

Montana Transportation Commission

**July 30, 2015 Meeting
Helena, Montana**

IN ATTENDANCE

Rick Griffith, Transportation Commissioner, Chairman
Barb Skelton, Transportation Commissioner
Carol Lambert, Transportation Commissioner
John Cobb, Transportation Commissioner
Dan Belcourt, Transportation Commissioner
Mike Tooley, Director MDT
Dwane Kailey, MDT Engineering
Lori Ryan, Commission Secretary
Ed Beaudette, MDT Legal
Jim Skinner, MDT Rail Transit Planning
Gary Neville, MDT
Stefan Streeter, MDT
Kevin McLaury, FHWA
Kitty Clemans, Executive Director

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

OPENING – Commissioner Rick Griffith

Commissioner Griffith called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the Commission Meeting of March 26, 2015, May 25, 2015, May 26, 2015, June 9, 2015, and June 23, 2015, were presented for approval.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the minutes for the Commission Meetings of March, 26, 2015, May 25, 2015, May 26, 2015, June 9, 2015, and June 23, 2015. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 1: Surface Transportation Program – Urban Meade Avenue – Glendive

Jim Skinner presented the Surface Transportation Program – Urban, Meade Avenue – Glendive to the Commission. The Surface Transportation Program Urban (STPU) provides funding for improvements on the Urban Highway System in Montana's 19 urban areas. STPU allocation amounts are based on a per capita distribution and are recalculated after each decennial census. Priorities for the use of STPU funds are established via local planning processes with final approval by the Transportation Commission.

MDT is requesting the addition of the following project to the program:

1. Meade Avenue - Glendive: This project is located within the City of Glendive on Meade Avenue from Towne Street to Slocum Street. The proposed project will be a total street reconstruction with new curb and gutter, ADA corners, and sidewalk replacement.

The estimated total cost for all phases is \$1,275,000 (including indirect costs and inflation). Glendive's annual STPU Allocation is \$147,381 with an anticipated letting year (FFY 2017) balance of \$589,524 requiring 4.65 years of borrow from future allocations.

Summary: MDT is requesting Commission approval for a Surface Transportation Program Urban (STPU) project in Glendive with an estimated total cost of \$1,275,000. The project scope will be a total street reconstruction of Meade Avenue with new curb and gutter, ADA corners, and sidewalk replacement.

The proposed project has been prioritized via local planning processes and is consistent with the policy direction established in TRANPLAN-21. Specifically, roadway system performance, traveler safety, and bike/ped features will be enhanced with the addition of this project to the STPU program.

MDT staff recommends that the Commission approve the addition of this project to the program.

Commissioner Griffith asked about the two-year bill. Right now we're funded through 30 days, how do we handle a five-year pledge to the program? Jim Skinner said it is like any project we move forward, we have to assume we will receive the funding. Commissioner Griffith asked if there was a caveat in their agreement. Jim Skinner said there is not a caveat in the standard agreement but I have seen it included in other agreements. Commissioner Griffith said our funding goes day-to-day. From past history we've had 34 day-to-days so it is unlikely we will have to do that but I think it is wise to cover the commitment, just so long as they share the burden. Jim Skinner said he would include that in future agreements.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Surface Transportation Program – Urban, Meade Avenue – Glendive. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 2: Construction Project on State Highway System – Contract Labor Railroad Quiet Zone – Helena

Jim Skinner presented the Construction Project on State Highway System – Contract Labor, Railroad Quiet Zone in Helena to the Commission. The City of Helena is proposing a railroad quiet zone from Carter Drive to Joslyn Street. In order to properly implement the quiet zone, railroad crossings must be modified at Carter Drive (U-5806), Benton Avenue (U-5805), and Montana Avenue (N-128). Proposed improvements are relatively minor and would include raised medians, curbs and gutters at these locations.

MDT headquarters and District staff have reviewed and concur with the recommended improvements. The City of Helena will provide 100 percent of project funding and will be required to complete MDT's design review and approval process (to ensure that all work complies with MDT design standards). All improvements will be consistent with federal requirements (as outlined in 49 CFR Part 222).

Summary: The City of Helena is proposing a project to modify the state highway system to accommodate a railroad quiet zone. The project will be fully funded by the City of Helena and will utilize contract labor to modify railroad crossings at Carter Drive (U-5806), Benton Avenue (U-5805), and Montana Avenue (N-128).

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

Commissioner Griffith asked what a quiet zone was. Jim Skinner said a quiet zone is where the community can implement and work with the railroad to get them to stop blowing their horns at crossings. As a result of them not blowing their horns, they make some safety improvements to make the crossings safer for both pedestrians and vehicles. The ones in Billings have crossing gates to help with safety. Commissioner Lambert said there was actually legislative action that said they had to blow the whistle at all crossings. Jim Skinner said this allows them to get around that. The agreement would be that it doesn't preclude the railroad from blowing their horns but to have some alternate mechanisms. Commissioner Lambert asked if the Commission could give them authority to ignore state law. Jim Skinner said this doesn't do that. Commissioner Griffith asked if the Commission could approve this with the caveat that you will look into it. Jim Skinner said we can make the approval contingent upon this being consistent with state law.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Construction Projects on State Highway System – Contract Labor, Railroad Quiet Zone in Helena pending verification of state law. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 3: Functional Classification/System Designation Secondary 323 – Ekalaka to Alzada

Jim Skinner presented the Functional Classification/System Designation, Secondary 323 – Ekalaka to Alzada to the Commission. The Transportation Commission gives concurrence on functional classification recommendations for public roadways at the state level with final approval by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Functional classification is a method of classifying roads by the service they provide as part of the overall highway system.

In March of 2015, MDT conducted a functional classification review of Secondary 323 (S-323) from Ekalaka to Alzada. The purpose of this review was to determine if the functionality of the roadway had changed due to the conversion of this route to a paved surface (from gravel). As a result of the review, MDT is now advancing the following functional class recommendation for this section of roadway: Rural Minor Arterial.

With this change in functional class, MDT is recommending a Primary Highway System designation for this section of roadway. Justification for this change is based primarily on increased functionality. However, it should be noted that the termination of MT 7 (in Ekalaka) represents the only instance where a Primary route does not connect to an equivalent (or higher) system roadway. Thus, the proposed change would also improve overall system continuity.

Summary: MDT is requesting Transportation Commission approval of a functional classification revision – from Rural Major Collector to Rural Minor Arterial - for Secondary (S-323) from Ekalaka to Alzada. Additionally, staff is requesting designation of this segment of roadway (totaling 72 miles) as a Primary Highway System route.

Staff recommends the Commission approve the following items:

1. Functional Classification Revision:

- a. Reclassify Secondary 323 (S-323), from Ekalaka to Alzada, to a Rural Minor Arterial (from a Rural Major Collector).

This functional classification revision is subject to FHWA approval.

2. System Action:

- a. Remove the noted section of Secondary 323 from the Secondary Highway System.
- b. Add the noted section of Secondary 323 to the Primary Highway System.

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

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Functional Classification/System Designation, Secondary 323 – Ekalaka to Alzada. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Item No. 4: Bridge Replacement Project
Varney Bridge – 8 Miles South of Ennis**

Jim Skinner presented the Bridge Replacement Project, Varney Bridge – 8 Miles South of Ennis to the Commission. MDT's Bridge Bureau reviews bridge conditions statewide and provides recommendations for construction projects to be added to the Bridge Program. At this time, the Bridge Bureau recommends adding the following bridge replacement project to the program:

Varney Bridge – 8 Miles South of Ennis: The intent of this project is to replace an aging structure (known locally as the Varney Bridge) on Secondary 249 (S-249). The bridge is a single-lane structure originally built in 1897. Madison County received a TSEP grant in the amount of \$750,000 and will be providing local match (another \$750,000) to help facilitate replacement of the bridge. The total estimated project cost is approximately \$6 million.

