50%. If that's the case then the mover should pay 50% and the city of Missoula should pay 50%. I don't know what the current statute is regarding this. I think the whole conversation is one of the reasons we need the Commission and the Department to work on our freight corridors in the State of Montana and establish those corridors that could be used to move these big loads because there is going to be more of the big loads to come. The Refineries in Billings use them and obviously the Refineries in Great Falls use them, and there is a company in Missoula that builds things almost this big that use them. What's going to happen if their movers are restricted, they will move out of the state. It's imperative we look into the future. I think the Department should be consistent with what they do to other people who have to move obstructions in the roadway. I would strongly hope the Commission would work with the Department to get that freight corridor policy moved up because Montana is a pass through state to move goods through the country. We need to make sure freight is moving through the state smoothly and isn't obstructed.

Director Tooley said the versions of the long-term highway bill that are coming through now, the House version has a requirement for states to come up with a freight plan. What he's referring to will be part of that. I anticipate the Department will be required to have such a plan at some point in the near future. In the meantime some of this will come back on the Motor Carrier Services to make sure these issues are resolved to help move these mega loads through our state. Commissioner Lambert asked who has been paying for the removal of obstructions. Director Tooley said the moving company has been paying. Commissioner Lambert said then they should keep paying. With that, Commissioner Cobb's second motion died for lack of a second.

Chairman of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency thanked the Commission for their action. He thanked the MDT staff for their cooperation with his staff not only on this but other projects. It's has been a good experience to work with you over the last two years.

Commissioner Lambert moved to delegate authority on State Highway System, Pedestrian Overpass – Reserve Street (Missoula). Commissioner Cobb seconded the motion. Commissioners Cobb, Lambert, Belcourt and Griffith voted aye, Commissioner Skelton voted nay

Commissioner Cobb moved to grant approval to the Missoula Redevelopment Agency to construct a pedestrian overpass across Reserve Street at Old Highway 93 to link the Missoula trail system to the U.S. 93 corridor trail system, but that the approval is subject to the following conditions. Commissioner Lambert seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

1. That the pedestrian structure be constructed in such a manner that will allow for the passage of oversize loads, including but not limited to over-high and over-wide loads.
2. That the Department of Transportation shall be responsible for determining when the structure must be opened to allow for the passage of oversize loads.
3. That the structure cannot be altered without the prior approval of the Department of Transportation and the Transportation Commission.

4. That the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and City of Missoula shall be responsible for any liability associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of the structure.
5. That the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and City of Missoula shall be responsible for all maintenance of the paths and structures placed in the Department of Transportation's right of way and shall maintain sufficient bonding for that purpose as determined by the Department of Transportation.
6. That the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and City of Missoula shall be responsible for all costs of removing the structure at the end of its service life.
7. That the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and City of Missoula shall maintain sufficient insurance as determined by the Department of Transportation and shall name the State of Montana and Department of Transportation as additional insureds.
8. That the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and City of Missoula will enter into a formal agreement with the Department of Transportation prior to construction of the structure.
9. That the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and City of Missoula will obtain all necessary permits.

**Item No. 4: Urban Highway System Revisions – Great Falls
Airport Drive – Gore Hill Interchange to Airport Terminal
9th Street So. – 13th Avenue South to 17th Avenue South
17th Avenue So. - 9th Street South to 13th Street South**

Lynn Zanto presented the Urban Highway System Revisions – Great Falls, Airport Drive – Gore Hill Interchange to Airport Terminal, 9th Street South – 13th Avenue South to 17th Avenue South, 17th Avenue South - 9th Street South to 13th Street South to the Commission. The Transportation Commission has sole responsibility for approval of Urban Highway System revisions (per MCA 60-2-126). Typically, Urban Highway System revisions are requested by local governments via local planning processes.

The city of Great Falls and Cascade County, through the Great Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), are requesting that the Montana Transportation Commission modify the Great Falls Urban Highway System as follows:

- Remove Airport Drive (U-5212), between Gore Hill Interchange and the Airport Terminal, from the Urban Highway System. (0.60 miles)
- Add 9th Street South, between 13th Ave. South and 17th Ave. South, to the Urban Highway System. (0.25 miles)
- Add 17th Avenue South, between 9th Street South and 13th Street South, to the Urban Highway System. (0.34 miles)

The removal of Airport Drive (from the Urban System) is necessary to accommodate a transfer of ownership to the Great Falls International Airport Authority. The addition of route segments (on 9th Street South and 17th Avenue South) is necessary to maintain system mileage.

