

In order to comply with Montana state law, all personal information has been removed from public comments.

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 08/14/2008 14:54:07
Project Commenting On: Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

We are just now back in town, and while this is late for the formal comment period, I am commenting in the hope that my thoughts might prove useful as this process goes forward.

I have cycled most of the proposed road-based Helena-Great Falls bike/ped route. It is a lovely ride, if fatally flawed as a dedicated bike route. The obvious problem is that the route is on a road. Bike paths, such as Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes or Hiawatha bike paths in Northern Idaho, or the extensive fietspads (bike-routes) of the Netherlands gain much of their magic by being bike paths -- not shared automobile/bike paths.

The Helena-Great Falls route, if a separate bike path (not a shared bike/auto route) would be an attractive one, and would almost certainly substantially add to a significant new revenue source to the fishing/camping economies of Wolf Creek, Craig, and Cascade. The proposed shared auto/bike 'solution' is a distant second best to a real separate bike route, and would not, I fear, add appreciably to the quality of the ride or to the economies of the communities along the way.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this proposal. I'd be pleased to answer any further questions you might have.

{signed}

Reference Number = picomment_914031982421875

Helena, Montana 59601
August 11, 2008

Zia Kazimi
MDT Planning Division
PO Box 201001
Helena, Montana 59620-1001

Re: Helena to Great Falls Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Feasibility Study

Dear Mr. Kazimi:

This letter serves as comments on the Montana Department of Transportation's Helena to Great Falls Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Feasibility Study. I attended the meeting in Cascade on July 9, 2008, and made briefs comments on the study at that time. This letter supplements those comments.

I appreciate MDT's efforts to study the feasibility of a bicycle and pedestrian trail in this area. In this age of increasing fuel prices, and the ill effects of sedentary lifestyles, it is imperative for us to enhance alternative means of transportation. A bike trail offers an opportunity for this. In addition, a lengthy bike way can be an important and valuable source of healthy recreational opportunities, and may have substantial socio-economic impacts on local communities.

While I would like to see a lengthy bicycle trail between Helena and Great Falls, I do not believe a bike path in the frontage road right-of-way is a sensible alternative. I do not believe the state would realize the benefits described above with a trail in the existing right-of-way. The reasons for this include the following:

- There are significant safety issues with the proposed location. Placing bikers and pedestrians close to a busy road way is likely to cause accidents.
- This type of bike trail will not have a significant positive impact on local communities. Visitors will not be attracted to this area to use such a path.
- The expenditure of substantial funds for development of this pathway is out of proportion to its expected benefits.
- This proposal does not address other alternatives, particularly the feasibility of acquiring the nearby rail line.

The rail line would not have the safety issues that the proposed road right-of-way would present, and would likely become a popular recreational destination, with resulting substantial socio-economic impacts.

I would wholeheartedly support efforts by the state to investigate the feasibility of acquiring the BNSF rail line, and developing it into a destination bike trail. I believe the rail line could be acquired for an investment that is on a par with the amount of money that it would take to develop a bike path in the public road right-of-way, based on the development costs cited in the feasibility study.

I believe that in order for any feasibility study to be credible, it must consider other reasonable alternatives. To date, BNSF has not indicated a desire to dispose of the rail line. However, this possibility has not been thoroughly tested by the state. Eventually, a consideration of reasonable alternatives must be considered in order to comply with NEPA and MEPA.

I urge MDT to expand its feasibility study to consider the rail trail as an alternative to the public road right-of-way.

Sincerely,

{signed}

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 08/11/2008 22:51:30
Project Commenting On: Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:
BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME

BUT

DO IT RIGHT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Build a bike route between Helena and Great Falls that will bring in \$\$\$\$.
How? Well certainly not by riding on the highway with cars speeding by. How fun is that? That won't bring in tourists.
We need a dedicated bike path on the BNSF RAIL LINE.
Look at the trends in the world and realize biking is a big business world wide. We need to be visionary and make this a destination for promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Reference Number = picomment_80560302734375

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 08/11/2008 10:45:20
Project Commenting On: Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:
I've read the feasibility study regarding the "north of Helena/ south of Great Falls road improvement consideration for bicycle and pedestrian use". While described as a bicycle/pedestrian path, the study appears to circumvent the idea of a rail to trail project on the BNSF line.

