



# **BILLINGS AREA I-90 CORRIDOR PLANNING STUDY**

## **APPENDIX A COMMUNITY AND AGENCY PARTICIPATION MATERIALS**

**PREPARED FOR:**



**PREPARED BY:**



104 East Broadway, Suite G-1  
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(406) 442-0370

**March 2012**



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## COMMUNITY AND AGENCY PARTICIPATION PLAN

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April 2011



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has initiated a corridor planning process along an approximately 22-mile segment of I-90 beginning at the Laurel Interchange (RP 433.8) and ending immediately west of the Pinehills Interchange (RP 455.85) in order to comprehensively address future transportation needs, prioritize transportation projects, and foster cooperative state and local transportation planning efforts for the Interstate corridor.

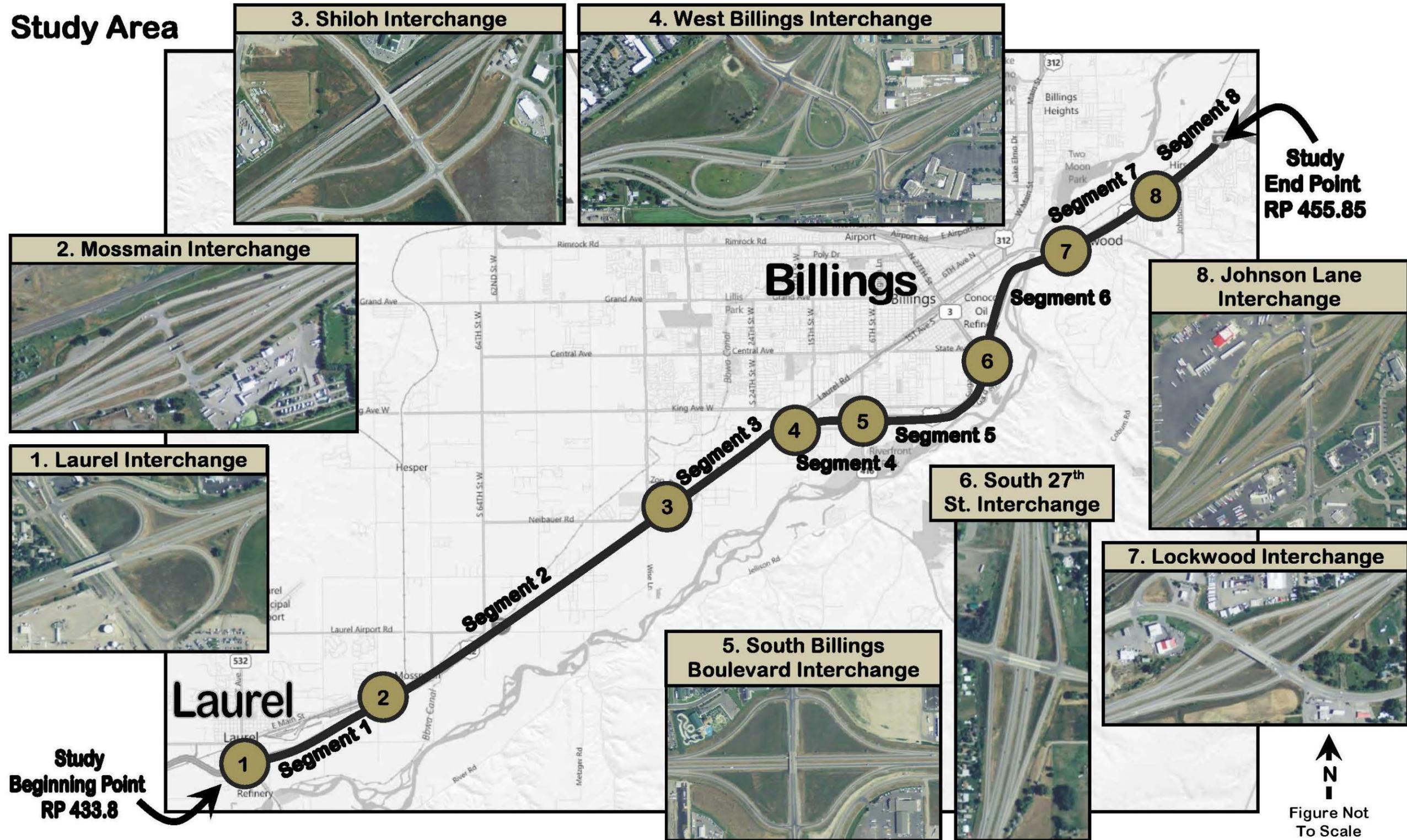
This planning process will examine the geometric characteristics, crash history, and existing and projected operational characteristics of I-90 Interstate segments and select interchanges, as well as existing and projected physical constraints, land uses, and environmental resources within the planning corridor. The end result of the planning effort will be a comprehensive package of short-term and long-term recommendations intended to address the transportation needs of the Interstate highway. These recommendations will assist MDT in targeting the most critical Interstate highway needs and allocating resources appropriately.

### 1.1 Study Area

This study will focus on the portion of I-90 beginning at the Laurel Interchange (RP 433.8) and ending immediately west of the Pinehills Interchange (RP 455.85). Figure 1-1 illustrates the study area.



Figure 1-1 Study Area





## 1.2 Goals of Involvement Plan

The primary goal of the community and resource agency involvement effort for the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study is to gather input about the needs, issues, and concerns within the I-90 corridor. MDT will attempt to provide meaningful avenues for resource agencies, stakeholders, and community members to participate throughout the corridor planning process.

## 2.0 INVOLVEMENT PROCEDURES

### 2.1 Study Contacts

Contact information for MDT and the Consultant will be provided in all published materials and is also listed below.

**Gary Neville, MDT Billings District Engineer**

Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)  
Billings District Office  
424 Morey St.  
PO Box 20437  
Billings, MT 59104-0437  
406.657.0232  
gneville@mt.gov

**Sarah Nicolai, Consultant Project Manager**

DOWL HKM  
P.O. Box 1009  
Helena, MT 59624  
406.442.0370  
snicolai@dowlhkm.com

**Tom Kahle, MDT Project Manager**

Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)  
Statewide and Urban Planning  
2960 Prospect Avenue  
PO Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001  
406.444.9211  
tkahle@mt.gov



## 2.2 Print Media

Meeting announcements will be developed by DOWL HKM and advertised by MDT at least two weeks prior to informational meetings. Advertisements will announce the meeting location, time, and date; the format and purpose of the meetings; and the locations where documents may be reviewed (if applicable). The following print newspapers may carry the display advertisements:

- Billings Gazette
- Billings Outpost
- Yellowstone County News
- The Billings Times

## 2.3 Radio and Television

MDT may announce informational meetings on local radio and television stations. Specific media outlets will be identified over the course of the study, as appropriate.

## 2.4 Document Availability

### 2.4.1 Newsletters and Meeting Materials

DOWL HKM will develop two newsletters over the course of the study. The first newsletter will be issued at the time of the first informational meeting and will introduce the study and describe its purpose, illustrate the study area and study components, and describe key findings from the Existing and Projected Conditions Report. The second newsletter will be distributed at the time of the second informational meeting and will present recommendations from the Draft Corridor Study Report, including proposed improvement options within the Interstate corridor. DOWL HKM will also develop meeting materials for each informational meeting, including agendas, static exhibits, and other presentation materials. Print copies of newsletters and meeting materials will be available at each of the two informational meetings hosted for this study. MDT will publish electronic versions of newsletters and meeting materials on the study website. Print copies of newsletters may also be mailed to a limited distribution.

### 2.4.2 Reports

MDT will publish electronic versions of reports on the study website. Print copies of the Existing and Projected Conditions Report and the Draft Corridor Planning Study Report will be available at the MDT Statewide and Urban Planning Section Office (2960 Prospect Avenue; Helena, MT). It is anticipated that print copies of these reports may also be made available at the following locations.



## Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

### Community and Agency Participation Plan

- MDT Billings District Office (424 Morey Street; Billings, MT)
- City of Billings Planning & Community Services Planning Division (510 N. Broadway; Billings, MT)
- City of Billings Public Works Engineering Division (2224 Montana Avenue; Billings, MT)
- Yellowstone County Public Works Dept. (217 N. 27th Street; Billings, MT)
- Parmly Billings Library (510 N. Broadway; Billings, MT)

## 2.5 Meetings

### 2.5.1 Work Group Meetings

Work group meetings will be scheduled every two weeks for the duration of the 12-month study period. Meeting participants will discuss study progress, analysis methodologies, and any issues or concerns that arise over the course of the study. The work group will serve in an advisory role and will review study documentation prior to publication. The individuals listed below will be invited to participate in the work group.

**Table 2.1 Work Group Members**

Name	Affiliation	Phone Number	Email
Bob Burkhardt	FWHA	406. 441.3907	bob.burkhardt@fhwa.dot.gov
Alan Woodmansey	FWHA	406. 441.3916	alan.woodmansey@dot.gov
Brian Andersen	MDT	406.444.6103	brandersen@mt.gov
Debi Meling	City of Billings	406.657.8231	MelingD@ci.billings.mt.us
Gary Neville	MDT	406.657.0232	gneville@mt.gov
Jean Riley	MDT	406.444.9456	jriley@mt.gov
Jeff Olsen	MDT	406.444.7610	jolsen@mt.gov
LeRoy Wosoba	MDT	406.444.1280	lwosoba@mt.gov
Mike Black	Yellowstone County	406.256.2735	mblack@co.yellowstone.mt.gov
Scott Walker	City of Billings	406.247.8661	WalkerS@ci.billings.mt.us
Thomas Gocksch	MDT	406.444.9412	tgocksch@mt.gov
Tim Miller	Yellowstone County	406.256.2735	tmiller@co.yellowstone.mt.gov
Tom Kahle	MDT	406.444.9211	tkahle@mt.gov
Zia Kazimi	MDT	406.444.7252	zkazimi@mt.gov



### 2.5.2 Informational Meetings

Two informational meetings will be held over the course of the study.

The first informational meeting will be held part-way through the planning process after the Consultant has evaluated environmental, social, and land use conditions and conducted geometric, crash, and operational analyses of the Interstate corridor. During the first meeting, the Consultant will introduce the study, present findings from the Existing and Projected Conditions Report, and solicit feedback about issues and concerns in the corridor.

The second informational meeting will occur toward the end of the study process. Community members will be asked to provide feedback on recommended improvement options presented in the Draft Corridor Study Report.

Comments will be considered throughout the course of the planning process.

### 2.5.3 Resource Agency Meeting

At the time of the first informational meeting, the Consultant will facilitate a resource agency meeting to discuss natural resources occurring within the Interstate corridor, anticipated impacts that could result from improvement options, and potential mitigation strategies.

## 2.6 Consideration of Traditionally Underserved Populations

MDT will attempt to involve traditionally underserved segments of the population in the corridor planning study process through the following measures:

#### Plan Meeting Locations Carefully

- MDT will host informational meetings in locations that are accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

#### Seek Help from Community Leaders and Organizations

- MDT and the Consultant will confer with community leaders and representative organizations about how best to involve traditionally underserved populations.



## Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

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### Community and Agency Participation Plan

#### Be Sensitive to Diverse Audiences

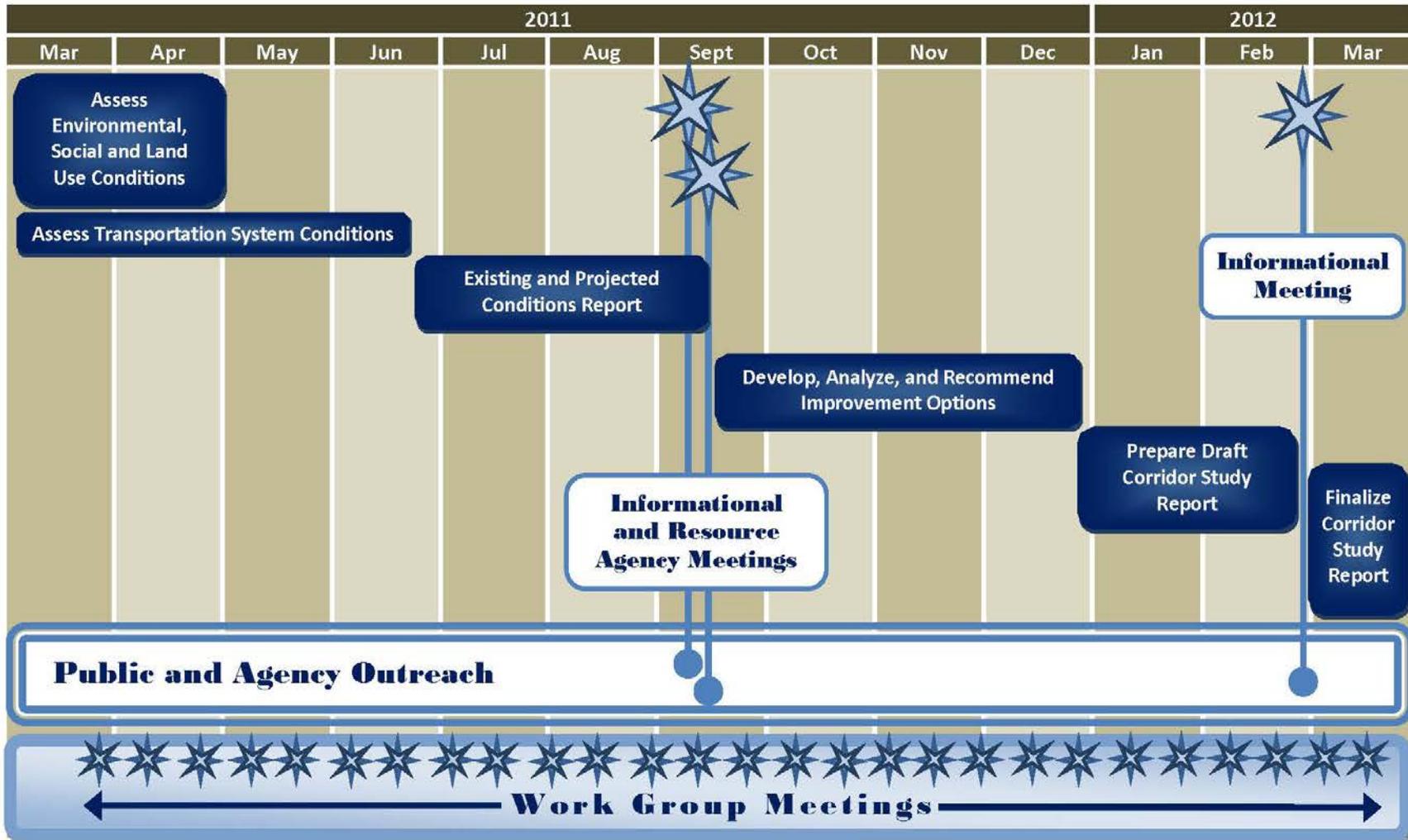
- MDT and the Consultant will attempt to communicate as effectively as possible during informational meetings by avoiding technical jargon and exercising appropriate conduct and judgment. Alternative accessible formats of study materials will be provided upon request.

## **2.7 Study Schedule**

The Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study began on March 17, 2011 and is expected to be completed by March 2012. Figure 2-1 illustrates the study schedule in more detail.



Figure 2-1 Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study Schedule





Newsletter  
Issue 1  
September  
2011

# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Inside This Issue:

- What is a Corridor Planning Study?
- Study Area and Study Focus
- What are the Steps in a Corridor Planning Study?
- Community Involvement Opportunities
- Study Schedule and Study Contacts

## What is a Corridor Planning Study?

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), in cooperation with the City of Billings, Yellowstone County, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is conducting a Corridor Planning Study along Interstate 90 (I-90) from the Laurel Interchange (RP 433.8) to the Pinehills Interchange (RP 455.85). Representatives from the above entities have been selected to form a planning team for the corridor study.

A Corridor Planning Study is a **planning-level assessment** of a study area occurring before project-level environmental compliance activities under the National and Montana Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA/MEPA). MDT developed a Corridor Planning Study process to provide a better link between early transportation planning and environmental compliance efforts. The Corridor Planning Study process involves

conducting a high-level evaluation of safety, operational, and geometric conditions and environmental resources within a specified corridor in order to identify needs and constraints. This process allows MDT to save time and money in subsequent project phases by facilitating early identification of constraints within a corridor through early coordination with members of the community, resource agencies, and other interested parties; screening of possible improvement options; and elimination of infeasible options. A Corridor Planning Study is a planning document that considers multiple improvement options throughout a corridor. This planning process is distinct from a NEPA/MEPA environmental compliance document and from design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction phases for an individual project.

## Informational Meeting #1 Tuesday, September 13, 2011 at 6pm

Parmly Billings Library  
3rd Floor Meeting Room  
510 N. Broadway; Billings, MT

The purpose of the meeting is to explain the corridor planning study process, present information about existing and projected conditions in the corridor, and request community input regarding concerns, opportunities and constraints that may influence improvement options.

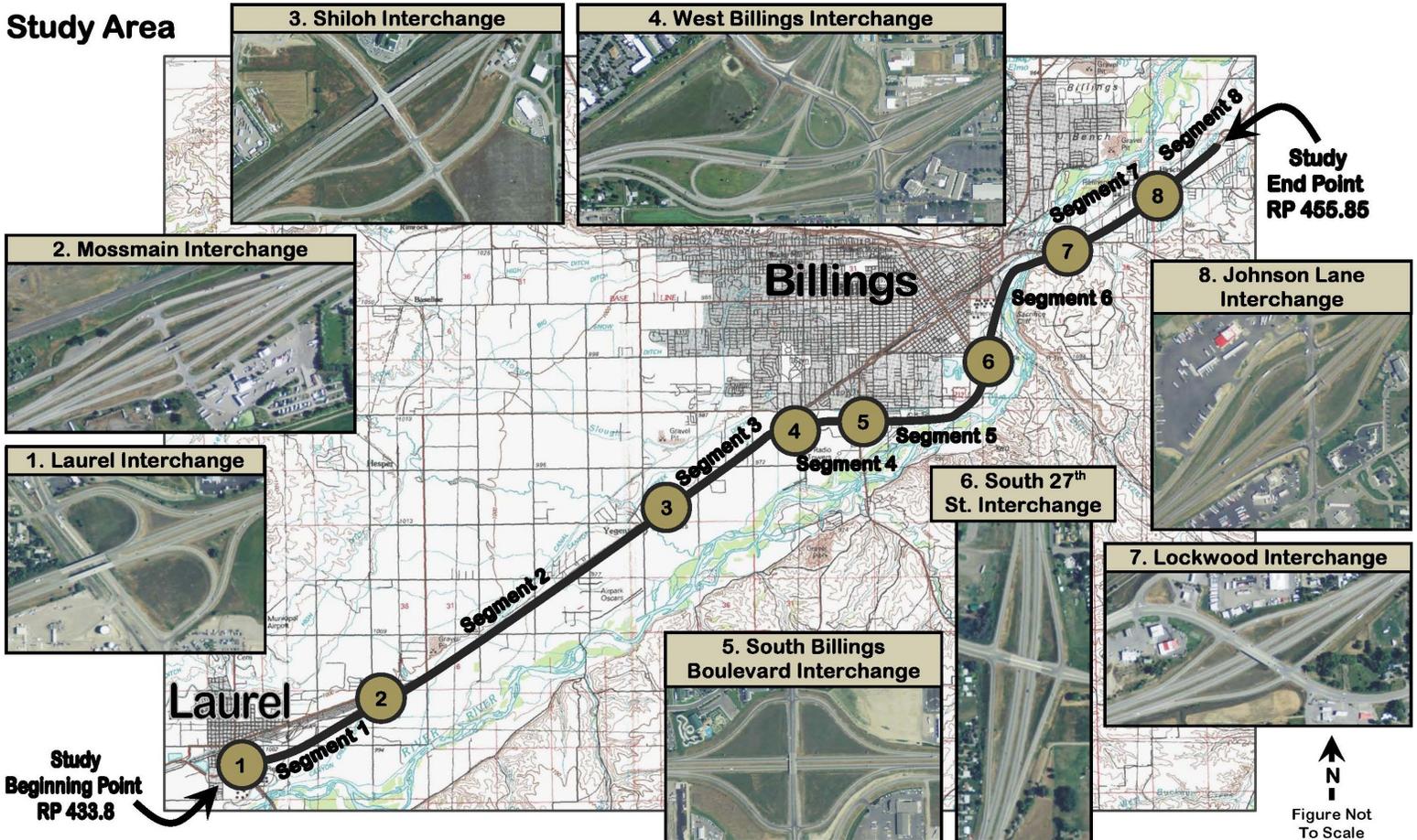
**Community members are encouraged to attend.**

We look forward to seeing you there!

## Study Area

The Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study Area includes approximately 22 miles of Interstate 90 (I-90) beginning at the Laurel Interchange (RP 433.8) and ending immediately west of the Pinehills Interchange (RP 455.85).

### Study Area



## Study Focus

I-90 is part of the National Highway System and serves as a primary means of moving people, goods, and services throughout the country. The system is characterized by controlled access, high traffic volumes, and long-distance trips. I-90 serves as the principal east-west route in the Billings area.

The Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study will examine the geometric characteristics, crash history, and existing and projected operational characteristics of I-90 mainline segments and interchanges, as well as existing and projected physical constraints, land uses, and environmental resources within the corridor study area. The end result of the planning effort will be a comprehensive package of short-term and long-term recommendations intended to address the needs and objectives on the I-90 corridor over the planning horizon (2035). These recommendations will assist MDT in identifying potential projects based on needs, objectives, and funding availability.

## What are the steps in a Corridor Planning Study?

The steps involved in MDT's Corridor Planning Study process include:

We  
Are  
Here



1. ***Develop Corridor Study Work Plan***

The planning team will assess the complexity of issues within the corridor and the level of effort required to address the issues.

2. ***Develop Existing and Projected Conditions Report***

The report will assess the geometric characteristics, crash history, and existing and projected operational characteristics of I-90 Interstate segments and interchanges, as well as existing and projected physical constraints, land uses, and environmental resources within the corridor study area.

3. ***Identify Needs, Objectives, and Screening Criteria***

In consideration of comments submitted during community and resource agency involvement efforts, the planning team will identify needs and objectives for the corridor and a corresponding set of screening criteria that will be used to evaluate improvement options.

4. ***Identify and Analyze Improvement Options***

The planning team will identify a preliminary set of short-term and long-term improvement options, which will be evaluated based on their ability to meet the screening criteria and address the I-90 corridor needs and objectives.

5. ***Recommend Improvement Options***

The planning team will recommend improvement options to address the I-90 corridor needs and objectives. Potential impacts, mitigation opportunities, and estimated costs will be identified for each improvement option.

6. ***Prepare Draft Corridor Study Report***

The planning team will prepare a draft report documenting the corridor planning process, including community and agency input, key findings, recommendations, and next steps. The team will seek comments on the draft report from resource agencies, stakeholders, and members of the community.

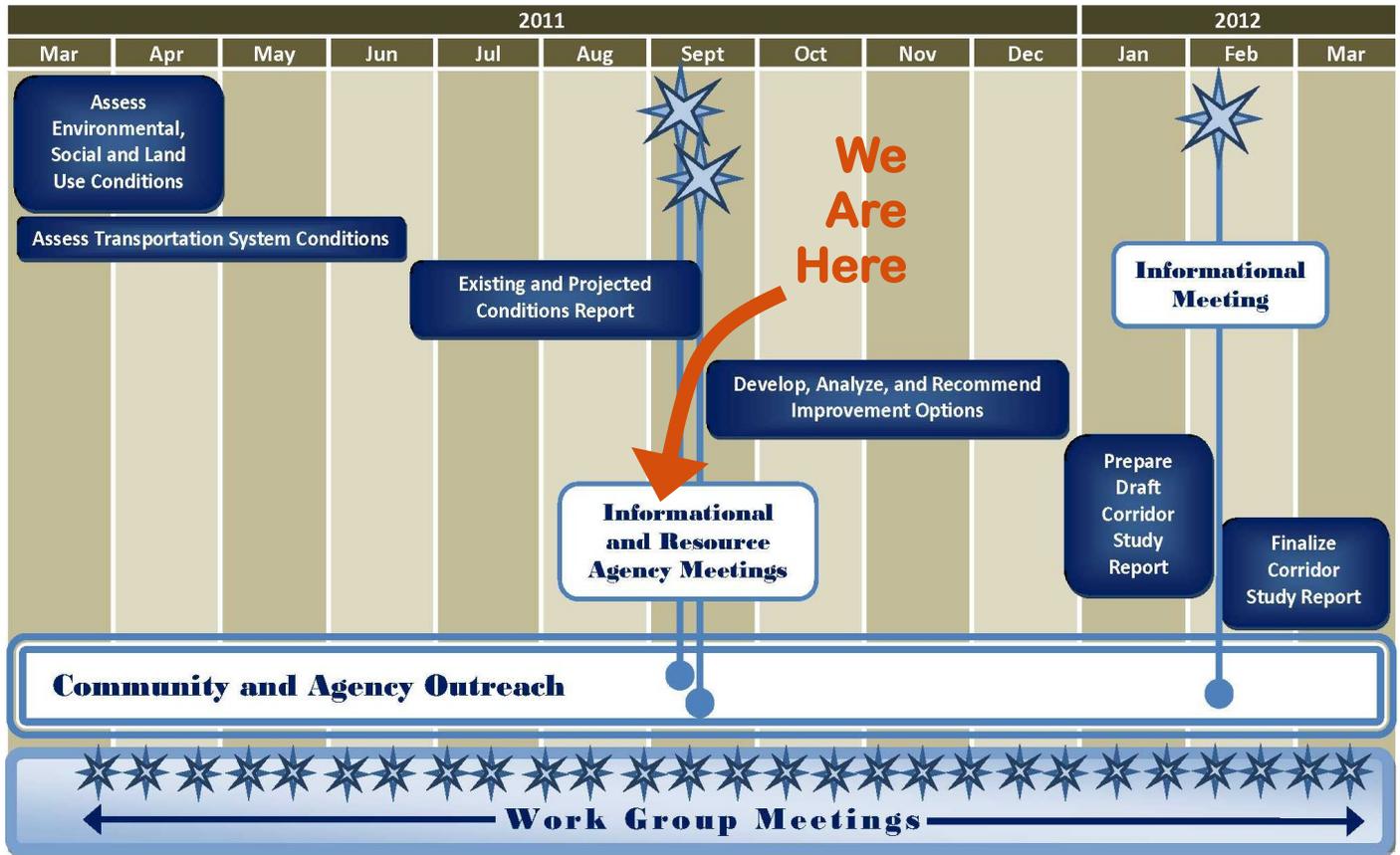
7. ***Finalize Corridor Study Report***

The planning team will finalize the corridor study report, incorporating comments from community members, resource agencies, and other interested parties. Recommendations from the study will assist MDT in identifying potential projects based on needs, objectives, and funding availability.

**View the Draft Existing and Projected Conditions Report  
on the study website at**

**<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor>**

# Study Schedule



## How can I stay involved in this study?

Community participation is an important part of this study. Your input regarding corridor issues, concerns, opportunities, and constraints will be considered during the study. To review additional information about the study and to submit comments electronically, visit the study website at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor>

### Contact Us

#### Gary Neville

MDT Billings District Engineer  
406.657.0232  
gneville@mt.gov

#### Sarah Nicolai

DOWL HKM Project Manager  
406.442.0370  
snicolai@dowlhkm.com

#### Tom Kahle

MDT Project Manager  
406.444.9211  
tkahle@mt.gov

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any department service, program or activity. For the hearing impaired, the TTY number is (406) 444-7696 or (800) 335-7592, or Montana Relay at 711. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request.





# **Informational Meeting**

**Tuesday, September 13, 2011**

## **AGENDA**

- 1) Welcome and Introductions**
- 2) Overview of Corridor Planning Process**
- 3) Study Area and Analysis Locations**
- 4) Key Findings from Existing and Projected Conditions Report**
  - a) Transportation System
  - b) Land Use
  - c) Environmental Resources
- 5) Next Steps**

**Visit the website at:**

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor/>



# Informational Meeting

Tuesday,  
September 13, 2011

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Meeting Room  
Parmly Billings Library  
510 N. Broadway

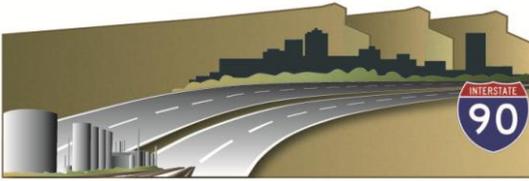


# Welcome & Introductions



# Purpose of Meeting

- Provide Overview of Corridor Planning Study Process
- Present Key Findings from Existing and Projected Conditions Report
  - Transportation System
  - Land Use
  - Environmental Resources
- Solicit Community Input



### **A Corridor Planning Study Is:**

- A **planning-level assessment** of a study area that occurs before any project is forwarded for design or environmental review.