The proposed project is consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Performance Programming (P3) Process – as well as the policy direction established in TRANPLAN-21. Specifically, roadway system performance and traveler safety will be enhanced with the addition of this project to the program.

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the addition of this project to the Bridge Program.

Dwane Kailey said we have a Bridge Adoption Program. If a local government wants to adopt that bridge, we can compensate them up to the cost of demolition of the structure. Typically we will work with the local governments as we go through the design process to see if there is a mechanism to help. Commissioner Griffith asked if there had been any requests for this bridge. Dwane Kailey said he was not aware of any. Commissioner Griffith said he'd been over the bridge recently and it is not one you would put on a functional highway but maybe on a county road would be better than an old wood structure and it would save a pretty unique bridge.

Commissioner Belcourt asked if the bridge had a historical designation. Jim Skinner said he was not sure but could look that up. Commissioner Griffith said we should do everything we can to try to avoid tearing it down and try to donate it to somebody. Maybe we could send a letter to the counties around the area to see if they would be interested in the bridge. Dwane Kailey said he would work with the District Administrator as well as the Bridge Program; we'll do our best.

Commissioner Lambert said I know of an instance in Powder River County where there is a bridge that the county doesn't want but individual wants it. Is there was a law that says if the county doesn't want it, then the county can recommend to sell it or give it to that individual. Is there a law that precludes them from doing that? Dwane Kailey said there are mechanisms for private parties to adopt these bridges as well. The challenge is getting them into place and getting them secured; it is very expensive. A lot of people think that when they've got the bridge then it is very inexpensive but to set up the foundations and re-establish a deck and maintain them is very expensive. Commissioner Lambert asked if it would be cheaper than tearing down the bridge. Dwane Kailey said not necessarily. The two bridges sitting outside of Helena have that issue. They thought it would be very inexpensive to adopt those and put them back into place. Now they are sitting there rusting today because of the cost of reinstalling them. Commissioner Lambert asked who the private individual would get ahold of to work with them and discuss it. Dwane Kailey said send them to me and I'll get them in touch with the appropriate individual.

Commissioner Skelton moved to approve the Bridge Replacement Project, Varney Bridge – 8 Miles South of Ennis. Commissioner Lambert seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 5: Missoula District NHS Projects
US 93 – Idaho to Grandview (Kalispell)
US 2 – Cottonwood to Reserve (Kalispell)
US 93 & Treeline Road (Kalispell)
US 93 & 13th Street (Whitefish)

Jim Skinner presented the Missoula District NHS Projects, US 93 – Idaho to Grandview (Kalispell), US 2 – Cottonwood to Reserve (Kalispell), US 93 & Treeline Road (Kalispell), US 93 & 13th Street (Whitefish) to the Commission. The National Highway System (NH) Program finances highway projects to rehabilitate, restore, resurface, and reconstruct Non-Interstate routes on the National Highway System. Montana's Transportation Commission allocates NH funds to MDT districts based on system performance. In response to emerging pavement preservation, operational and safety needs, the Missoula District is advancing two mill/fill and two intersection improvement projects on the National Highway System. The total estimated cost for these NH projects is \$8,393,000.

Summary: The Missoula District is requesting approval to add four projects to the National Highway System (NH) Program. The total estimated cost for all projects is approximately \$8,393,000.

The proposed projects are consistent with the Kalispell and Whitefish Transportation Plans. Additionally, the projects are consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Performance Programming (P3) Process – as well as the policy direction established in TRANPLAN-21. Specifically, roadway system performance and traveler safety will be enhanced with the addition of these projects to the program.

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the addition of these National Highway System (NH) projects to the program.

Commissioner Griffith asked if the \$8.3 million was already in the Red Book under Maintenance. Jim Skinner said these are pavement preservation projects and are in the Red Book under Pavement Preservation. This would just be adding the names to the slots. Commissioner Griffith said there is already money in the budget to take care of it but we are just putting the names in place.

Commissioner Belcourt moved to approve the Missoula District NHS Projects, US 93 – Idaho to Grandview (Kalispell), US 2 – Cottonwood to Reserve (Kalispell), US 93 & Treeline Road (Kalispell), US 93 & 13th Street (Whitefish). Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 6: Glendive District Projects
Fallon Area Culverts
Nashua – East & West
Forsyth – East & West

Jim Skinner presented the Glendive District Projects, Fallon Area Culverts, Nashua – East & West, Forsyth – East & West to the Commission. The Interstate Maintenance (IM) Program finances highway projects to rehabilitate, restore, resurface, and reconstruct routes on the Interstate System. Montana’s Transportation Commission allocates IM funds to MDT Districts based on system performance. In response to emerging safety needs on the Interstate System, the Glendive District is advancing a project to rehabilitate/replace culverts on I-94 near Fallon at an estimated cost of \$3.31 million.

The National Highway System (NH) Program finances highway projects to rehabilitate, restore, resurface, and reconstruct Non-Interstate routes on the National Highway System. Montana’s Transportation Commission allocates NH funds to MDT districts based on system performance. In response to emerging pavement preservation needs on the National Highway System, the Glendive District is advancing a project to resurface (overlay) approximately 10.2 miles of US-2 near Nashua at an estimated cost of \$6.33 million.

The Surface Transportation Program – Primary (STPP) finances highway projects to rehabilitate, restore, resurface, and reconstruct routes on the state’s Primary Highway System. Montana’s Transportation Commission allocates STPP funds to MDT districts based on system performance. In response to emerging pavement needs, the Glendive District is advancing a rehabilitation project on P-95 in Forsyth at an estimated cost of \$4.83 million.

Summary: The Glendive District is requesting approval to add three projects to the highway program. The total estimated cost for all projects is approximately \$14,465,000. The amounts originating in specific programs are listed below:

Interstate Maintenance	\$ 3,306,000
National Highway System	\$ 6,334,000
Surface Transportation Program Primary	<u>\$ 4,825,000</u>
	\$14,465,000

The proposed projects are consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Performance Programming (P3) Process – as well as the policy direction established in TRANPLAN-21. Specifically, roadway system performance and traveler safety will be enhanced with the addition of these projects to the program.

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the addition of these Glendive District projects to the program.

Commissioner Griffith asked if these were maintenance projects or regular projects. Jim Skinner said two are overlays and are regular projects and one is a preservation project. Commissioner Griffith asked why they weren't in the Red Book. I assume they didn't have the projects identified at that time. Commissioner Griffith asked what the ready date was for this project. Jim Skinner said they don't have a date since they aren't in the Red Book. Commissioner Griffith said so essentially we are putting these in the Red Book. Jim Skinner said yes. Commissioner Belcourt asked about Nashua East and West. That is on the Fort Peck Reservation so has there been coordination with the Tribe. Jim Skinner said he was planning on contacting the Tribe. Any work we do on Reservations has a process we follow.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Glendive District Projects, Fallon Area Culverts, Nashua – East & West, Forsyth – East & West. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 7: Highway Safety Improvement Program – On-System HSIP Project

Jim Skinner presented the Highway Safety Improvement Program – On-System HSIP Project to the Commission. The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) makes federal funding available to states to assist with the implementation of a data-driven and strategic approach to improving highway safety on all public roads. In Montana, the primary focus of the HSIP program involves identifying locations with crash trends (where feasible countermeasures exist) and prioritizing work according to benefit/cost ratios.

MDT is proposing to add an intersection improvement project to the HSIP Program in the Great Falls District. The project is located on US-12, east of the I-15 Interchange in Helena, near Shepard Way and Lola Street. The intent of the project is to improve operations in the area and enhance safe access to US-12.

The project will extend Shepard Way (to US-12) and install a traffic signal at the intersection of US-2 and Shepard Way. Additionally, the project will limit access at Lola Street (right turn only) and obliterate approaches to the east and west of Shepard Way. Lastly, the project will realign the Frontage Road to provide enhanced queuing on Shepard Way.