Why was this feasibility study completed? Was it the apparent public interest in a rail to trail project on the BNSF line? If so, why wasn't the rail to trail idea part of the study?

In my opinion, we need to find the leadership in our state who can encourage BNSF to discuss the possibility of converting this line to non-motorized use. Many who have commented remark about other successful rail to trail projects. How were those successes achieved? Is there an example of an unsuccessful rail to trail project?

Lets explore the opportunity and not consider the flawed alternatives. The BNSF line from Helena to Great Falls should not be a parking area for unused cars. If it is not a viable route for the railroad, then lets use it for something wonderful!

Reference Number = picomment_75201416015625

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Helena to Great Falls Bicycle path study. I would like to commend MDT on its willingness to become involved in non-motorized transportation needs and opportunities.

I understand the concept reviewed in this study was originally proposed as legislation as an alternative to the idea of converting the out of service BNSF rail line between Helena and Great Falls into a Rail Trail. The idea of a trail along the public road way at first appears to be better than nothing but upon further review of the route, the choke points and the constant changing of a separated trail to the road edge and back again the trail along the highway would in practice create an unsafe bike way and actually it would be worse than nothing.

As linked in the study the bike path would have a mixture of trail types each with a very short length often interrupted by the 22 choke points causing users to mix in and out of vehicle traffic. Just as a rider was getting accustomed to a separated trail it would return to the road edge only to be interrupted by a narrow right of way or a bridge or another choke point. I believe if such a trail were to be constructed I would still opt to ride on the highway shoulder to be safer.

In addition to the mixing of traffic and the choke points the study should have looked at other hazardous conditions along the route, specifically sight distances, side roads coming crossing the 'trail', tight curves, low sun angles at certain times of the day and shaded areas along the roadway all which add to the danger of walking or biking along the roadway. Further, the study could address the relative degrees of safety of a separate trail outside of the road right of way (rail trail) verses a widened shoulder.

Unfortunately because of choke points and the necessity to use Interstate 15 for part of the route the study only reviewed 65 miles and made no connection to the

population centers and the existing community trail systems in Helena and Great Falls. To have a viable trail corridor it needs to be inclusive of the population centers.

One of the benefits of a Rail Trail along the BNSF line would be as an economic stimulus to the area. As is witnessed in Idaho and South Dakota trail systems stimulate local economies to provide for trail users both local and nonresident. One of the benefits of converting the BNSF line into a rail-trail would be drawing tourists to the area. A widened road shoulder with numerous choke points would have little to no draw to riders and walkers outside of the area. Additionally following the frontage road removes walkers and riders from the most scenic and quietest parts of the route by separating them the creeks, rivers and often places them in the immediate vicinity of I-15. If MDT continues to pursue this concept I would request that they include all possible corridor alternatives that include converting the out of service BNSF 95.4 mile into a trail.

In this time of decreasing gas tax income due to decreased gasoline usage due to high fuel prices the expenditure to fulfill this option are not as cost effective as other possible alternatives such as the rail-trail. Specifically, the study suggested that the 65 mile corridor costs would range from \$150,000 to \$200,000 per mile to construct or approximately \$11.5 million at a minimum. The irony of this is that expense would be more than the initial acquisition and preliminary development costs of converting 95 miles of the out of service BNSF rail line into a rail trail and in doing so creating a safer trail environment that connects the population centers and creates a new tourism attraction for Montana.

I understand that this study was developed in response to individuals opposed to a rail trail. The concept covered by this study does not address the basic reasons why many locals supported the rail trail concept; specifically a scenic trail connecting Helena and Great Falls that would create new economic drivers for the communities along the route while providing for safe use by locals and our guests. Because of this, even if the road side trail were to come to fruition the supporters of the Rail Trail on the BNSF ROW will continue to pursue that end.

Thanks again for the chance to comment.

Regards
{signed}

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item:	Comment on a Project
Submitted:	08/10/2008 10:30:32
Project Commenting On:	Helena Bike-Pedestrian Path Study
Nearest Town/City to Project:	Helena-Great Falls

Comment or Question:

We ranch on the opposite side of the river from the proposed trail, so in many ways we are removed from the direct impacts of this proposal.