### **A Corridor Planning Study Is Not:**

- A design, right-of-way acquisition, or construction project
- Environmental compliance document

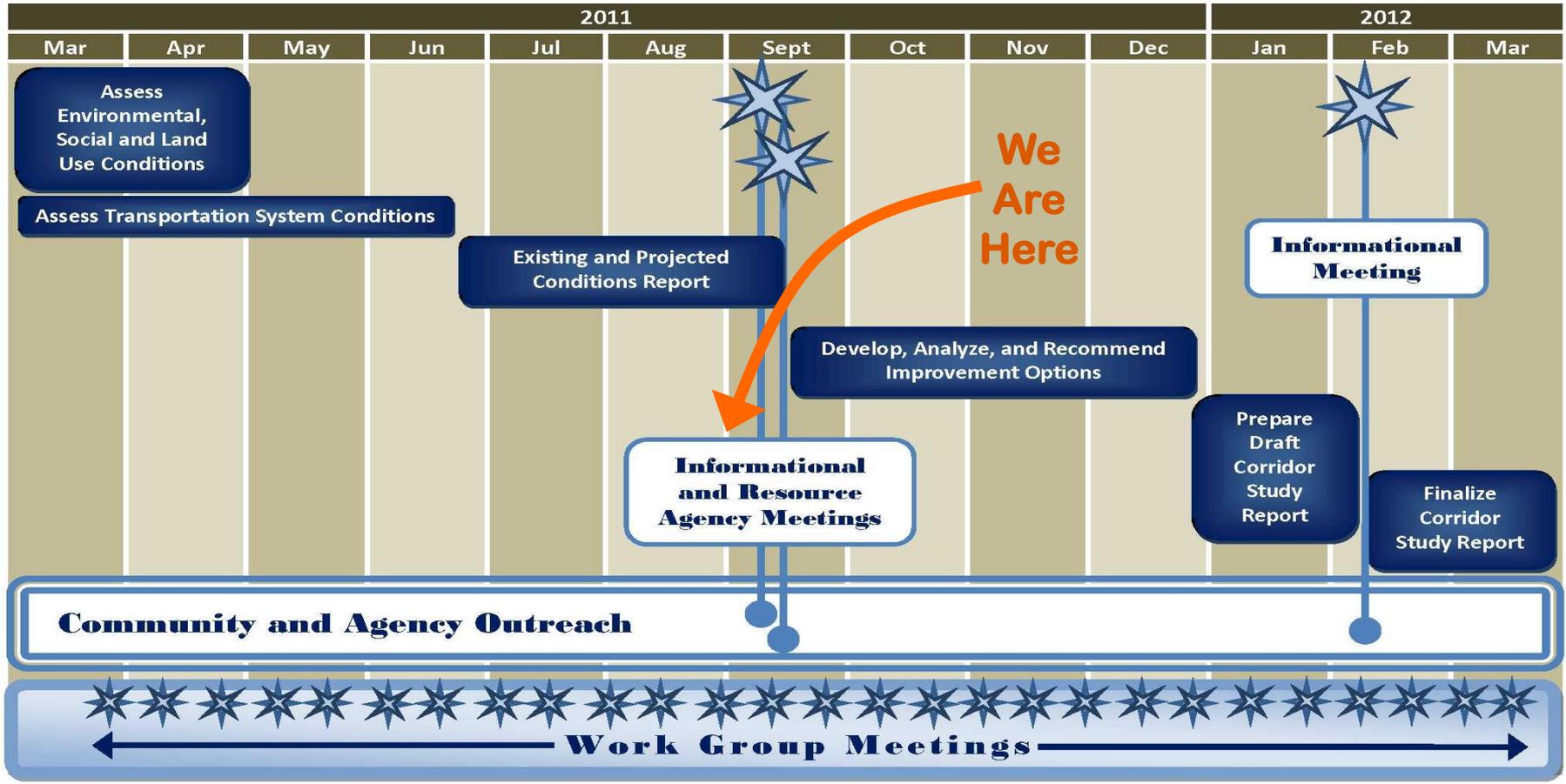


# Montana's Corridor Planning Process

- Involves conducting an **overview of safety, operational, and geometric conditions and environmental resources** within a corridor in order to identify needs and constraints.
- This process allows MDT to **save time and money** in subsequent projects phases by:
  - Helping identify realistic strategies given funding or other constraints
  - Identifying fatal flaws before initiation of formal environmental process
  - Eliminating alternatives from further evaluation
- Provides a **link between early transportation planning and environmental compliance** efforts for project development.



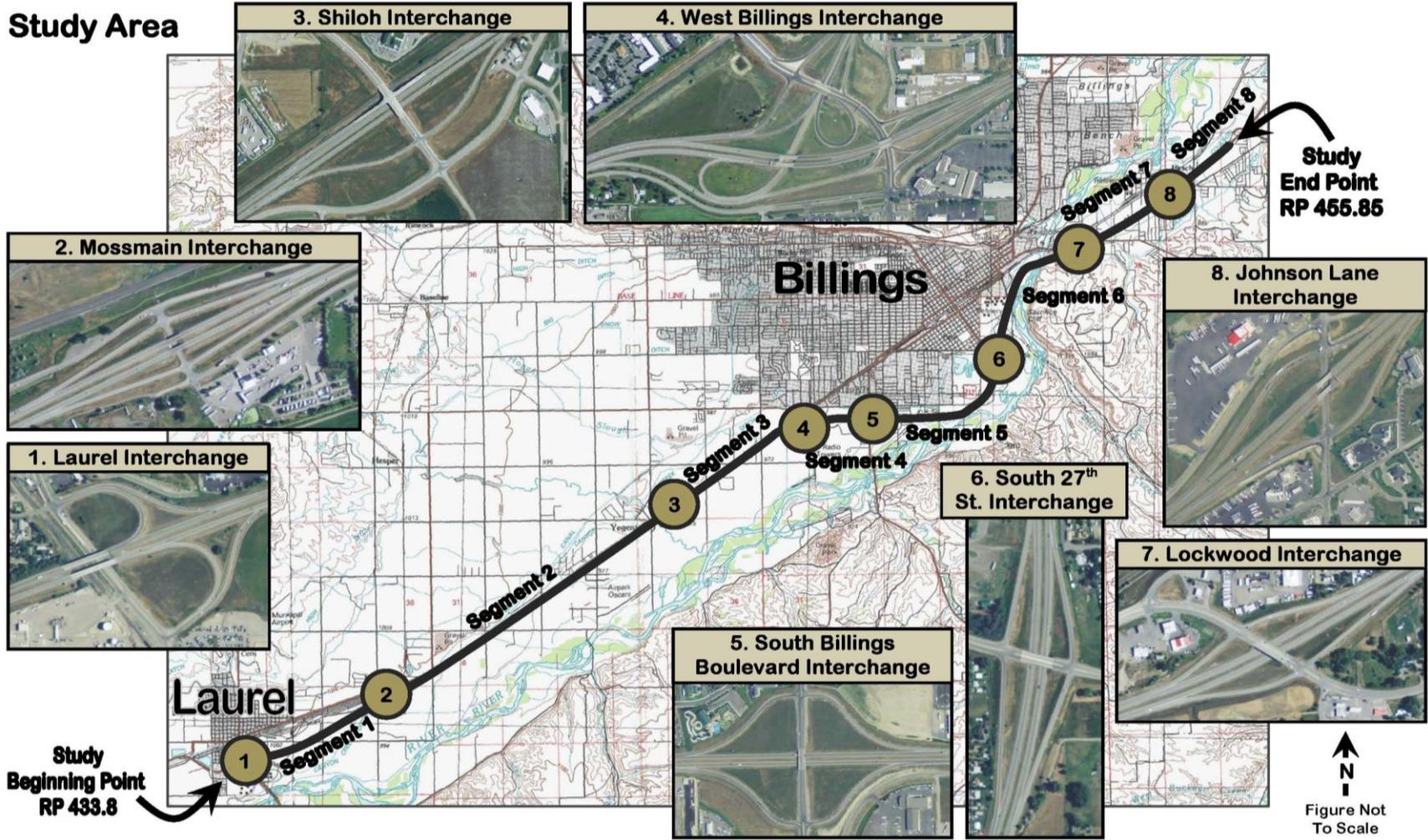
## What are the Steps?





# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Study Area





# Function

- Interstate system is characterized by **controlled access, high traffic volumes and speeds, and long-distance trips.**
- I-90 serves as the **principal east-west route** in the Billings urban area and the surrounding area in Yellowstone County.



# Traffic Volumes

- **Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)** ranges from **9,037 vehicles** at the Laurel Interchange to **27,453 vehicles** between the West Billings and South Billings Boulevard Interchanges (2010 volumes).
- **Primary users** of I-90 include local residents, commuters, commercial truck drivers, recreational users accessing the Yellowstone River, and tourists traveling to Yellowstone National Park and other regional attractions.
- **Vehicle mix** includes all types.



# Physical Characteristics

## ● Roadway Width

- Four-lane divided highway generally consisting of two separate two-lane roadbeds
- Area between the West Billings Interchange and the South Billings Boulevard Interchange (RP 446.3 to RP 446.8) includes a third auxiliary lane in each direction.

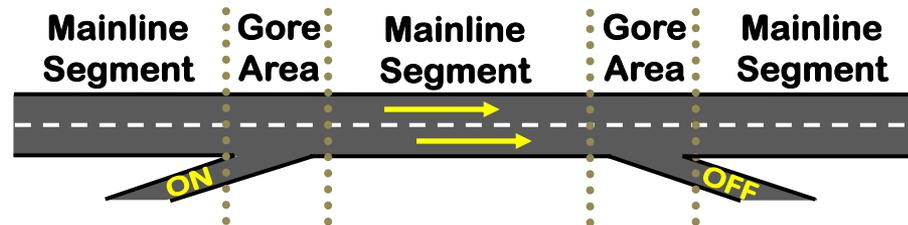
## ● Bridges

- 36 bridges within the study area
- 15 are functionally obsolete (6 of these eligible for rehabilitation)
- I-90 structures over the Yellowstone River are classified by MDT as “fracture critical.”



# Analysis Locations

- **Mainline Interstate Segments** between interchanges and between merge/diverge (on-ramp and off-ramp) locations
- **Merge/Diverge Gore Areas** for on-ramps and off-ramps



- **Laurel and Mossmain Interchange Intersections**

(Note: All other interchange intersections except for the recently constructed West Billings Interchange were evaluated in the 2006 *Billings I-90 Interchanges Project* report)



# Geometric Analysis Methodology

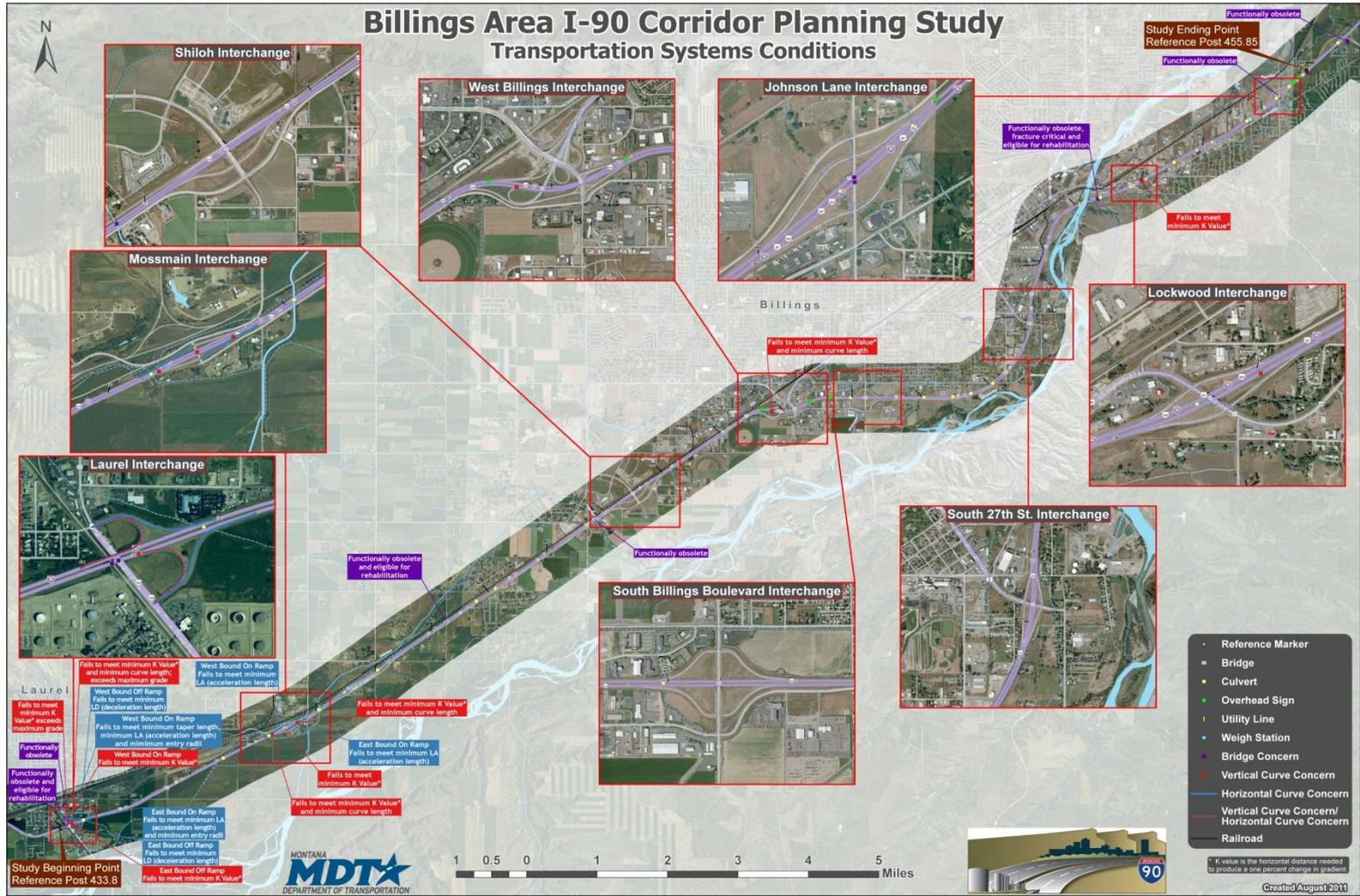
- Mainline Interstate
  - Ramp Gore Areas
  - Ramp Intersections for Laurel and Mossmain Interchanges
- **Horizontal Alignment Analysis**
    - Turns or bends in the road
  - **Vertical Alignment Analysis**
    - Grade or elevation changes and vertical curves (hills and valleys)



Analysis conducted according to MDT's Geometric Design Criteria for Freeways and Signalized/Non-signalized Intersections



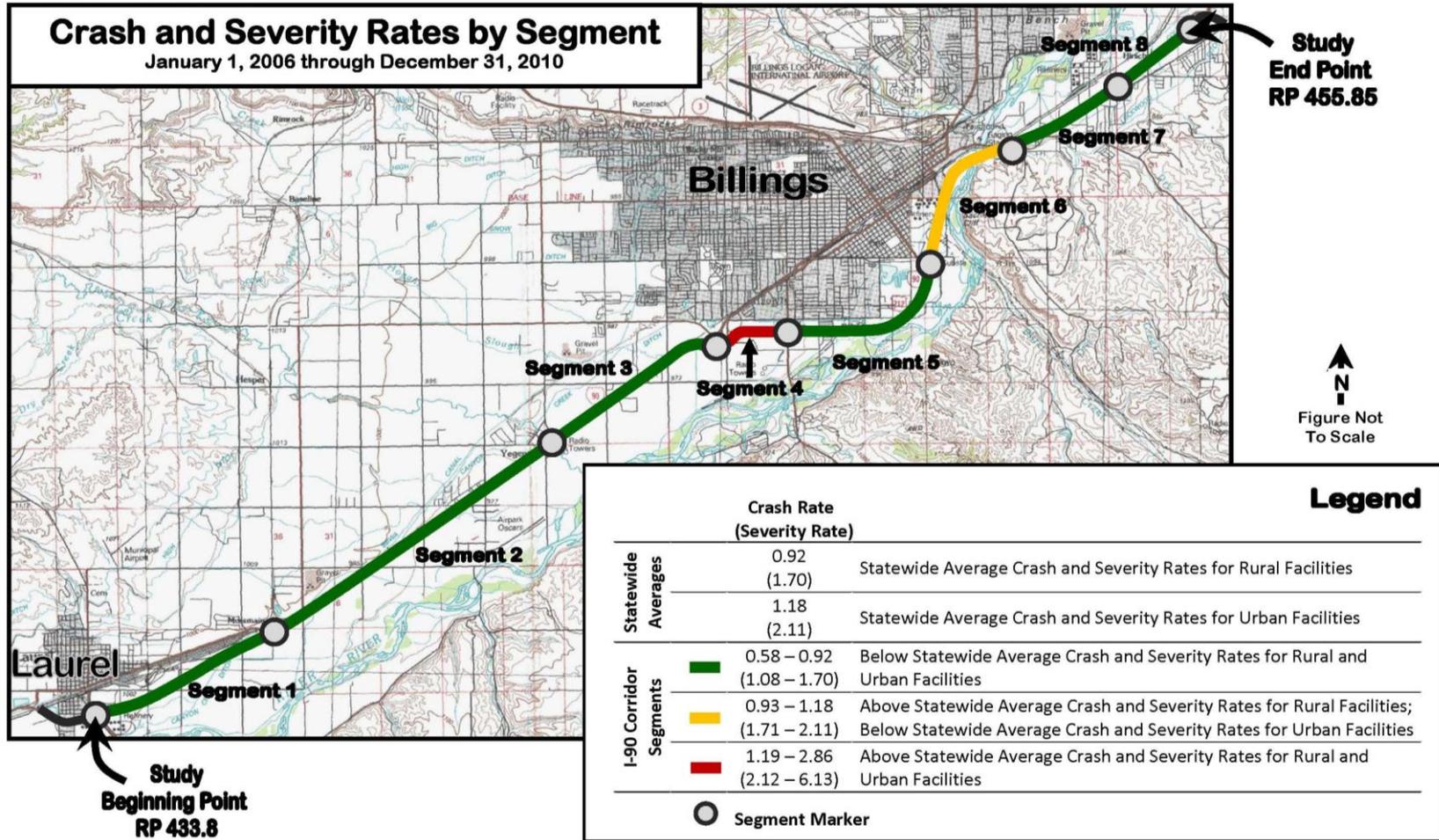
# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study





# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

# Safety Analysis





# Operational Analysis Methodology

- **Level of Service (LOS)**

- Report Card Concept
- A = Best Conditions
- F = Worst Conditions

- Existing Conditions (2010)  
and Projected Conditions (2035)

<u>Level of Service</u>	
A	
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Level of Service 2010

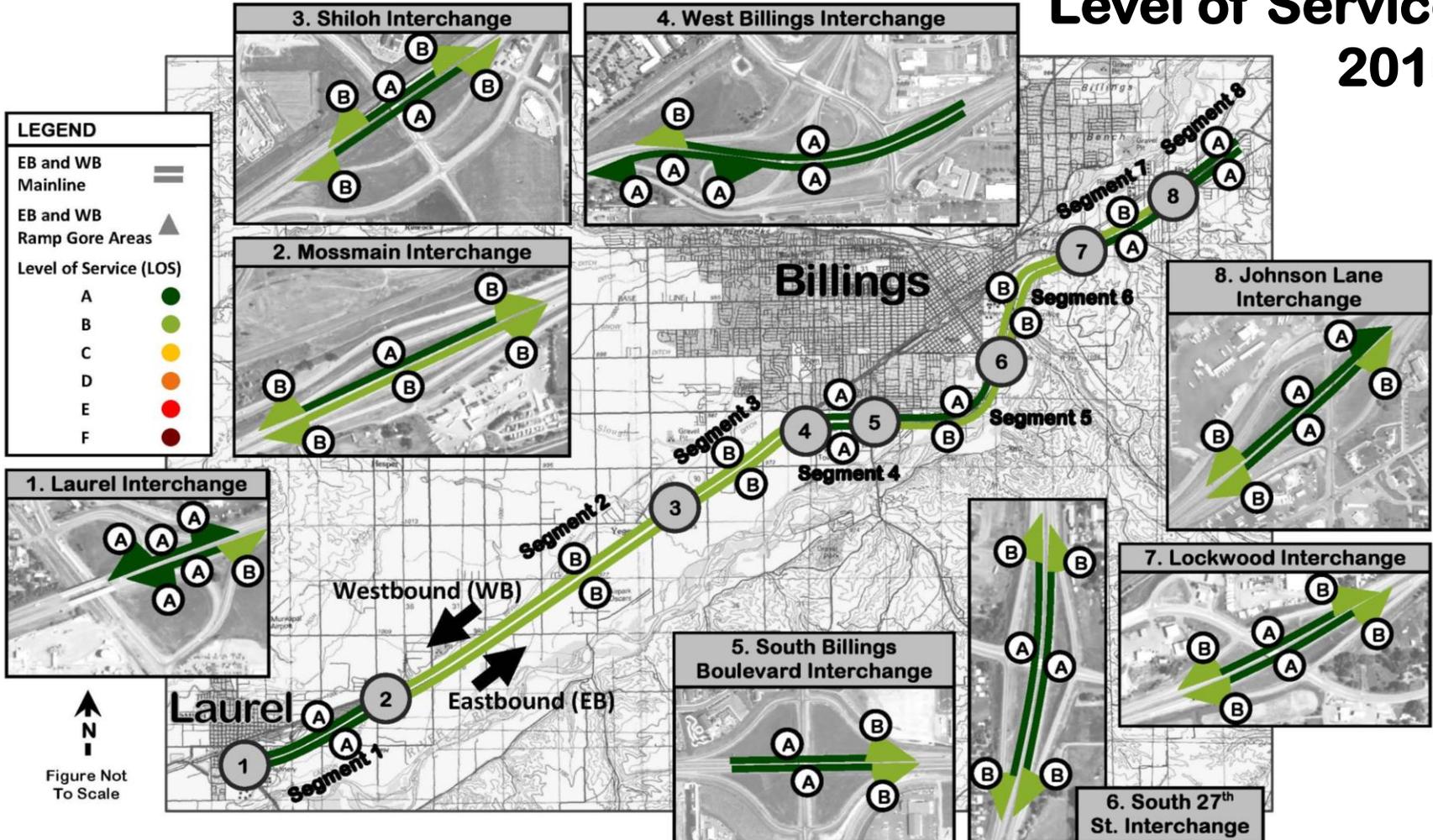
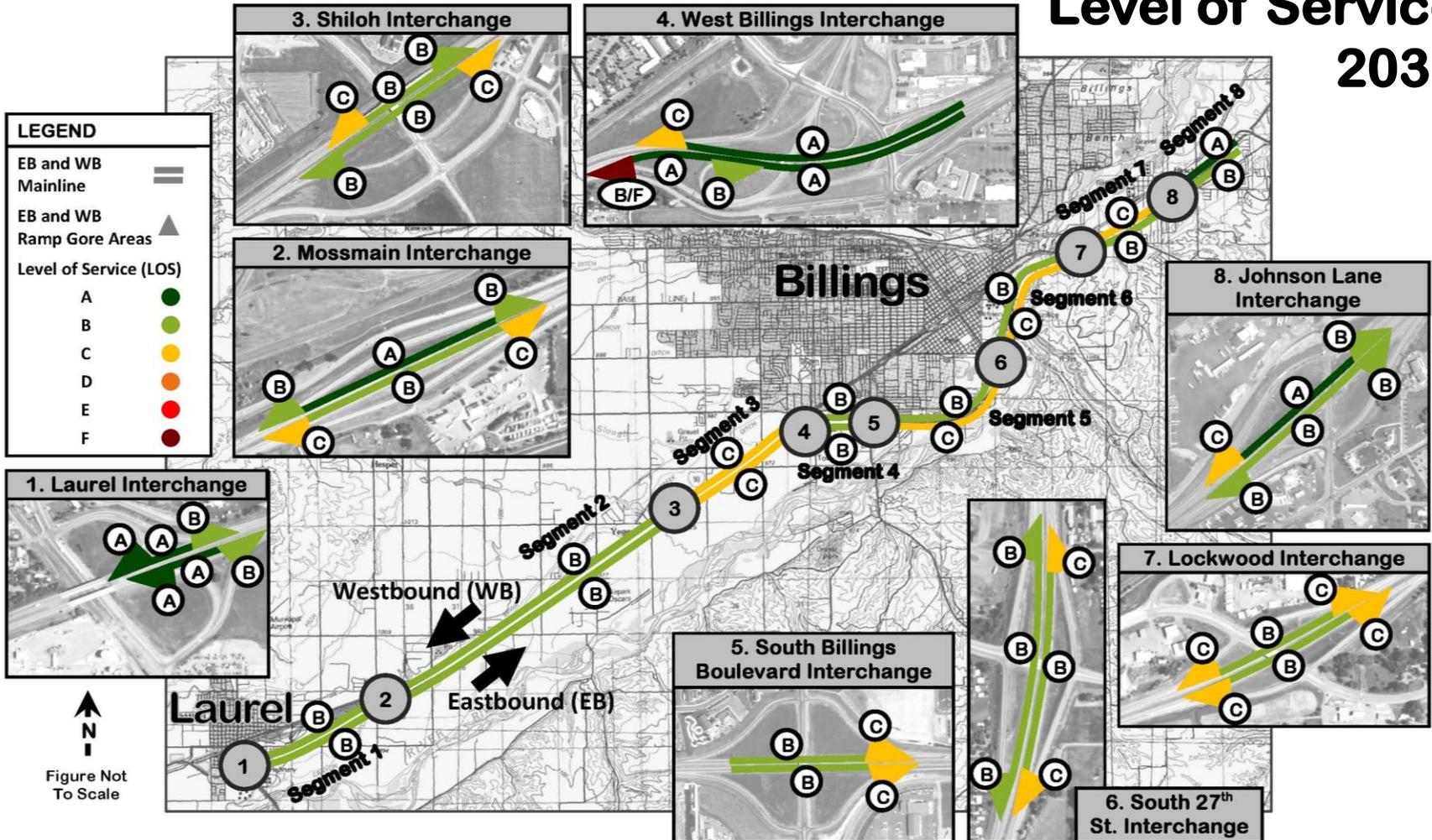


Figure Not To Scale



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

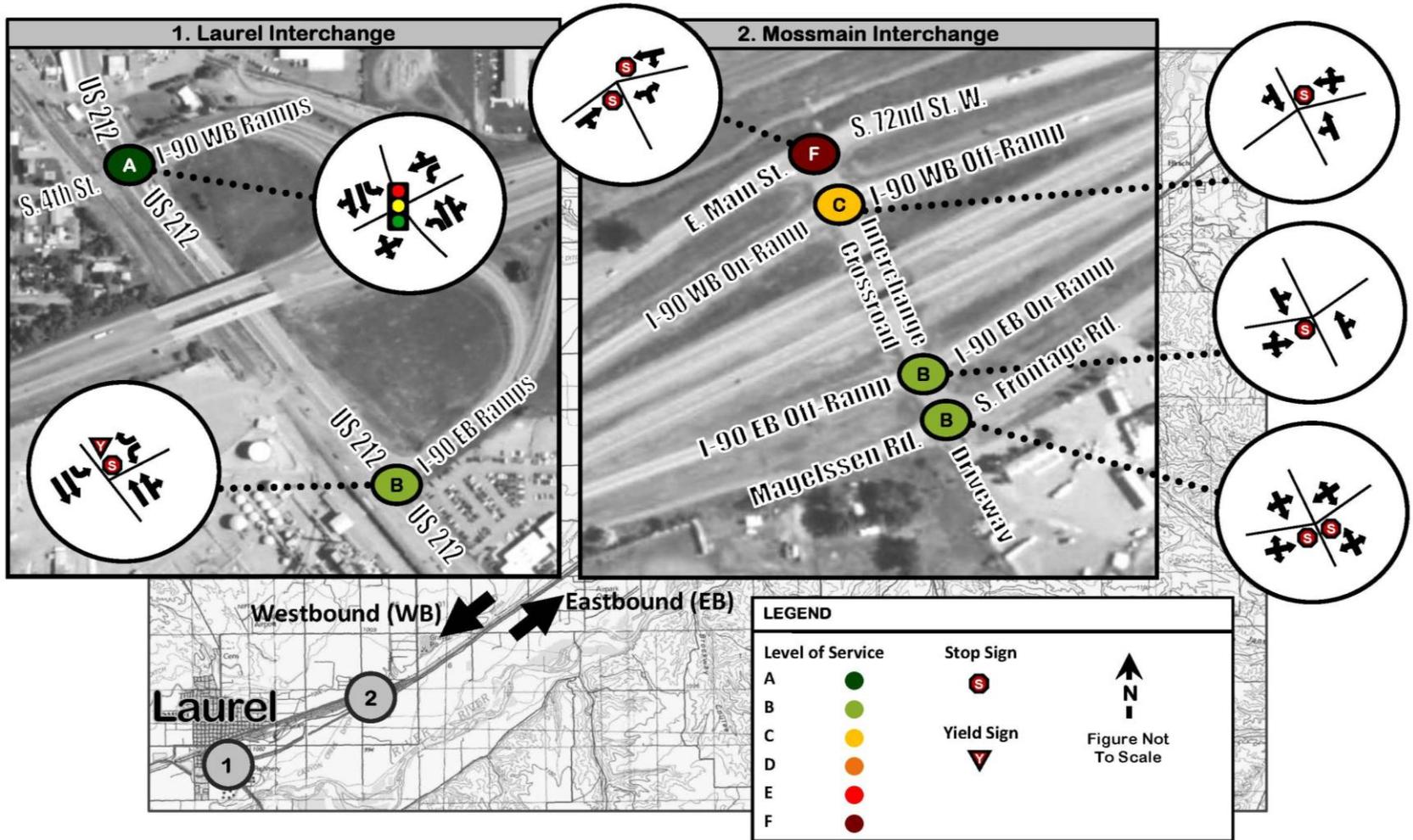
## Level of Service 2035





# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

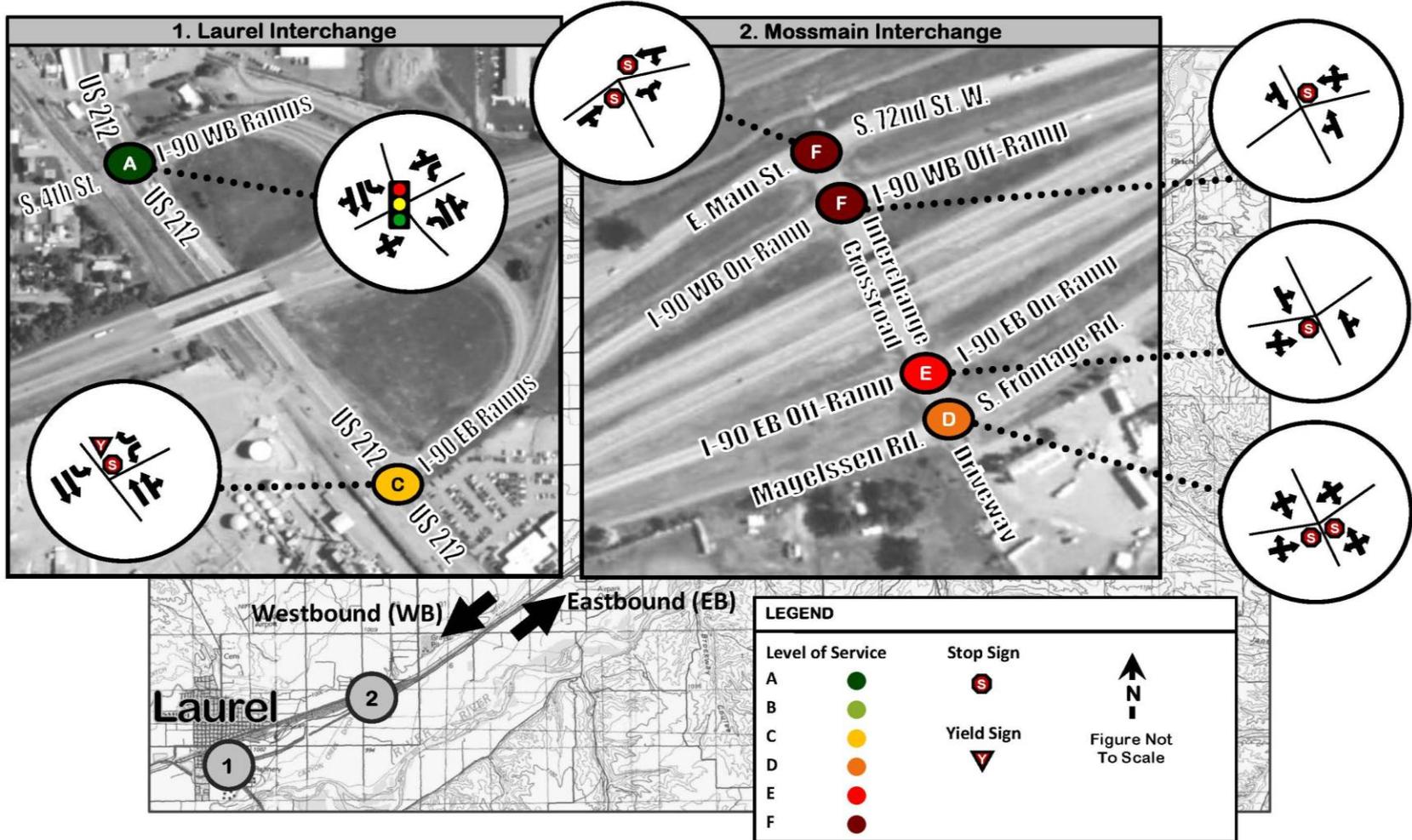
## Laurel & Mossmain 2010





# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Laurel & Mossmain 2035





# Land Use Conditions

## Existing Land Use in Corridor

- Current Zoning: heavy, light, and entryway industrial; highway and community commercial; single family, multi-family, and manufactured home residential; planned unit development; public use; and agricultural
- Main Land Uses in Corridor: industrial, commercial, and agricultural

## Development/Growth Potential in Corridor

- Lockwood Interchange, South Billings Boulevard and Shiloh Interchange are zoned for commercial development and are expected to further develop over the study planning horizon year (2035).
- Future land use projections reported in the Billings Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Yellowstone County and City of Billings Growth Policy were incorporated in the corridor study analysis.