The project meets the criteria set forth for HSIP-funded projects and the total estimated cost is \$1,826,000 (see below for details).

Project Name	Scope	Signed Route (Dept. Rte.)	RP	Length (miles)	PE	CN	CE	Total Est. Cost (all phases)
SF 159 Lola Shepard Int Imprv	Intersect. Improve	US-12, US-287, Prospect Ave. (N-8)	46.6	0.6	\$195,000	\$1,127,000	\$169,000	*\$1,826,000

*Includes costs for IC (\$63,000) and RW (\$272,000).

Summary: MDT is asking the Commission to approve the addition of one project (shown above) to the Highway Safety Improvement Program. The proposed project is consistent with the Helena Area Transportation Plan and the objectives identified in the Performance Programming (P3) Process – as well as the policy direction

established in TRANPLAN-21. Specifically, traveler safety and access management will be enhanced with the addition of this project to the HSIP program.

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

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Highway Safety Improvement Program – On-System HSIP Project. Commissioner Belcourt seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Elected Officials/Public Comment

No public comment

Agenda Item No. 8: Secondary Roads Program – Preservation Project - Cascade East

Jim Skinner presented the Secondary Roads Program – Preservation Project, Cascade East to the Commission. MDT is requesting Commission approval to advance a pavement preservation project in the Great Falls District. This project will be funded via the Surface Transportation Program – Secondary (STPS). The Secondary Highway System includes any highway not classified as a local route or rural minor collector that the Transportation Commission has chosen to include on the Secondary Highway System. Funding is distributed by formula.

District 3 (Great Falls) has nominated this project for the 2018 Pavement Preservation Program. The following table provides location, scope, and cost information:

Project Name	Scope	Signed Route (Dept. Rte.)	Beg. RP	Length (miles)	PE	CN	CE	Est. Cost (all phases)
Cascade - East	Overlay	Secondary 330 (S-330)	36.754	0.170	\$101,000	\$507,000	\$51,000	\$659,000

Summary: MDT is requesting Commission approval to add a pavement preservation project to the Great Falls District Secondary Program. The total estimated cost for the project is approximately \$659,000.

The proposed project is consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Performance Programming (P3) Process as well as the policy direction established in TRANPLAN-21. Specifically, roadway system performance and traveler safety will be enhanced with the addition of this project to the program.

MDT staff recommends that the Commission approve the addition of this project to the program.

Commissioner Lambert asked if it was a bridge. Commissioner Griffith said it was not a bridge.

Commissioner Skelton moved to approve the Secondary Roads Program – Preservation Project, Cascade East. Commissioner Lambert seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item No. 9: Interim Speed Limit Recommendation
Hutton Ranch Road – X-15996**

Dwane Kailey presented the Interim Speed Limit Recommendation, Hutton Ranch Road – X-15996 to the Commission. As you may recall Hutton Ranch Road was actually rebuilt. It has a posted speed limit on it right now and we're asking you to endorse the interim speed limit until we can get a speed study done. Staff recommends:

A 35 mph speed limit on Hutton Ranch Road (X-15996) beginning at the intersection with US 93 and continuing to the intersection with West Reserve Drive, an approximate distance of 0.8-miles.

We have a letter of concurrence from the City of Kalispell.

Commissioner Lambert said if there is already a speed limit on that road then the Commission must have put it on. Dwane Kailey said when we rebuilt this road we had to post some sort of a speed limit on it so we put in a 35 mph speed limit because it is urban. We thought that was appropriate. We are now asking you to endorse that interim speed limit until we can get a speed study done.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Interim Speed Limit Recommendation for Hutton Ranch Road – X-15996. Commissioner Belcourt seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item No. 10: Interim Speed Limit Recommendation
Interstate 15 & Interstate 90**

Dwane Kailey presented the Interim Speed Limit Recommendation, Interstate 15 & Interstate 90 to the Commission. In the last Legislative Session, Senate Bill 375 approved a speed increase on the Interstate System to 80 mph, however, in working with the Legislature we were able to secure language that allowed the Commission and the Department of Transportation authority to establish interim speeds in certain areas until such time as we could complete a speed study and then establish the speed appropriately. With that the staff has reviewed the level of service of safety of the Interstate System and they also have driven it. At this time we are recommending we adopt an interim speed limit. We recommend perpetuating the 75 mph speed limit pending an engineering and traffic investigation along:

Interstate 15 – 75 mph / Trucks 65 mph

Milepost 142.7 (North end of Elk Park) to Milepost 164.165 (South of Boulder Int.), an approximate distance of 21.465-miles.

Milepost 216.705 (North of Sieben Int.) to Milepost 248.0 (North of Hardy Creek Int.), an approximate distance of 31.295-miles.

Interstate 90 – 75 mph / Trucks 65 mph

Milepost 0.0 (Montana/Idaho Line) to Milepost 34.180 (East of St. Regis Int.), an approximate distance of 34.18-miles.

* Milepost 94.2850 (West of Desmet Int.) to Milepost 103.420 (begin of 65 mph zone), an approximate distance of 8.02-miles.

The speed limit will remain 65 mph in place as posted within the Missoula Urban Area.

* Milepost 107.660 (end of 65 mph zone) to Milepost 114.510 (East side of Turah Int.), an approximate distance of 6.85-miles.

Milepost 228.0 (North of Continental Dr. Int.) to Milepost 242.550 (East of Pipestone Int.), an approximate distance of 14.55-miles.

Milepost 294.8 (West of Belgrade) to milepost 319.100 (West of Jackson Cr. Rd. Int), an approximate distance of 24.3-miles.

* This portion of I-90 is located within the boundaries of the E&W Missoula Urbanized Area description. It is suspected that the new boundaries may be too far removed from the developed-congested area, and would benefit from an engineering and traffic investigation to define a more operationally valid speed zone.

Interim speed limits approved for the Interstate System will go into effect October 1, 2015.

Commissioner Belcourt asked how long it takes to do a speed study. Dwane Kailey said we have a fair number of speed studies on our docket so it can take anywhere from six months to about a year and a half to do them. We are proposing, because of the statute and the Interstate System itself, to collect the data the remainder of this summer and into the fall. We are hoping to come back to you with recommendations by spring or early summer next year.

In an area of full disclosure, we do have another initiative taking place right now as well. The department is reviewing the opportunity for various speed limits. A number of states in certain areas have adopted variable speed limits in association with weather. For example, Idaho, Wyoming and Washington State have a few. They vary the speed depending on weather conditions. We've identified a fair number of areas in the state where the level-of-service-of-safety is higher than what we would expect and it is associated with weather. So we're going to conduct that investigation along with performing speed studies so it may take us a little bit longer to get back to you on it.

Commissioner Belcourt said the Legislature set a top speed limit. Dwane Kailey said that was correct. They set a statutory speed limit on our system and the Commission has the authority, within that same statute, to set special speed zones. We have to provide you with an engineering recommendation and it is within your authority to adopt a speed limit as you see appropriate. Commissioner Belcourt asked if there was any cap – 85 mph, 90mph, or reasonable and prudent? Dwane Kailey said the statute sets a cap limit. You can exceed that but the only way to increase a speed is based upon local government's concurrence or request to increase that speed.

Commissioner Griffith asked if most of these are through mountainous terrain. Dwane Kailey said yes. Commissioner Griffith said our intent with these is to reduce from the 80 mph speed limit to cover curves and down hills. It is our intent to do a speed study that concurs with the need for that. Dwane Kailey said in these areas we have advisory plates which advise slower speeds. The posted legal speed limit is 75 mph right now. We may see some recommendations for slower than 75 mph, for example Wolf Creek Canyon, Homestake Pass, Lookout Pass. We have a fair number of accidents in those areas and it is from people travelling too fast for the conditions.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Interim Speed Limit Recommendation for Interstate 15 & Interstate 90. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No.11: Speed Limit Recommendation MT 41/US 287 – Twin Bridges

Dwane Kailey presented the Speed Limit Recommendation, MT 41/US 287 – Twin Bridges to the Commission. This is based on a request by the Mayor of Twin Bridges. The department has reviewed the accident history, the roadway culture and characteristics. At this time we are recommending the following:

A 50 mph speed limit beginning at station 515+00, project FAP 281-C (2,500 feet north of the intersection with 10th Avenue) and continuing south to station 523+00, an approximate distance of 800 feet.