However, as long-term residents of this area, we feel strongly about this issue:

1. It is absolutely criminal in the current energy climate to even consider asking the railroad to either sell or vacate the line. We need to retain as much of our transportation infrastructure as possible. A working rail line between Great Falls and Helena could be a model for moving people for business and recreation.
2. It is equally irresponsible in the current climate, when property taxes continue to climb and our schools are underfunded, to consider using tax dollars to provide recreation for a rather narrow spectrum of users.
3. With the aging baby boomer population, it would seem more appropriate to fund rehabilitation of a transportation system (trains) that would help more people have access to recreation points along the way. How about examining the Monarch Fishing Train model (that used to serve eastern Cascade County residents in another era)?
4. The argument that a bike trail on the railroad bed would attract people from out of state is weak -- especially if put up against the attraction of a "fishing train" through the Wolf Creek canyon. Moreover, that solution would also add the flexibility of use in all seasons of the year.
5. And as for the "ugly" rail cars parked on the tracks, we believe that they are no more intrusive than all the houses and unbridled subdivision that has changed the character of the canyon.

Reference Number = picomment_9111328125

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 08/09/2008 21:00:48
Project Commenting On: Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

I was unable to attend the public meeting in Cascade but appreciate the information provided on your website.

Having biked the recreational road that is being considered within this study; and also biked the separate trails established in other states (Utah, Idaho, Colorado); I do not believe the significant investment of public dollars to widen shoulders to provide a recreational trail should be considered.

The current road conditions would be improved for motor vehicles and local users by widening the shoulders, likely resulting in greater vehicle speeds. Based on the few locations where there are currently 3' shoulders, the shoulders are not maintained to be suitable as a biking surface and do not provide suitable separation

for bicyclists. Competitive level cyclists will not use the shoulder due to maintenance and recreational cyclists will not use the shoulder as it is too close to 4500 vpd traveling at speeds some 50-mph greater. The increased travel speeds are a prime reason NOT to widen the shoulders for non-motorized use.

Is there any consideration for using Chevalier Road as a recreational route, with no separate path? (share the road route) due to its low traffic volumes (less than 40 vpd per your presentation)?

Is there a purpose and need for this study?

thank you for the opportunity to comment

Reference Number = picomment_56781005859375

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 08/09/2008 10:56:28
Project Commenting On: Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

A safe and publicly supported bike trail is a must in this age of alternative green travel. With Montana rated as one of the most desirable places to live, the recreational tourist attraction of the bike trail would be a boon to our state. I believe that our "green conscious" governor should be heavily involved in this development and I would request that this comment be forwarded to him personally.

Thank you,
{signed}

Reference Number = picomment_287261962890625

Sent: Saturday, August 09, 2008 3:59 PM
To: Kazimi, Zia
Subject: Helena to Great Falls Bike Path Study

I just reviewed the bike path study. If I read proposed segments details correctly, I would seriously question safety for bikers and drivers, and the ultimate benefit of the path.

I bike with a group that makes an annual trip to ride on the Lake Coeur d'Alene path, which is safe, scenic, and easy enough for everyone from children to oldsters. It's a

huge magnet for tourists, especially those segments that are located away from the highway. Small communities have thrived, benefiting from an influx of tourists, especially in summer, who appreciate the feeling of traveling the by-ways and not the highways.

Montana's proposed bike path seems to be mostly patchwork and band-aids. The choke points are critical danger points and the number of them is very high -- it seems to me they would be accidents waiting to happen. The route itself would probably not be the kind that would attract many residents more than once, or tourists that would be ready and willing to spend dollars in Montana.

I hope an alternate plan will be developed that is designed for now and into the future, and can maximize attraction, use, and financial benefit of a project like that.

Thanks for working on this project.

{signed}

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item:	Comment on a Project
Submitted:	08/08/2008 15:38:55
Project Commenting On:	Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study
Project State Highway No.:	MT
Nearest Town/City to Project:	Clancy
Project Milepost:	MT

Comment or Question:
Bicycle/Pedestrian Path between Helena and Great Falls

We agree with much of what has already been said by bicycle enthusiasts in support of a true bicycle path and against the hazardous path which has been proposed. What has not been mentioned is the opportunity a multi-use path would create for not only bicylists, but also the handicapped using wheel chairs, walkers and X-C Skier in the winter time. The Mikelson trail in S. Dakota charges a small fee to use the trail which ensures the maintenance and clean-up of the trail. And can you imagine the possibilities of B & B's along the trail like the one in Idaho where one could bike from one to the next along the way? A portion of the Bed Tax could be used as a possible continued funding source. Let's not limit our imaginations to a make-shift solution that lack the amenities a complete and real bike path would provide. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Reference Number = picomment_71624755859375

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 08/08/2008 11:10:13
Project Commenting On: Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

I am strongly in favor of a bike path between Helena and Great Falls. This study does not come close to accomplishing that goal. It is not continuous enough to even be called a good start.