Summary: MDT is requesting Transportation Commission approval of the following Urban Highway System revisions:

- Remove Airport Drive (U-5212), between Gore Hill Interchange and the Airport Terminal, from the Urban Highway System. (0.60 miles)

- Add 9th Street South, between 13th Ave. South and 17th Ave. South, to the Urban Highway System. (0.25 miles)
- Add 17th Avenue South, between 9th Street South and 13th Street South, to the Urban Highway System. (0.34 miles)

Staff recommends the Commission approve these modifications to the Urban Highway System.

Commissioner Cobb moved to approve the Urban Highway System Revisions – Great Falls, Airport Drive – Gore Hill Interchange to Airport Terminal, 9th Street South – 13th Avenue South to 17th Avenue South, 17th Avenue South - 9th Street South to 13th Street South. Commissioner Lambert seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 5: Butte District Project Belgrade – Urban Improvements

Lynn Zanto presented the Butte District Project, Belgrade – Urban Improvements to the Commission. The National Highway System (NH) Program funds highway projects to rehabilitate, restore, resurface, and reconstruct Non-Interstate routes on the National Highway System. Montana’s Transportation Commission allocates NH funds to MDT Districts based on system performance. In response to emerging operational needs on the National Highway System, the Butte District is advancing a major rehabilitation project on Jackrabbit Lane in Belgrade.

Specifically, the Butte District is proposing a project to widen Jackrabbit Lane (to a 5-lane roadway) from Madison Avenue to Main Street in Belgrade. Additionally, the project would improve signal operations along the Jackrabbit Lane corridor (from Amsterdam Road to Main Street) and on Amsterdam Road (from Jackrabbit Lane to Thorpe Road).

The majority of the project will be funded with Butte District NH funds. However, some intersection improvement work (traffic signal upgrades, ADA, etc.) is eligible to receive CMAQ dollars. The total estimated cost for all project phases is \$4,062,000 – which includes an estimated \$1M contribution from the CMAQ program for construction costs.

Summary: The Butte District is requesting Transportation Commission approval for a major rehabilitation project on Jackrabbit Lane in Belgrade. The intent of the project is to widen Jackrabbit Lane (to a 5-lane roadway) from Madison Avenue to Main Street. Additionally, the project will improve signal operations along the Jackrabbit Lane corridor (from Amsterdam Road to Main Street) and on Amsterdam Road (from Jackrabbit Lane to Thorpe Road).

The total estimated cost for all project phases is \$4,062,000 – which includes an estimated \$1M contribution from the CMAQ program for construction costs. The proposed project is consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Performance Programming Process (P3) as well as the policy direction established in TRANPLAN-21. Specifically, roadway system performance and traveler safety will be enhanced with the addition of this project to the program.

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the addition of this Butte District project to the program.

Commissioner Griffith said with this we will essentially have constructed a new road from the Interstate south to Four Corners. This creates four and five lanes all the way down. If you've ever driven in Belgrade and want to go past Madison Avenue, the traffic is backed up clear to the Interstate because the road goes from four lanes back down to two lanes, so it takes a considerable amount of time to get through an intersection. Therefore, I'd be glad to add this to our Red Book requests.

Commissioner Belcourt moved to approve the Butte District Project, Belgrade – Urban Improvements. Commissioner Lambert seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 6: Billings District Project US12 Bank Stabilization

Lynn Zanto presented the Billings District Project, US12 Bank Stabilization to the Commission. The National Highway System (NH) Program finances highway projects to rehabilitate, restore, resurface, and reconstruct Non-Interstate routes on the National Highway System. Montana's Transportation Commission allocates NH funds to MDT districts based on system performance.

The Surface Transportation Program – Primary (STPP) finances highway projects to rehabilitate, restore, resurface, and reconstruct routes on the state's Primary Highway System. Montana's Transportation Commission allocates STPP funds to MDT districts based on system performance.

In response to emerging roadway safety needs on an NHS / Primary System route, the Billings District is advancing a bank stabilization project on US-12 (along the Musselshell River) to prevent roadway erosion during future high water events. The proposed project would include slope work, armoring (primarily with riprap) and installation of vegetation at 4 locations on US-12.