A 40 mph speed limit beginning at station 523+00, project FAP 281-C (1,700 feet north of the intersection with 10th Avenue) and continuing south to station 549+00, an approximate distance of 1,500 feet.

A 30 mph speed limit beginning at station 549+00, project FAP 281-D (200 feet north of the intersection with 10th Avenue) and continuing south to station 588+00, an approximate distance of 3,900 feet.

A 40 mph speed limit beginning at station 588+00, project FAP 281-D (300 feet south of the intersection with 1st Avenue) and continuing south to station 595+00, an approximate distance of 700 feet.

A 50 mph speed limit beginning at station 595+00, project FAP 281-D (1,000 feet south of the intersection with 1st Avenue) and continuing south to station 610+00, an approximate distance of 1,500 feet.

Commissioner Griffith asked about the concurrence of Twin Bridges. Are they concurring with the recommendation of doing something different or just concurrence in general? Dwane Kailey said what I understand is that they are okay with the speed but they would like us to take a look at the school traffic and see if there are other improvements we need to do there as well. Commissioner Griffith asked if they are eligible for a school crossing zone like the one in Winston. Dwane asked if he was referring to the 20% reduction. Commissioner Griffith said yes. Dwane Kailey said he would look into that. Commissioner Griffith said you're taking their letter as absolute concurrent but looking into it further. Dwane Kailey said my understanding is they are concurring with the speed limit but want us to look at the school crossing to see if there are other improvements that need to be made and we will do that.

Commissioner Skelton moved to approve the Speed Limit Recommendation for MT 41/US 287 – Twin Bridges. Commissioner Belcourt seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 12: Speed Limit Recommendation Secondary 540 – East River Road

Dwane Kailey presented the Speed Limit Recommendation, Secondary 540 – East River Road to the Commission. This is the road that starts at US 89 north of Gardner and continues north along the Yellowstone River to an intersection with US 89 south of Livingston. We could find no evidence that the Commission had adopted a special speed zone nor are the speeds currently posted at the statutory 70 mph. With that we reviewed the accident history, the roadway culture, and the traveling speeds along the route. At this time we are recommending the following:

South end of Corridor

A 55 mph speed limit beginning at milepost 0.0 – intersection with US 89 and continuing north to milepost 24.3 (500' south of the intersection with Sunset Trail Road), an approximate distance of 24.3 miles.

Pine Creek – Pine Creek School Segment

A 45 mph speed limit 500 feet south of the intersection with Sunset Trail Road and continuing north to straight-line diagram station 26+00 (200' south of the Pine Creek Bridge), an approximate distance of 900 feet.

Then a 35 mph speed limit beginning at straight-line diagram station 26+00 (200' south of the Pine Creek Bridge) and continuing north to station 49+00, an approximate distance of 2,300 feet.

A 45 mph speed limit beginning at straight-line diagram station 49+00 (400' south of milepost 25.0) and continuing north to station 100+00, an approximate distance of 5,100 feet. *(Park County officials have the option to invoke a 35 mph school zone speed limit within the portion of this 45 mph speed zone that passes in front of the Pine Creek School, having an approximate distance of 1,100 feet.)*

North end of Corridor

A 55 mph speed limit beginning at milepost 25.9 (400' north of Weeping Wall Way) and continuing north to the end of the route at the intersection with US 89, an approximate distance of 5.2 miles.

Just for clarity there is a 35 mph speed limit in conjunction with the Pine Creek School. Our speed study doesn't necessarily support that but with the 45 mph zone and the county's adoption of the 85% rule, they can have the 35 mph zone. We have presented this to local officials and they have concurred with it.

Commissioner Griffith read a letter from a constituent that expressed fears and concerns about raising the speed limit on the road. She stated that her family uses that road and there are no shoulders with limited sight due to hills and curves. She expressed great safety concerns about the speed limit being increased to 55 mph since drivers would be exceeding that by at least 10 mph. She asked that the speed limit not be raised any greater than 45 mph on the East River Road due to safety concerns.

Commissioner Griffith asked Dwane if she was right that the speed limit would be raised from 35 mph to 45 mph in that area. Dwane Kailey said he was not sure what she meant about the south end. The first 24 miles is currently 55 mph and we are maintaining that. The only changes are in and around Pine Creek. There are some slight changes from 35 mph to 45 mph but in and around the school it will remain 35 mph. If she is in Pine Creek she may see a little bit of an increase from 35 mph to 45 mph. Commissioner Griffith asked Dwane whether he believed they were not raising the speed limit anywhere in the corridor. Dwane said there is a slight increase in and around Pine Creek from 35 mph to 45 mph but other than that we are not increasing the speed on the corridor. Commissioner Griffith asked what part he was referring to. Dwane showed him a drawing and said the dashed blue line is posted 55 mph and that is what we are recommending. Just south of Pine Creek the red dashed line means we are proposing to go to 45 mph and then we transition to 35 mph for a little ways and then the right side goes to red again for 45 mph and the left side stays at 35 mph up to the school. We are proposing 35 mph in and around the school and then transition back to 45 mph and 55 mph from there.

Commissioner Griffith said that is on the north end and she is talking about the south end. Dwane said she would be agreeable to not more than 45 mph and at this time we are not changing it above 45 mph. Commissioner Griffith said it looks like we are raising her speed limit in front of her house. He asked if we could hold this

item until we have a chance to clarify. Dwane said they could hold it until the next meeting.

Commissioner Lambert asked about public comment. Dwane Kailey said we don't take this to public comment, we present it to the local officials. They will typically hear it in a public meeting and write us a letter of concurrence or with comment. Commissioner Griffith asked if we know whether or not there was opportunity given for public comment. Dwane Kailey said we don't know that. Commissioner Griffith asked if Dwane could find out whether this went to public comment. All Commission meetings should be public notice and have agenda items available. That's the intent of the Montana Open Meeting Law. Dwane Kailey said typically District staff presents the recommendation to the city or county commission in a public meeting forum. They will explain what the recommendation is and what the changes are. They receive comment back and then after the meeting the council will write us a letter of concurrence or comment.

Tabled

Agenda Item No. 13: Speed Limit Recommendation US 93 Ravalli

Dwane Kailey presented the Speed Limit Recommendation, US 93 Ravalli to the Commission. As you may recall we installed an interim speed zone in this area quite some time ago in 2012. At this time we have reviewed the traveling the speeds, the accident history, the roadway culture and configuration and we are making the following recommendation:

A 60 mph speed limit beginning at metric station 403+00, project NH 52(120) (milepost 24.65) and continuing north to metric station 436+60, an approximate distance of 2.1 miles.

A 45 mph speed limit beginning at metric station 436+60, project NH 5-2(121) (350' south of Thornton Rd.) and continuing north to metric station 455+00, an approximate distance of 1.14 miles.

With that we asked for a comment both from local government as well as the Tribal government. In this case we have concurrence from the Tribal government. We have concurrence for the existing interim from the local government which is not consistent with what we are recommending. So we present this to you with staff's recommendation. We believe this is appropriate. We extended the 60 mph speed zone a little bit south to be more consistent with what we feel is the canyon and some challenges for driving. We ask the Commission to adopt it as such. Commissioner Griffith asked if it was the least restrictive. Dwane said that is correct. Commissioner Belcourt said he reviewed the letters and I agree with the department's recommendations.