Why not put our efforts into working with BN toward using their continuous railbed. This solution has some obstacles, but they could be addressed with appropriate support and would result in a much, much better product.

Reference Number = picomment_2093505859375

Sent: Friday, August 08, 2008 9:34 AM
To: Kazimi, Zia
Subject: Helena to Great Falls

Zia, I am interested in helping establish a Helena/Great Falls bike trail, preferably a "rails to trails" trail. My wife and I have ridden the Hiawatha Trail three times, and I am amazed at the beautiful scenery and quality of ride. It is also a revenue generator for the area's tourism. I think a ride from Helena to Great Falls would be equally as spectacular. If there is any way I can be of assistance in dealing with the railroad on this issue, please contact me. Thanks for all you are doing on behalf of Montana...{signed}

Sent: Friday, August 08, 2008 6:18 AM
To: Kazimi, Zia
Subject: Helena to Great Falls Bike Path Study

Zia Kazimi,

We support the use of the BNSF railway as a bike/ped. trail between Helena and Gr. Falls. As we travel the country in our RV with bikes in tow we marvel at what some states have done to develop bike/ped trails that enhance recreational opportunities. As we visit with people on these trails it is amazing how many are "tourists" utilizing these trails and spending money in the process. Money for camping, food, "supplies", etc. This, in addition to visiting all that the communities have to offer. Wolfcreek and Craig would be impacted positively as well as Gr.Falls and Helena. If you were to review studies of how bike/ped trails were developed in other states you would find what a positive impact these trails have on a local level. With the goverment saying our population is fat, we don"t get enough exercise, we are not

spending enough and we burn too much gas then what better way to solve these problems than using the BNSF as a bike/ped

{signed}

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 08/07/2008 22:14:43
Project Commenting On: Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

As a bike commuter in Helena, I am keenly aware of the dangers to bicyclists in our city, so the first thing I noticed about the Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study is the hazard created by 22 choke points. Putting cyclists and motorists so close together on a well traveled highway would not make for an enjoyable bike ride. The BNSF track makes so much more sense from both a safety and economic standpoint. Such a bike path along the scenic Missouri River would quickly become a destination as it has in so many other nearby states. Please don't abandon this hope of so many cyclists in the Helena and Great Falls areas.

Reference Number = picomment_1988525390625

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Web Comment or Suggestion
Submitted: 08/07/2008 21:19:20

Comment or Question:

Why was this study even done? Surely the numerous chokepoints and route type transitions were discoverable without much effort. They make this route essentially unworkable for a real bike connection between Helena and Great Falls.

One solution would be to close the entire Interstate between the two cities to truck and automobile traffic and allow non-motorized vehicles only. While somewhat tongue-in-cheek and certainly impossible to pull off, such a solution might have more merit than one would think at first blush.

In any event, use of the connecting and, for all purposes of transport, abandoned rail line would be a much cheaper, spectacular and safe public bike trail. It would be a lasting message to the future that some really did care about public health and the environment.

Reference Number = webcomment_655517578125

Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2008 12:28 PM

I'm very supportive of bike trails and former rail tracks provide a great way for states to provide bike trails. Our family from grandparents to grandkids had a great experience on the Couer d'Alene bike trail. In rural N. Minnesota, there is a wonderful long bike trail situated on a former rail bed. Montana needs to be more proactive in securing former rail beds to develop bike trails. We have spectacular scenery and should take advantage of attracting this type of tourist.

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 07/28/2008 20:41:57
Project Commenting On: Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

I appreciate the time and expense that the department spent on the Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study. What it confirmed for me was the need to pursue the option of the existing rail line between the two town, and that is no longer in use. As we continue to run out of gasoline, we must look at alternatives for public recreation. We had the chance to create an amazing resource when the Milwaukee Road ceased to exist and it would be a shame to lose this option. Those states who have successfully converted rails to trails have captured the benefits already... and those benefits will only continue to grow with the price of gasoline.