# Environmental Conditions

## Physical Environment

- Soil Resources & Farmland
- Water Resources
- Floodplains
- Hazardous Substances
- Air Quality

## Biological Resources

- Fish and Wildlife
- Vegetation

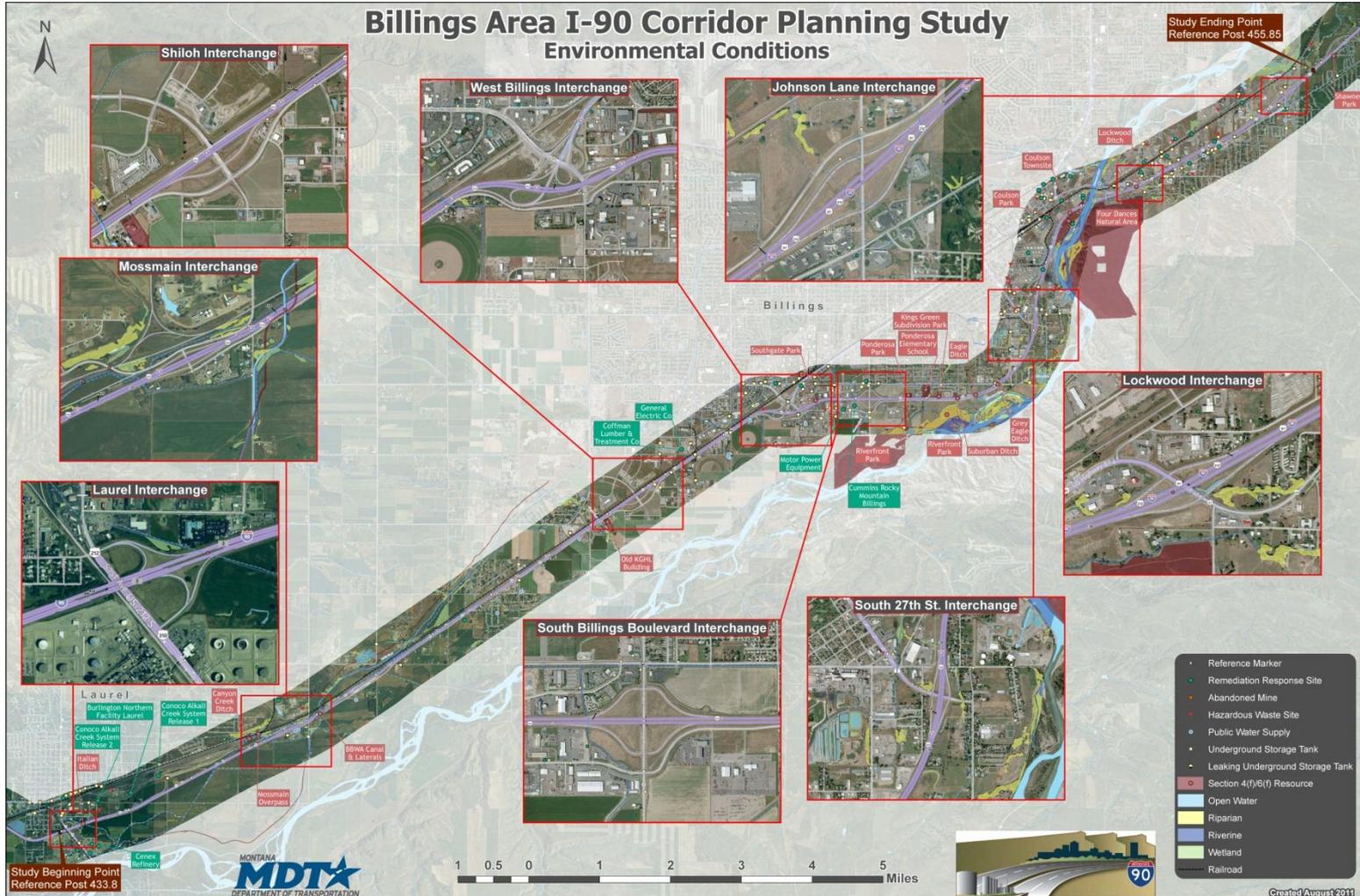


## Social and Cultural Resources

- Demographic Conditions
- Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) Resources
- Cultural and Archaeological Resources
- Noise
- Visual Resources



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study





# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Next Steps





# Please Submit Comments!

- **Submit Comment Sheet Tonight**
- **Submit Comments on Website**  
<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor>
- **Call or email:**  
Gary Neville at 406.657.0232 or [gneville@mt.gov](mailto:gneville@mt.gov)  
Sarah Nicolai at 406.442.0370 or [snicolai@dowlhkm.com](mailto:snicolai@dowlhkm.com)  
Tom Kahle at 406.444.9211 or [tkahle@mt.gov](mailto:tkahle@mt.gov)
- **Mail comments to:**  
Sarah Nicolai  
DOWL HKM  
PO Box 1009  
Helena, MT 59624

**Comments Due October 13, 2011**



# Contacts

**Gary Neville, MDT Billings District Engineer**

406.657.0232

[gneville@mt.gov](mailto:gneville@mt.gov)

**Sarah Nicolai, DOWL HKM Project Manager**

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**Visit the website at:**

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor>



## MEMORANDUM

**Physical Address:**  
104 East Broadway  
Suite G-1  
Helena, Montana 59601

**Mailing Address:**  
P.O. Box 1009  
Helena, Montana 59624

Phone: (406) 442 - 0370 Fax: (406) 442 - 0377

---

**To:** Tom Kahle  
MDT Project Manager

**From:** Sarah Nicolai  
DOWL HKM Project Manager

**Date:** October 19, 2011

**Subject:** **Draft Minutes**  
**Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study**  
**Informational Meeting #1**

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### **Introduction**

The first informational meeting for the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study was held on September 13, 2011 at the Parmly Billings Library in Billings, MT. The following team members were in attendance:

Tom Kahle	MDT – Planning Division
Gary Neville	MDT – Billings District
Todd Cormier	DOWL HKM
David Stoner	DOWL HKM

Nine members of the public attended the informational meeting, including County Commissioner Bill Kennedy.

### **Media Coordination**

The informational meeting was advertised on August 28 and September 11, 2011 in the Billings Gazette and on August 24 and September 7, 2011 in the Laurel Outlook. In addition, a press release was emailed to radio stations, newspapers, and other local media outlets on September 2, 2011. Copies of the display advertisement and press release are provided at the end of this memorandum.

### **Presentation**

A formal presentation was conducted by David Stoner. The presentation began with an introduction of MDT and DOWL HKM representatives. David explained the corridor planning study process and benefits. The presentation continued with an overview of the study area and

analysis locations. Key findings from the Existing and Projected Conditions Report were highlighted, including the Transportation System Conditions map and Environmental Conditions map. The presentation concluded with an overview of subsequent steps in the corridor planning study process. A copy of the presentation, sign-in sheet, and other meeting materials are provided at the end of this memorandum.

### **Discussion Period**

A community member asked about the timeframe for implementation of the corridor study. Todd explained that the study is halfway completed and that by the end of the corridor study MDT will have a plan that identifies the location and approximate year for improvement options through 2035.

An attendee asked which bridges would need to be replaced in the corridor. David directed the gentleman to the Transportation System Conditions Map that identified the location of all the bridges that are functionally obsolete and eligible for rehabilitation, including the two bridges crossing the Yellowstone River.

A gentleman stated that Billings would undergo a growth spurt due to the upcoming expansion of the regional oil business in the area. David acknowledged this comment and explained that the Billings Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Yellowstone County and City of Billings Growth Policy future land use projections were incorporated into the corridor planning study analysis.

An attendee asked for clarification regarding the term “fracture critical” in relation to the Yellowstone River Bridge. Todd and Gary explained that the term does not mean that the bridge is in danger of collapsing, only that its replacement is of high priority. Following up on this discussion, a community member stated that the term “fracture critical” should be explained in the presentation and report. David agreed that this term would be explained in the final version of the report.

A member of the public asked if the presentation could be viewed online. David stated that it would be posted to the study website following the meeting.

### **Written Comments**

No written comments were received at the meeting or during the comment period, which closed on October 13, 2011.



## **Informational Meeting**

**Discuss Billings Area I-90 Corridor  
Planning Study  
Tuesday, September 13, 2011 6:00 P.M.  
Parmly Billings Library  
510 N. Broadway, Billings, MT**

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) will discuss the study area which includes an approximately 22-mile segment of Interstate 90 (I-90) beginning at the Laurel Interchange (Reference Marker 433.8) and ending immediately west of the Pinehills Interchange (Reference Marker 455.8). The purpose of the meeting is to explain the corridor planning study process, present information about existing and projected conditions in the corridor, and request community feedback regarding opportunities and constraints that may influence development of improvement options.

The meeting is open to the public and the public is encouraged to attend. MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any department service, program or activity. For reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please contact Sarah Nicolai at (406) 442-0370 at least two days before the meeting. For the hearing impaired, the TTY number is (406) 444-7696 or (800) 335-7592, or Montana Relay at 711. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request.

Comments may be submitted in writing at the meeting, by mail to Sarah Nicolai, DOWL HKM, P.O. Box 1009, Helena, MT 59624; by email to [snicolai@dowlhkm.com](mailto:snicolai@dowlhkm.com); or online at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor/comments.shtml>

Please indicate comments are for the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study and submit by October 13, 2011.

**From:** [Grant, Paul](#)  
**To:** [BECKY BOHRER; Big Sky Business Journal;](#)  
[Billings - Roadwatch Montana \(jon@roadwatchmt.com\); Billings Business;](#)  
[BILLINGS GAZETTE; BILLINGS OUTPOST;](#)  
[communicationsnewsfeeds@aatso.org; KBBB FM-KBUL-AM-KCTR-FM-KKBR-](#)  
[FM-KMHK-FM; KBLG-AM-KRKX-FM-KRZN-FM-KYYA-FM; KBLW-FM; KEMC-](#)  
[FM; KEMC-FM; KGHL-AM-KGHL-FM-KOBL-FM-KRSQ-FM-KZRV-FM; KNDZ;](#)  
[KBEZ; KHMT-TV; KPBR-FM-KPLN-FM-KWMY-FM; KSVI-TV; KTVQ-TV; KTVQ-](#)  
[TV; KULR-AM-KMZK-AM; KULR-TV; KULR-TV; KULR-TV; KBSR;](#)  
[Laurel Outlook;](#)  
**cc:** [Kahle, Tom; Zanto, Lynn \(MDT\); Nicolai, Sarah; Streeter, Stefan;](#)  
[Neville, Gary; Erb, Michelle; Collins, Corrina; Ryan, Lori; Grant, Paul;](#)  
[Road Supervisor; Tim Miller; Yellowstone County Commissioners;](#)  
**Subject:** MDT schedules informational meeting to discuss Billings Area I-  
90 Corridor Planning Study – Yellowstone County  
**Date:** Friday, September 02, 2011 7:32:29 AM

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September 2, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information:

Lori Ryan, Public Information, MDT, (406) 444-6821

MDT schedules informational meeting to discuss Billings Area I-90 Corridor  
Planning Study – Yellowstone County

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is conducting an informational meeting to discuss the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study. The study area includes an approximately 22-mile segment of Interstate 90 (I-90) beginning at the Laurel Interchange (Reference Marker 433.8) and ending immediately west of the Pinehills Interchange (Reference Marker 455.8). The meeting will start at 6 pm on Tuesday, September 13, 2011 in the 3rd floor meeting room at the Parnly Billings Library, 510 N. Broadway in Billings.

The purpose of the meeting is to explain the corridor planning study process, present information about existing and projected conditions in the corridor, and request community feedback regarding opportunities and constraints that may influence development of improvement options. Information presented will include key findings from the planning-level environmental review, crash analysis, geometric analysis, and operational analysis of the corridor.

Community participation is a very important part of the process, and the public is encouraged to attend. Opinion, comments and concerns may also be submitted in writing at the meeting; by mail to Sarah Nicolai, DOWL HKM, P.O. Box 1009,

Helena, MT 59624; by email to [snicolai@dowlhkm.com](mailto:snicolai@dowlhkm.com); or online at

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor/comments.shtml>

Please indicate comments are for the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study and submit by October 13, 2011.

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any service, program or activity of our department. If you require reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please call Sarah Nicolai at (406) 442-0370 at least two days before the meeting. For the hearing impaired, the TTY number is (406) 444-7696 or 1-800-335-7592, or call Montana Relay at 711. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request.

-----END-----

Project name: Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study  
Yellowstone County



# Informational Meeting

Tuesday, September 13, 2011

Name:	Address:	City, State, ZIP Code	E-mail:
Stan Kinney + Patty Ennis	2148 Old Hwy 10 W	LAUREL MT 59044	Stanpatty@imt.net
Nancy Belk	1744 Robin	Lockwood MT 59101	lockvet@gmail.com
ROBERT MURRY	512 1/2 16TH ST W	BILLINGS 59102	
WOODY WOODS	1644 OLD HAPPIN R.	LOCKWOOD, MT 59101	WOODYW@LOCKWOODWATER.COM
Bob Riehl	126 Rolling Meadow Dr	Lockwood, MT 59101	briehl@usadiq.com
Jill Cook	1036 Spotted Jack Ln E	Lockwood, MT 59101	jcook@m-m.net
Evelyn Pyburn	P.O. Box 3262	Billings, MT 59103	evelyn@bigskybusiness.com
Bill Kennedy	P.O. Box 35000	Billings MT.	



# Informational Meeting

Tuesday, September 13, 2011

**MDT Invites Your Comments:**

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To receive further study information, please provide your name and address:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please leave your comments with staff at the meeting, or mail to:

Sarah Nicolai  
DOWL HKM  
PO Box 1009  
Helena, MT 59624

Please indicate comments are for the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study submit comments by **October 13, 2011.**



August 31, 2011

To: Resource Agency Distribution

Subject: Resource Agency Meeting Invitation  
Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), in cooperation with the City of Billings, Yellowstone County, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), has initiated a Corridor Planning Study to explore the potential need for improvements along Interstate 90 (I-90) through the Billings area. The study area includes approximately 22-miles of I-90 beginning at the Laurel Interchange (RP 433.8) and ending immediately west of the Pinehills Interchange (RP 455.85).

With this letter, MDT invites you to attend a Resource Agency Meeting.

When: Thursday, September 22, 2011 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Where: MDT Headquarters Office		MDT Billings District Office
West Auditorium (basement)	or	Main Conference Room
2701 Prospect Avenue		424 Morey Street
Helena, MT 59601		Billings, MT 59104

Resource agencies are asked to review and offer their comments on the Draft Environmental Scan document and the Draft Existing and Projected Conditions Report. Electronic versions of these documents are provided on the enclosed CD, along with print copies of the meeting agenda and Newsletter #1 for the study. If you are unable to attend the Resource Agency Meeting, please forward these documents to an appropriate agency designee. We would also appreciate your agency's comments regarding initial avoidance areas, mitigation needs, and opportunities in the corridor. Formal written comments are due on October 13, 2011. Additional information about the study is available at the study website (<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor/>).

Thank you in advance for your agency's participation.

Sincerely,

Tom S. Martin, P.E., Chief  
Environmental Services Bureau

Enclosures: CD containing electronic versions of draft reports  
Resource Agency Meeting Agenda  
Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study Newsletter #1

**Resource Agency Distribution:**

MT Department of Environmental Quality  
Mr. Richard Opper, Director  
Lee Metcalf Building  
1520 East Sixth Avenue  
PO Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620

MT Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Mr. Gary Hammond, Regional Supervisor  
1420 East Sixth Avenue  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620

MT Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Mr. Jim Darling, Habitat Section Supervisor  
1420 East Sixth Avenue  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620

MT Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Mr. Walt Timmerman, Recreation Section  
1420 East Sixth Avenue  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620

MT Department of Natural Resources and  
Conservation  
Mary Sexton, Director  
1625 Eleventh Avenue  
PO Box 201601  
Helena, MT 59620

MT Natural Heritage Program  
Mr. Bryce Maxell, Interim Director  
Montana State Library  
1515 East Sixth Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620

MT State Historic Preservation Office  
Dr. Mark Baumler, Director  
225 North Roberts  
PO Box 201201  
Helena, MT 59620

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Mr. Todd Tillinger, Montana Program  
Manager  
Helena Regulatory Office  
10 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 2200  
Helena, MT 59626

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Ms. Joyce Swartzendruber, State  
Conservationist  
Federal Building, Room 443  
10 East Babcock Street  
Bozeman, MT 59715

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Mr. Mike Nedd, Acting State Director  
5001 Southgate Drive  
Billings, MT 59101

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Ms. Julie Dalsoglio, Director  
Region VIII, Montana Operations Office  
10 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 3200  
Helena, MT 59626

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mr. R. Mark Wilson, Field Supervisor  
Montana Field Office  
585 Shepard Way  
Helena, MT 59601

Copies (without CD): Bob Burkhardt, FHWA  
Stefan Streeter, MDT  
Gary Neville, MDT  
Jim Skinner, MDT  
Zia Kazimi, MDT  
Tom Kahle, MDT  
Jean Riley, MDT  
Thomas Gocksch, MDT  
Jeff Olsen, MDT  
LeRoy Wosoba, MDT  
Brian Andersen, MDT  
Debi Meling, City of Billings  
Scott Walker, City of Billings  
Tim Miller, Yellowstone County  
Mike Black, Yellowstone County  
File



# **Resource Agency Meeting**

**Thursday, September 22, 2011**

## **AGENDA**

- 1) Welcome and Introductions**
- 2) Overview of Corridor Planning Process**
- 3) Study Area and Analysis Locations**
- 4) Key Findings from Existing and Projected Conditions Report**
  - a) Transportation System**
  - b) Land Use**
  - c) Environmental Resources**
- 5) Next Steps**

**Visit the website at:**

**<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor/>**



# Resource Agency Meeting

Thursday,  
September 22, 2011

Montana Department of Transportation  
West Auditorium  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
Helena, MT

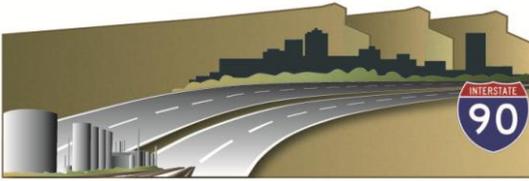


# Welcome & Introductions



# Purpose of Meeting

- Provide Overview of Corridor Planning Study Process
- Present Key Findings from Existing and Projected Conditions Report
  - Transportation System
  - Land Use
  - Environmental Resources
- Solicit Resource Agency Input
  - Existing and Projected Conditions Report
  - Environmental Scan



### **A Corridor Planning Study Is:**

- A **planning-level assessment** of a study area that occurs before any project is forwarded for design or environmental review.

### **A Corridor Planning Study Is Not:**

- A design, right-of-way acquisition, or construction project
- Environmental compliance document



# Montana's Corridor Planning Process

- Involves conducting an **overview of safety, operational, and geometric conditions and environmental resources** within a corridor in order to identify needs and constraints.
- This process allows MDT to save time and money in subsequent projects phases by:
  - Helping identify realistic strategies given funding or other constraints
  - Identifying fatal flaws before initiation of formal environmental process
  - Eliminating alternatives from further evaluation
- Provides a **link between early transportation planning and environmental compliance** efforts.



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Corridor Planning





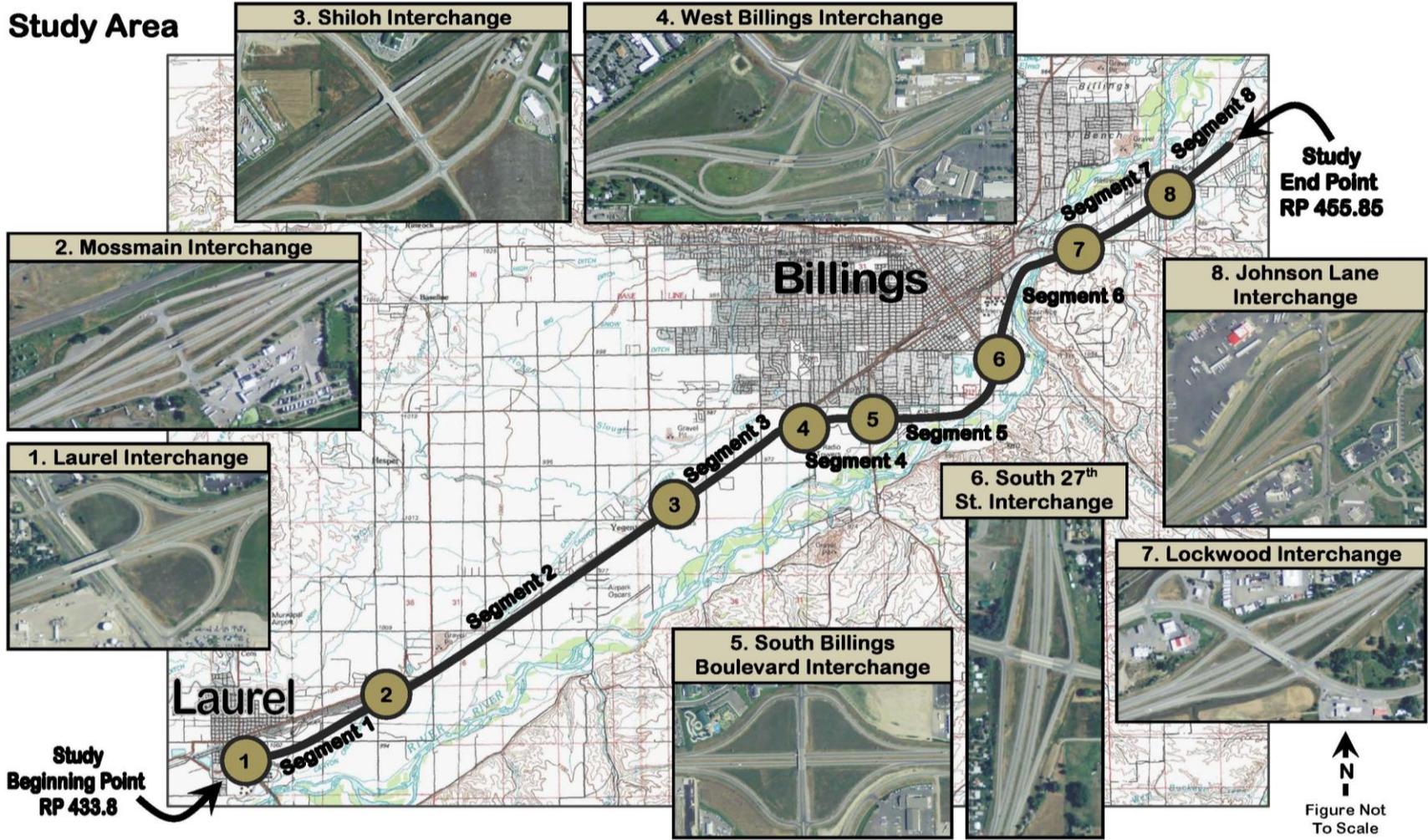
# What are the Steps?





# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Study Area





# Transportation System



# Function

- Interstate system is characterized by **controlled access, high traffic volumes and speeds, and long-distance trips.**
- I-90 serves as the **principal east-west route** in the Billings urban area and the surrounding area in Yellowstone County.



# Traffic Volumes

- **Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)** ranges from **9,037 vehicles** at the Laurel Interchange to **27,453 vehicles** between the West Billings and South Billings Boulevard Interchanges (2010 volumes).
- **Primary users** of I-90 include local residents, commuters, commercial truck drivers, recreational users accessing the Yellowstone River, and tourists traveling to Yellowstone National Park and other regional attractions.
- **Vehicle mix** includes all types.



# Physical Characteristics

## ● Roadway Width

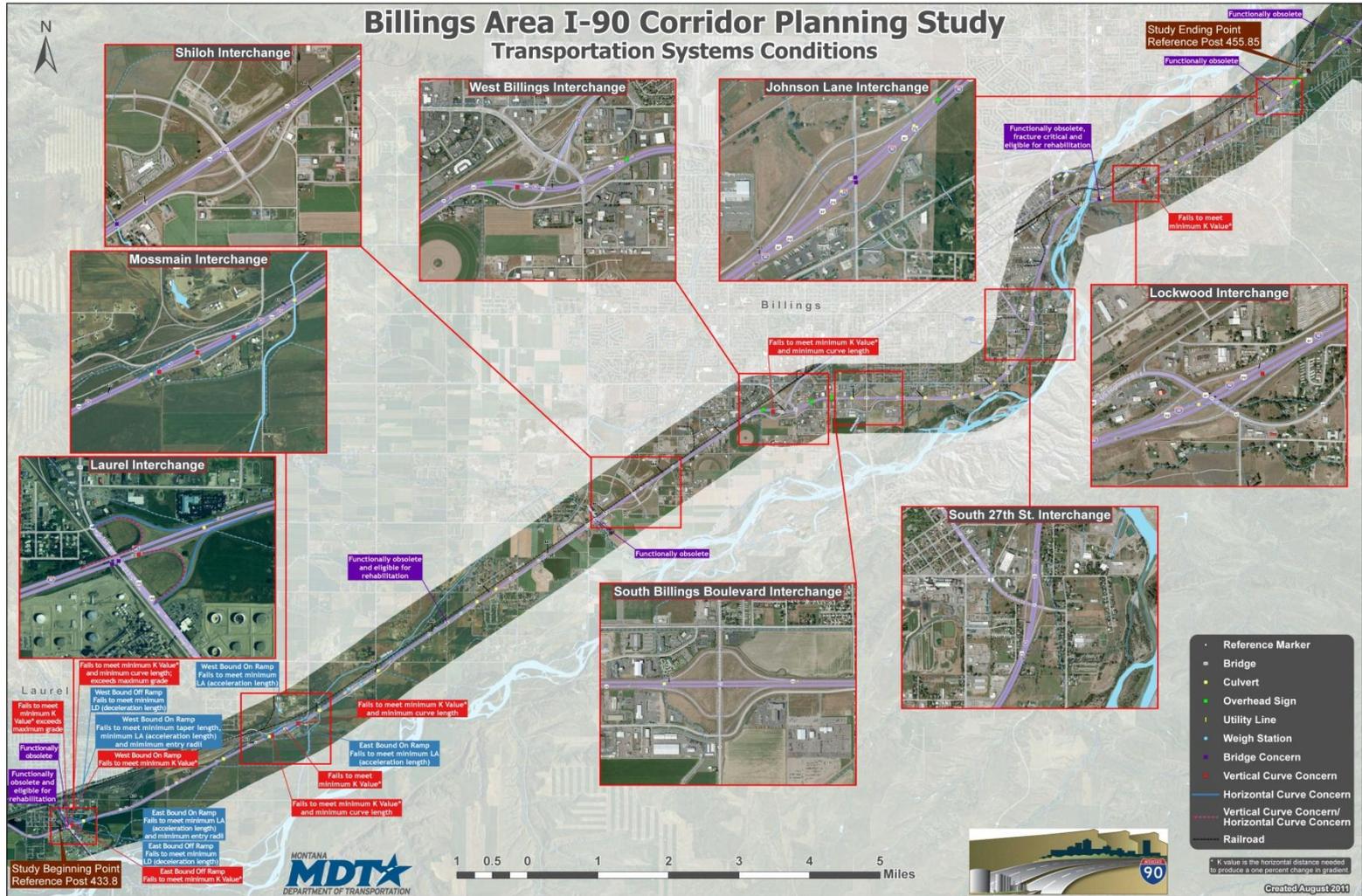
- Four-lane divided highway generally consisting of two separate two-lane roadbeds
- Area between the West Billings Interchange and the South Billings Boulevard Interchange (RP 446.3 to RP 446.8) includes a third auxiliary lane in each direction.

## ● Bridges

- 36 bridges within the study area
- 15 are functionally obsolete (6 of these eligible for rehabilitation)
- I-90 structures over the Yellowstone River are classified by MDT as “fracture critical.”