The total estimated cost for all project phases is \$2,452,000 – which would be equally split between the Billings District NH and STPP programs.

Summary: The Billings District is requesting Transportation Commission approval of a bank stabilization project on US-12 along the Musselshell River. The intent of the project is to prevent roadway erosion during future high water events by armoring slopes and installing vegetation (at 4 locations on US-12).

The total estimated cost for all project phases \$2,452,000 – which will be equally split between the Billings District NH and STPP programs. The proposed project is consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Performance Programming Process (P3) as well as the policy direction established in TRANPLAN-21. Specifically, roadway system performance and traveler safety will be enhanced with the addition of this project to the program.

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the addition of this Billings District project to the program.

Commissioner Skelton moved to approve the Billings District Project, US-12 Bank Stabilization. Commissioner Lambert seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 7: Speed Limit Recommendation Belgrade – Bozeman Frontage Road (p-205)

Dwane Kailey presented the Speed Limit Recommendation, Belgrade – Bozeman Frontage Road (p-205) to the Commission. This is the speed study for the Belgrade/Bozeman Frontage Road. As you are all aware, the Commission adopted an interim speed zone on this roadway back in October 2014. We postponed collecting data until the opening of the East Belgrade Interchange which has been done. We've collected the data and are presenting it to you for your information and review and approval.

We did notice a fairly significant drop in traffic on this roadway, about 44%. I would mention that in the nine months that we've had the interim speed zone out there, car accidents have not dropped. We actually saw 23 crashes versus 25 crashes in a 12-month period prior to the speed zone. We've not seen the fatalities that we saw before but there are still a fair number of crashes out there. There has been an increase in traffic stops and citations. I don't know why – if more people are speeding or if there is more enforcement out there. A lot of the citations are for speeds in excess of 60 mph. Nine of the citations were issued between 65-69 mph and five were issued in excess of 70 mph. Also of significance is the operational crash violation type category – 11 stop signs failed to yield and citations were issued. We did a comparison of the traveling speeds. These were all measured at the same location before and after. Speeds have decreased ever so slightly, less than 5 mph. The 85th percentile speeds were in the 56-60 mph range. That is important because our recommendation is 55 mph which is at the lower end. Normally we recommend at the upper end which is 60 mph. That speaks to how much consideration my staff is giving this corridor.

Staff recommends extending the 45 mph speed limit on the west end of this corridor. Please keep that in mind when you make your recommendation. Staff is recommending:

A 45 mph speed limit beginning at station 6+00, project FAP 82D (as previously approved) and continuing east to station 41+00, an approximate distance of 4,000 feet.

A 55 mph speed limit beginning at station 46+00, project FAP 82D (1,700 feet east of Alaska Road) and continuing east to station 42+50 (milepost 28.2), an approximate distance of 6.8-miles.

Commissioner Griffith asked the timeframe for the corridor study. Lynn Zanto said we are looking at starting the corridor study in April. Commissioner Griffith asked if part of the corridor study included slope flattening? The District Administrator said that is a separate project from the study. It was a safety project that was already identified at that location. Lynn Zanto said the studies that have happened in advance of the corridor study will be incorporated into the baseline condition. Commissioner Lambert asked the length of the 45 mph extension. Dwane Kailey said it is based on the traveling speeds and we think it is appropriate to extend that 45 mph speed zone a little bit farther than the existing.

Lee Hovart. I'm a resident out there. When they reduced that to 50 mph I was very happy about it after the last death at one of the intersections. I counted the accesses to the Frontage Road and there is 25 of them. Fifteen of those accesses are from gravel roads where you don't get a lot of traction to move out into the highway. There are three roads that are gravel truck entrances and they don't start very fast out of an intersection. Going 55 mph is different than 50 mph. I do honor your study. I figure you have a good recommendation because you're wearing a Broncos shirt. (Laughter). There is another entrance for us that goes from Airport Road to Spring Hill Road which is two miles longer and takes four minutes longer but it is a lot safer

on that road. I take that road during the wintertime. I really appreciate this opportunity to be here. Thank you.

Marilee Brown. I'm from the Safer Bozeman Citizen's Group. We're the ones that asked you to reduce the speed limit last year to 50 mph. By posted it at 50 mph you have moved one step closer to achieving vision zero. We originally started our whole action based on the dangerous intersection at Valley Center Spur Frontage Road where there have been deaths, litigation, and heart-stopping near misses on a regular basis. I have to say that the 50 mph posting has been helping. There's still a lot that has to be done. Recently they put in the white striping to help the visibility and line of site issues that exist there but as soon as the snow comes, those white lines are going to disappear.