Reference Number = picomment_281341552734375

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 07/25/2008 14:17:23
Project Commenting On: Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

I am not completely opposed to using the current public right of way to build a public trail system, but I am concerned with the 22 chokepoints identified in this study.

I have children and I will not take them on a trail that requires us to ride the shoulder over bridges, around blind corners, or through underpasses. I much prefer the option of continued investigation into a "rails to trails" type arrangement that does not require users to merge with auto traffic.
Thank You.

Reference Number = picomment_189117431640625

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 07/22/2008 14:59:30
Project Commenting On: Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

As someone who has been intimately involved in establishing a Rail Trail between Helena and Great Falls for the past four years I can't help but point out the glaring omission of this study. The sole reason for this study is to propose a publically funded alternative to a Rail Trail yet there is no comparison set forth in the study to determine if it is a better or worse alternative. The Director's rationale for excluding a Rail Trail comparison during the public hearing is inaccurate. Over the course of the last four years, BNSF has, on several occasions, changed their public position on whether abandonment of the line was imminent or not. Such is the prerogative of a private business in a rapidly changing economy. The truth is BNSF could change their position tomorrow and thus a Rail Trail is just as viable as it was four years ago. And why would the Department make an arbitrary assumption one way or the other? The MDOT Director does not sit on the board of BNSF and shouldn't pretend to. The public deserves better. We deserve to see the whole picture. Specifically the cost, potential economic benefit, and safety of a bike path on the public right-of-way versus a Rail Trail on the existing BNSF right-of-way.

Reference Number = picomment_1080322265625

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 07/19/2008 14:01:44
Project Commenting On: Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study
Nearest Town/City to Project: Helena/Great Falls

Comment or Question:

I attended the recent meeting in Cascade, and commented at that time. Your presentation was excellent and represented an impressive effort to define the possibilities for bicycle recreation between Helena and Great Falls. More such studies and subsequently more bike paths are needed. However, the study was restricted to specifically exclude comparison with a rail trail on the BNSF tracks now used for rail car storage. The following comments were also submitted to the Great Falls Tribune in response to their article on the July 9 meeting:

- Major safety issues must be addressed. On again- off again protected bikeways such as DOT proposed are hazardous, especially for young or inexperienced riders. It is precisely these young riders we want to encourage to use the paths.
- The proposal is expensive and thus, should provide many public benefits in return for taxpayers' funds. Unfortunately, the route as described will not become a "destination" for touring or vacation bicyclists in the way that the Coeur d'Alene trail in northern Idaho has. The huge economic benefits of that path are unlikely to accrue to the proposal as it presently exists
- The lack of interest by BNSF in selling the rail corridor probably reflects the lack of interest by our state leaders. In S. Dakota, the Mikelson trail, named for a supportive governor, succeeded because of such support. Visionary leadership from governmental officials might bring BNSF to the bargaining table
- Past losses of Montana's heritage (Charlie Russell collection now residing in Fort Worth, Texas and the recreation access sites along the old Milwaukee rail line) are now widely lamented. A dedicated, safe recreation corridor between Helena and Great Falls should not become another opportunity tragically lost.

Reference Number = picomment_99102783203125

 A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
 Submitted: 07/15/2008 11:29:18
 Project Commenting On: Helena-Great Falls Bike/Pedestrian Path Feasibility
 Study

Comment or Question:
 The bike route is really needed. Helena does not have shoulders on the roads to ride and the majority of motorists do not understand "sharing the road". Is scary to ride in Helena as I have had motorists intentionally try to run us off the road, we get honked at and people pass as close as possible even with the passing lane clear. Its crazy! This is so needed. We travel to spokane and coeur D'Alene now to ride safely, so it would be nice to keep the business in our neck of the woods and MT vs other states. This trail system is sooo needed. Please, Please, please keep up the good work in improving roadways, educaiton and projects like this one.