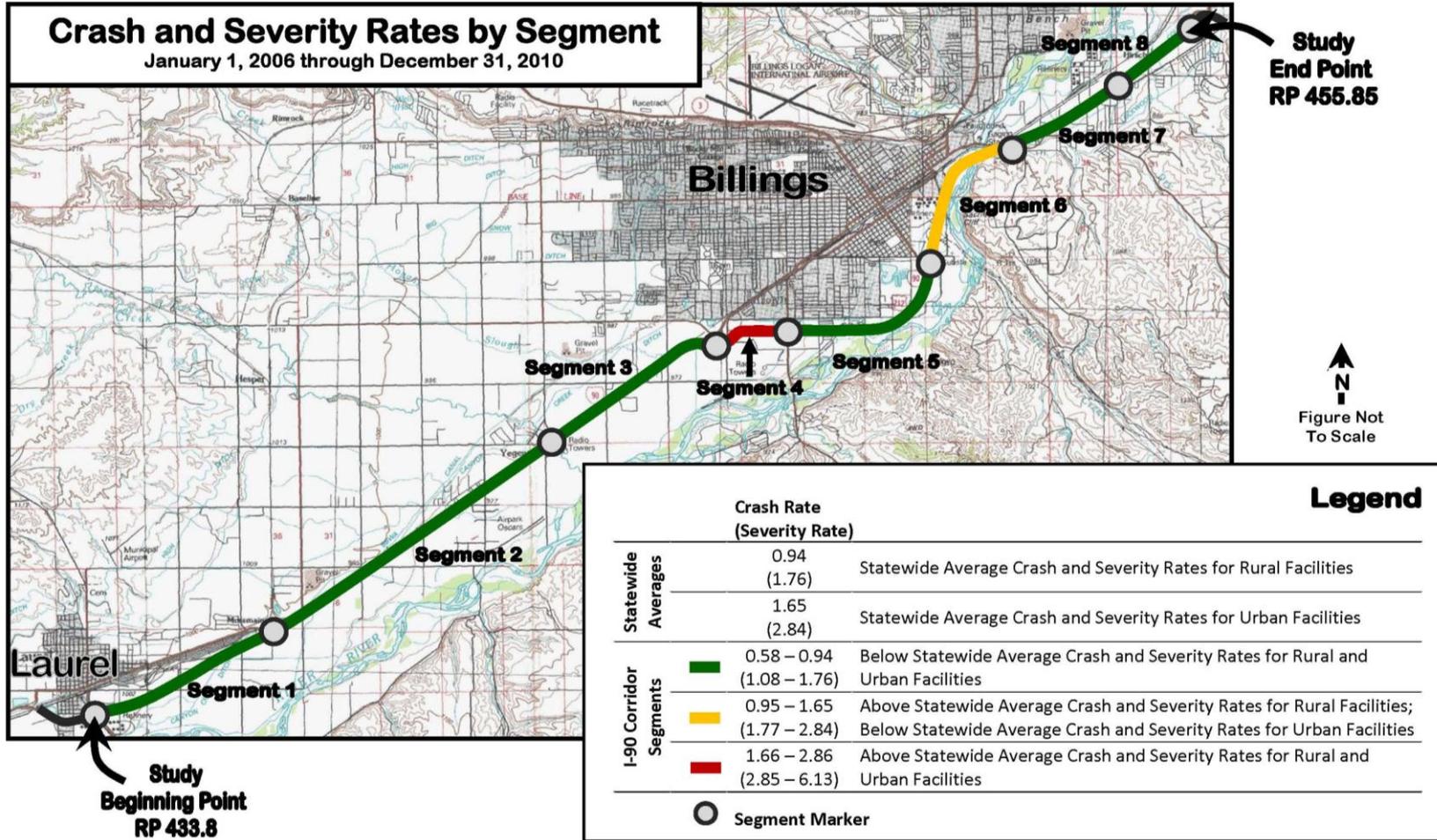
# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study





# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

# Safety Analysis





# Operational Analysis Methodology

- **Level of Service (LOS)**

- Report Card Concept
- A = Best Conditions
- F = Worst Conditions

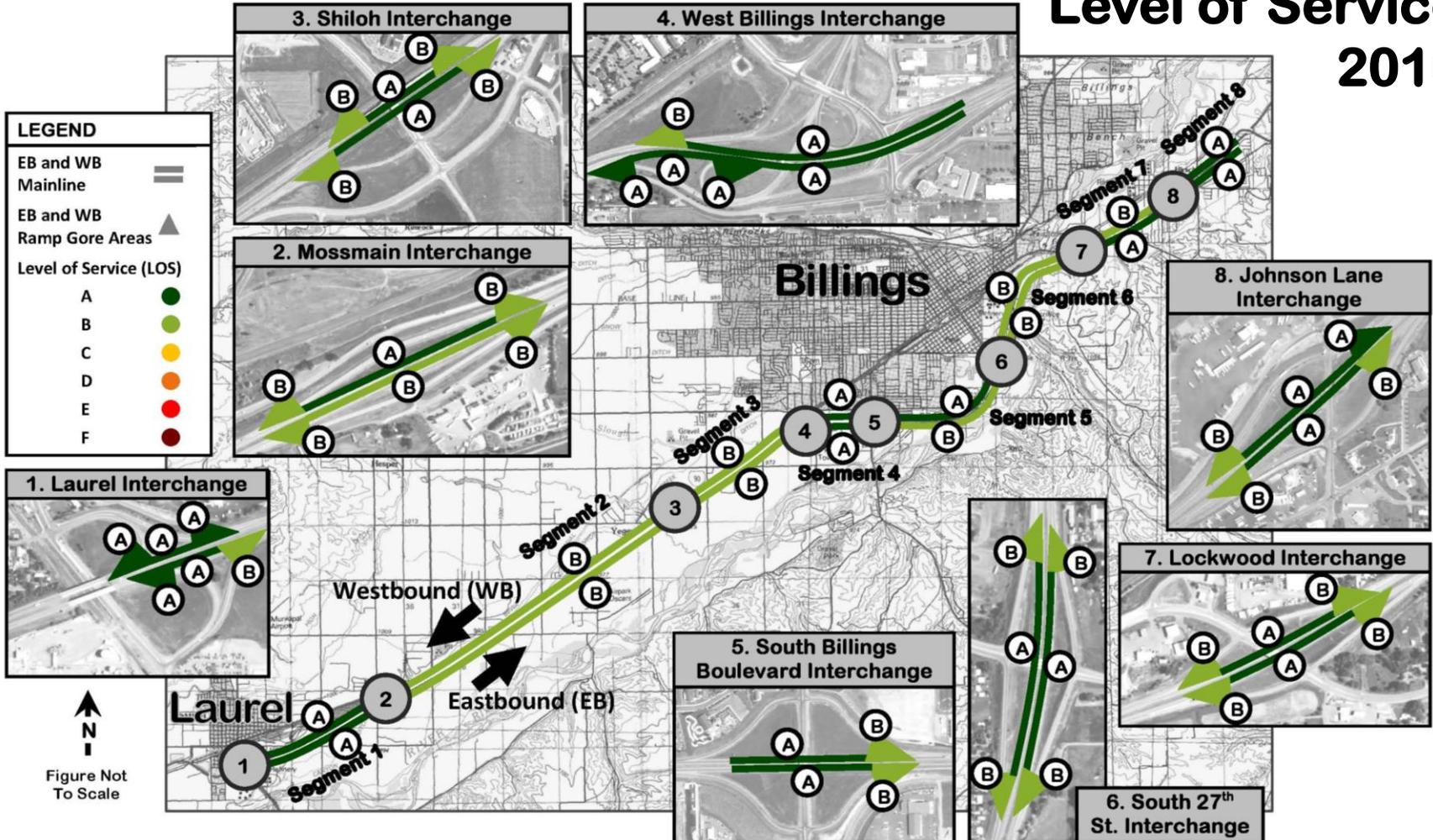
- Existing Conditions (2010)  
and Projected Conditions (2035)

<u>Level of Service</u>	
A	
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

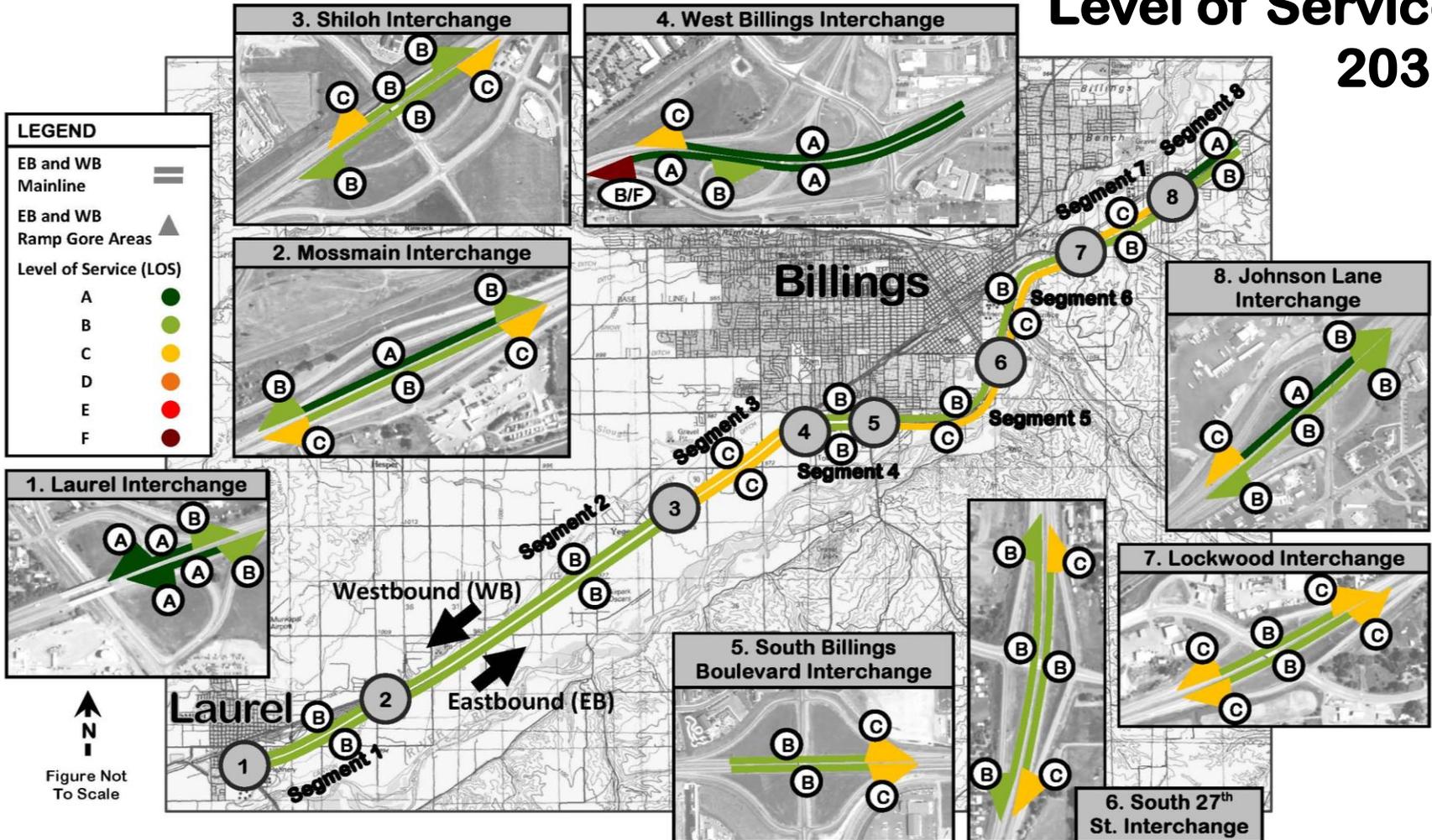
## Level of Service 2010





# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

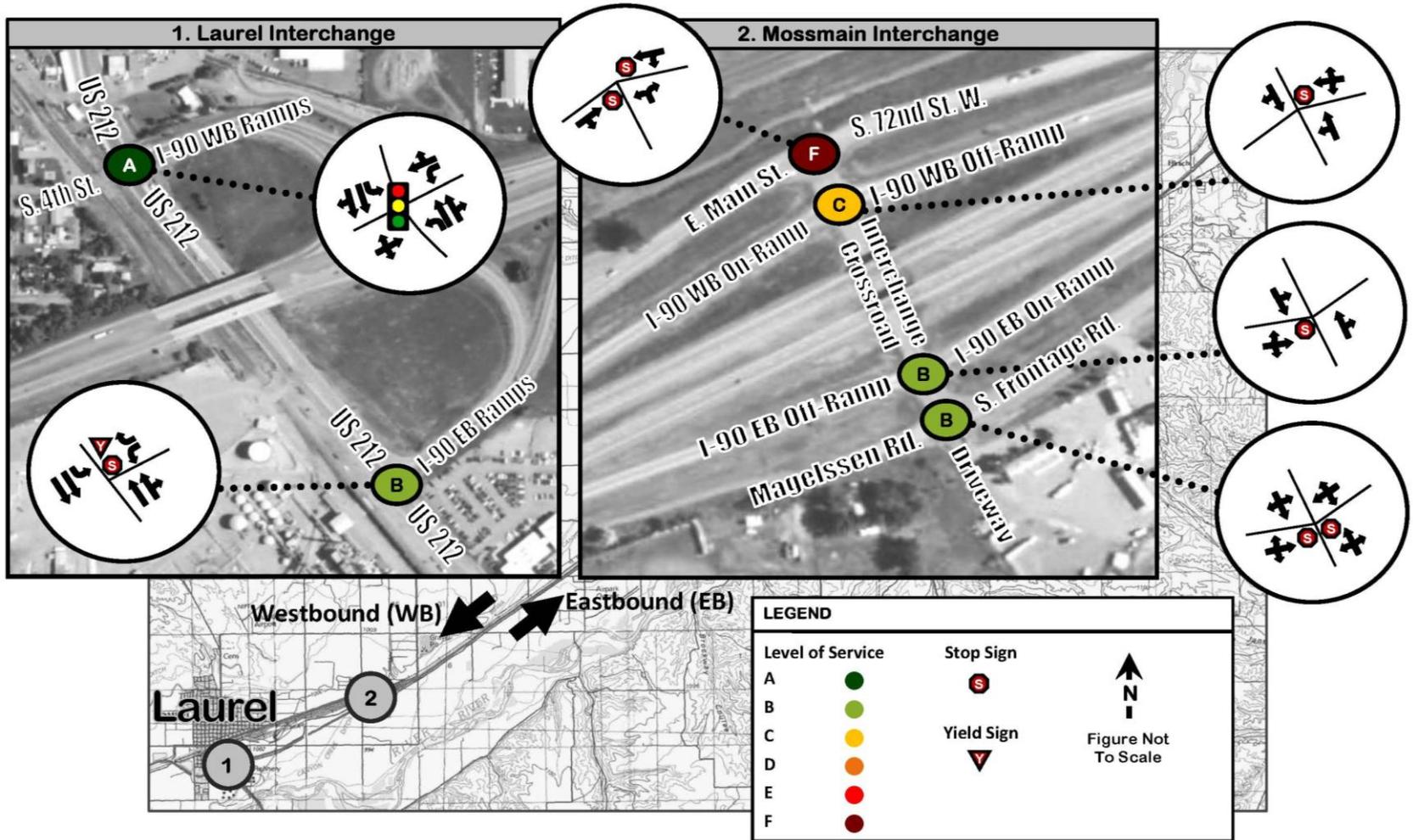
## Level of Service 2035





# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

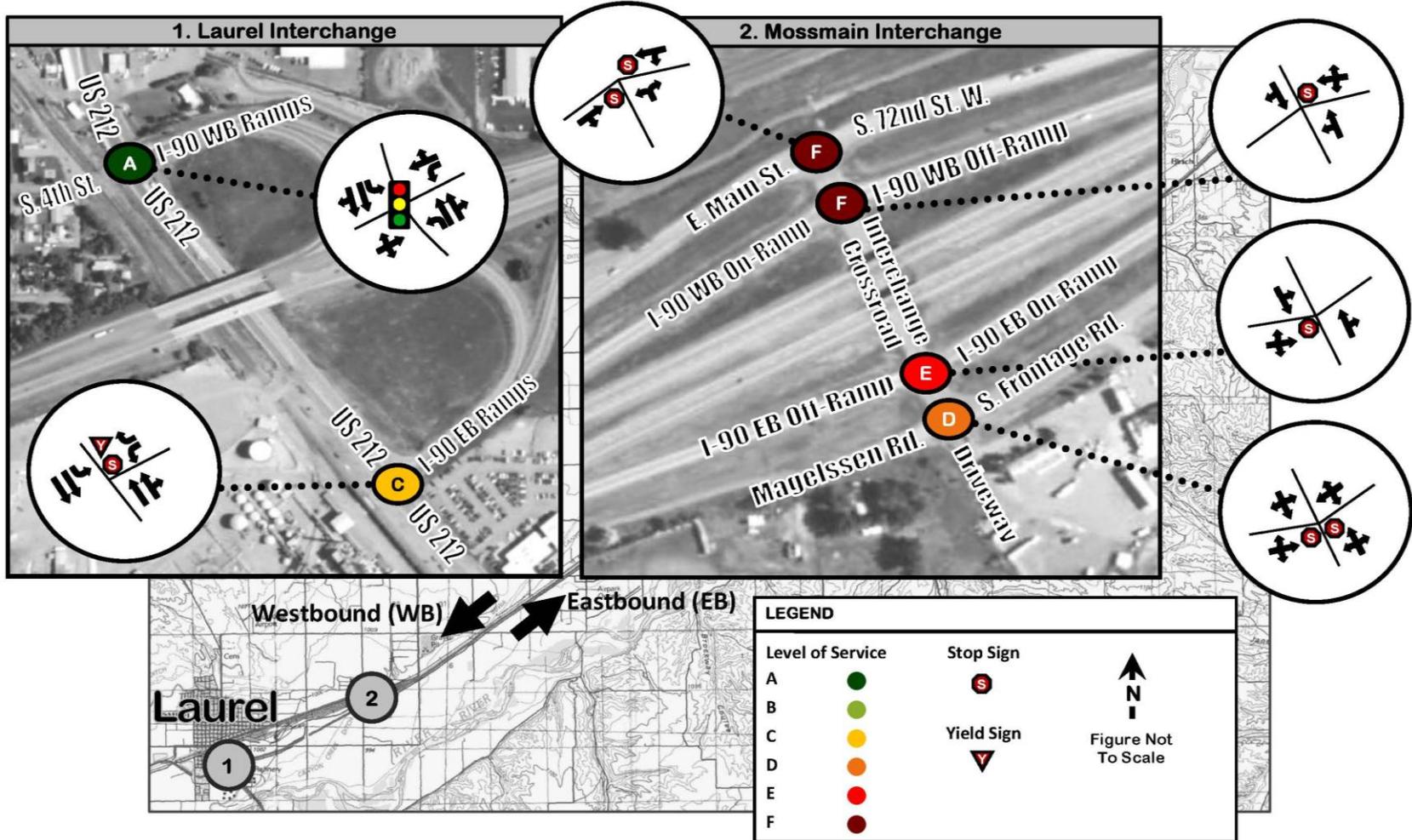
## Laurel & Mossmain 2010





# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Laurel & Mossmain 2035





## Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

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# Land Use



# Land Use Conditions

## Existing Land Use in Corridor

- Current Zoning: heavy, light, and entryway industrial; highway and community commercial; single family, multi-family, and manufactured home residential; planned unit development; public use; and agricultural
- Main Land Uses in Corridor: industrial, commercial, and agricultural

## Development/Growth Potential in Corridor

- Lockwood Interchange, South Billings Boulevard and Shiloh Interchange are zoned for commercial development and are expected to further develop over the study planning horizon year (2035).
- Future land use projections reported in the Billings Urban Area Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Yellowstone County and City of Billings Growth Policy were incorporated in the corridor study analysis.



# Environmental Resources



# Environmental Conditions

## Physical Environment

- Soil Resources & Farmland
- Water Resources
- Floodplains
- Hazardous Substances
- Air Quality

## Biological Resources

- Fish and Wildlife
- Vegetation
- T&E



## Social and Cultural Resources

- Demographic Conditions
- Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) Resources
- Cultural and Archaeological Resources
- Noise
- Visual Resources



# Environmental Conditions

## ○ Water Resources and Floodplains

- Yellowstone River, Canyon Creek, Hogan's Slough, the BBWA Canal, and several minor irrigation ditches

## ○ Hazardous Materials

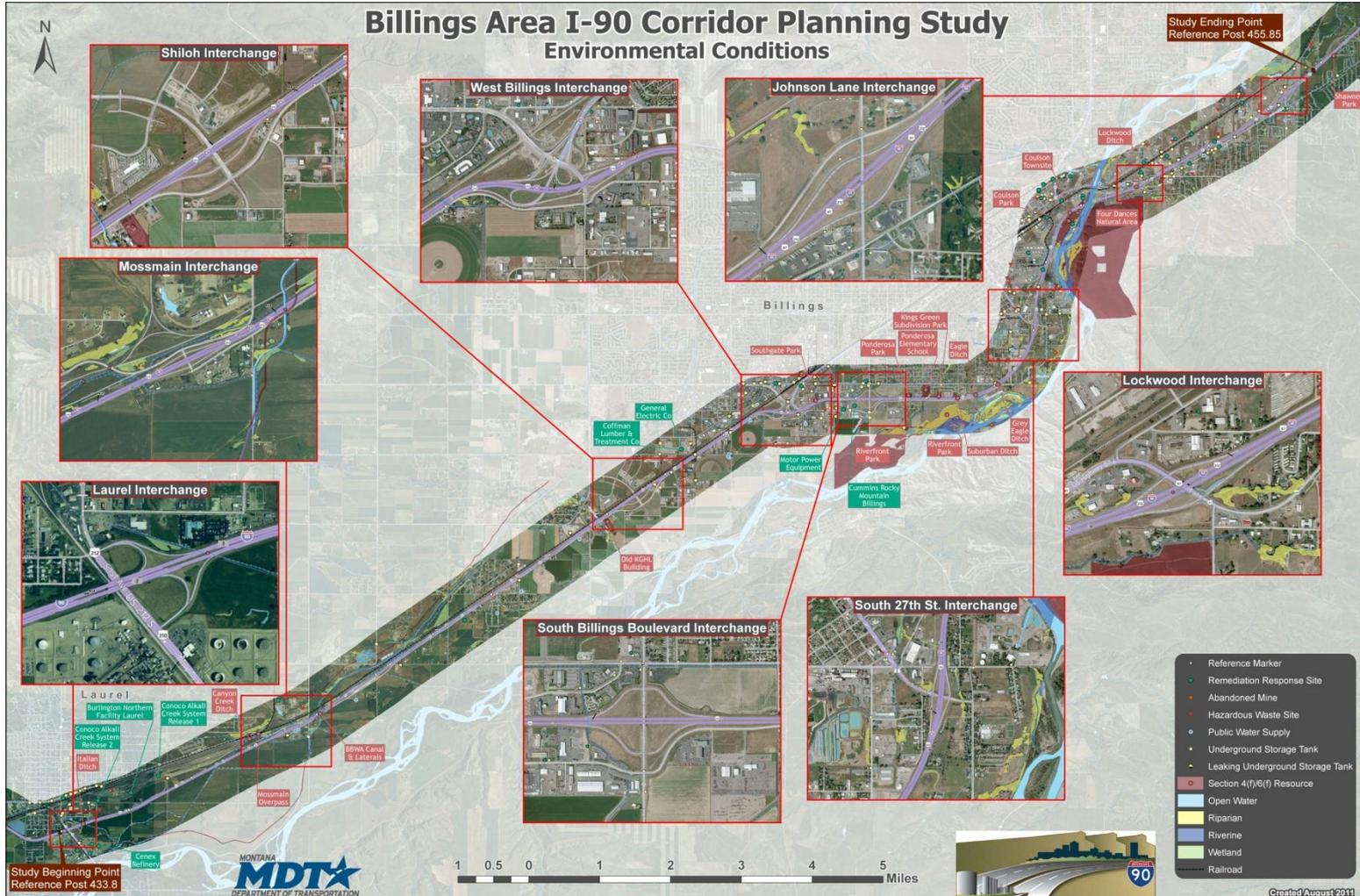
- LUST / UST Sites, Remediation Response Sites, petroleum pipelines

## ○ Section 4(f) and 6(f) Resources

- Parks, ditches, historic sites



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study





## Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

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# Discussion



# Please Submit Comments!

- **Mail comments to:**

Tom Martin  
Montana Department of Transportation  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
PO Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001

- **Questions:**

Tom Gocksch at 406.444.9412 or [tgocksch@mt.gov](mailto:tgocksch@mt.gov)

**Comments Due October 13, 2011**

**Visit the website at:**

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor>



## MEMORANDUM

**Physical Address:**  
104 East Broadway  
Suite G-1  
Helena, Montana 59601

**Mailing Address:**  
P.O. Box 1009  
Helena, Montana 59624

Phone: (406) 442 - 0370      Fax: (406) 442 - 0377

---

**To:** Tom Kahle  
MDT Project Manager

**From:** Sarah Nicolai  
DOWL HKM Project Manager

**Date:** October 19, 2011

**Subject:** **Draft Minutes**  
**Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study**  
**Resource Agency Meeting**

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### Introduction

The resource agency meeting for the Billings Area I-90 Corridor planning study was held on September 22, 2011 at the Montana Department of Transportation main headquarters West Auditorium. The following resource agency representatives and work group members were in attendance.

Mike McGrath	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Stephen Potts	Environmental Protection Agency
Scott Walker	City of Billings Transportation Planner
Vern Heisler	Deputy Public Works Director
Jean Riley	MDT – Planning Division
Tom Gocksch	MDT – Environmental Bureau
Gary Neville	MDT – Billings District
Sarah Nicolai	DOWL HKM
Todd Cormier	DOWL HKM
David Stoner	DOWL HKM

### Resource Agency Coordination

An invitation letter was sent to the resource agency distribution list on September 1, 2011. A copy of the letter is provided at the end of this memorandum. DOWL HKM attempted to contact all of the individuals on the distribution list on September 21, 2011 to confirm attendance at the meeting.

## **Presentation**

A formal presentation was conducted by Sarah Nicolai. The presentation began with introductions of MDT, DOWL HKM, and resource agency representatives. Sarah explained the corridor planning study process and benefits. The presentation continued with an overview of the study area and analysis locations. Key findings from the Existing and Projected Conditions Report were highlighted, including the Transportation System Conditions map and Environmental Conditions map. The presentation was concluded with a discussion of environmental issues and constraints along the right-of-way throughout the corridor. A copy of the presentation is provided at the end of this memorandum.

## **Discussion Period**

Tom Gocksch explained that the environmental conditions map depicts available information that MDT had gathered throughout the corridor and asked meeting attendees to identify any missing resources or information. Tom Gocksch added that the more complete MDT's identification of environmental conditions at the corridor planning study level, the smoother the environmental review process would be if an individual project is nominated from the study.

Sarah scrolled through an electronic version of the environmental conditions map from west to east as meeting attendees reviewed a large print version of the map. Tom Gocksch noted the Canyon Creek Ditch and stated that it may be eligible for Section (4f) preservation and listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Mike asked if the ditch carries fish. Tom Gocksch responded that there are reported instances of the ditch carrying fish and this would be assessed in more detail during the environmental review process if an individual project is nominated from the study. Mike asked if the culverts throughout the corridor are designed for fish passage. Jean responded that culverts likely do not meet current design standards. Tom Gocksch stated that MDT would reconstruct culverts to meet current design standards and allow for fish passage should an individual project be nominated. Mike stated that MDT should work with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to identify fish passage issues for individual projects. Mike explained that FWP would have a more comprehensive list of locations that do not meet current design standards for aquatic organism passage.

Sarah asked if Stephen had any concerns he would like to discuss. Stephen responded that he only had general concerns regarding potential impacts to surface waters and riparian environments. In response to Stephen's comments, Tom Gocksch stated that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is currently reviewing the extents of the Yellowstone River floodplain. MDT will incorporate the updated floodplain map if it becomes available before the conclusion of the corridor planning study.

Vern asked if the Beall manufacturing site is included in the environmental conditions map. Tom Gocksch stated that he was not certain of this, but would consult with Brian Goodman from the MDT Environmental Bureau. Tom explained that Brian Goodman is familiar with the environmental conditions throughout the Billings area from having worked on the Billings Bypass study and would be knowledgeable about this issue. Tom Gocksch continued by encouraging meeting attendees to submit comments in writing to MDT regarding any environmental issues, constraints or conditions.

Mike stated that bald eagle nesting areas have been identified around the Laurel and Johnson Lane interchanges and any potential construction would have to work around peak nesting season. Jean added that the pallid sturgeon may be present in the Yellowstone River; any reconstruction of the Yellowstone River bridges would result in impacts to the river. Mike explained that reconstruction of the Yellowstone River bridges would require identification of methods to minimize impacts as much as possible. Tom Gocksch stated that before any reconstruction of the bridges, formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services would be conducted. Jean and Mike agreed that the potential presence of the pallid sturgeon would not prevent potential reconstruction of the Yellowstone River bridges, but that coordination with appropriate agencies would be necessary.

Jean asked Stephen if MDT would need to consider induced growth. Stephen replied that he would need to review the proposed improvement options in order to respond to the question. Sarah stated that improvement options have not yet been developed. Jean added that as improvement options are developed, induced growth issues may need to be considered. Stephen asked if the resource agency meeting presentation was on the website. Sarah stated that it would be posted to the study website following the meeting.

#### **Written Comments**

No written comments were received at the meeting. A single comment letter was received from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) during the comment period, which closed on October 13, 2011. A copy of the NRCS letter is provided at the end of this memorandum.

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Federal Building, Room 443  
10 East Babcock  
Bozeman, MT 59715

RECEIVED

SEP 30 2011

ENVIRONMENTAL

Office: (406) 587-6811  
Fax: (406) 587-6761

September 29, 2011

Mr. Tom S. Martin, Chief  
Environmental Services Bureau  
Montana Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Dear Mr. Martin:

I am responding to your August 31, 2011 letter, asking the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to comment on the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study. Thank you for the invitation to participate in the Resource Agency Meeting held in Billings on September 22, 2011, however, we were unable to attend. We do have the following comments regarding the planning study. The Farmland Classification Maps contained in Appendix 1 of the Draft Environmental Scan submitted with your request indicates that the project area contains Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance.