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

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 14: Certificates of Completion April & May 2015

Dwane Kailey presented the Certificates of Completion for April & May 2015 to the Commission. They are presented for your review and approval. Staff recommends

your approval. We also included information on the projects where the costs grew through the construction process to help you see why that growth occurred.

Commissioner Griffith said he noticed as the projects come through that we don't have any project specific goals yet. The report says we do have DBE goals, is that correct? Dwane Kailey said some of these projects take multiple years to construct and then complete so what you're seeing are older projects. Commissioner Griffith said the payments to DBE's is much greater than both the goal and statewide achievement goal. On these projects, what is the percentage of DBE? Dwane said they didn't sum this so all the project tally. I believe our Civil Right Section sends you information on the program as a whole is doing.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Certificates of Completion for April & May 2015. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 15: Project Change Orders April & May 2015

Dwane Kailey presented the Project Change Orders for April & May 2015 to the Commission. They are presented for your review and approval. Staff recommends your approval.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Project Change Orders for April & May 2015. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 16: Liquidated Damages

Dwane Kailey presented the Liquidated Damages to the Commission. They are presented for your review and approval. Staff recommends your approval.

We have one project presented. It is a Safety Project southeast of Helmville. The contractor was HL Construction, Inc. They are not disputing the Liquidated Damages of 27 days. The dollar value was \$22,329.00. With them not disputing and the Commission accepting, there is no need for action.

Commissioner Griffith said we looked at a lot of projects yesterday, do you expect any liquidated damages in some of the projects that had some removal actions going on. Stefan Streeter said they did. Red Lodge Robinson will be slipping into liquidated damages any day. All the re-work is due to poor performance and poor material so none of that justifies additional time so we expect substantial liquidated damages on that project. Commissioner Lambert asked if they pay for all of the changes and pay liquidated damages too. Stefan Streeter said that is correct, they pay the liquidated damages as well as pay for the repair work.

Commissioner Griffith said Stefan took them on a very good tour. It was both informative and productive. Thank you to Commissioner Skelton and Stefan Streeter; we did a lot of things in a short amount of time and saw a lot of projects, both good and bad. I appreciate seeing both sides of that. It was an excellent tour.

STAND

Agenda Item No. 17: Letting Lists

July 9th through December 2015

Dwane Kailey presented the Letting Lists to the Commission. They are presented for your review and approval. Staff recommends your approval. You are fairly aware that there are troubles with federal funding. With your approval, please understand we may have to take action contrary to what we're presenting to you based on what funds we receive. Commissioner Lambert said our motion can be contingent upon federal action.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Letting Lists contingent upon monies being available to let these projects. Commissioner Skelton seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 18: 2016 Proposed Letting Schedule

Dwane Kailey presented the 2016 Proposed Letting Schedule to the Commission. They are presented for your review and approval. Staff recommends your approval. We have worked with MCA and attempted to accommodate their annual fall meeting with our letting schedule. We've also set a five-week advertisement for the January 2016 to avoid conflict with the Christmas holiday and the MCA. We are proposing two lettings per month in February, March, April, May and September. Then one letting each month thereafter.

Commissioner Lambert moved to approve the Proposed Letting Schedule. Commissioner Belcourt seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

Directors Discussion & Follow-up

Federal Funding:

Director Tooley said we are going to talk about federal and state funding. In about 45 minutes we expect the Senate to vote on a six-year highway bill. We expect that to pass. So the policy side of this will be completed in the Senate. Yesterday the House passed a three-month funding extension and then adjourned. So the House won't be there to take up the Senate's Bill. So basically the Senate is going to have to accept a three-month federal funding extension while they continue to argue over the "pay fors" in the Senate Bill as they go forward. So the good news is we expect there will be an extension but the bad news is we expect there will be an extension instead of a six-year bill. I was in Washington D.C. two weeks ago and talked to the Delegation; they are all on the same page. Our Delegation understands the issues and they are working hard to make sure that this longer term vision comes to pass. Again, I make the same comment to them every time, if they would please educate the other 532 members of Congress to that level, this would all be settled very quickly.

So where does that leave us? We're expecting three months of federal funding and authority that will allow us to open the bids on the Kalispell Bypass. From there, that's about it. We're going to be talking about contingency plans and what this looks like. So you're aware, we have authorized some advance construction. That's appropriate given the current state balances. However, with the issues with the state fund and the uncertainty about continuing extension on the federal side, and the amount of risk the department is taking, we've about reached our comfort limit. So the meeting next week will be to talk about state balances, anticipation of what will happen on the federal side, and what we will do going forward. It might be that we

are comfortable to continue putting out some projects and/or it may be we stop for a while until we understand exactly what Congress is going to do. We will keep you completely informed. The opinions are pretty broad on this issue but they will brief me next week, show me numbers, and then we'll talk about it.

Commissioner Griffith asked which was more pressing, federal funding or the state balance issue. Director Tooley said we pay for everything up front so state balances are always the first thing we look at. Right now, however, we are able to advance construct some of these projects knowing that we've got at least three months of federal funding coming in and at \$.87 on the dollar, federal funding is the biggest part but first you consider what's in your checkbook anticipating that federal reversal. So state funding is number one. Right now, although we project a deficit at the end of fiscal 2017, this is not Fiscal 2017 and we still have state balances so we can advance construct some things. We're getting to the point where we're getting a little nervous about these three-month extensions. That is what the meeting next week is about – to square all that away. So when you vote on letting lists you know that if we have the money that is our plan.

Commissioner Griffith asked if the Reauthorization includes both more money and the same money. If it is, does it adjust the ratio money we get versus our competitive states? Director Tooley said that is a great question. The Senate Bill we like very much. It isn't perfect which makes it likely to pass. It does include current level funding plus inflation. The formulas haven't changed so Montana will actually realize more cash should the Senate Bill pass and be funded. The argument with the Senate Bill is how you pay for it. It is a six-year bill and the Delegation all said to a person that the acceptable "pay fors" is probably two or three years. So you get a six-year policy bill with hopefully two years of funding behind it. Two of the big chunks of money are in the "pay fors" that is where the battle is – the Import/Export Bank is attached to it. Some members of Congress in both houses feel very strongly about that. Also some federal pension reform is in there and the other side of the isle feels very strongly about that. So I think that's where the discussions will be over the next few months – where the cash actually comes from. For Montana the Senate Bill is actually very good. Rural states didn't lose anything and that's kind of a win at this point. We're in good shape if the Senate Bill passes and our lives will all be much easier to plan. The state fund is where everything starts.

Revenue Transportation Interim Committee Appearance:

I made my first appearance before the Revenue Transportation Interim Committee. I had a briefing with them about the status of the State Special Revenue Fund. It was good to have that briefing with them and explain that in order to manage cash, the department was going to have to make about \$27 million in spending reductions over the next two years. The whole point was to try and get that Committee interested in actually looking at the issue. As you know the Interim Study for Highway Funding and Projects died in Senate Transportation which was disappointing but the Interim Committee has no studies so they are going to have to study something. My plan was to basically get them interested in the issue enough to want to study it and it looks like they are going to take that up. The Chair is Senator Thomas from Stevensville. He was on Senate Highways and Transportation and he understands the Highway Program. He's interested and I think he's going to appoint a subcommittee to look into this specifically. There were some very good questions from the Committee on that as well. Before I got there they had public comment and one of the groups that came forward was a group that is calling themselves The Transportation Coalition. It's made up of The Contractors Association, Trucking Association, State Chamber of Commerce, and other interested groups. They made it pretty clear that they are very interested in the state making investments in transportation infrastructure. So they set the stage. I came in and explained our situation, the Committee was already fairly well educated by the previous group and asked some pretty good questions.

They are already thinking and they've already got some ideas on how to fix this in the interim and then look at a longer term fix.