Reference Number = picomment_832061767578125

 A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
 Submitted: 07/09/2008 16:59:19
 Project Commenting On: Helena-Great Falls Bike/Pedestrian Path Feasibility
 Study

Comment or Question:

This is with regard to the Helena-Great Falls Bike/Pedestrian Path Feasibility Study. I would like to see a path separate from the main roads, since it is much safer for cyclists, especially for cyclists with children or cyclists who have less experience on roads. I have heard the arguments against building a separate path, but paths can be made from the bicycle/pedestrian path to businesses and should be encouraged. It's just best to keep the path separate from vehicle pathways.

Reference Number = picomment_832733154296875

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 07/09/2008 12:37:16
Project Commenting On: Bike trail from Helena to Great Falls

Comment or Question:

I want a bike trail that is separate from the road grade and traffic that runs between Helena and Great Falls following Little Prickley Pear Creek and the Missouri River. This would be a great thing for the people of the state and would also be a tourist draw.

I definately support this type of thing. More Bike trails, bike lanes, and bike paths.

Thanks,

{signed}

Reference Number = picomment_425140380859375

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 06/30/2008 09:50:54
Project Commenting On: Helena-Freat Falls Bike/Pedestrian Path Feasibility Study

Comment or Question:

I strongly support creation of a bike/pedestrian path between Helena and Great Fall. The path would be a great asset to the region and a source of income for the communities along the path.

I am a Minnesota native, and made use of the many hundreds of miles of similar paths in Minnesota and Wisconsin. In every instance, the presence of the paths resulted in good things for the towns and municipalities in their vicinity. The concerns listed in the recent IR article (i.e. trespassing, noise, littering, other landowner impacts, and disturbance of wildlife) were not an issue in the above states, and are probably driven by fear of the unknown. Cyclists, hikers, and other "silent sport" advocates simply are respectful of the environment and others, and are not a typical source of those issues. I know of no instances in the above states where these issues were a problem. In fact, many cycling groups, hiking clubs, or individual families "adopted" portions of trails to help with maintenance. If there was any issue, it was usually caused by unauthorized motorized trail use (snowmobiles or ATVs) which resulted in trail damage. Also, property owners along the trails actually saw their real estate values increase because location on a trail was seen as a desirable selling feature.

Bottom line, the trail would be a good thing for all. I sincerely hope that the state, county, and local municipalities support the creation of the path.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

{signed}

Reference Number = picomment_73773193359375

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 06/27/2008 10:15:13
Project Commenting On: Helena Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

The Missouri River canyon between Cascade & Wolf Creek is the most awesome place in the world for a bike path. I'm getting old (52) & can't hike anymore (bad knees) - bicycling is my only way to get outdoors & enjoy Montana's beauty.

Such a trail may add years to my life!

Reference Number = picomment_642364501953125

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project
Submitted: 06/25/2008 15:10:18
Project Commenting On: Helena-Great Falls Bike/Pedestrian Path Feasibility Study
Project State Highway No.: I-15
Nearest Town/City to Project: Cascade
Project Milepost: 166

Comment or Question:

I am writing to give/throw my TOTAL support for the "Helena-Great Falls Bike/Pedestrian Path". It's a win-win for the communities along the way. The current eye sore i.e. the "container" holding rail cars one witnesses while driving Interstate I-15 between Great Falls and Helena are not the worst thing to decorate the track, but it would be far more pleasant to see human beings.

Reference Number = picomment_635498046875

RECEIVED

JUL 08 2008

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

7/6/08

ZIA KAZIMI
MDT PLANNING DIVISION
P.O. BOX 201001
HELENA, MT 59620-1001

DEAR ZIA,

AS WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ATTEND ON 7/9/08 THE PUBLIC MEETING REGARDING THE BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PATH FEASIBILITY IN CASCADE, MT, WE WOULD LIKE TO OFFER OUR COMMENTS IN THIS LETTER.