The provisions of the Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), require evaluation of important farmland status (prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, or locally important farmland), when the actions or financial assistance of a federal agency, the Federal Highway Administration in this case, irreversibly converts (directly or indirectly) farmland.

FPPA impact determination requests for linear projects are evaluated using form NRCS-CPA-106, Farmland Conversion Impact Rating for Corridor Type Projects (attached). A fillable electronic version of the form is available by contacting Tom Pick. His phone number is (406) 587-6873, or e-mail him at [thomas.pick@mt.usda.gov](mailto:thomas.pick@mt.usda.gov). Parts I and III are to be completed by the federal agency (or their agent) proposing the conversion. The name of the applicable federal agency should be indicated on the form. The acres to be converted (direct and/or indirect) under each alternative are to be provided in Section III.

The NRCS-CPA-106 form should then be sent to Ms. Kate Norvell, Resource Soil Scientist, 10 East Babcock Street, Federal Building, Room 443, Bozeman, Montana 59715-4705. NRCS then completes Parts II, IV, and V in response, as needed, to document if any important farmlands are present in the area proposed for conversion, and the relative agricultural productivity value of any important farmland, if present. The Federal agency then completes Parts VI and VII, as appropriate, and returns the completed form to NRCS.

A map or maps of sufficient detail and scale to accurately delineate the proposed project area is to be included with the NRCS-CPA-106 form. Farmland receiving a combined score of less than 160

points is determined to not be subject to the provisions of the FPPA. Farmland receiving a combined score of 160 points or more requires evaluation of multiple alternatives to mitigate impact to important farmland.

With respect to other potential environmental impacts, NRCS has no additional regulatory or oversight responsibilities in the area of the project and as such, has no further comments concerning the proposed project. Should you have any questions regarding this response letter, please contact Mr. Tom Pick.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joyce Swartzendruber".

JOYCE SWARTZENDRUBER  
State Conservationist

Enclosure: Form NRCS-CPA-106, Farmland Conversion Impact Rating for Corridor Type Projects

cc w/o encl:

Gerald Schaeffer, State Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Bozeman, Montana

Keri Bilbo, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Offices, NRCS, Bozeman, Montana

Kate Norvell, Agronomist, NRCS, Bozeman, Montana

Philip Sandoval, District Conservationist, NRCS, Billings, Montana

**FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING  
FOR CORRIDOR TYPE PROJECTS**

<b>PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)</b>		3. Date of Land Evaluation Request	4. Sheet 1 of _____
1. Name of Project		5. Federal Agency Involved	
2. Type of Project		6. County and State	
<b>PART II (To be completed by NRCS)</b>		1. Date Request Received by NRCS	2. Person Completing Form
3. Does the corridor contain prime, unique statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - Do not complete additional parts of this form.)		YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	4. Acres Irrigated   Average Farm Size
5. Major Crop(s)	6. Farmable Land in Government Jurisdiction Acres: _____ %	7. Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: _____ %	
8. Name Of Land Evaluation System Used	9. Name of Local Site Assessment System	10. Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS	

<b>PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)</b>	<b>Alternative Corridor For Segment</b>			
	Corridor A	Corridor B	Corridor C	Corridor D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly				
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly, Or To Receive Services				
C. Total Acres In Corridor	0	0	0	0

<b>PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information</b>				
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland				
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland				
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted				
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value				

**PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information Criterion Relative value of Farmland to Be Serviced or Converted (Scale of 0 - 100 Points)**

Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(c))	Maximum Points				
1. Area in Nonurban Use	15				
2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use	10				
3. Percent Of Corridor Being Farmed	20				
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	20				
5. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	10				
6. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	25				
7. Availability Of Farm Support Services	5				
8. On-Farm Investments	20				
9. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	25				
10. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	10				
<b>TOTAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT POINTS</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)</b>					
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100				
Total Corridor Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

1. Corridor Selected:	2. Total Acres of Farmlands to be Converted by Project:	3. Date Of Selection:	4. Was A Local Site Assessment Used?  YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------	---	-----------------------	--

5. Reason For Selection:

Signature of Person Completing this Part: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Complete a form for each segment with more than one Alternate Corridor**

## CORRIDOR - TYPE SITE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following criteria are to be used for projects that have a linear or corridor - type site configuration connecting two distant points, and crossing several different tracts of land. These include utility lines, highways, railroads, stream improvements, and flood control systems. Federal agencies are to assess the suitability of each corridor - type site or design alternative for protection as farmland along with the land evaluation information.

(1) How much land is in nonurban use within a radius of 1.0 mile from where the project is intended?

More than 90 percent - 15 points  
90 to 20 percent - 14 to 1 point(s)  
Less than 20 percent - 0 points

(2) How much of the perimeter of the site borders on land in nonurban use?

More than 90 percent - 10 points  
90 to 20 percent - 9 to 1 point(s)  
Less than 20 percent - 0 points

(3) How much of the site has been farmed (managed for a scheduled harvest or timber activity) more than five of the last 10 years?

More than 90 percent - 20 points  
90 to 20 percent - 19 to 1 point(s)  
Less than 20 percent - 0 points

(4) Is the site subject to state or unit of local government policies or programs to protect farmland or covered by private programs to protect farmland?

Site is protected - 20 points  
Site is not protected - 0 points

(5) Is the farm unit(s) containing the site (before the project) as large as the average - size farming unit in the County ?

(Average farm sizes in each county are available from the NRCS field offices in each state. Data are from the latest available Census of Agriculture, Acreage or Farm Units in Operation with \$1,000 or more in sales.)

As large or larger - 10 points  
Below average - deduct 1 point for each 5 percent below the average, down to 0 points if 50 percent or more below average - 9 to 0 points

(6) If the site is chosen for the project, how much of the remaining land on the farm will become non-farmable because of interference with land patterns?

Acreage equal to more than 25 percent of acres directly converted by the project - 25 points  
Acreage equal to between 25 and 5 percent of the acres directly converted by the project - 1 to 24 point(s)  
Acreage equal to less than 5 percent of the acres directly converted by the project - 0 points

(7) Does the site have available adequate supply of farm support services and markets, i.e., farm suppliers, equipment dealers, processing and storage facilities and farmer's markets?

All required services are available - 5 points  
Some required services are available - 4 to 1 point(s)  
No required services are available - 0 points

(8) Does the site have substantial and well-maintained on-farm investments such as barns, other storage building, fruit trees and vines, field terraces, drainage, irrigation, waterways, or other soil and water conservation measures?

High amount of on-farm investment - 20 points  
Moderate amount of on-farm investment - 19 to 1 point(s)  
No on-farm investment - 0 points

(9) Would the project at this site, by converting farmland to nonagricultural use, reduce the demand for farm support services so as to jeopardize the continued existence of these support services and thus, the viability of the farms remaining in the area?

Substantial reduction in demand for support services if the site is converted - 25 points  
Some reduction in demand for support services if the site is converted - 1 to 24 point(s)  
No significant reduction in demand for support services if the site is converted - 0 points

(10) Is the kind and intensity of the proposed use of the site sufficiently incompatible with agriculture that it is likely to contribute to the eventual conversion of surrounding farmland to nonagricultural use?

Proposed project is incompatible to existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland - 10 points  
Proposed project is tolerable to existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland - 9 to 1 point(s)  
Proposed project is fully compatible with existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland - 0 points

---

**From:** [Walker, Scott](#)  
**To:** [Nicolai, Sarah](#);  
**Subject:** RE: Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study - Work Group Meeting on October 5, 2011  
**Date:** Monday, October 03, 2011 11:15:05 AM

---

Hi Sarah! Please find below some thoughts from the Planning Department concerning the I-90 Corridor Study. Should you have any questions please let me know.

1. South Billings Urban Renewal District Master Plan – ongoing, comprehensive planning process to identify programs and projects to revitalize the neighborhood accessed by the South Billings Blvd interchange. Expected due date is 2/2012. It is important that MDT consider the outcome of this plan and any recommended projects that relate to the interchange. For more information visit [www.southbillings.com](http://www.southbillings.com)
2. The 2008 City-County Growth Policy recommends a policy to “Create a visually appealing urban interstate corridor” which would include higher maintenance of the landscaped areas and more landscaping. Each interchange is a gateway to Billings and should set an attractive example. Our current rights-of-way, especially around the interchanges, are dull and unappealing. What can be done to improve the aesthetics of the interchanges?
3. Non-motorized access and safety at overpasses, bridges, interchanges: If this study is looking out to 2035, pedestrian, ADA, and bicycle circulation and access across the I-90 corridor must not be ignored. While our auto-oriented society is still trying to address and accommodate non-motorized travel, I think it will be a norm in the next 10-20 years, and should be considered when any interchange or bridge is considered for upgrade, or replacement, through this corridor in our community. While MDT did provide some pedestrian access at the revamped Zoo Drive Interchange, I think we can do better in future projects to make the environment *hospitable and safe* for pedestrians trying to get from Billings to the Yellowstone River and other points south. Little curb walks on overpasses may meet minimum safety requirements, but they are not hospitable for non-motorized users. This can be designed and done better in the years ahead.
4. It is imperative that MDT consider the excellent Lockwood Transportation Plan with any analysis of the corridor in the Lockwood area. The modeling work and design work done by Marvin and Associates in that document is very good and will save MDT time and money, as well as provide better safety and functionality, if they follow those recommendations where they apply to the interchanges in the Lockwood area.
5. LOS remain great for next 25 years: Given the minimal changes in LOS for the entire corridor till 2035, I think it is important to recognize that we don't need to do much, if any, over-sizing, widening, and expanding of the I-90 system through our community in the next 25 years. We can focus on maintenance and design improvements to what we have. This is great news as it allows funds to go to projects that are necessary and needed in the community.

~Scott



Newsletter  
Issue 2  
February  
2012

# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Inside This Issue:

- What Are the Needs in the Corridor?
- Mainline Interstate Concepts
- Recommended Improvement Options
- Public Involvement Opportunities
- Study Schedule and Study Contacts

## What Are the Needs in the Corridor?

Corridor needs and objectives were developed through a review of existing and projected conditions, input from community members and resource agencies, and coordination with MDT District staff. The needs listed below reflect transportation system issues and concerns along with the desire to maintain the function and operation of the Interstate facility.

***Need 1: Accommodate existing and future transportation demand on I-90.***

***Need 2: To the extent practicable, provide a facility that safely accommodates Interstate travel.***

Improvement options were developed to address corridor needs and objectives. Recommended improvements include safety improvements to reduce conflicts at interchange ramps; geometric improvements to bring facilities up to current MDT design standards; and operational improvements to decrease congestion and improve traffic operations where Level of Service (LOS) is anticipated to drop below acceptable levels by 2035. Engineers use the LOS concept to describe operational characteristics of a facility, with LOS A representing the best conditions and LOS F representing the worst conditions. Desirable operations for Interstate facilities and interchange ramp intersections are defined as LOS B and LOS C, respectively.

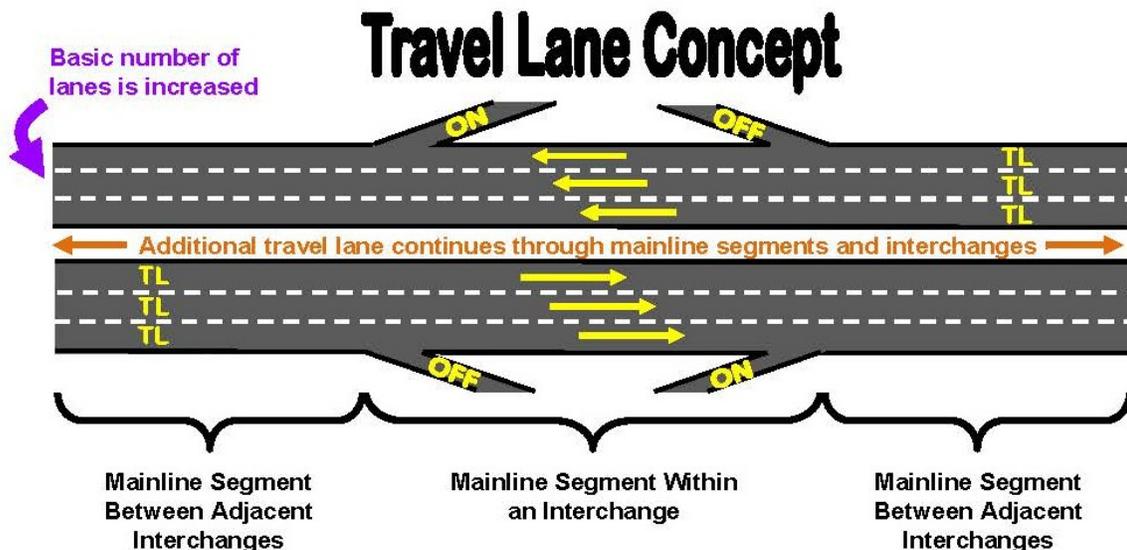
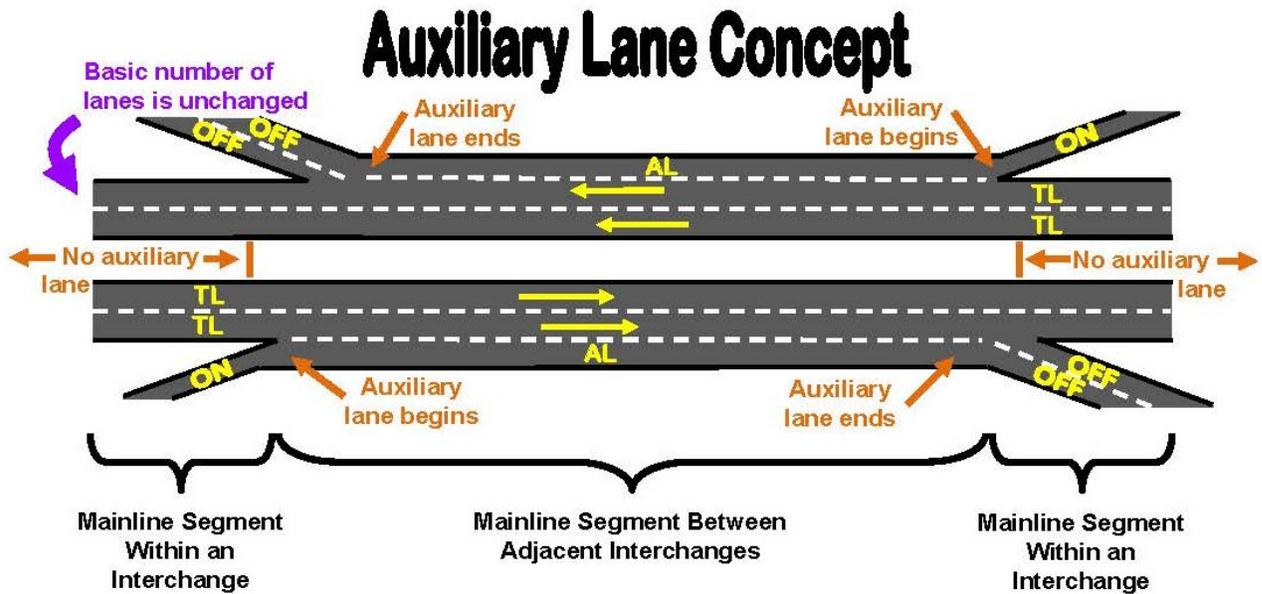
Improvement options illustrated on page 3 are recommended for further consideration as funding becomes available. Additional information, including the complete list of needs and objectives, is provided in the Draft Corridor Study Report. The report may be viewed online beginning February 20, 2012.

View documents on the study website at  
<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor>

## Mainline Interstate Concepts

Several mainline Interstate segments between the Shiloh Interchange and the Johnson Lane Interchange are projected to operate at an undesirable LOS C by 2035 if left in their current configuration. A third lane is recommended in each direction to improve these segments to a desirable LOS B. A third mainline Interstate lane can be developed in one of two ways:

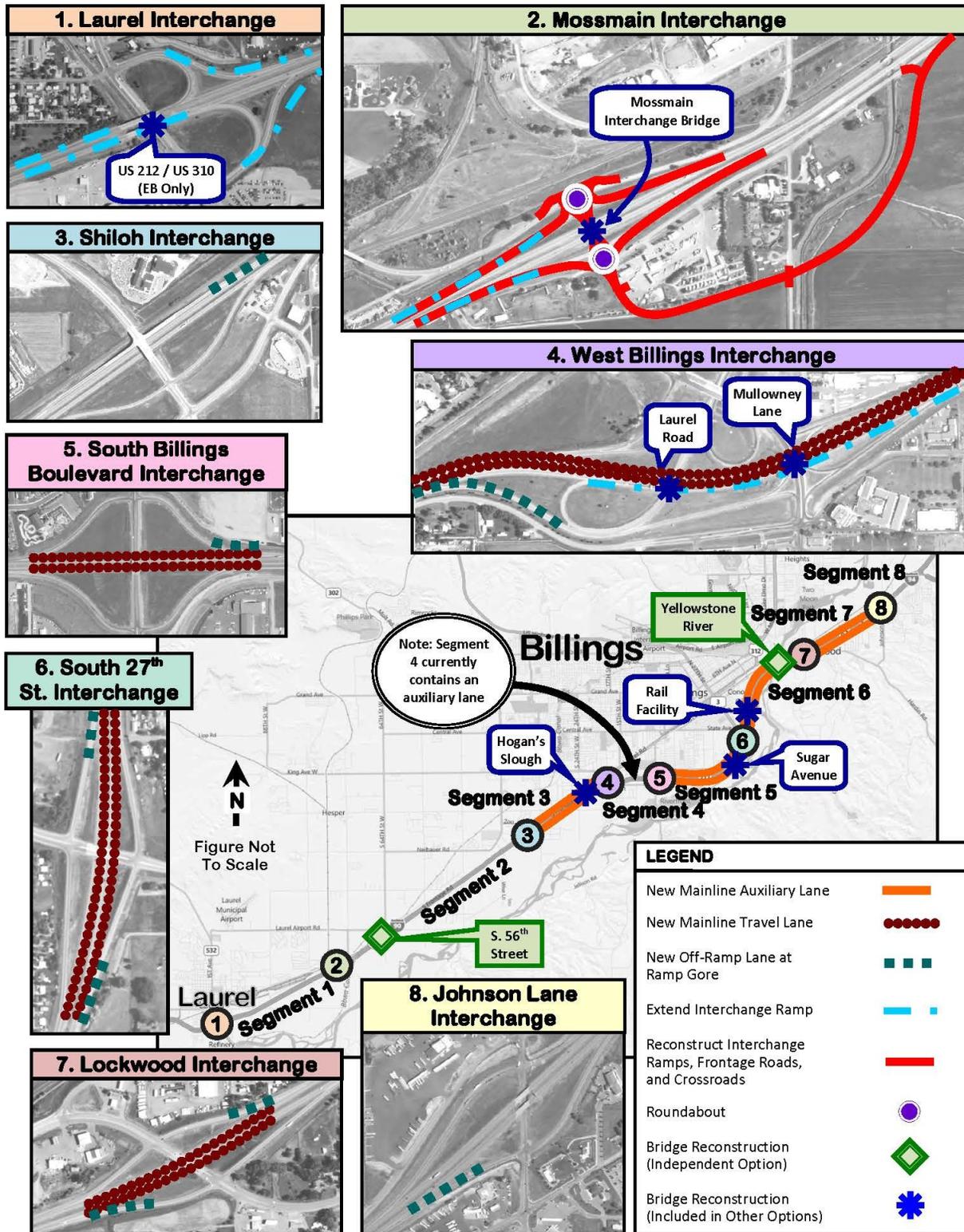
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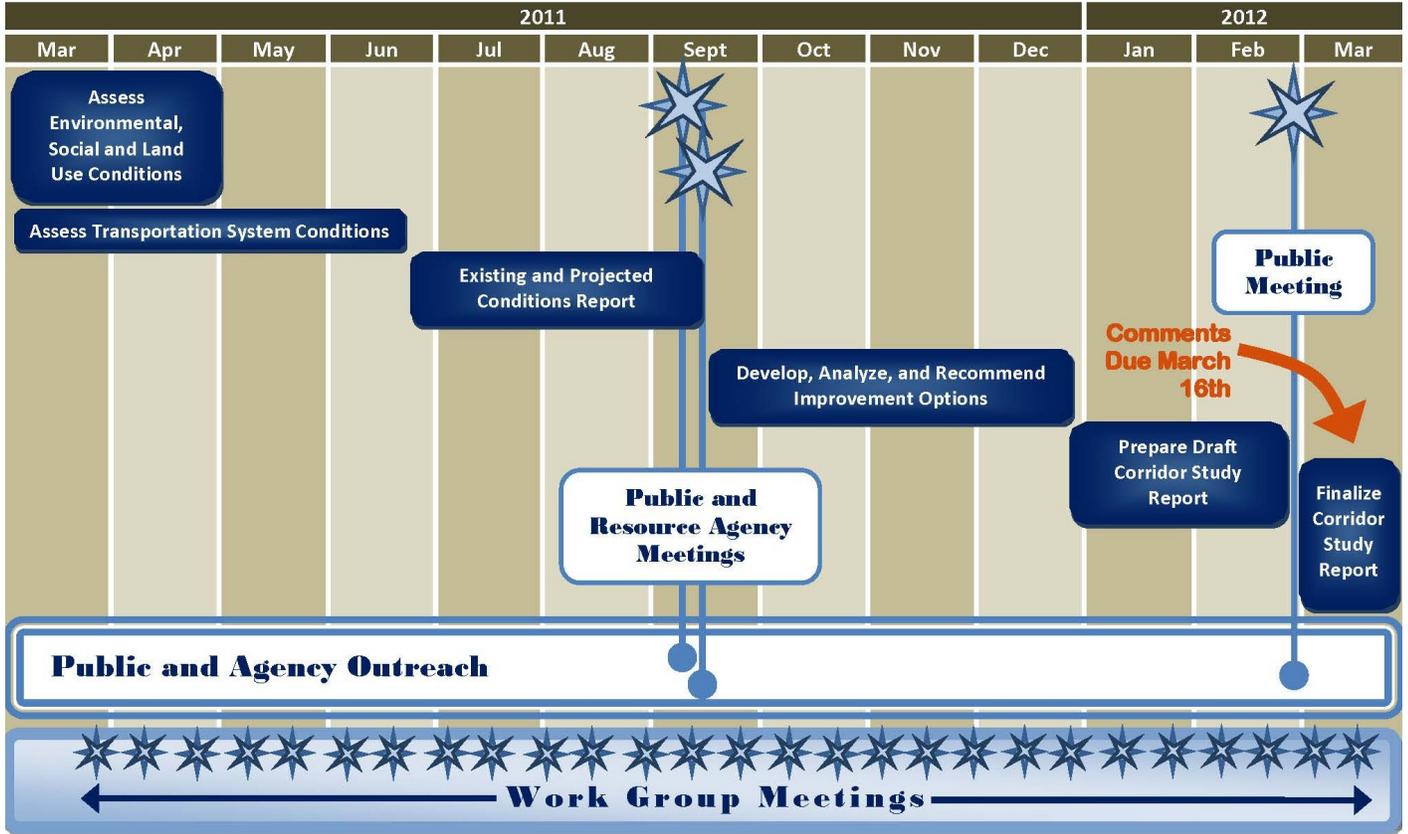
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Note: This figure is intended for illustrative purposes only and does not represent any portion of the I-90 study corridor.

**Recommended Improvement Options** are illustrated in the figure below. Near term and long term options include improvements to the mainline Interstate, bridges, interchange ramps, and the Laurel and Mossmain Interchange ramp intersections. Options are recommended for further consideration as funding becomes available. Mainline Interstate improvement options are generally anticipated to remain within existing right-of-way. Additional right-of-way may be needed for improvements to the Laurel and Mossmain Interchanges. Detailed information is provided in the Draft Corridor Study Report. This document may be viewed online at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor> beginning February 20, 2012.



# Study Schedule



## How can I stay involved in this study?

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Comments on the Draft Corridor Study Report are due on **March 16, 2012**.

### Contact Us

#### Gary Neville

MDT Billings District Engineer  
406.657.0232  
gneville@mt.gov

#### Sarah Nicolai

DOWL HKM Project Manager  
406.442.0370  
snicolai@dowlhkm.com

#### Tom Kahle

MDT Project Manager  
406.444.9211  
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Newsletter  
Issue 2  
February  
2012