Missoula Bridge Issue

Commissioner Griffith said regarding those groups, all the Commissioners received a letter regarding the Missoula bridge pedestrian issue – can you update us on that? Director Tooley said the concern is the design being advanced by Missoula would somehow constrict the limit oversize loads. I think they chose a design that actually works for them and is much better. We've insisted that if an oversized load comes through that there be an option to remove the center piece so it won't restrict oversized loads. It won't be as simple as maybe some of the industry folks would like but it's still an option to get the high and wide loads through Missoula.

Jim Skinner said they have been communicating with them because we have to permit this. We did include the repair the Director mentioned so that the center would be removable and we actually provided the maximum dimension of load on that corridor to the design firm so that it could accommodate that. Is it easy to remove? That's another question. Commissioner Griffith said he was not following what you could remove on a bridge deck. Jim Skinner said it would take a crane to remove the center section. Commissioner Griffith asked about the part they lift out. Jim Skinner said it would be part of the walking structure. They are looking at some innovative ways to design it. This would be a pedestrian overcrossing over Reserve Street. Where old Reserve comes in just north of the Brooks Street Intersection – it would be just below that. This is part of the extension of the Lolo Trail that is being constructed.

Commissioner Lambert asked who would pay the cost of that. Director Tooley said it would fall on the industry. If you want to move a load through that corridor you'd have to pay the cost. Just like everything else – they already pay for traffic control by the Highway Patrol and pay to move utilities temporarily and this would just be one more thing. Commissioner Howlett asked what the cost of the removal would be. Director Tooley said they can't tell them that right now. Kevin McLaury gave them a relative amount (inaudible). Commissioner Griffith asked if there was anything from Federal Highways that gives guidance. There is a thought process that says all our highways are open and unrestricted to all vehicles. Is this something that would make that look restrictive for federal funding? Is the federal funding hurdle of that project okay? Kevin McLaury said he could not answer that specifically. I do know there has been discussions about having to identify certain corridors that accommodate the high and wide loads and we would encourage the department to continue to have those discussions and allowing even swingable arms on lights as standard and things like that. If they weren't it would even be more restrictive but since the department is taking some action to allow high and wide loads, it's not prohibitive. The local entity is not specifically trying to build a structure that would limit the industry from moving freight and goods through a specific area. It would seem, and I need to check into it, that as long as there are options to raise this or move the structure somehow I doubt that would infringe on federal funding eligibility. I will do some checking on that.

Commissioner Belcourt said we are talking about a huge load not semi-trucks coming through, like mega-loads. Jim Skinner said it would be legal loads. Commissioner Griffith asked if it would be urban funds or National Highway funds. Jim Skinner said it would be entirely funded by the local authority. They are going to provide us with a full set of designs. Reserve Street is a National Highway System Route so the department is approaching this as encroaching in our right-of-way, so we have to approve the encroachment. Our plan is like the quiet zone, we are planning to bring this in front of the Commission to approve modifications of the System at the next meeting. There will be a maintenance agreement too.

Director Tooley said it was a good question and we definitely don't want to stop commerce on any routes. There has been legislation introduced in past sessions to have a study and determine a commerce corridor and that has not passed. It usually comes down to funding. So where we're at now is to maintain the system, we have to make sure commerce can continue. The loads we're looking at aren't just regular loads – these are highly unusually loads. You might have two per year come through the state. Communities build to every-day usage and these are unusually big loads. I think you can still get most oversized loads underneath but not the mega-loads. Commissioner Griffith said we've had more than a couple of mega loads in a year. Director Tooley said right but we haven't had any that have taken that route in the past year that I recall. They've gone other ways. Commissioner Griffith said wasn't the typical path from Lewiston, Idaho, over Lolo and down through Reserve. Director Tooley said it was but there were challenges on the Idaho side so they chose different routes. Commissioner Griffith asked where the new route would be. Director Tooley said Coeur-d-Alene on I-90. Commissioner Griffith said he didn't know the route had changed. My concern is with the Reserve Street structure but if they are not using it then it's not relevant. Director Tooley they haven't used it but that doesn't mean they won't at some point. Right now it's not to their advantage to consider it. Commissioner Griffith said if they are not using it then \$70,000 isn't an issue either, they are just not using it for other reasons. I'm glad we figured that out because I was under a misconception of what that route was.

Note of Appreciation to Dwane Kailey and his Staff

Director Tooley said we talk a lot about speed zones here and I wanted to say I appreciate Dwane's staff and the work they do on all the speed zones. We had a brief conversation on the Interstate System and if you take a look at what they've done, they've taken a quick look at the entire Interstate System and now we're down to 140 miles that we have to consider. That's pretty impressive. There's still a lot of work left to be done but this has made your job and ours a lot easier by cutting to the chase and identifying those areas. I know Dwane and his staff are constantly looking at ways to make the highways safer including speed zones and speed limits. I appreciate the work they do. Commissioner Griffith said they do it without additional staff. That was a big task to take on since the Legislature. I'm glad the department had the foresight to get the amendment in to allow you to review those areas because that was a big task in itself. We all fight hard to keep the roads safe and without that effort and sometimes you don't think we appreciate the work you do, we absolutely do especially now. We know this was sort of thrown in and unexpected. Thank you.

Commissioner Griffith asked Director Tooley to let the Commission know how the meeting on state funds goes next Friday. Director Tooley said he would do that.

Environmental Excellence Award – Kevin McLaury, FHWA

I would like to thank the hospitality that Stefan Streeter gave to us on the tour. Thank you, I appreciate it very much.

I've been notified that the Montana Department of Transportation is being recognized for the Environmental Excellence Award. I will read what that is.

The Environmental Excellence Award recognizes outstanding transportation projects, processes, and partners that use FHWA funding sources to incorporate environmental stewardship into planning and project development processes.

This was specifically to Hwy 78 East which we drove through yesterday and Stefan talked to us about the archeological dig from the former Crow Agency. I will read the piece that was given to us:

The Montana Hwy 78 Project, the highway reconstruction effort, incorporated innovative educational programs and volunteer opportunities into its mission. Because Highway 78 runs through an important archeological and cultural site, the lands of Absarokee, the Crow Indian Agency Project, project partners took efforts to preserve and promote the history of the area through this project. Staff in the Montana Department of Transportation developed and created education curriculum for 4th and 5th grade students in partnership with the Crow Tribe and Montana Partner Archeology, a Heritage Education Program funded by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The project partners also organized a volunteer program for teachers, students and community members to learn about archeology techniques and participate in actual excavation work. The project is a national example of the potential for transportation agencies to generate innovative educational programs as part of their standard operations.

So I'd like to first of all commend the department for their efforts in this area and commend you as well. Congratulations on this award. I'll be presenting a plaque to the department at a later date and hold a formal ceremony. Congratulations to all of you.

Commissioner Griffith thanked all involved. Every time I go on a district tour I learn not only about the roads, which I have a great interest in as a Commissioner but also an interest from my past and my understanding of building the roads and also learning the culture. It was the first time I knew the Crow Agency wasn't east of us. I also found out about another move in between those times. I remember when Kevin Howlett took us on a tour of Hwy 93. He showed us all the archeological sites but they couldn't tell us about it because they didn't want artifact finders to go digging in those sites but I respected the fact they recognized the need for the department to protect those sites. I continue to learn from these tours so I thank you. It was a great tour both from the good and the bad and the historically significant. Thanks also for a great dinner last night; it was nothing short of spectacular. Very rarely am I stymied about how good other people cook. That was a job above and beyond what I could do. I've been out of school for a long time but everything is a learning process. One of the learning curves on the Hwy 93 trip was understanding why we couldn't just put a road right through Ronan and bypass Ronan so we could get to the Flathead faster. Kevin told us to stop, slow down and smell the roses. Think about where you're going and the cultural and the historic nature of the land. He truly changed my whole philosophy. That doesn't say we don't want to get there quick, it just says to stop and smell the roses while we get there and I appreciate that so much. I'm going to follow up by learning more about it on my own.