AND I FEEL THIS PATH SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTED AND MAINTAINED. WE THINK THAT RECREATIONAL CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER WHILE SHARING THE ROAD WITH MOTOR VEHICLES. THE PATH SHOULD INCREASE USE OF OUR BEAUTIFUL CANYON BY MOSTLY PEOPLE WHO ARE SENSITIVE TO OUR NATURAL SETTING, SO WE ARE NOT CONCERNED WITH INCREASED IN LITTERING, NOR ANY ESCALATION IN CRIME. PEOPLE INTERESTED IN PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SCENIC SPLENDOR ARE NORMALLY OF HIGH MORAL CHARACTER AND SHOULD NOT BE AN ADVERSE ISSUE. PROPERTY VALUES ON OR NEAR THE PATH SHOULD, AS OTHER AREAS PUTTING THIS PLAN TO USE, INCREASE - RESULTING IN GREATER TAX REVENUE FOR THE COUNTY. SMALL TOWNS, SUCH AS CASCADE SHOULD BECOME MORE PROSPEROUS, CLEANER AND MORE ATTRACTIVE. INCREASED REVENUE WILL OFFER ABILITY TO EXPAND BETTER LOCAL SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS. WE ARE WILLING TO PAY FOR THIS PATH THROUGH INCREASED TAX ASSESSMENTS - IT'S WORTH THE MONEY TO BETTER OUR COMMUNITY, EVEN IF WE DO NOT CHOOSE TO USE IT.

SINCERELY,



Comment form

Project name: Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Between Helena & Great Falls Study

Project ID: NA Control Number: NA

Meeting date and time: Wednesday, July 9, 2008 6:30 p.m. Open House; 7:00 Presentation Location: Wedsworth Hall, #13 Front Street S, Cascade, MT

You are invited to make your comments on this form and place it in the comment box located at the sign-in table or take it with you and mail it to Zia Kazimi, MDT Planning Division, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001

Comments may also be submitted by fax to (406) 444-7671 or online at

www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml

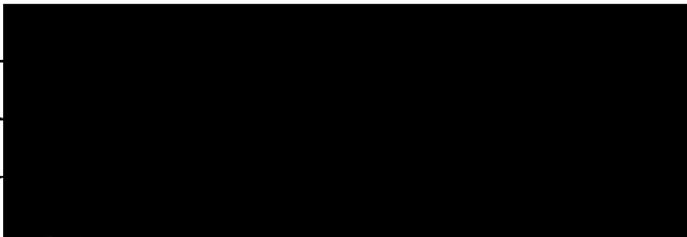
The deadline for comments is August 11, 2008.

Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below.

Thank you for your interest in and comments about this project. Please use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

Ian

Name and address (Include physical address & email address, please):



Comments: There are a variety of reasons that make this bicycle/pedestrian path a win-win; the myriad of bike trails for X-country bicyclists whether Great Divide or Adven. Cycling routes - this would augment options, safety of these 'green-minded', ^{peace} piece of mind for ~~drivers~~ tourism - more options for travel. It is a great concept and I hope that it becomes a reality. The time to do this feasibility study is great! appreciated. The study is clear, concise & well thought out!

You would market a user group! Local putzers, bicycle route for tourism, races, runs, etc.

NOTE: Widened shoulders should be considered on all highways we have a great state - this would be wonderful for safety of travelers.

JUL 22 2008

Montana Department of Transportation



Comment form

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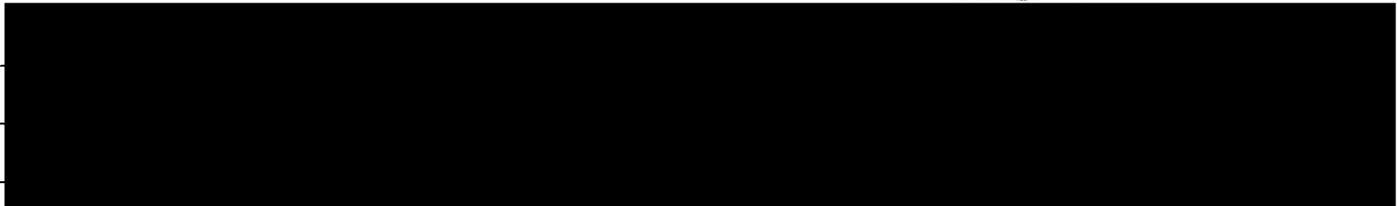
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Name and address **(Include physical address & email address, please):**