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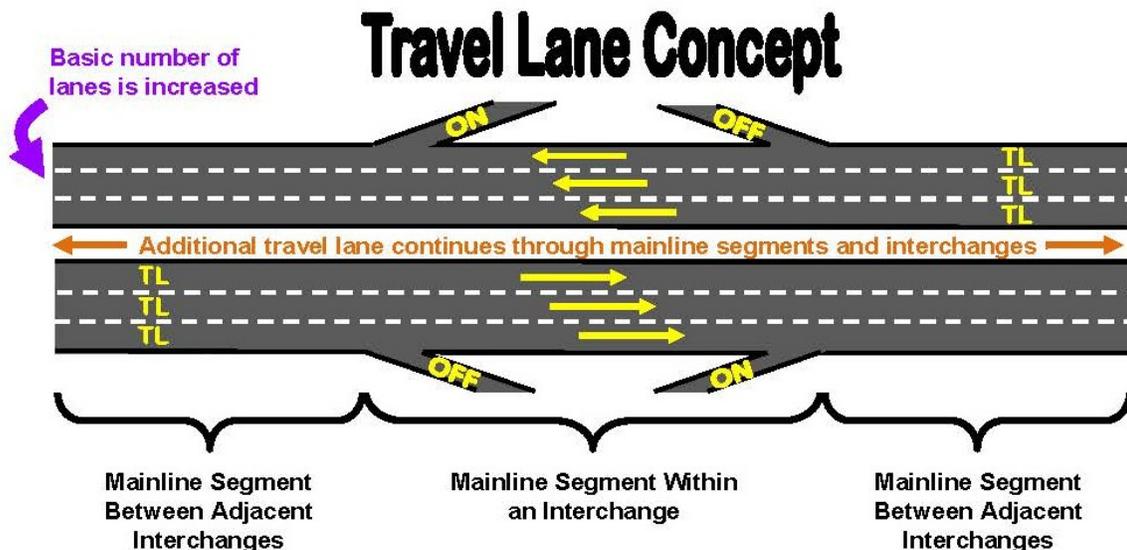
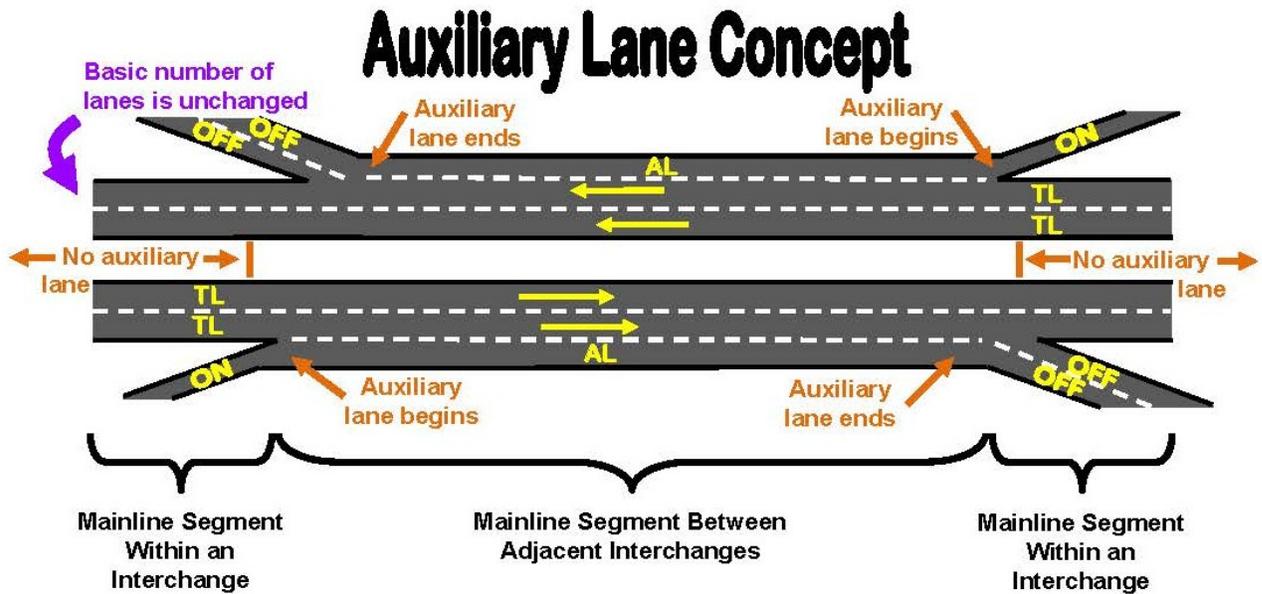
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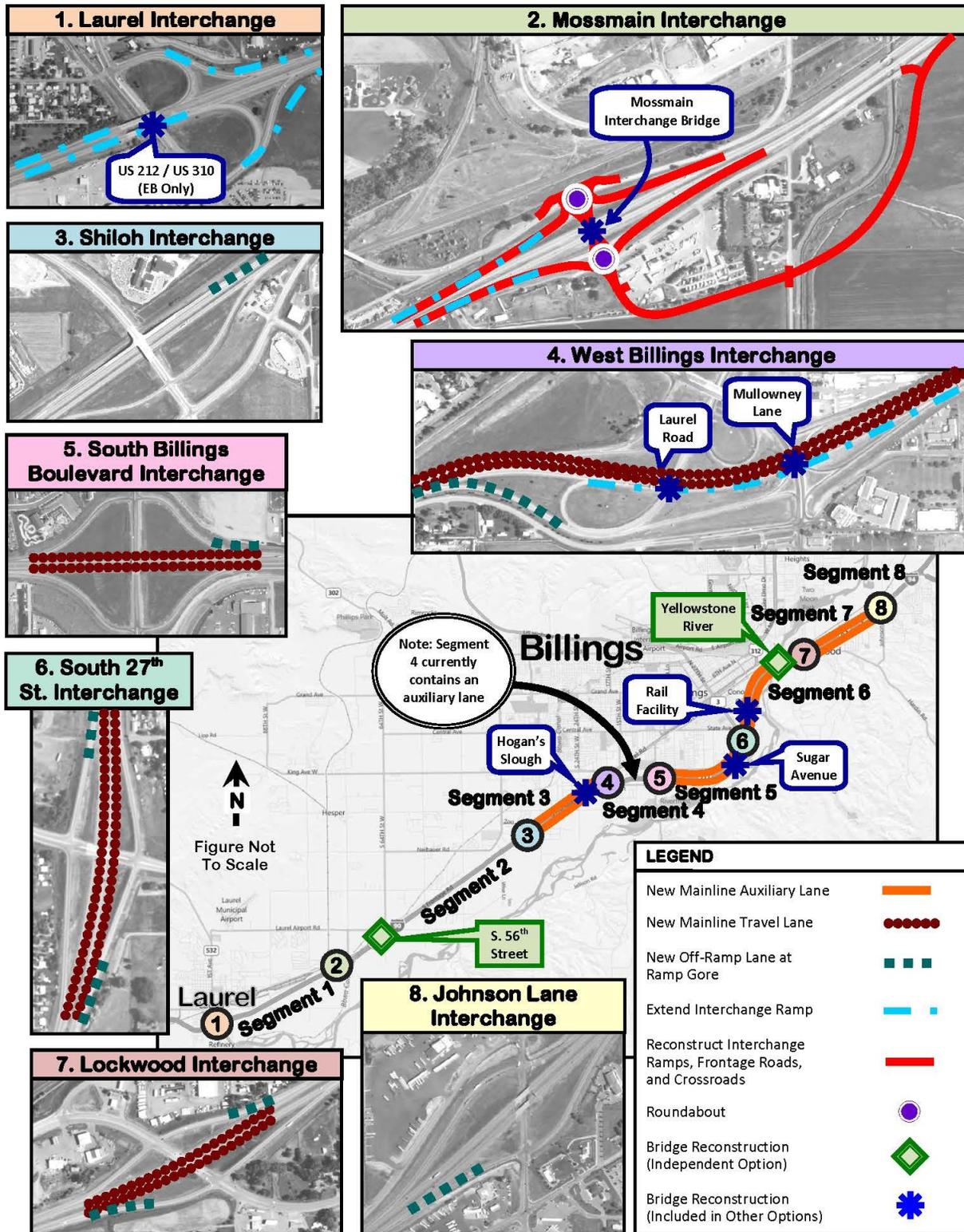
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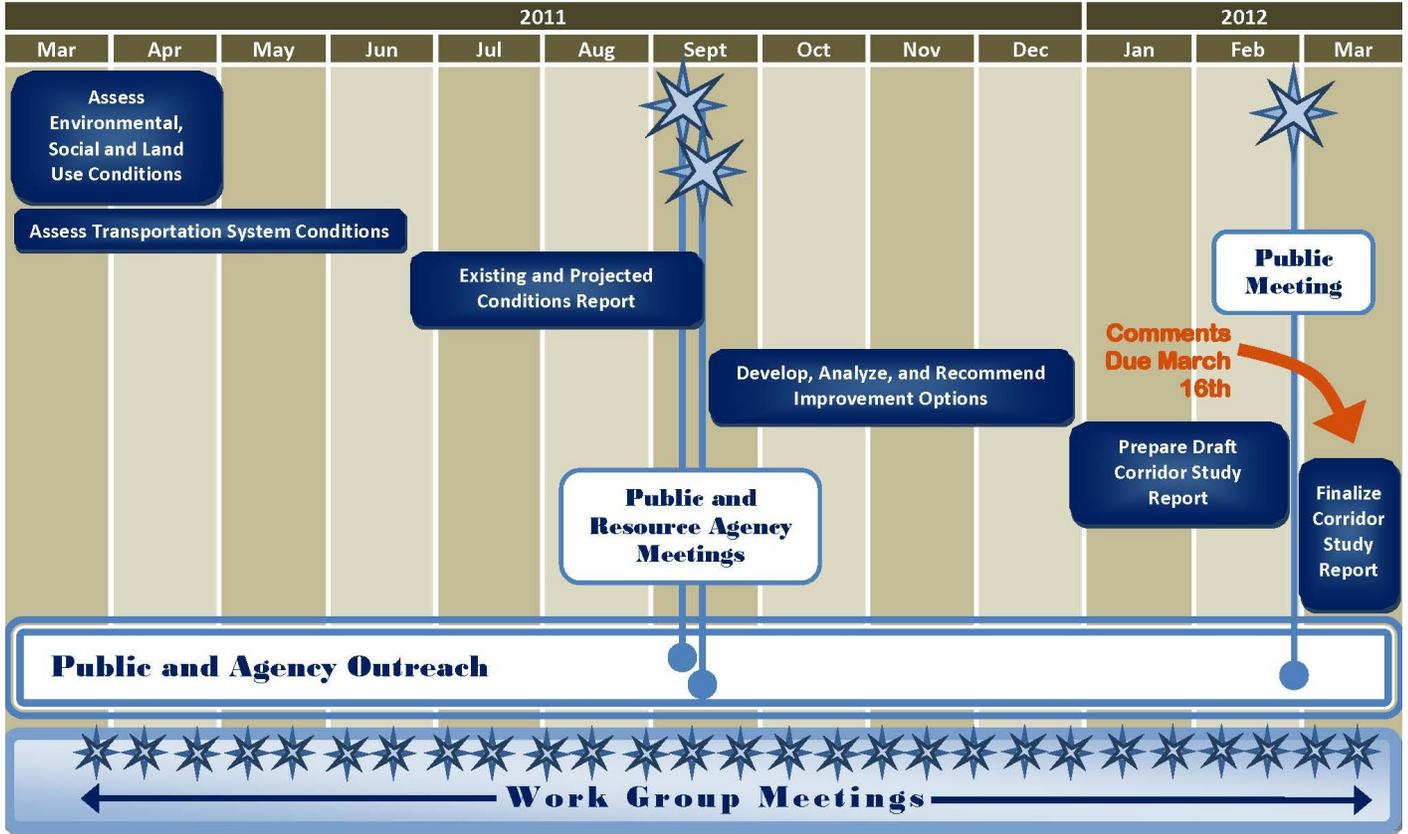
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## **Public Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 28, 2012**

### **AGENDA**

- 1) Welcome and Introductions**
- 2) Overview of Corridor Planning Process**
- 3) Study Area and Analysis Locations**
- 4) Background Information**
- 5) Key Findings from Draft Corridor Study Report**
  - a) Corridor Needs and Objectives**
  - b) Recommended Improvement Options**
- 6) Next Steps**

**Visit the website at:**

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# Public Meeting

Tuesday,  
February 28, 2012

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Meeting Room  
Parmly Billings Library  
510 N. Broadway

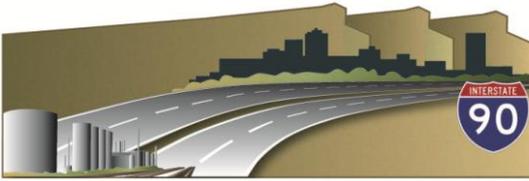


# Welcome & Introductions



# Purpose of Meeting

- Provide Overview of Corridor Planning Study Process
- Discuss Corridor Study Background Information
- Present Key Findings from Draft Corridor Study Report
  - Corridor Needs and Objectives
  - Recommended Improvement Options
- Solicit Community Input



### **A Corridor Planning Study Is:**

- A **planning-level assessment** of a study area that occurs before any project is forwarded for design or environmental review.

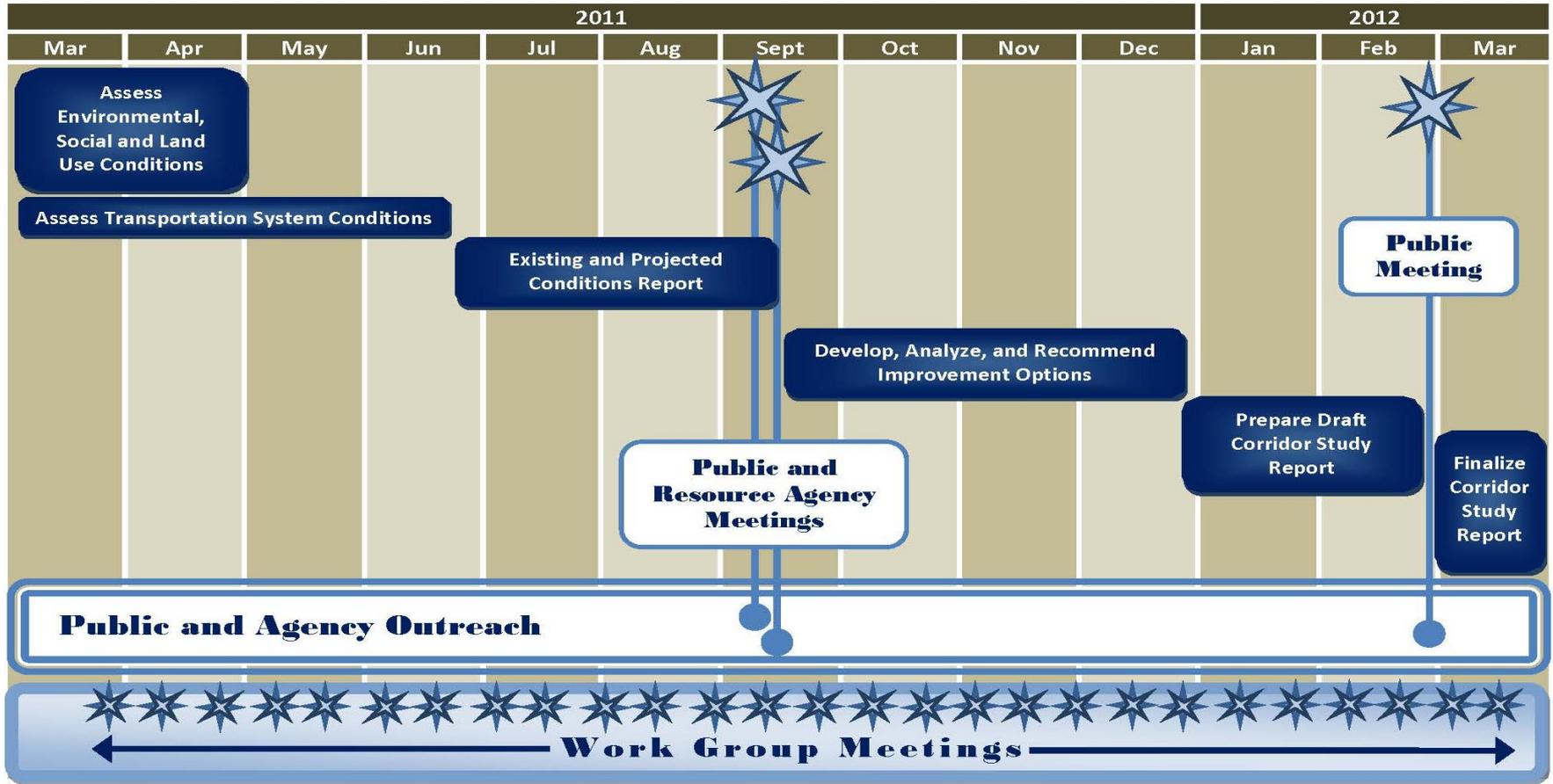
### **A Corridor Planning Study Is Not:**

- A design, right-of-way acquisition, or construction project
- Environmental compliance document



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

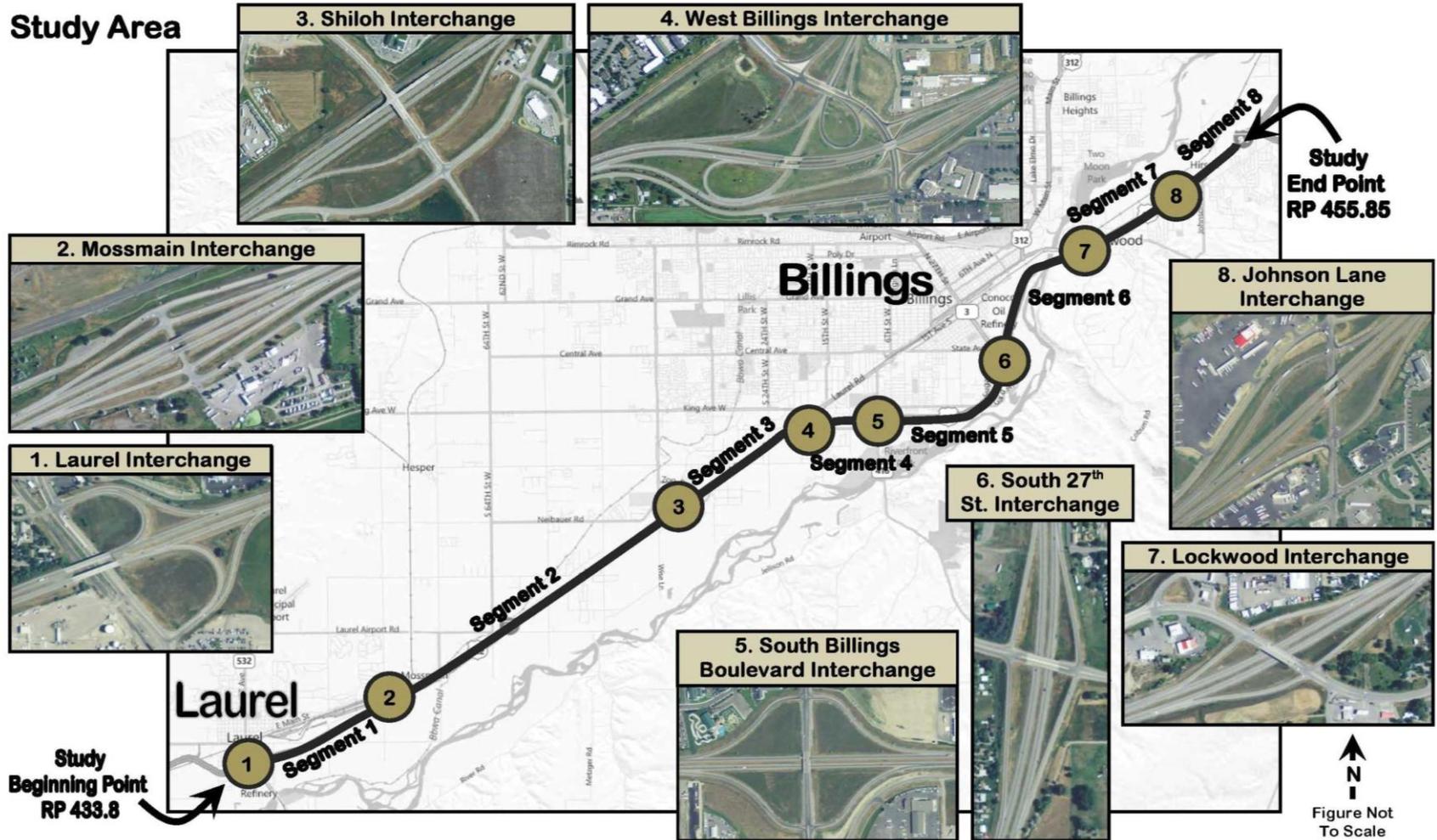
## What are the Steps?





# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Study Area





# Physical Characteristics

## ● Roadway Width

- Four-lane divided Interstate highway generally consisting of two separate two-lane roadbeds
- Area between the West Billings Interchange and the South Billings Boulevard Interchange (RP 446.3 to RP 446.8) includes a third auxiliary lane in each direction.

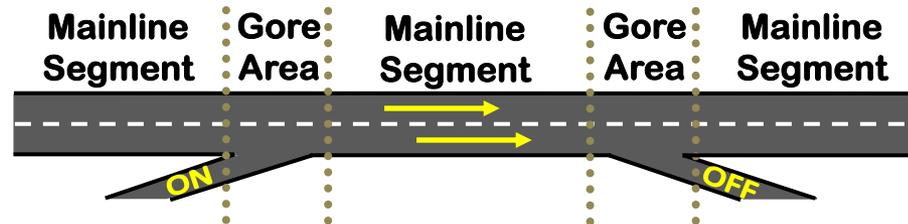
## ● Bridges

- 32 bridges within the study area
- 10 are functionally obsolete (4 of these eligible for rehabilitation)
- I-90 structures over the Yellowstone River are classified by MDT as “fracture critical.”



# Analysis Locations

- **Mainline Interstate Segments** between interchanges and between merge/diverge (on-ramp and off-ramp) locations
- **Merge/Diverge Gore Areas** for on-ramps and off-ramps



- **Laurel and Mossmain Interchange Intersections**

Note: All other interchange intersections except for the West Billings Interchange were evaluated in the 2006 *Billings I-90 Interchanges Project* report (see Appendices B and D of the Draft Corridor Study Report)



# Geometric Analysis Methodology

- Mainline Interstate
  - Ramp Gore Areas
  - Ramp Intersections for Laurel and Mossmain Interchanges
- **Horizontal Alignment Analysis**
    - Turns or bends in the road
  - **Vertical Alignment Analysis**
    - Grade or elevation changes and vertical curves (hills and valleys)



Analysis conducted according to MDT's Geometric Design Criteria for Freeways and Signalized/Non-signalized Intersections



# Operational Analysis Methodology

## ● Level of Service (LOS)

- Report Card Concept
- A = Best Conditions
- F = Worst Conditions

## ● Existing Conditions (2010) and Projected Conditions (2035)

## ● Desirable LOS

- Mainline Interstate: LOS B
- Ramp Intersections: LOS C

<u>Level of Service</u>	
A	
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Level of Service 2035

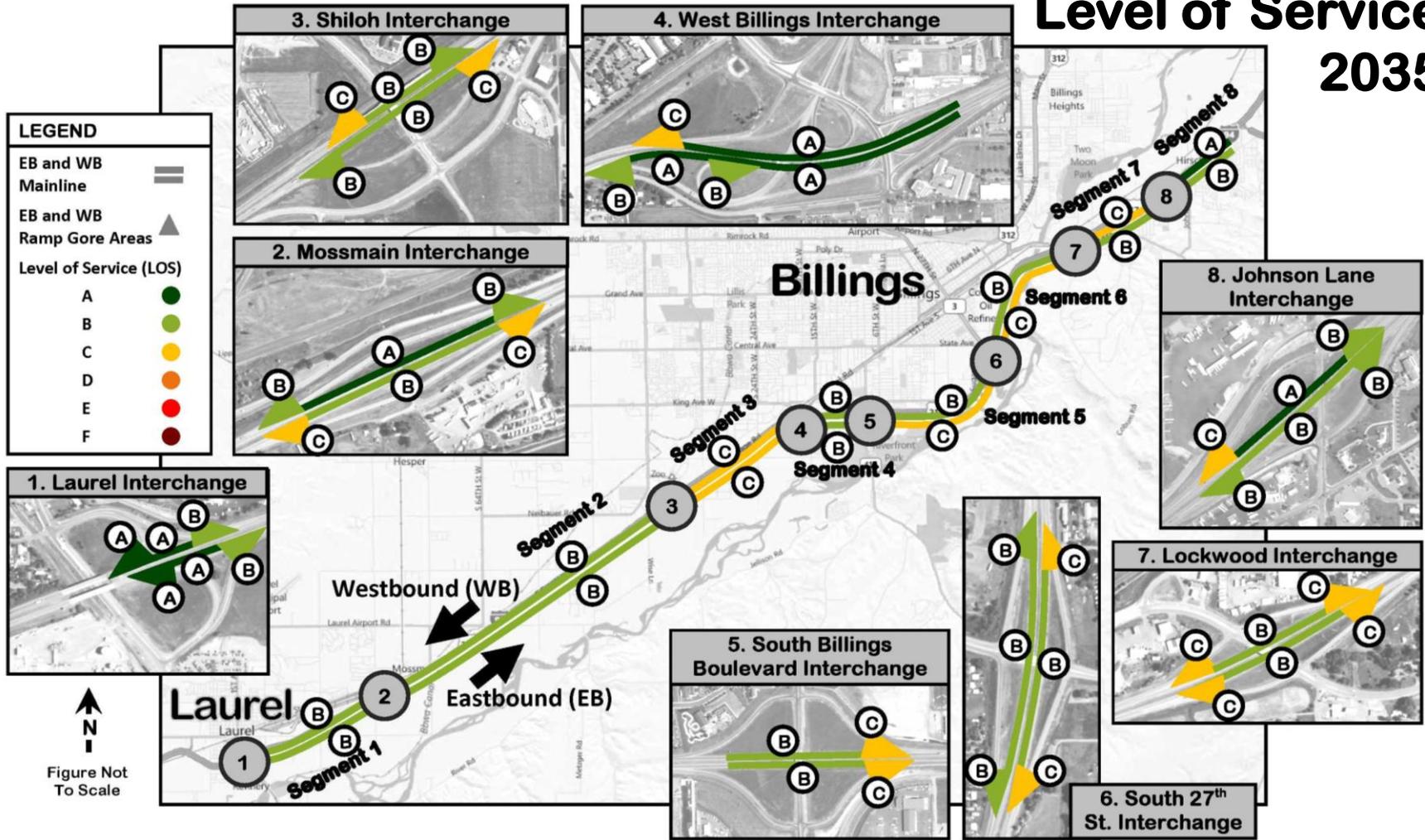
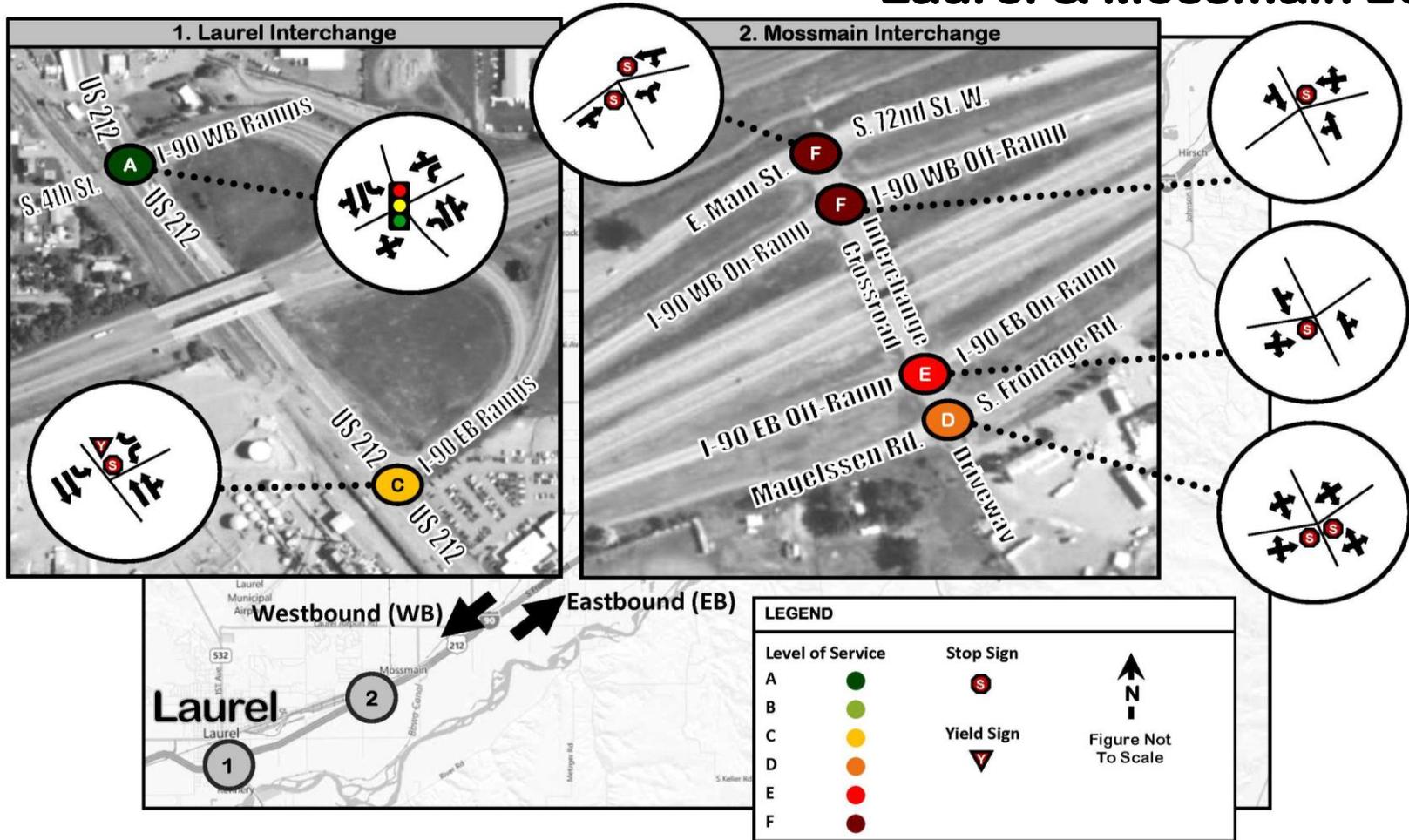


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# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Laurel & Mossmain 2035





# Corridor Needs and Objectives

- **Need 1**: Accommodate existing and future transportation demand on I-90.

## *Objectives*

- Maintain Level of Service (LOS) B or better for rural and urban mainline segments and interchange ramps through the 2035 planning horizon year.
- Maintain LOS C or better for Laurel and Mossmain ramp intersections through the 2035 planning horizon year.



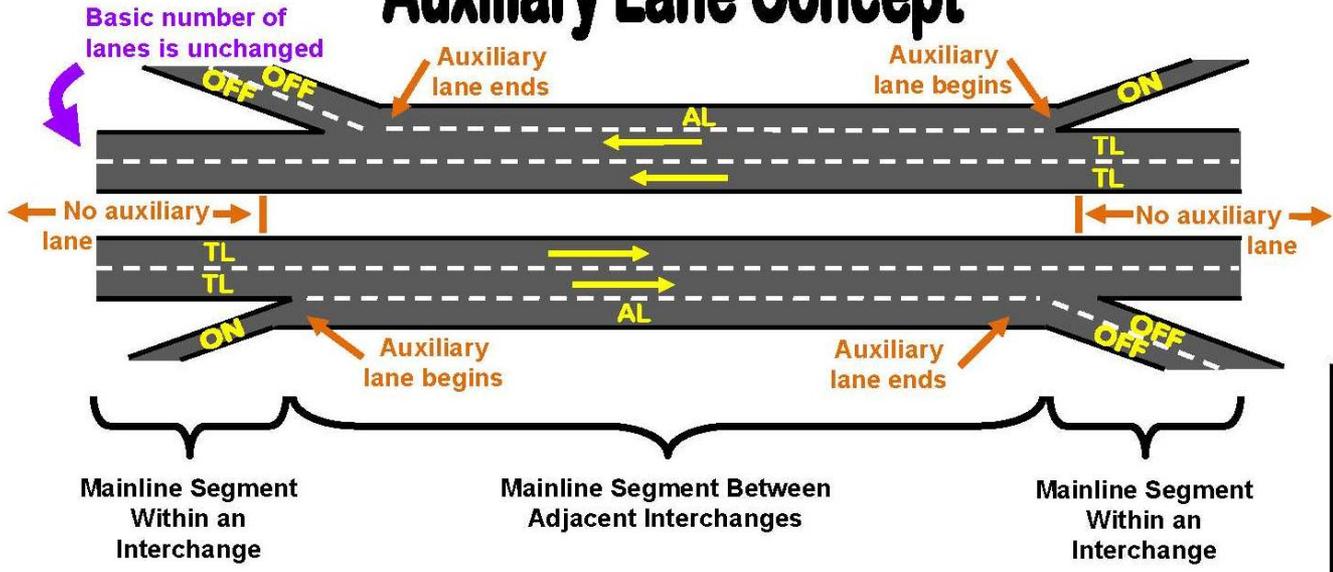
# Corridor Needs and Objectives

- **Need 2:** To the extent practicable, provide a facility that safely accommodates Interstate travel.

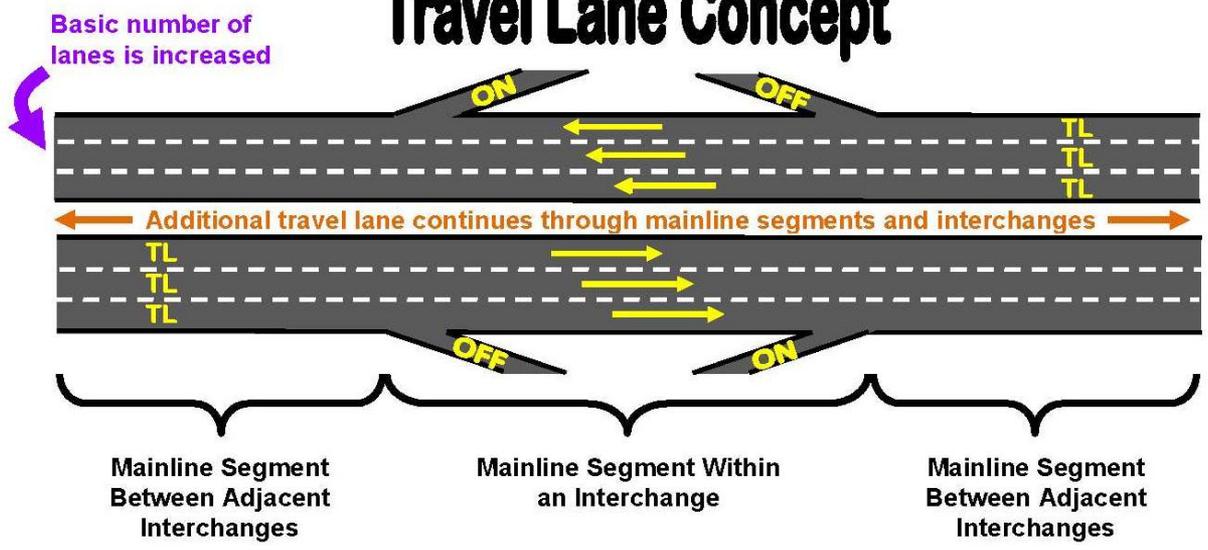
## *Objectives*

- Provide roadway elements that meet current MDT design standards.
- Provide bridge structures that meet current MDT design standards.