Billings Bypass – Stefan Streeter

Commissioner Griffith said he had asked Stefan Streeter to put together a drawing of the Billings Bypass and present it to the Commission today. He didn't want the Commission to be surprised for the need in Billings for a lot of money to complete this Bypass.

Stefan Streeter thanked the Commissioners for coming on the tour. It's always an honor and a privilege to take people out and show them the work the department does and the importance of the work. This isn't any different. One emphasis I really tried to stress yesterday was Main Street and the Heights and some of the issues we have in Billings. Down by the Metra it is the busiest highways in the State of Montana and it carries an enormous load of traffic – anywhere from 30,000 to 50,000 cars per day. Commissioner Griffith said Kalispell carried 44,000 at the peak. Stefan Streeter said he wished we didn't carry that number. We've done a lot of things over the last decade to try and get the number down. We would be happy to give the busiest road designation to Great Falls or Kalispell or whoever wants it

because that means we're doing our job by dispersing traffic and making the system safer.

On Main Street we have had 570 accidents in a two-year period on 3.8 miles of road. Out of the 570 accidents, well over 200 of them are injury related where people were hauled off in an Ambulance. We need to do something different. We've done a lot of traffic studies and the most recent showed that no matter what we do with the Bypass, the Bench Boulevard Project, the Airport Road improvements, Aaronson, building the Inner Belt Loop, with all of that in place our interception at Airport Road is still projected to fail or go into Level-of-Service F and D within 10 years. So we've recently moved a project forward, a study with Kittelson to look at that intersection to see what we can do with all these improvements to keep traffic flowing in this 10-year period.

The Billings Bypass started in 1999 with a Feasibility Study by Yellowstone County. There were many Congressional earmarks given over the years and at one point we had just over \$20 million which is what funded the EIS. The EIS was a 10+-year process and there were many iterations. The original concept was a bypass. The Bypass was going to go to a new interchange and move completely around the Heights all the way to the Airport, MT 3 out near where Commissioner Skelton lives, then in the future potentially connect back to Laurel. However, with the funding constraints and realization that the funding would never be there as well as a major event in the Heights, a tornado where 25,000 people couldn't get out of the Heights. The realization was that: (1) we need to be fiscal constrained so Federal Highways would sign an environmental document, and (2) we need a release valve so that if we have a national disaster or emergency, people can get out of the Heights. So it went back to the local boards, city and county through PCC and back to their respective governments and they came back and said let's restructure this. With Federal Highway's help we took the Billings Bypass concept and created what became the connection to the community of Lockwood, 15,000+ people to the Billings Heights. We changed the purpose and need, we went back out to the public through advisory committees and came up with a new purpose and need.

It still holds the term "bypass" for several reasons: (1) Congressional funding is tied to the word "bypass" and (2) these connections in the future could progress up Hwy 87 and then continue around the city as a bypass. The intent today is to create a route that connects Billings Heights to Lockwood providing for a future corridor and at the same time providing that safety access for all these residence in the Heights should something happen again to Main Street.

Through all this process we've developed many projects – the Airport Road Project about 6-7 years ago that was built expanding the two lane to a four lane, the Bench Boulevard Project was connected and we drove that yesterday. That is in its final construction project next summer to finish that expansion. All in an effort to get that traffic off Main Street.

That leads us to this – the environmental documents was signed in December 2013. Since that time we've moved forward and hired Dowl HKM to do the final design. This became the number one priority of the local government following Bench Boulevard. So all Urban Funds will be directed to this project as well as any MAFI Funds until project is built. It does many things – it builds a new Interchange which is desperately needed. That is something MDT would be responsible for and is now included in this project. You'll have a crossing to the railroad tracks and progress through this area here (referring to graphic). This area, since the development of the EIS, is now part of what they are trying to develop as a Tax Development District for business. Yellowstone County, working through Big Sky Economic Development, is in the process of getting this all turned into a rail/truck/warehousing/manufacturing area. It crosses over the river and will go through the Yellowstone River Parks

Association land which they are currently developing and tie that into the Lotham area. This will catch people coming in from Huntley and Shepherd.

The price tag is somewhere between \$80-\$100 million due to two key components: the Interchange itself is somewhere in the \$30 million range and the river crossing itself is somewhere in the \$30 million range. The rail crossing is fairly insignificant as far as crossings go. We have to climb to get to the river bridge so the grades are already up. As it sits today it will be a two lane crossing. One of the issues is with the tax increment. If this were to go and receives all the approvals of the county, they are going to look at rail spurs and different things that may increase that length. We've been working with the local group through Big Sky EDA on what their portion would be if that bridge had to expand. We just started with the detailed design.

As we look at funding, there are many funding sources. This will be a county road when we're done (referring to graphic). It will probably be built with Urban Funds. This section can be built with Urban Funds or NH Funds. We're hoping to get some bridge funds. Here we still have some earmark left. This will probably be IM Funds. As we get down here we're trying to figure out how we're going to fund an Interchange. As we move forward it's going to take a whole bunch of different funding sources coming together almost in an orchestrated manner to make things happen.

We were looking into the future and started projecting what years we could potentially deliver and what funding sources would fall into there. We fell about a year behind in getting Dowl HKM under contract. We were hoping three-to-five years to hit the ground with the first project and then each one of these colors (referring to graphic) is what we perceive today subject to change with the five-mile extension being one project where we connect to Hwy 312. What makes that a logical project and maybe the first project is it would provide independent utility for what we think is probably one of the more important projects and that is the structure itself. We don't want to build anything and then have federal funding run out or something change and then have a bridge to build. We want to make sure we have logical links. When we do the bridge we'll either have this at the same time. We perceive this to be a two-year project because of the length, so it's a fairly substantial. Somewhere in that timeframe we would want to get the railroad structure under contract. Again our funding would have to line up so we can let this next.

Then we have connection into the Interchange and the Interchange itself. Then coming this way, this may not be all one project depending on the cost which should be fairly insignificant compared to the major projects. However, there is a major intersection with a section of Hwy 312. We're going to reconfigure Bench and Mary would come into the new Interchange so that would be an improved intersections whether they would be roundabouts or T-intersections. So there would be quite a bit of intersection work along this route to address the residential homes and potential traffic. So as we sat there and looked into the crystal ball trying to figure out what the next 10 years is going to bring, we came up with potentially about eight projects. We're hoping to let them in sequence. Get one started and just keep following for some years. If the funding sources match we may let two in one year but once the ball starts moving then keep it moving.

Commissioner Griffith asked if this was contiguous with Yellowstone County's Master Plan. Stefan Streeter said it was. We're an NPO so it has to go through the process. It is in their process and it is the priority again following Bench Boulevard. Commissioner Griffith asked if they're okay with making commitment with their Urban Funds to do this project. Stefan Streeter said they actually signed a funding agreement with MDT that says all future Urban Funds after Bench Boulevard will go to this project. By doing that they created a document that, if this takes eight years to get on the ground, it doesn't allow their replacements to come in and change the

priority. Commissioner Lambert asked how long this project would be. Stefan said they were hoping to have it completed by 2022 but every year that goes by we lose time. Once we get started we're going to roll it and hopefully the funding will line up with one or two projects a year. I do think it's important for a lot of aspects. It is important to understand, although it's a mega project, it's a part of trying to mitigate a bigger problem which is the safety issue on Main Street and how do we get the traffic off Main and provide that release. We were really happy when we build Bench Boulevard. The numbers on Bench Boulevard went from zero to 10,000 that first month but it has since dropped back to 8,000 now and it hasn't really reduced the accidents on Main. The real challenge will be this next summer when they start building Bench because all that traffic will go back to Main.