I read the speed study and it was pretty good but there were a few things missing; things the Highway Administration allows you to consider. Say for instance in that seven and a half miles there are 59 intersections. That's 59 potential sites for a T-bone crash or a rear-ending. There are 434 land-locked homes that have no access other than the Frontage Road. There are businesses, homes, churches and hundreds of people that have to use the Frontage Road on a regular basis and can't use the freeway. It has no shoulder, it's narrow, it has deep ditches on either side, and it has a deteriorating road surface. So yes the accident crashes went up. It says in the study that part of the reason for the crashes going up is because of the temporary lowering and construction site along the west end of Frontage Road. We wanted to know about whether major injury crashes, preventable crashes, and deaths have decreased. Of concern is that in a crash if the speed limit goes from 50 mph to 55 mph, there is a 58% chance increase of death. If it goes from 50 mph to 60 mph, it's 210%. That's huge. So with the help of the Highway Patrol, we decided to take a look looked at four major intersections that have all had problems in the past. We looked at the exact same nine months the year before so we wouldn't be mixing apples and oranges like the speed study had to. In the previous year there were three major injuries that were sent to the hospital at those four intersections and one death. But once you posted it at 50 mph it became zero. So you're getting closer to achieving your goal. It's exactly what you wanted to accomplish. Why risk changing that? Posting it at 50 mph has been working. Yes people naturally want to go a little faster than 50 mph; that happens with any speed limit that is posted. That's why there is such a thing known as "speed creep". It's rare to know that you've saved lives. We don't know whose life you saved last year but we know that you saved someone's life. We would like to say thank you on each of their behalf and please don't go backwards.

Steve Cranford. I'm the Bozeman Police Chief. You should be in receipt of a letter written by our elected City Commission requesting that you consider keeping the speed at the interim speed limit of 50 mph. I'm a Police Chief not a Traffic Engineer but it is our position, for many of the same reasons that were just so eloquently stated, that the Commission should consider keeping the speed at 50 mph. With the opening of Airport exit at Belgrade, the traffic was paralleling each other there, our folks are either going to the Airport or going to and from work, commuting to Bozeman to work and then back home to Belgrade. We feel that keeping the speed limit lower subconsciously it hasn't finished moving that traffic load over to I-90 and we feel you will continue to see people shifting over there. If you have less traffic then you have less crashes. Also lower speeds lower potential for serious injury and death.

From a public safety perspective, we would love to see more shoulders on Frontage. It is difficult to do traffic stops. My hats off to the patrol who have been doing it out there; it is tough with no shoulder to work on. With I-90 you can safely travel down it with less risk of a head-on collisions and if somebody has an accident, they can pull over to the side. Whereas on Frontage Road those options are limited. I looked at our numbers and we experienced the same kind; we parallel the total crash number within our jurisdiction. Our jurisdiction goes from where North 7th turns into

Frontage Road and currently it ends at Nelson Road where they are putting in a new MDT yard. That's the ground we currently have to patrol in our jurisdiction. We saw similar numbers and scale as the overall number but six of those were animal collisions. We ask that you consider keeping the speed limit at the interim speed limit of 50 mph. Alternatively if it's the Commission's decision to go to 55 mph, maybe consider moving that out west of Valley Center Spur. Thank you.

Marilee Brown. We noticed that the moment you put the 50 mph speed limit into effect, people started leaving Frontage Road and moving onto the Freeway. So it is a good deterrent to keep people on the highway. If you do consider changing the speed limit from 50 mph to 55 mph west of the Spur, we ask that you consider including the subdivision one mile past that which has over 200 homes. So put it west of Coulee Drive.

Commissioner Griffith said there are a bunch of things that weigh into this for me. First of all this Commission jumped to that thing ahead of a speed study and it's made a difference. That's a four-five lane street and we've respected that it needs to be at 55 mph versus 70 mph which is what the speed limit was. I do believe that because of the Commission action we did save lives. The last few times I've turned off Valley Center Spur and onto Frontage Road, I've followed farm equipment going underneath the Spur traveling at 25 mph or less. Their ability to get out and into the traffic is much less than a vehicle. We have the issue of shoulder widening that our District and the Department has put as a priority on the Red Book list and we have the Corridor Study. I would hate because of those things three things that we change the speed limit at this point in time. It is still an active farm area in between Bozeman and Belgrade. Until we get a solution between the other two, the project on shoulder widening and the Corridor Study needs to be complete before we change it. However I do think your recommendation on the 45 mph is a viable one – to change it to 45 mph for that portion of the road. My concern and recommendation is that we keep the rest of it at 50 mph until those two items are complete and then we can look at it again.