# Auxiliary Lane Concept



# Travel Lane Concept



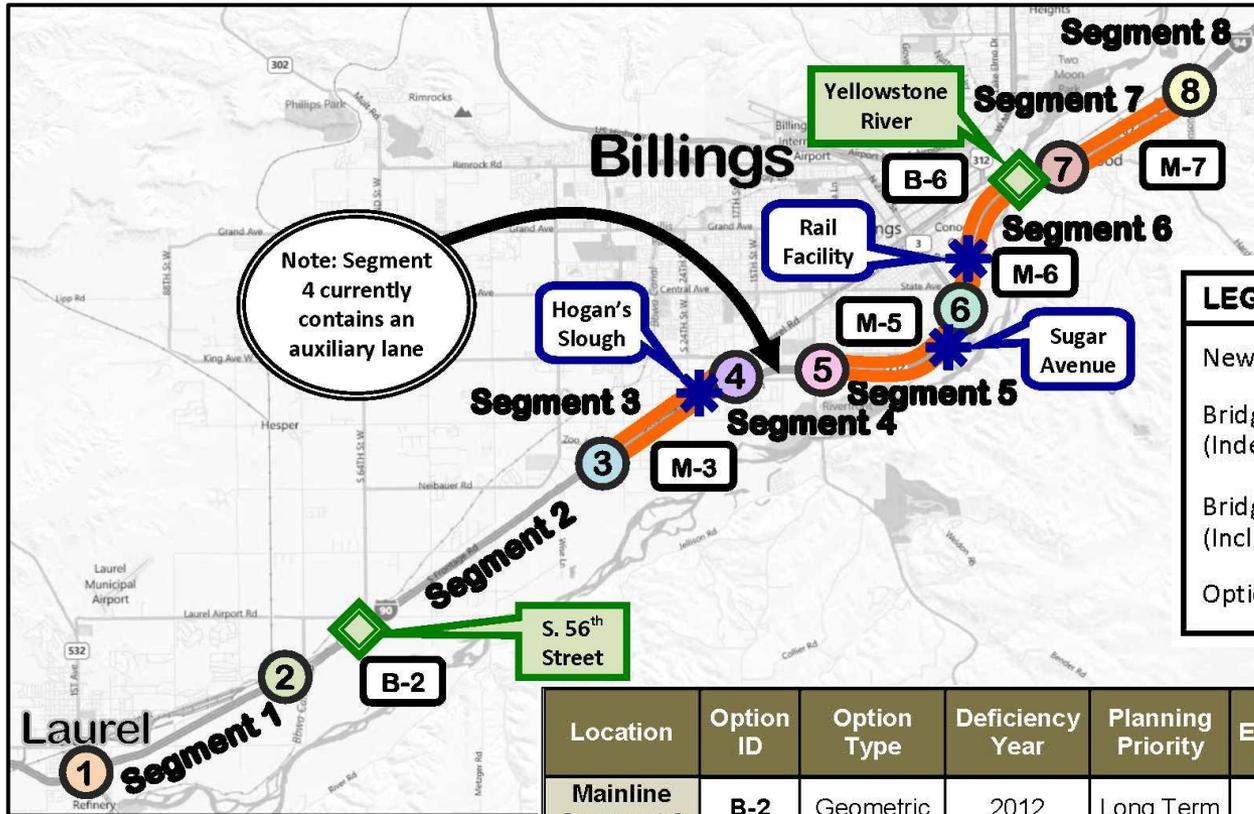
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# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Mainline Improvement Options



LEGEND	
New Mainline Auxiliary Lane	
Bridge Reconstruction (Independent Option)	
Bridge Reconstruction (Included in Other Options)	
Option ID	

Figure Not To Scale

Location	Option ID	Option Type	Deficiency Year	Planning Priority	Impacts to Environmental Resources	Right-of-Way Acquisition	Estimated Cost
Mainline Segment 2	B-2	Geometric	2012	Long Term	No	No	\$2,300,000
Mainline Segment 3	M-3	Capacity	2027	Long Term	Yes	No	\$10,000,000
Mainline Segment 5	M-5	Capacity	2028	Long Term	Yes	No	\$9,600,000
Mainline Segment 6	M-6	Capacity	2023	Long Term	Yes	No	\$8,800,000
	B-6	Capacity Geometric	2012	Near Term	Yes	No	\$33,400,000
Mainline Segment 7	M-7	Capacity	2027	Long Term	No	No	\$5,800,000

Estimated costs reflect construction only.



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

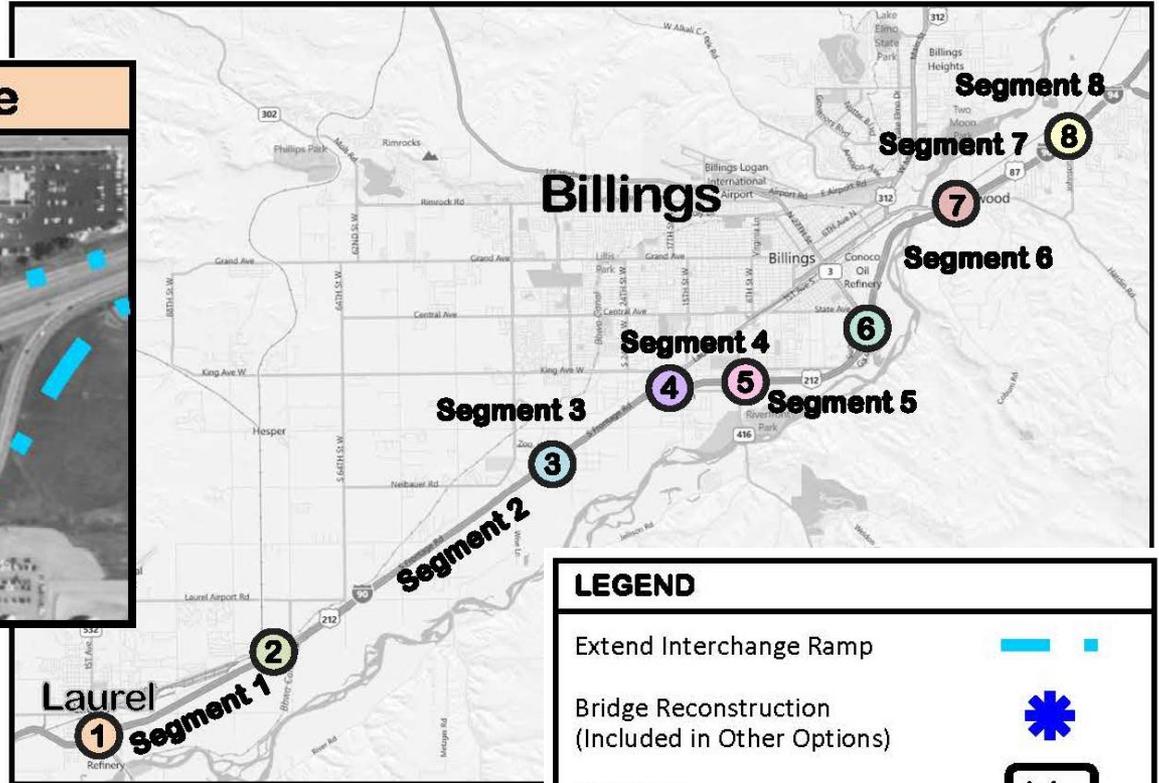
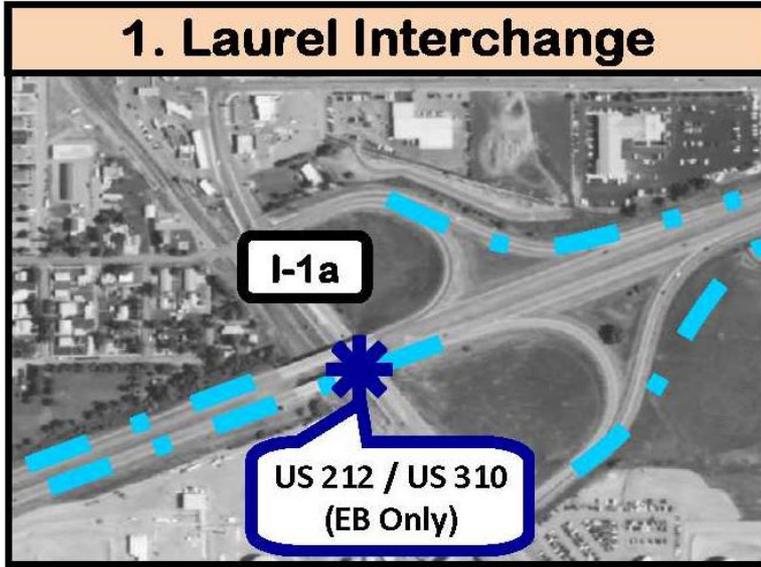


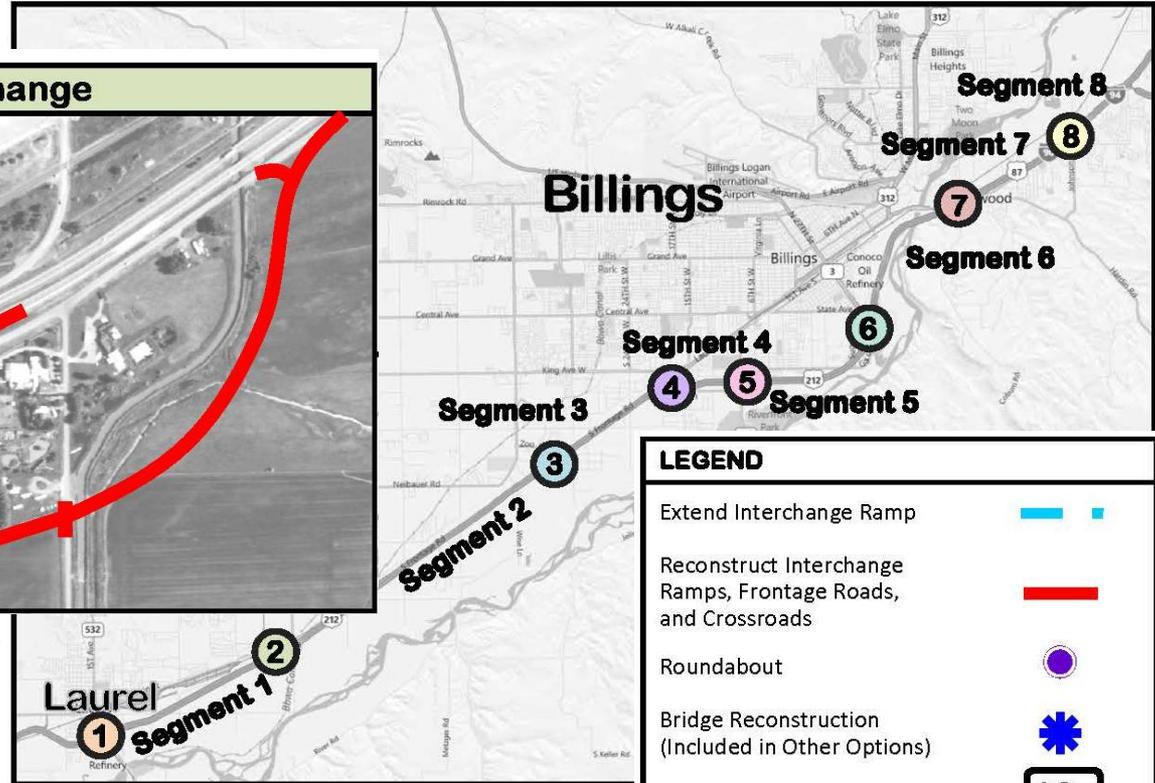
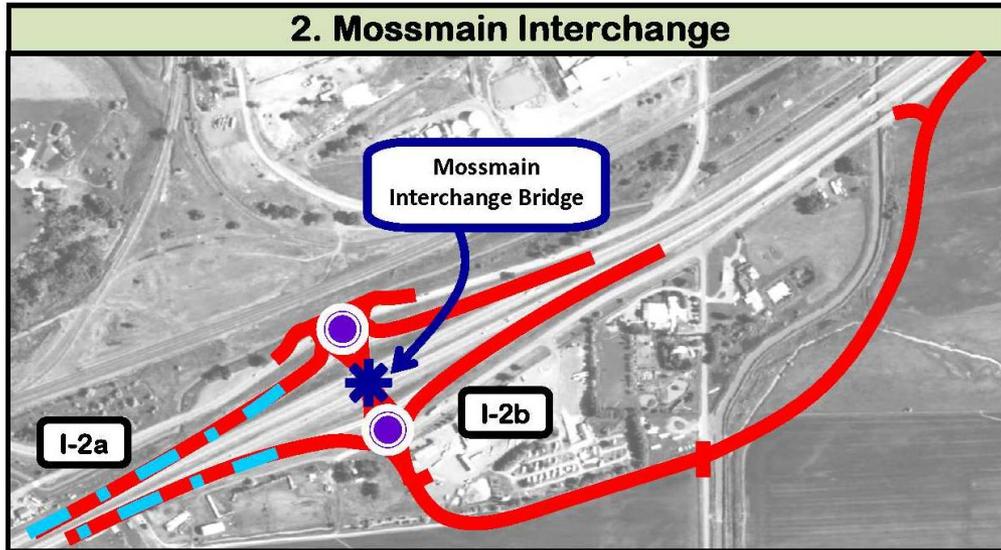
Figure Not To Scale

Estimated costs reflect construction only.

Location	Option ID	Option Type	Deficiency Year	Planning Priority	Impacts to Environmental Resources	Right-of-Way Acquisition	Estimated Cost
Interchange 1: Laurel	I-1a	Geometric	2012	As Needed	Yes	Yes	\$6,400,000
	I-1b	Safety	2012	As Needed	No	No	\$400,000



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study



Estimated costs reflect construction only.

↑  
N  
↓  
Figure Not To Scale

Location	Option ID	Option Type	Deficiency Year	Planning Priority	Impacts to Environmental Resources	Right-of-Way Acquisition	Estimated Cost
Interchange 2: Mossmain	I-2a	Geometric	2012	Near Term	No	No	\$800,000
	I-2b	Capacity	2012	Near Term	Yes	Yes	\$11,100,000
	I-2c	Safety	2012	As Needed	No	No	\$400,000



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study



**LEGEND**

- New Mainline Auxiliary Lane
- New Off-Ramp Lane at Ramp Gore
- Bridge Reconstruction (Included in Other Options)
- Option ID M-3

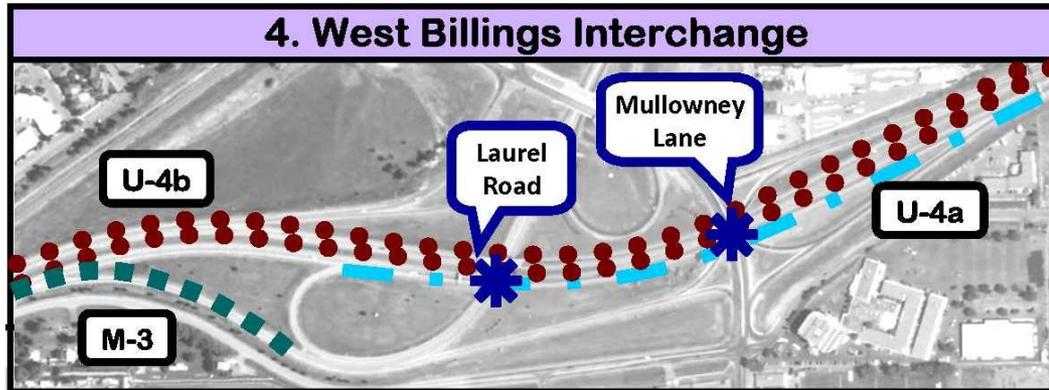
↑  
N  
↓  
Figure Not To Scale

Estimated costs reflect construction only.

Location	Option ID	Option Type	Deficiency Year	Planning Priority	Impacts to Environmental Resources	Right-of-Way Acquisition	Estimated Cost
Mainline Segment 3	M-3	Capacity	2027	Long Term	Yes	No	\$10,000,000

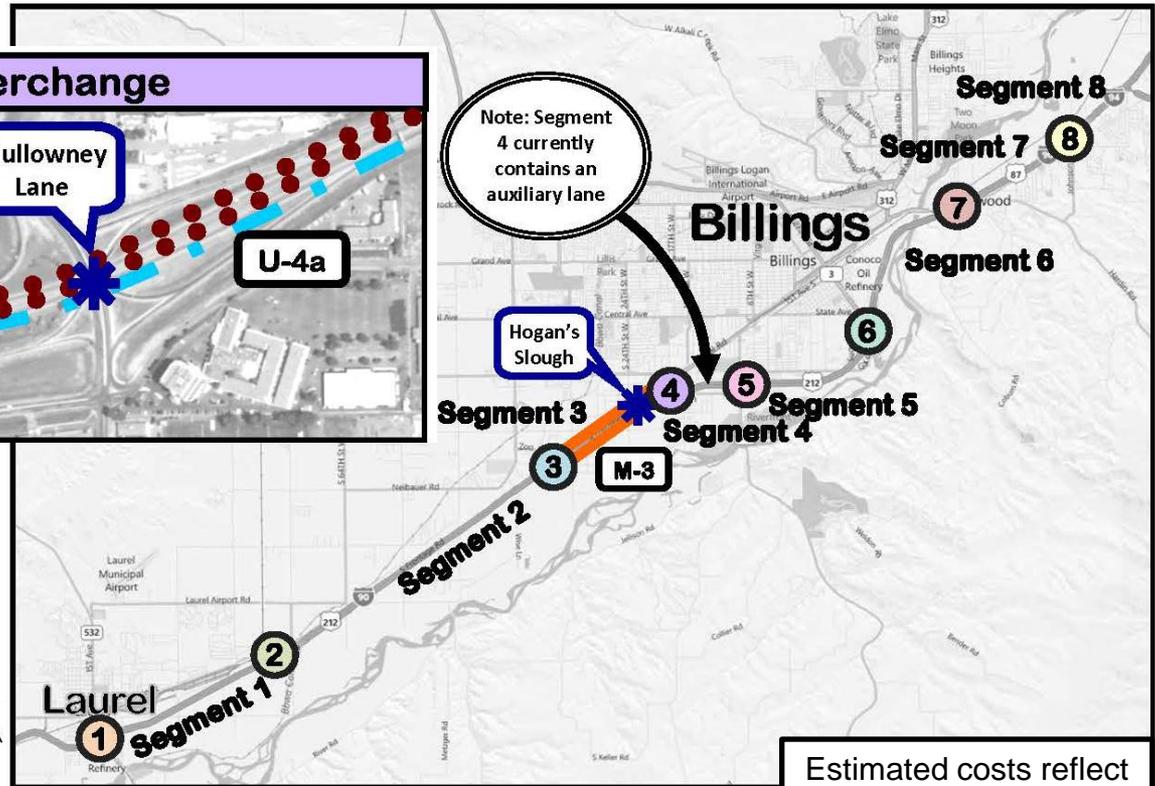


# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study



LEGEND	
New Mainline Auxiliary Lane	
New Mainline Travel Lane	
New Off-Ramp Lane at Ramp Gore	
Extend Interchange Ramp	
Bridge Reconstruction (Included in Other Options)	
Option ID	

Figure Not To Scale



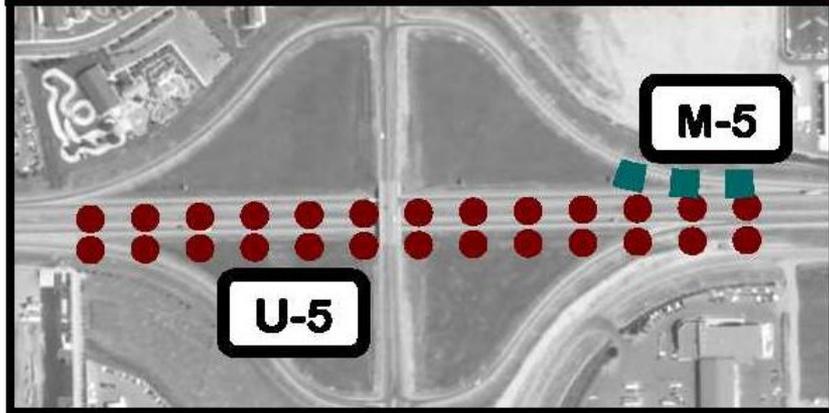
Estimated costs reflect construction only.

Location	Option ID	Option Type	Deficiency Year	Planning Priority	Impacts to Environmental Resources	Right-of-Way Acquisition	Estimated Cost
Mainline Segment 3	M-3	Capacity	2027	Long Term	Yes	No	\$10,000,000
Interchange 4: West Billings	U-4a	Safety	2012	Near Term	No	No	\$6,900,000
	U-4b	Traffic Operations & Lane Balance	2028	Long Term	No	No	\$12,600,000

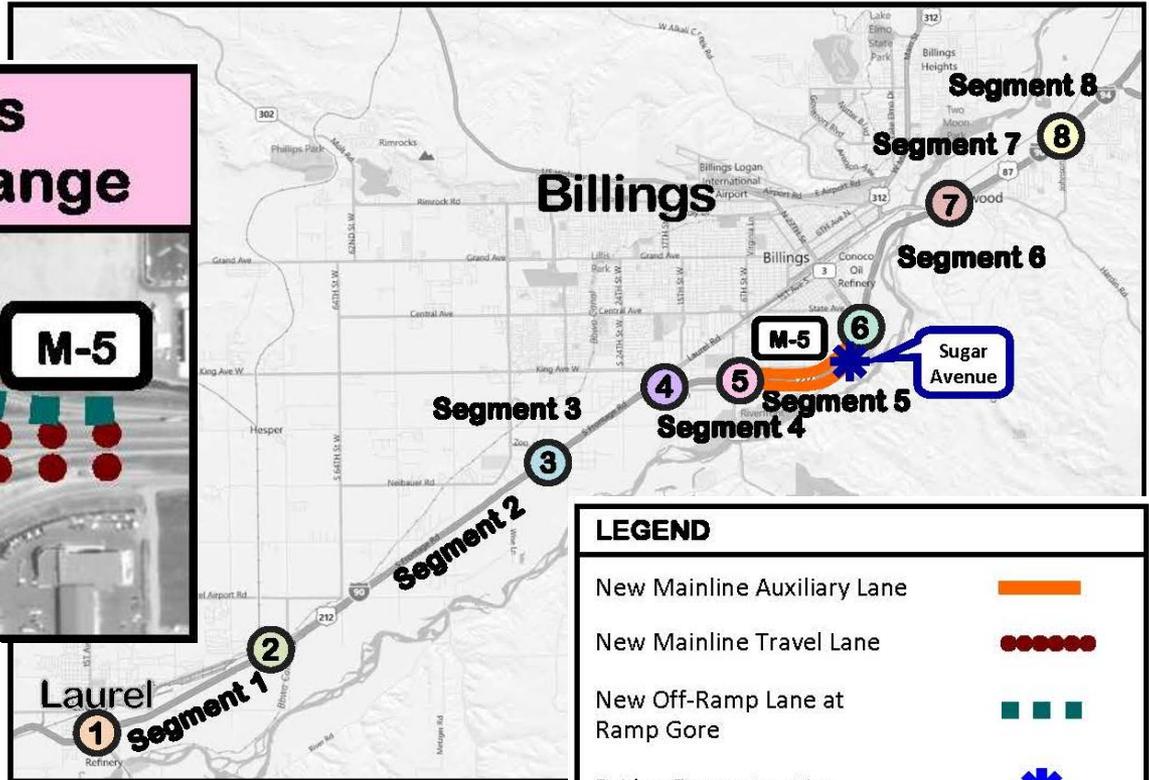


# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## 5. South Billings Boulevard Interchange



↑  
N  
↓  
Figure Not To Scale



**LEGEND**

- New Mainline Auxiliary Lane ▬
- New Mainline Travel Lane ●●●●●
- New Off-Ramp Lane at Ramp Gore ■ ■ ■
- Bridge Reconstruction (Included in Other Options) ✳
- Option ID M-5

Estimated costs reflect construction only.

Location	Option ID	Option Type	Deficiency Year	Planning Priority	Impacts to Environmental Resources	Right-of-Way Acquisition	Estimated Cost
<b>Interchange 5: South Billings Boulevard</b>	<b>U-5</b>	Traffic Operations & Lane Balance	2028	Long Term	No	No	\$1,600,000
<b>Mainline Segment 5</b>	<b>M-5</b>	Capacity	2028	Long Term	Yes	No	\$9,600,000



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## 6. South 27<sup>th</sup> St. Interchange

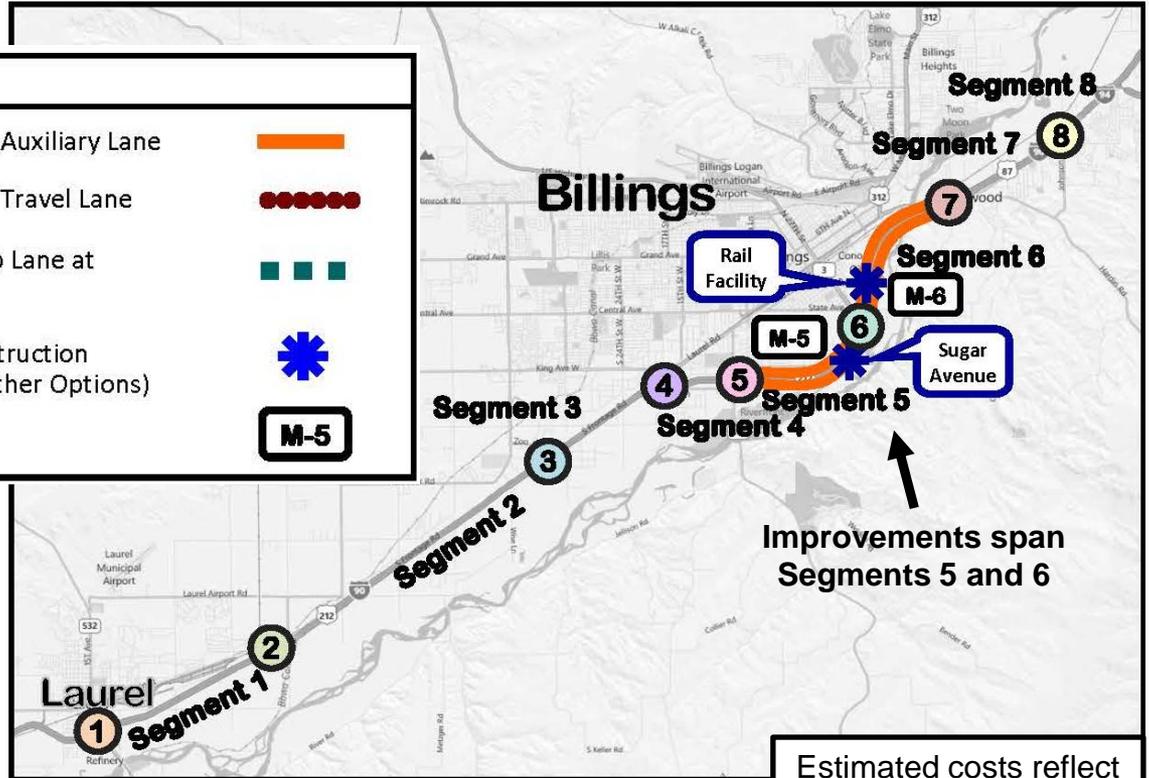
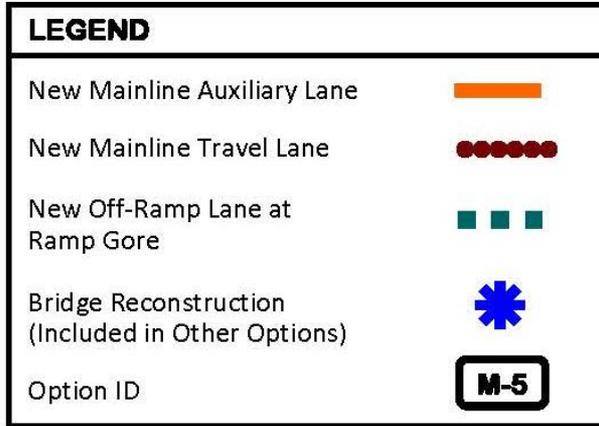
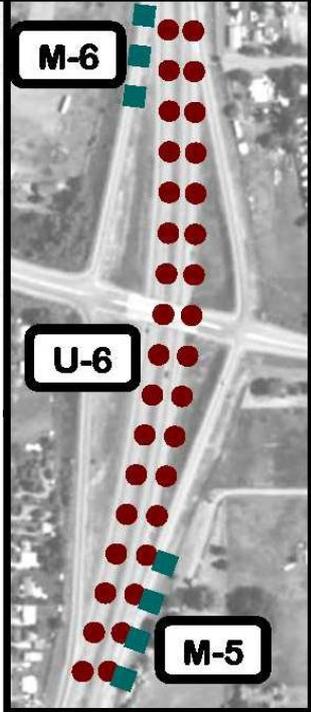


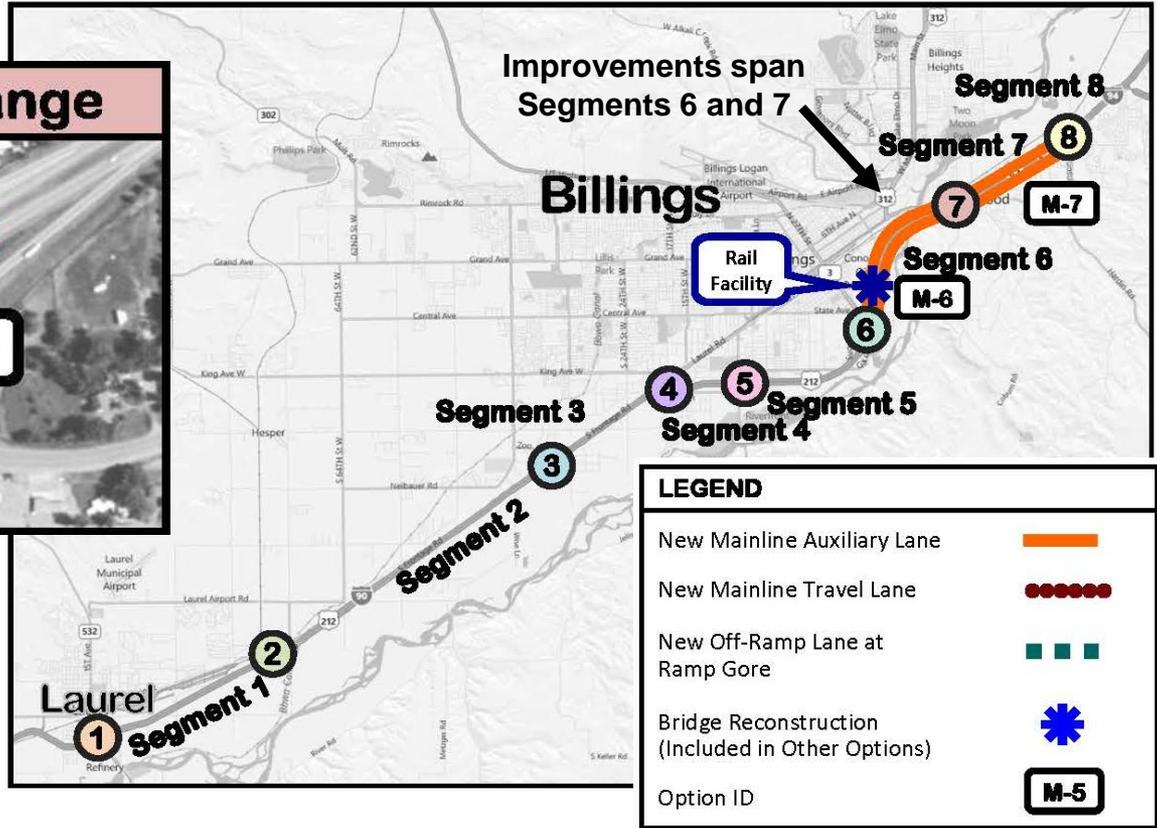
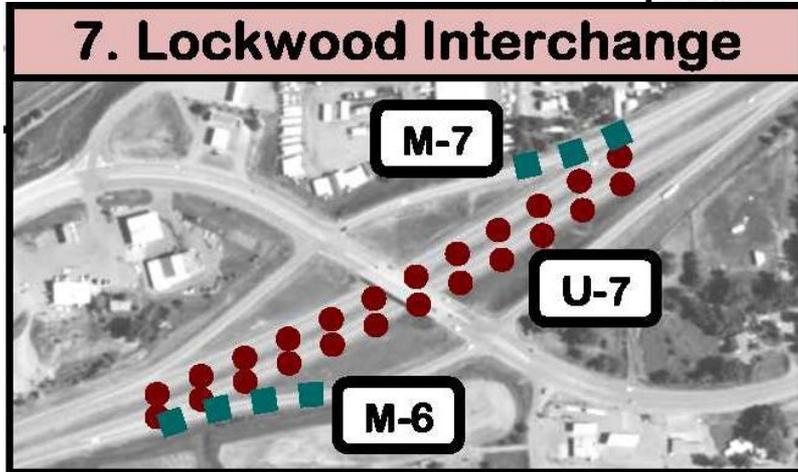
Figure Not To Scale

Estimated costs reflect construction only.