Commissioner Griffith said you've got the possibility of ten million on Interstate capacity and how much on Urban? Stefan Streeter said this project doesn't have any Interstate capacity on it. We have to do something with the existing Interchange. Commissioner Griffith asked if that would qualify for capacity funding. Stefan said he understood that program was ending. Commissioner Griffith said if you take the money from Urban, how much uncommitted money do you need for this project and how much can you reasonably take out of your District budget to do that? Stefan said we've taken our Red Book and with the current allocations we've projected it out. So if we get this much money and we take it out to 2022 and we start putting these projects in, how do we get them in? We believe that through some creativity which will take money away from other things, there is the potential we can deliver it. We wouldn't continue to pursue it if we didn't believe it can work. If we had additional funds come in from some other source of course that would free up monies to do other intersections and improvements that need to be done. Once we get going, this will be our priority as well as the local governments and as long as the funding sources stay the same. Once we start looking at Johnson Lane, there are all kinds of safety issues so I'm hoping we'll get some kind of safety money. With bridge money, NH money, Interstate money, Urban funds around \$25 million, we think there's enough earmarked to pay the consultant to design it and secure the right-of-way. After that one of the earmarks will be gone.

Commissioner Belcourt said that's a horrible orchestration of funding sources. Stefan said it is; we worked very hard to put it together. Commissioner Belcourt said during the tornado people couldn't get out of there and that's a real issue. Stefan said there are two main ways out of the Heights – one is to go up Airport Road and down Zimmerman Trail or down 27th Street into the heart of the city, the other is go by the Metra. Everybody goes by the Metra. It functions fairly well with three lanes in both directions providing nothing happens. However if a truck tips over then we get instant backup or if we get an accident in an intersection then people back up for miles. There's been a lot of work to mitigate that both from the city of Billings and the State of Montana with Bench Boulevard and Airport Road. The city built another route on the west side called Alkali Creek which connects subdivisions on Alkali west side down to Airport road. The Inner Belt loop is about one quarter complete and that will connect to Zimmerman and provide another route. So there's been a lot of work; it's almost like a big Master Plan of parts. This part has finally come to the forefront where hopefully in the next 10 year it is on the build.

Commissioner Lambert said the growth of the Heights is phenomenal. Stefan said it is substantial. The west side is actually growing faster than the Heights but the Heights is definitely growing. We drove up Marion and there is a 100+ unit subdivision going in right at the intersection of Bitterroot and Mary. Businesses are starting to move into the Heights in anticipation of this road moving forward. It's been talked about for so many years that I think people have lost confidence in its ability to be built. I think it's going to be built.

Gary Neville said Federal Highways signed a Record of Decision and we had to show them this was financially sound and we could fund the project. We are using CMAC

funds also for this. This is a copy of the future Master Plan and, as you can see, they have plotted a Bypass through their area which shows they are supporting it. The key for us as we move this design forward is to continue working with the Parks people, the Bike/Ped people, the TED people, the unincorporated City of Lockwood, and Yellowstone County. It's a real coordination effort, you could make it a full time job. In the end it is something that is not only needed but it will really be a benefit.

Commissioner Griffith asked if the Airport was apprised of the size of the bond. Stefan said it is a long way from the Airport. Commissioner Griffith said anything within five miles has to be FAA approved. Stefan said he was unaware of that. Commissioner Griffith said that is a big pond that is a wildlife attractant to airplanes. Stefan said he would let the Park people know about it. Commissioner Griffith said it becomes our problem if we invest \$100 million into that project.

Stefan said one last part of this, we came under a lot of pressure after the environmental document was signed. A lot of local groups popped up that weren't there before that expressed concern over pedestrian and bicycle and growth through this area. We put a pencil to it and it could be a pretty substantial cost especially crossing a 2,000 foot bridge. Depending what kind of structure we use, it could range from two to six million dollars just to put 10-foot path on this bridge. The document did address pedestrians adequately and it provides for a 10-foot shoulder across the structure, however, given the concern we are going back to take a look and see if we can come up with a different mechanism. What's been great about the process, even though it's been painful for the Division Administrator in Billings, is how the community has come together for a common good. This map (referring to graphic) shows the acceptance of what the environmental document says on one end of the bridge using existing roadways. The Park's people agreed to build any kind of pedestrian parkways connecting this through the Parks themselves which was a pretty big step forward. We've committed to looking at the structure and doing what we can.

On the other side of the river, this development has agreed to build a pedestrian path from Lockwood all the way through the property connecting to the structure and not only to provide the materials and the land and build the trail but also make payment. It would all be on private property of MDT right-of-way. Although the discussions have been somewhat tenuous at times, it has brought the community together all trying to solve something for the community. As we move forward we are going to keep that in mind as well – what we can do for the community to enhance the community that doesn't jeopardize the project. I thought that was important to look at. These bullets represent months of meetings with people throwing things into the pot to make this happen. It's a win, win, win.

The other thing to come out of this is you have this development here (referring to graphic) and on the other side the development has also agreed to build something similar. So people would have access to two wildlife areas if they choose to walk or bike. It is going to create a real nice place for Billings as well as the increase for transportation. Everything I've told you today is conceptual.

Commissioner Griffith asked if there was anything in the six-year bill that changes set-asides. Director Tooley said nothing substantial. The Secretary is very interested in bike/ped issues but I haven't seen anything on the funding side to reflect that, at least not in the Senate Bill. The Senate Bill actually comes out of the Committee which is chaired by Senator Imhoff from Oklahoma, a Republican, so he might not be taking all the Secretary's input. Director Tooley complemented Stefan on his presentation. It was in-depth but probably one tenth of one percent of how complicated this has been for him. The work he's done with these various interest groups to try and keep them close to the same page has been really impressive. It's been neat to see the community rally around this and come up with their own ideas and contributions. It has been pretty positive.

Commissioner Griffith said he appreciated the presentation. I wanted the Commission to know about the Billings Bypass. You've got big plans for Billings and we're both excited for it. We hope for Montana's infrastructure, you're successful. Stefan said his job was to be successful. We may not get it in five years but it will get done. I didn't do this, Gary did this and the staff did this, I just get the credit for it. Gary's the one who stayed late last night to bring this together for you. Commissioner Griffith said the Commission will be one of your big partners. I'm excited for the project and we anxiously await the outcome. Commissioner Lambert said Stefan did a fantastic job. Billings is big and I'm impressed with the job you've done. Stefan said I have a lot of help. We have good people that are specialized to make all of us successful. I lean on a lot of people to help me be successful – Shane, Ed, and Federal Highways. It's a big partnership; it's not any one of us or any group of us, it's all of us including the Commission. That's what makes MDT successful, it's not individuals it's the team. Commissioner Belcourt said as large as Montana is, it's amazing and I give credit to the whole department. Dwane Kailey said I'm so impressed every day by MDT whether it Planning, Admin, HR, or Maintenance. When we have these challenges, it's amazing how much our staff comes together to find solutions. I'm so impressed every day by the committed people I work with. Thank you for the comments directed to me but I am with Stefan – it's not me, I'm just the lucky individual that gets to present it to you. It's the staff; they do the leg work and they are an honor to work with. Stefan Streeter said these people put their heart and soul into this for the people of Montana sometimes for low pay and no credit but they do it because they love what they're doing. It's pretty neat to be part of an organization this long that has that kind of dedication for public safety. It's a privilege and honor to work with them. It's not me, its 2,100 people.

Commissioner Griffith said this is a big state and what connects us is our highways. So it's important for all of us to look at. Truly Billings is a big city. Western Montana, while not as big city-wise as Billings, the complexity of roadways is much bigger. What makes it good is that we're all still a connected state; we all understand each other's needs. When this projects comes about, the Commission is going to be there. When the project on Hwy 93 comes about, the Commission is going to be there. That's what makes this Commission great and that's what makes the department great. So far we've been a "just in time" service, it would be nice to get a little bit ahead.

Next Commission Meeting

The next Conference Calls were scheduled for August 18th, September 8th, and September 22nd. The next Commission Meeting was scheduled for September 24, 2015.

Adjourned

Meeting Adjourned