Dwane Kailey said for the record we did not have the official recommendation from the city of Bozeman prior to the meeting. Danielle Bolan has been able to secure that. The city of Bozeman did recommend maintaining the 50 mph speed limit. Gallatin County concurred with our recommendation. The city of Belgrade voted three to two to actually increase it to 60 mph. Commissioner Griffith said that's the complexity of this but in the end it is the Commission's responsibility and I hope we can take that responsibility seriously.

Commissioner Skelton moved to retain and make permanent the 50 mph speed limit and lengthen the 45 mph zone for Belgrade – Bozeman Frontage Road (p-205). Commissioner Lambert seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Elected Officials/Public Comment

Rachael Court, John Tester's office. I'm just here to observe transportation issues. Commissioner Griffith said we're glad you're here and thank the Senator for all his support of transportation.

Agenda Item No. 8: Speed Limit Recommendation MT 72 - Belfry

Dwane Kailey presented the Speed Limit Recommendation, MT 72 - Belfry to the Commission. This is a speed review of MT 72 near Belfry. This is based on project realignment of MT 72. Department staff has gone out and reviewed the roadway, the

accident history and based on their review and measurements of the traveling speeds we are providing you with the following recommendation:

A 45 mph speed limit beginning at station 173+00 (metric) project STPP 72-1(8) and continuing north to station 176+00, an approximate distance of 300 meters or 1,000 feet.

A 35 mph speed limit beginning at station 176+00 (metric) project STPP 72-1(8) (950' south of Vaill St) and continuing north to station 14+40 (metric) project STPP 72-1(5), an approximate distance of 540 meters or 1,800 feet.

A 45 mph speed limit beginning at station 14+40 (metric) project STPP 72-1(5) (1,800 feet north of Vaill St) and continuing north to station 17+40, an approximate distance of 300 meters or 1,000 feet.

We have the Carbon County Commissioner's concurrence in this recommendation.

Commissioner Skelton moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation for MT 72 – Belfry. Commissioner Belcourt seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 9: Speed Limit Recommendation US 93 – Evaro Area

Dwane Kailey presented the Speed Limit Recommendation, US 93 – Evaro Area to the Commission. We have presented this speed study to the Commission in the past. Approximately a year ago, MDT was proposing or beginning to conduct a Road Safety Audit through this area as well as a larger portion of US 93. It was the Commission's recommendation at that time to table this speed study until such time the Road Safety Audit was completed. It has been completed. There was a question as to anything in the Audit that reflected or might have influenced the Speed Study. I've gone back and researched the Road Safety Audit and there was one comment by a Tribal Member that maybe a speed reduction in association with the Casino might be appropriate. However when this was presented to the Tribal Council, they concurred with the recommendation. At this time the Speed Study recommends no change. You may recall that the Missoula County Commission did not provide a direct recommendation. They forwarded a letter from the Tribal Family Community Council. So they didn't provide a recommendation at all, they just forwarded a letter. Commissioner Griffith asked what the letter said. Dwane Kailey said they were looking for a speed reduction in and around the Evaro community area. Again our recommendation is no change. That was concurred and supported by the Tribal Council. Commissioner Cobb asked if he had a chance to look at some mitigation if we weren't going to change it. Dwane Kailey said I believe we did provide that. I believe staff looked into signing and we try to provide the wildlife signing. I'll have to double check to see if that was provided at this location.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation for US 93 – Evaro Area. Commissioner Belcourt seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 10: Certificates of Completion August – 2015

Dwane Kailey presented the Certificates of Completion for August 2015 to the Commission. We are providing those projects that have reached completion as well as the original DBE goal and the final DBE payment percentage. We have also included a report on the D5 Flood Restoration Project which did grow substantially in cost due to change orders. These flood repair projects are very challenging and typically see change orders.