Location	Option ID	Option Type	Deficiency Year	Planning Priority	Impacts to Environmental Resources	Right-of-Way Acquisition	Estimated Cost
Mainline Segment 5	M-5	Capacity	2028	Long Term	Yes	No	\$9,600,000
Interchange 6: South 27 <sup>th</sup> Street	U-6	Traffic Operations & Lane Balance	2028	Long Term	No	No	\$1,900,000
Mainline Segment 6	M-6	Capacity	2023	Long Term	Yes	No	\$8,800,000



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study



Estimated costs reflect construction only.



Location	Option ID	Option Type	Deficiency Year	Planning Priority	Impacts to Environmental Resources	Right-of-Way Acquisition	Estimated Cost
Mainline Segment 6	M-6	Capacity	2023	Long Term	Yes	No	\$8,800,000
Interchange 7: Lockwood	U-7	Traffic Operations & Lane Balance	2027	Long Term	Yes	No	\$1,900,000
Mainline Segment 7	M-7	Capacity	2027	Long Term	No	No	\$5,800,000



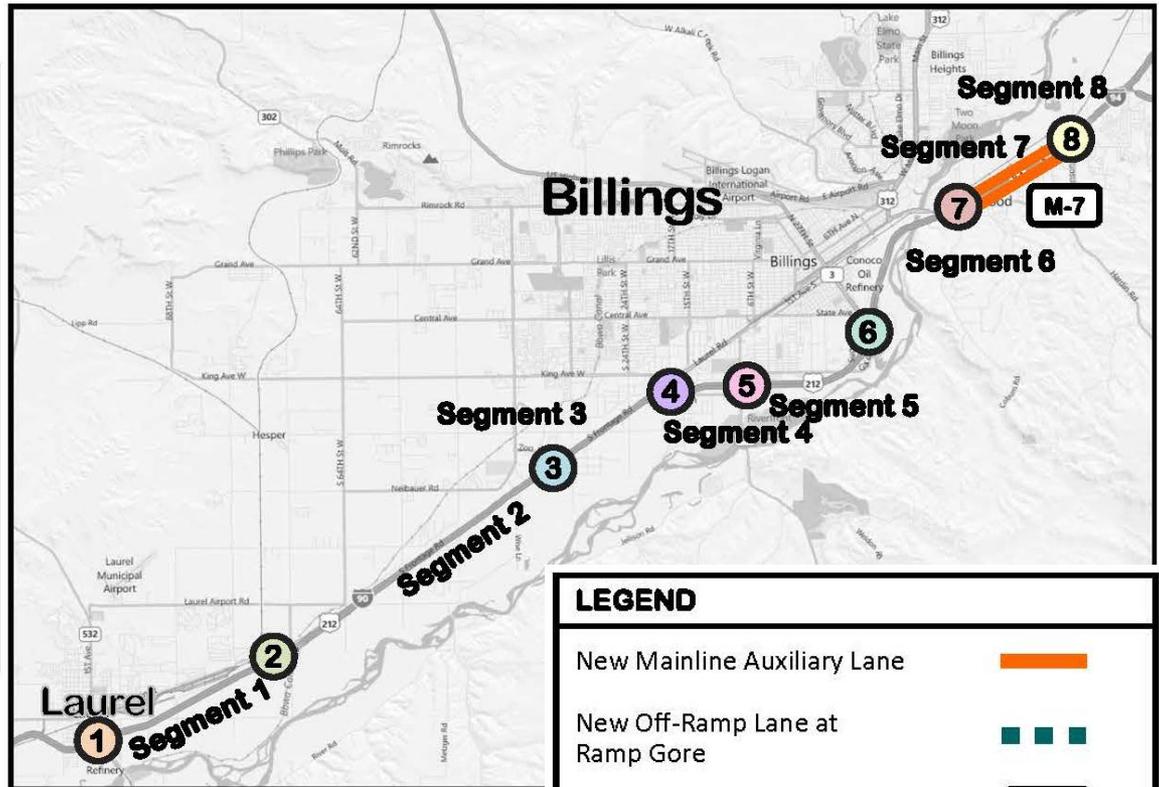
# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## 8. Johnson Lane Interchange



Figure Not To Scale

Estimated costs reflect construction only.



**LEGEND**

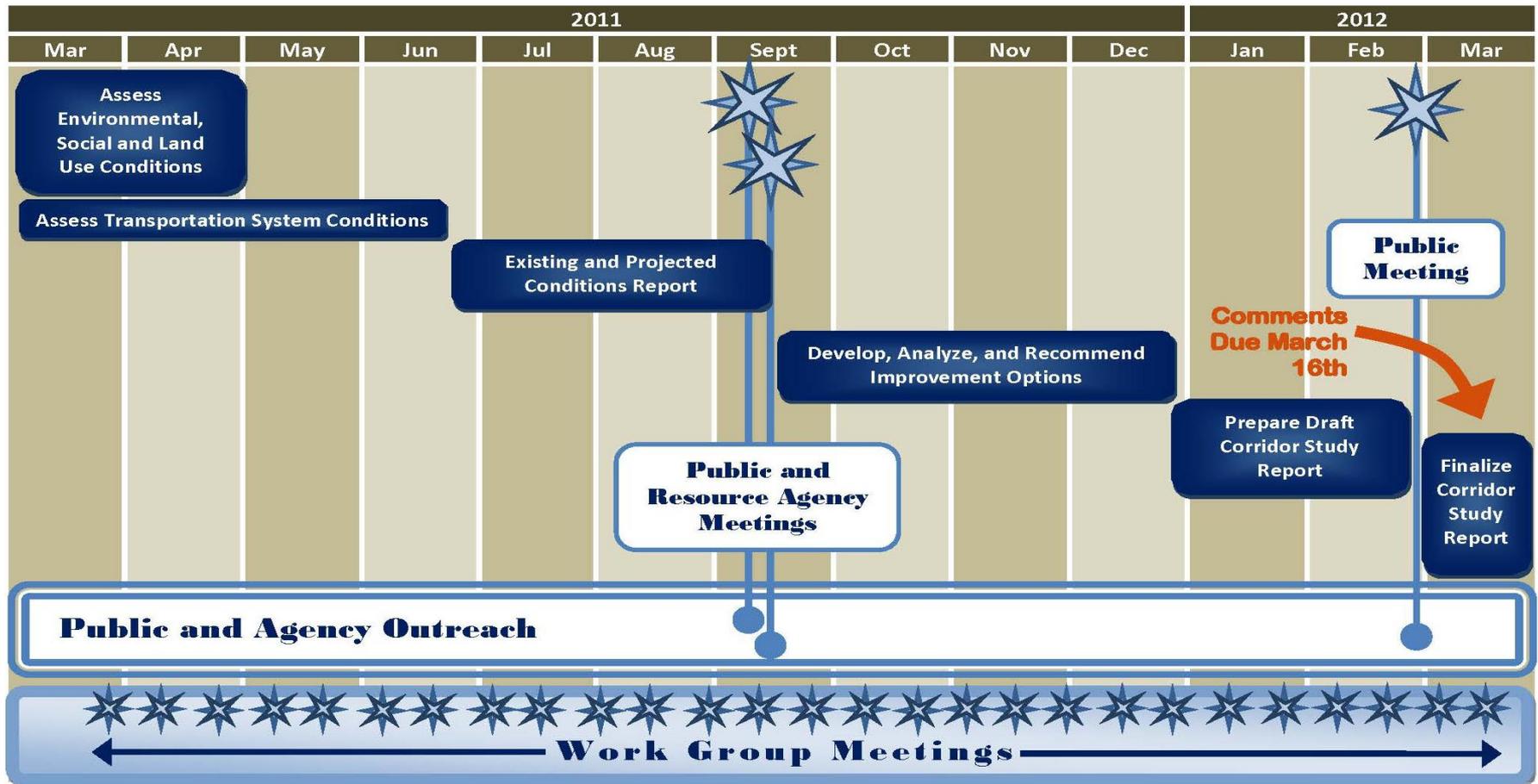
- New Mainline Auxiliary Lane
- New Off-Ramp Lane at Ramp Gore
- Option ID M-7

Location	Option ID	Option Type	Deficiency Year	Planning Priority	Impacts to Environmental Resources	Right-of-Way Acquisition	Estimated Cost
Mainline Segment 7	M-7	Capacity	2027	Long Term	No	No	\$5,800,000



# Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

## Next Steps





# Please Submit Comments!

- **Submit Comment Sheet Tonight**
- **Submit Comments on Website**  
<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor>
- **Call or email:**  
Gary Neville at 406.657.0232 or [gneville@mt.gov](mailto:gneville@mt.gov)  
Sarah Nicolai at 406.442.0370 or [snicolai@dowlhkm.com](mailto:snicolai@dowlhkm.com)  
Tom Kahle at 406.444.9211 or [tkahle@mt.gov](mailto:tkahle@mt.gov)
- **Mail comments to:**  
Sarah Nicolai  
DOWL HKM  
PO Box 1009  
Helena, MT 59624

**Comments Due March 16, 2012**



**DOWL HKM**

## MEMORANDUM

**Physical Address:**  
104 East Broadway  
Suite G-1  
Helena, Montana 59601

**Mailing Address:**  
P.O. Box 1009  
Helena, Montana 59624

Phone: (406) 442 - 0370

Fax: (406) 442 - 0377

---

To: Tom Kahle  
MDT Project Manager

From: Sarah Nicolai  
DOWL HKM Project Manager

Date: March 23, 2012

**Subject: Draft Minutes  
Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study  
Informational Meeting #2**

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### Introduction

The second informational meeting for the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study was held on February 28, 2012 at the Parmly Billings Library in Billings, MT. The following team members, MDT and FHWA representatives were in attendance:

Tom Kahle	MDT – Planning Division
Stefan Streeter	MDT – Billings District
Gary Neville	MDT – Billings District
Tom Gocksch	MDT – Environmental Bureau
Fred Bente	MDT – Consultant Design
Alan Woodmansey	FHWA – Operations Engineer
Sarah Nicolai	DOWL HKM
Todd Cormier	DOWL HKM
David Stoner	DOWL HKM

Three members of the public attended the informational meeting.

### Media Coordination

The informational meeting was advertised on February 12 and 26, 2012 in the Billings Gazette and February 8 and 22, 2012 in the Laurel Outlook. A press release was emailed to radio stations, newspapers, and other local media outlets on February 17, 2012. Print copies of the Draft Corridor Study Report were mailed to the following viewing locations.

- MDT Statewide and Urban Planning Section (2960 Prospect Avenue; Helena, MT)
- MDT Billings District Office (424 Morey Street; Billings, MT)
- City of Billings Planning & Community Services Planning Division (510 N. Broadway; Billings, MT)
- City of Billings Public Works Engineering Division (2224 Montana Avenue; Billings, MT)
- Yellowstone County Public Works Dept. (217 N. 27th Street; Billings, MT)
- Parnly Billings Library (510 N. Broadway; Billings, MT)

Copies of the display advertisement and press release are provided at the end of this memorandum.

### **Presentation**

A presentation was conducted by Sarah Nicolai. The presentation began with an introduction of MDT, FHWA, and DOWL HKM representatives. Sarah explained the corridor planning study process and benefits. The presentation continued with an overview of the study area and analysis locations. Key findings from the Draft Corridor Study Report were highlighted, including corridor needs and objectives and recommended improvement options. The presentation concluded with an overview of next steps in the corridor study planning process. A copy of the presentation, sign-in sheet, and other meeting materials are provided at the end of this memorandum.

### **Comments**

No written comments were received at the meeting. Two written comments were received during the comment period, which closed on March 16, 2012.

The following matrix summarizes comments provided during the informational meeting and the study comment period.

<b>Comments Provided During Informational Meeting on February 28, 2012</b>	<b>Response</b>
Is construction of auxiliary lanes a step before construction of a third through travel lane? Would auxiliary lanes or a third through travel lane be more conducive to future growth in the Billings area?	Auxiliary lanes are typically developed where additional capacity is needed between adjacent interchanges, due to traffic volumes entering the Interstate at one interchange and exiting the Interstate at the following interchange. Through travel lanes are typically constructed where additional capacity is needed due to traffic volumes continuing through one or more downstream interchanges. Additional analysis will be completed during project development to determine lane configurations.

<p><b>Comments Provided During Informational Meeting on February 28, 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Response</b></p>
<p>When will the improvement options be constructed?</p>	<p>The corridor study presents potential improvement options that could be considered as funding allows. MDT has nominated the two Yellowstone Bridge structures for replacement based on the results of the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study. MDT will identify appropriate funding and timeframes for project programming and construction.</p>
<p>Would the roundabouts proposed at the Mossmain Interchange address capacity needs at the crossroad intersections?</p>	<p>The proposed roundabout configuration is anticipated to address the capacity needs at the Mossmain Interchange intersections. Several other options were considered in this location, including braided ramps, a single point urban interchange, reconstruction of the frontage roads, and signal optimization. The roundabout configuration is just one solution identified to address the capacity needs at the interchange intersections. Roundabouts and other configurations will be considered during project development.</p>
<p>Who would be responsible for maintaining the proposed roundabouts at the Mossmain Interchange intersections?</p>	<p>MDT would be responsible for maintaining the roundabouts at the Mossmain Interchange intersections. However, MDT may enter into agreements for the maintenance of landscaping if specialized landscaping is requested.</p>

<p><b>Comments Provided During Informational Meeting on February 28, 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Response</b></p>
<p>What is the overall cost savings of a roundabout as opposed to a signalized intersection?</p>	<p>The initial construction costs between building a roundabout and a traffic signal are comparable. A roundabout may need more right-of-way within the actual intersection, but requires less space on the streets approaching the roundabout. Roundabouts usually require less overall right-of-way to build than a signal with turn lanes because traffic doesn't have to line up and wait for a green light. In addition to reducing congestion and increasing safety, roundabouts eliminate hardware, maintenance and electrical costs associated with traffic signals. However, there are typically more overhead lights and additional maintenance with the central island landscaping at a roundabout. Many communities are also favorable to the aesthetics of a well-designed and landscaped roundabout. There is typically little difference in the overall cost and maintenance between a signalized intersection and a roundabout. Additional cost savings over the lifetime of the intersection can be realized by improved safety and improved efficiency (less CO2 emissions and associated gasoline consumption).</p>
<p>How far was traffic projected when the Shiloh Interchange was originally constructed?</p>	<p>Traffic was projected for 20 years. The Shiloh interchange was constructed in 2001 with traffic projected to 2021. The analysis completed for this study indicates by 2027 traffic will have increased to a point where improvements may be necessary at the westbound off-ramp.</p>
<p>Money can be saved by choosing the right configuration of auxiliary lanes or three through travel lanes. Billings will be big enough for three through travel lanes at some point.</p>	<p>Additional analysis would be necessary during project development to determine if auxiliary lanes or additional through travel lanes are warranted.</p>
<p>The Lockwood Interchange on-and off-ramps are not long enough.</p>	<p>A study of the Lockwood Interchange intersections were completed in 2006, and the recommendations from that study are still considered valid. Roundabouts at the crossroad intersections were recommended for the Lockwood Interchange. It is anticipated that roundabouts would correct the intersection proximity issues (by incorporating Coburn Road, which also alleviates the future need to signalize this intersection), and avoiding more costly widening to the bridge structure.</p>

<p><b>Comments Provided During Informational Meeting on February 28, 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Response</b></p>
<p>When will work on the Lockwood Interchange begin?</p>	<p>Nomination of projects will be determined by MDT based upon available funding.</p>
<p><b>Written Comments Provided During the Comment Period Ending March 16, 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Response</b></p>
<p>Letter received from the Montana Historical Society dated February 24, 2012:</p> <p>Thank you for the invitation. We will not be attending the meeting, but look forward to working with Jon Axline and Steve Platt on this undertaking when required. We have no comments on the Corridor Planning Study.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>Letter received from the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) dated March 13, 2012:</p> <p>In reviewing the Study, it appears the only identified project that would require additional review from DNRC Trust Lands is the proposed reconstruction of the eastbound and westbound I-90 bridges that span the Yellowstone River in Section 34-T1N-R26E. The DNRC asserts ownership over this portion of the Yellowstone River and have not been able to find evidence that an easement was previously granted to the Montana Department of Transportation for these bridges. The right-of-way illustrations in the Study do not show a right-of-way across the Yellowstone River. Additionally, this conflicts with Table 5.8 that indicates that no right-of-way acquisition is required for Option B-6.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Right-of-way plans (Appendix B) and mainline plan sheets (Appendix D) have been updated to reflect right-of-way/easement boundaries noted on as-built plans for this portion of the corridor. The status of right-of-way/easement agreements would need to be verified during project development.</p> <p>Table 5.8 has been updated to reflect the possible need for additional right-of-way/easement acquisition. Please refer to Appendix D for a discussion of anticipated permitting requirements, including a DNRC Land Use License (LUL) or easement on navigable waters.</p>



## **Informational Meeting**

**Discuss Billings Area I-90 Corridor  
Planning Study  
Tuesday, February 28, 2012 6:00 P.M.  
Parmly Billings Library, 3rd Floor  
510 N. Broadway, Billings, MT**

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) will discuss the study area which includes an approximately 22-mile segment of Interstate 90 (I-90) beginning at the Laurel Interchange (Reference Marker 433.8) and ending immediately west of the Pinehills Interchange (Reference Marker 455.8). The purpose of the meeting is to request community feedback on key findings from the draft corridor study report, including corridor needs and proposed improvement options.

The meeting is for public participation and the public is encouraged to attend. MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any department service, program or activity. For reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please contact Sarah Nicolai at (406) 442-0370 at least two days before the meeting. For the hearing impaired, the TTY number is (406) 444-7696 or (800) 335-7592, or Montana Relay at 711. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request.

Comments may be submitted in writing at the meeting, by mail to Sarah Nicolai, DOWL HKM, P.O. Box 1009, Helena, MT 59624; by email to [snicolai@dowlhkm.com](mailto:snicolai@dowlhkm.com); or online at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor/comments.shtml>

Please indicate comments are for the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study and submit by March 16, 2012.

**From:** [Grant, Paul](#)  
**To:** [BECKY BOHRER](#); [Big Sky Business Journal](#); [Billings - Roadwatch Montana \(jon@roadwatchmt.com\)](#); [Billings Business](#); [BILLINGS GAZETTE](#); [BILLINGS OUTPOST](#); [communicationsnewsfeeds@ashto.org](#); [KBBB FM-KBUL-AM-KCTR-FM-KKBR-FM-KMHK-FM](#); [KBLG-AM-KRKX-FM-KRZN-FM-KYYA-FM](#); [KBLW-FM](#); [KEMC-FM](#); [KEMC-FM](#); [KGHL-AM-KGHL-FM-KOBL-FM-KRSQ-FM-KZRV-FM](#); [KNDZ-KBEZ](#); [KHMT-TV](#); [KPBR-FM-KPLN-FM-KWMMY-FM](#); [KSVI-TV](#); [KTVO-TV](#); [KTVO-TV](#); [KULR-AM-KMZK-AM](#); [KULR-TV](#); [KULR-TV](#); [KULR-TV](#); [KBSR](#); [Laurel Outlook](#)  
**Cc:** [Kahle, Tom](#); [Nicolai, Sarah](#); [Zanto, Lynn \(MDT\)](#); [Kazimi, Zia](#); [Erb, Michelle](#); [Collins, Corrina](#); [Ryan, Lori](#); [Grant, Paul](#); [Road Supervisor](#); [Tim Miller](#); [Yellowstone County Commissioners](#)  
**Subject:** MDT schedules an informational meeting to discuss Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study – Yellowstone County  
**Date:** Thursday, February 16, 2012 8:09:26 AM

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February 16, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information:

Lori Ryan, Public Information, MDT, (406) 444-6821

Informational meeting to discuss Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study – Yellowstone County

Billings - The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is conducting an informational meeting to discuss the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study. The study area includes approximately 22 miles of Interstate 90 (I-90) beginning at the Laurel Interchange (Reference Marker 433.8) and ending immediately west of the Pinehills Interchange (Reference Marker 455.85). The meeting will start at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, February 28, 2012 in the 3rd floor meeting room at the Parmly Billings Library, 510 N. Broadway in Billings.

The purpose of the meeting is to request community feedback on key findings from the draft corridor study report, including corridor needs and proposed improvement options. Beginning on February 20, 2012, the draft corridor study report may be viewed online at

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor/documents.shtml>

Community participation is a very important part of the process, and the public is encouraged to attend. Comments may be submitted in writing at the meeting; by mail to Sarah Nicolai, DOWL HKM, P.O. Box 1009, Helena, MT 59624; by email to [snicolai@dowlhkm.com](mailto:snicolai@dowlhkm.com); or online at

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor/comments.shtml>

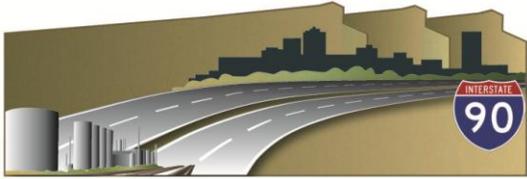
Please indicate comments are for the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study and submit by March 16, 2012.

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any service, program or activity of our department. If you require reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please call Sarah Nicolai at (406) 442-0370 at least two days before the meeting. For the hearing impaired, the TTY number is (406) 444-7696 or 1-800-335-7592, or call Montana Relay at 711. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request.

-----END-----

Project name: Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study  
Yellowstone County





## Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

# Public Meeting

Tuesday, February 28, 2012

**MDT Invites Your Comments:**

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To receive further study information, please provide your name and address:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please leave your comments with staff at the meeting, or mail to:

Sarah Nicolai  
 DOWL HKM  
 PO Box 1009  
 Helena, MT 59624

Please indicate comments are for the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study  
 submit comments by **March 16, 2012.**



February 17, 2012

To: Resource Agency Distribution

Subject: Public Meeting Invitation  
Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is conducting an informational meeting with the public to present the draft Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study. The study area includes approximately 22 miles of Interstate 90 (I-90) beginning at the Laurel Interchange (Reference Marker 433.8) and ending immediately west of the Pinehills Interchange (Reference Marker 455.85). The purpose of the meeting is to request feedback on key findings from the draft corridor study report, including corridor needs and objectives and recommended improvement options.

With this letter, MDT invites you to attend the public meeting.

When: Tuesday, February 28, 2012 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Where: Parmly Billings Library  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Meeting Room  
510 N. Broadway  
Billings, MT 59102

Resource agencies are asked to review and offer their comments on the Draft Corridor Study Report. An electronic version of this document is provided on the enclosed CD, along with a print copy of Newsletter #2 for the study.

Comments may be submitted in writing at the meeting; by mail to Sarah Nicolai, DOWL HKM, P.O. Box 1009, Helena, MT 59624; by email to [snicolai@dowlhkm.com](mailto:snicolai@dowlhkm.com); or online at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor/comments.shtml>.

Please indicate comments are for the Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study and submit by **March 16, 2012**. Additional information about the study is available at the study website (<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/i90corridor/>).

Thank you in advance for your agency's participation.

Sincerely,

Tom S. Martin, P.E., Chief  
Environmental Services Bureau

Enclosure: CD containing Draft Corridor Study Report  
Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study Newsletter #2

**Resource Agency Distribution:**

MT Department of Environmental Quality  
Mr. Charles Homer, Air Permitting &  
Compliance Manager  
Lee Metcalf Building  
1520 East Sixth Avenue  
PO Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620

MT Department of Environmental Quality  
Mr. Jeff Ryan, Environmental Science  
Specialist  
Lee Metcalf Building  
1520 East Sixth Avenue  
PO Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620

MT Department of Environmental Quality  
Mr. Dean Yashan, Environmental Program  
Manager  
Lee Metcalf Building  
1520 East Sixth Avenue  
PO Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620

MT Department of Environmental Quality  
Mr. Robert Ray, Watershed Protection Section  
Supervisor  
Lee Metcalf Building  
1520 East Sixth Avenue  
PO Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620

MT Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Mr. Gary Hammond, Regional Supervisor  
1420 East Sixth Avenue  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620

MT Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Mr. Jim Darling, Habitat Section Supervisor  
1420 East Sixth Avenue  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620

MT Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Mr. Walt Timmerman, Recreation Section  
1420 East Sixth Avenue  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620

MT Department of Natural Resources and  
Conservation  
Mr. Jeff Bollman, AICP, Area Planner  
1371 Rimtop Drive  
Billings, Montana 59105

MT Natural Heritage Program  
Mr. Bryce Maxell, Interim Director  
Montana State Library  
1515 East Sixth Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620

MT State Historic Preservation Office  
Dr. Mark Baumler, Director  
225 North Roberts  
PO Box 201201  
Helena, MT 59620

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Mr. Todd Tillinger, Montana Program  
Manager  
Helena Regulatory Office  
10 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 2200  
Helena, MT 59626

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Ms. Joyce Swartzendruber, State  
Conservationist  
Federal Building, Room 443  
10 East Babcock Street  
Bozeman, MT 59715

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Mr. Mike Nedd, Acting State Director  
5001 Southgate Drive  
Billings, MT 59101

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Mr. Stephen Potts  
Region VIII, Montana Operations Office  
10 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 3200  
Helena, MT 59626

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mr. Mike McGrath, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Montana Field Office  
585 Shepard Way  
Helena, MT 59601

Copies:

Bob Burkhardt, FHWA  
Stefan Streeter, MDT  
Gary Neville, MDT  
Jim Skinner, MDT  
Zia Kazimi, MDT  
Tom Kahle, MDT  
Jean Riley, MDT  
Thomas Gocksch, MDT  
Jeff Olsen, MDT  
LeRoy Wosoba, MDT  
Brian Andersen, MDT  
Debi Meling, City of Billings  
Scott Walker, City of Billings  
Tim Miller, Yellowstone County  
Mike Black, Yellowstone County  
File



February 24, 2012

RECEIVED  
FEB 28 2012  
ENVIRONMENTAL

*Historic Preservation  
Museum  
Outreach & Interpretation  
Publications  
Research Center*

TOM S MARTIN  
CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
2701 PROSPECT AVENUE  
PO BOX 201001  
HELENA MT 59620 1001

RE: Public Meeting Invitation, Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study

Dear Tom,

Thank you for the invitation. We will not be attending the meeting, but look forward to working with Jon Axline and Steve Platt on this undertaking when required. We have no comments on the Corridor Planning Study.

If you have any questions or concerns about what I have written above, you can contact me at (406) 444-0388, or email at [jwarhank@mt.gov](mailto:jwarhank@mt.gov).

Sincerely,



Josef J Warhank  
Review & Compliance Officer

File: MDT/2012

225 North Roberts Street  
P.O. Box 201201  
Helena, MT 59620-1201  
(406) 444-2694  
(406) 444-2696 FAX  
[montanahistoricalsociety.org](http://montanahistoricalsociety.org)

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13 March 2012

Sarah Nicolai  
DOWL HKM  
PO Box 1009  
Helena, MT 59624

Dear Ms. Nicolai:

This letter is written to provide comments on the draft Billings Area I-90 Corridor Planning Study that I received as the DNRC Agency representative for this project.

In reviewing the Study, it appears the only identified project that would require additional review from DNRC Trust Lands is the proposed reconstruction of the eastbound and westbound I-90 bridges that span the Yellowstone River in Section 34-T1N-R26E. The DNRC asserts ownership over this portion of the Yellowstone River and have not been able to find evidence that an easement was previously granted to the Montana Department of Transportation for these bridges. The right-of-way illustrations in the Study do not show a right-of-way across the Yellowstone River. Additionally, this conflicts with Table 5.8 that indicates that no right-of-way acquisition is required for Option B-6.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Study. If you have any questions on these comments, please feel free to contact me at (406) 247-4404 or [jbollman@mt.gov](mailto:jbollman@mt.gov).

Cordially,

Jeff Bollman, AICP  
Area Planner