Commissioner Cobb said interim construction services went way over from \$39,000 to \$109,000. Abraham Construction Services UPN 7423. Dwane Kailey said that is a CTEP Project and typically those are administered by the local governments. My guess is they extended the pathway. They had a fair number of these projects. As they got to the end of the CTEP project, they may have had additional funds they needed to expend so we end up extending the pathway through the federal approval process.

Commissioner Lambert asked if they were all railroad related projects; BNSF is railroad. Dwane said as we talked yesterday we showed you the Rail Hazard Elimination Program and these are projects in association with those. So yes we do contract with the rail authority to perform the work and then we reimburse them for certain parts of that work.

Commissioner Cobb moved to approve the Certificates of Completion for August – 2015. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No.11: Project Change Orders August – 2015

Dwane Kailey presented the Project Change Orders for August – 2015 to the Commission. He said Change Orders aren't always bad. Change Orders are a reflection of a balance between designing too much and designing just enough. You do want some change orders because if you don't ever have change orders then you're spending way too much time in design.

Commissioner Cobb moved to approve the Project Change Orders for August - 2015. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 12: Liquidated Damages

Dwane Kailey presented Liquidated Damages to the Commission. These are presented for your review. There are two projects with liquidated damaged. The first one is south of Chinook, the contractor is Helena Sand and Gravel. They had three days of liquidated damages for a total amount of \$8,268. They are not disputing those charges.

The second project is Libby Dam South, the contractor was LHC Inc. They had three days of liquidated damages for a total value of \$8,667. They are not disputing those charges. The Commission can take no action is you so choose.

Stand

Agenda Item No. 13: Letting Lists

Dwane Kailey presented the Letting Lists to the Commission. You were given an updated letting list prior to the meeting. This letting list has incorporated all the changes from the TCP including the last minute change we made. So these are accurate based on what you saw and concurred on in the TCP. These are presented for your review and approval through the month of September. The only caveat is this is dependent on federal funding.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Letting Lists. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 14: Amended Access Control Resolution F 23-1(5)1, 0109-005-000 Main Street & Haynes Avenue – Miles City

Dwane Kailey presented the Amended Access Control Resolution, 23-1(5)1, 0109-005-000, Main Street & Haynes Avenue – Miles City to the Commission. This is an amendment to an Access Control Resolution that you adopted in 1996 and amended in 1996. This amendment allows some additional development, specifically eight private approaches on the right side and left side of the project. Staff has reviewed and believes these approaches are appropriate and can be done in a safe and effective manner. Staff recommends approval of the Amended Access Control Resolution.

Commissioner Griffith asked about the eight private approaches on the project. What is the project? Dwane Kailey said it refers to the original project that set up the Access Control Resolution. Commissioner Cobb asked if they are putting these in now. I get the impression they've already been put in and we're just approving it after the fact. Dwane Kailey said that is correct. Commissioner Griffith asked if the Department concurs with this. Dwane Kailey said yes.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Amended Access Control Resolution, F 23-1(5)1, 0109-005-000, Main Street & Haynes Avenue – Miles City. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 15: Limited Access Control Red Lodge – Roberts STPP-MT 28-2(35)72; CN: 4375-002 MT 28-2(36)82; CN 4375-003

Dwane Kailey presented the Limited Access Control, Red Lodge–Roberts, STPP-MT 28-2(35)72; CN: 4375-002, MT 28-2(36)82; CN: 4375-003 to the Commission. Dwane Kailey said this is for the Hwy 212 corridor from Red Lodge to Roberts. This is in association with design projects that we're working on currently and allows MDT to better control access in association with the redesign project. Staff recommends approval of the Access Control Resolution as presented.

Commissioner Griffith asked if these accesses were already in. Dwane Kailey said no. This documents the accesses that are already in and also what we are proposing to build as part of the project. So some are in and some are not.

Commissioner Cobb moved to approve the Limited Access Control, Red Lodge–Roberts, STPP-MT 28-2(35)72; CN: 4375-002, MT 28-2(36)82; CN: 4375-003. Commissioner Lambert seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item No. 16: Limited Access Control
Culbertson East
CBI 1-10(69)645
6388-002**

Dwane Kailey presented the Limited Access Control Culbertson East, CBI 1-10(69)645, 6388-002 to the Commission. This is on the Culbertson Hwy 2 corridor and is a length of 10.7 miles. This is establishing access control prior to reconstructing the road. Staff recommends approval.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Limited Access Control, Culbertson East, CBI 1-10(69)645, 6388-002. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Directors Discussion & Follow-up

Director Tooley said we've been together for the last two days and have done a lot of work on the Red Book and I appreciate your work on that. It is nice to participate in this and have a product we can count on.

Electronic Billboard Rule Changes

The last meeting you had some questions and concerns on electronic billboard rule change. At least two of the Commissioners have participated in some of the conference calls with the working group and have heard some of the issues that have come up. This project continues to move forward. There has been a draft rule created that is still being reviewed by the various parties. It is not easy as you can imagine. Right now the current version of the draft rule says these billboards will only be allowed in areas that are zoned commercial or industrial within city limits or urban areas. These limits it to qualified locations only in cities and towns with zoning authority. So they are going to be very limited in their deployment right now. Urban areas allow for more area around the larger communities across the state. These are areas where a large number of off-premise signs currently reside. Our goal in the long term is reducing some of the other signs that might be realized, however, that is very problematic because there are a lot of folks out there that already have those signs. Right now the draft rule says electronic billboards can't be located closer than 1,000 feet from an Interchange. Right now current rules require off-premise signs to be located a minimum of 500 feet beyond or within 500 feet of an Interchange. So that's a pretty major change.

Under the draft rule they can't be any closer than 500 feet from an intersection. Right now that's the same as it is in rural areas but in urban areas it is 140 feet. So that's another change. Under the draft rule electronic billboards can't be located closer than 2,000 feet from another off-premise sign. So this substantially increases the space between electronic billboards. Current rules require a minimum spacing of 500 feet from off-premise signs located next to an Interstate or Primary Highway and 300 feet located next to a Primary Highway that is not limited access. So you're spreading them out and putting them in certain places. I don't think that's what the billboard folks were looking for and you may have gotten some of that feedback.

It's a really delicate balancing act between folks who want to install electronic billboards and have the wherewithal to do that and existing small businesses who want to maintain what they have. It hasn't been easy. The Department has been

working pretty hard on this. A year has gone by and we're here now still working on the draft rules.

Commissioner Griffith asked if they would have a rule by the next Commission meeting. Dwane Kailey said we'd like to at least brief you at that point in time. Director Tooley said we hope to have a more firm version of the draft rule that is pretty close to a draft final at that time. Dwane Kailey said there are Administrative Rule procedures we have to follow but the thinking is to present you with something, make sure it is what you're on board with, and then move toward the Administrative Rule process. This is a balancing act. We'd rather start small rather than broad and have to shrink it down. You can always expand it.

Commissioner Lambert said one of the things we're struggling with the most is the distances. In some cases like the intersection being 500 feet, a lot of time you don't have 500 feet between intersections. Commissioner Griffith said we're talking about the Interstate. Dwane Kailey said this would apply in urban areas as well.

Commissioner Belcourt asked if there was a definition of electronic billboards that encompasses what's out there now. Dwane Kailey said right now on the NHS routes and Interstates electronic billboards are not allowed. There is a definition for them. This rule attempts to allow them within our system. Montana does not allow them now. We are talking about off-premise electronic billboards. If you go out to Cedar Street, there is a Casino that has an electronic a billboard. That is on premise signing. This affects off-premise signing. There are two different rules that we are talking about.

Commissioner Skelton asked how they get away with the sign on 77nd and Grand. There are a lot of electronic signs out there but they must be on premise or off system. Commissioner Griffith said there are a lot off system. Dwane Kailey said this is part of the challenge – we don't regulate within urbanized areas except for NHS. With the expanded NHS, it has handed us a rather big challenge because we do have one right now at the corner of Cedar and North Montana which is a very large sign. According to the expanded NHS it is not allowed so we need to make a decision on this. Commissioner Lambert asked if they would grandfather those in. Dwane Kailey said right now we have no mechanism to grandfather.

Commissioner Skelton said a question asked on one of the calls was who was going to regulate them and who pays for that. Dwane Kailey said if it's on our system we're going to regulate them; we're bound by federal rules to regulate them. Kevin McLaury said Lady Bird Johnson put the Highway Beautification Act in place in the early 60's. The expanded NHS has caused some challenges. The Department has done a good job. They've GIS'd all the signs and we know where they are and we have pictures of them. Commissioner Griffith said the expanded NHS is a benefit. The roads I've seen take away more of our primary to be NHS, in other words were competing more for NHS dollars that we would have had in the Primary. Dwane Kailey said we track the health of our system and most of the expanded NHS is not to the level of performance of our normal NHS system. So when MAP21 came out with the performance measures, we did see our performance level of the NHS drop because of adding that into our system. Lynn Zanto said we looked at all our routes and now with national performance it added more miles that we'll be accountable for at the federal level. With that said through the years with the funding level there is always a risk they may reduce what's eligible for federal aid. We reviewed each of these with the locals and there is a federal process to remove them from the NHS and we did remove some but when it comes to standards we did bring up outdoor advertising. Kevin McLaury said the way we fund here is the way we want to do the funding. Coming from us you have two funding sources – NHS and non NHS. That's it. Now we kept the old system which keeps the primary, secondary, urban, etc. So when it comes to our funding, if it's NHS then its NHS and if it not NHS then it's not NHS. We don't have any differentiation. We've only got two pots and

you have five. That's fine and it gives you the flexibility to see where your money is going.

Commissioner Lambert asked if the Reservations fall under the same rules. Dwane Kailey said that has been a challenge. Indian Reservations are sovereign nations and we do not have the right to regulate signs on the Reservations. We've had a couple of the Reservations approach us and ask us to do that. We have not done that. We've offered up our rules and regulations for them to adopt via Ordinance but to date we're not going to take the right of a sovereign nation onto to MDT.

Funding

Director Tooley said regarding funding, the House voted yesterday on a short-term extension to mid-November and the Senate voted today. That keeps the heat on the Conference Committee. The House will vote on Thursday on their version of a long-term transportation bill. The Senate has already passed theirs. The good news is the two bills are similar and should not take a long time in Conference. Both Houses will resist amendments. Everybody thinks this could possibly be on the President's desk by Thanksgiving. Commissioner Griffith asked if there were differences in funding levels. Director Tooley said the Senate Bill has a little more generous funding package in certain area but both of them have current levels of funding plus inflation. Both of them maintain the formula distribution. In the House version there are some discretionary portions that we won't compete well on but at the same time in the significant projects portion there is a rural set aside that is good for Montana. We will at least be able to compete for some of those things. Those are the differences but both bills are close enough that I think they'll get this hammered out. I think the fight will be the funding and that seems to be dwindling down. It started out as a six-year bill with four years of funding and now it is a six-year bill with two years of funding.

Kalispell Bypass

Director Tooley said we broke ground on the last phases of the Kalispell Bypass. That is something the Commission has worked on and struggled with. The contract was let and signed and on October 9th I was able to go up and participate in the ground-breaking ceremony. I've been to ribbon cuttings and ground-breakings before but this one was particularly emotional for that community. If you really want to see what transportation means to a community, that was a good time to see it. They were overjoyed. Commissioner Griffith asked if this is the last connection to the Bypass. Director Tooley said there are two projects. This includes the Bypass itself and two or three Interchanges. It is a huge undertaking with a new alignment. It will really change the landscape of Kalispell. There are a lot of folks who have put businesses in there expecting this project to change Kalispell for the better with a lot of new opportunities for Kalispell.

Red Book Process

Commissioner Lambert said she like the way Lori Ryan put the Agenda together. Commissioner Griffith agreed and said it was a handy thing for Red Book with numbers. It was very good. Thank you. Commissioner Skelton thanked the staff and commended them for the Red Book; it was fabulous and so streamlined and so well done. Commissioner Griffith said he sees the emotions of the staff and the involvement level and the interaction. I've seen good Red Books and this was an absolutely great one. The staff was excited to be there and participated. For those who were new to Red Book, they didn't get to see the struggles others have gone through.

Long Range Transportation Plan

Lynn Zanto said we are kicking off an update to our Long Range Transportation Plan. That involves a public process where we reach out to the public and the stakeholders. So TRANPLAN21 sets the policy framework for agency business. It was originally developed in the mid-90's and has been an evolution of our stakeholder input to our policy areas in safety, roadway performance, economic development. We hired Dowl HKM to help us with that effort and is a year-long process.

Next Commission Meeting

The next Conference Calls were scheduled for December 1, 2015 and December 22, 2015.

Adjourned

Meeting Adjourned

Commissioner Griffith, Chairman
Montana Transportation Commission

Mike Tooley, Director
Montana Department of Transportation

Lori K. Ryan, Secretary
Montana Transportation Commission