Comments: FIRST OF ALL, MY CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR FEASIBILITY STUDY - THE COMMITTEE DID AN EXCEPTIONAL JOB AND THE PRESENTATION IN CASCADE WAS INFORMATIVE AND VERY IMPRESSIVE.
 * I WOULD ENCOURAGE THE LEGISLATURE OF 2009 TO APPROVE THIS PROJECT. IDEALLY, THE RAILROAD BED WOULD BE GOOD; BUT IT ISN'T FEASIBLE TO HOLD OFF ON DOING SOMETHING UNTIL THEY (PERHAPS) DECIDE TO ABANDON. THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH BICYCLISTS USING THE FRONTAGE ROAD ON THE ROADWAY WITH NO SHOULDER IS NOT SAFE FOR THE CYCLISTS OR THE VEHICULAR TRAFFIC. HOPEFULLY IT WILL NOT TAKE ANOTHER FATAL ACCIDENT IN ORDER FOR THE ACCESS FOR RECREATIONISTS TO IMPROVE. THERE IS AN INCREASED INTEREST IN BICYCLING DISTANCES - ALREADY - THERE ARE 2-3 "RACES" PER SUMMER BETWEEN GF/HILLM/WOLF CREEK/HELENA. THE PEOPLE WHO BICYCLE ALSO PAY TAXES FOR THE ROADWAYS, IT WOULD BE IDEAL FOR THEM TO HAVE SAFE ACCESS TO DISTANCES - (OVER)

I WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE THAT, IF THE PROJECT IS APPROVED,
THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO STARTING FROM THE GREAT FALLS
END - I THINK IT WOULD BE ~~EASY~~ ENOUGH TO TIE IN TO RIVERS EDGE
TRAIL (PERHAPS ALONG FLOOD ROAD TO ULM - INCORPORATE OUR
TRAILS (JOE'S TRAIL - ULM + CASCADE). THIS WOULD BE A
GREAT BOOST FOR YOU (ALREADY 2 SECTIONS NEARLY READY
CASCADE'S IS PAVED - ULM NEEDS FINAL SURFACING) AND FOR
[REDACTED] WHICH IS STRUGGLING TO KEEP IT GOING. WE
ASO ALSO HAVE A "SLUSH FUND" WE COULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARD
THE FINAL PAVING OF ULM - PLEASE CONSIDER THIS PROPOSAL
SHOULD THE LEGISLATURE APPROVE IT.

IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THE PARTICULARS -
PLEASE CALL [REDACTED]

THANK YOU - AND CONGRATULATIONS ON A JOB WELL DONE !

[REDACTED]

RECEIVED

Montana Department of Transportation



Comment form

AUG 4 2008

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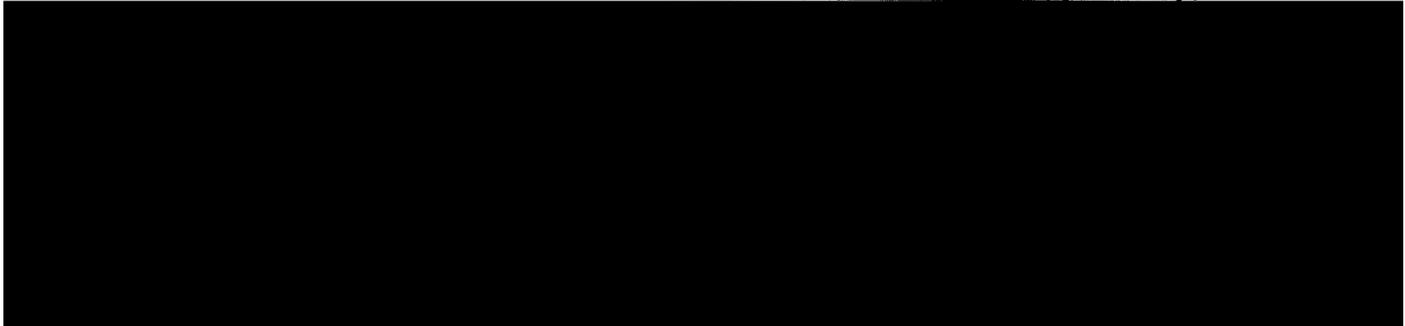
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Name and address **(Include physical address & email address, please):**



I love to ride Joe's Trail (Cascade) for exercise each day (even through the winter months).
It is good exercise which is ^{also} economical.

Please support Senate Bill 190 sponsored by Senator Lewis in your next legislative session.

It provides a cost-effective way to exercise off the narrow frontage roads making the trails a safe alternative to vehicles and pedestrians alike.

Thank you for your consideration!



August 4th 2008

RECEIVED

AUG - 7 2008

TRANSPORTATION

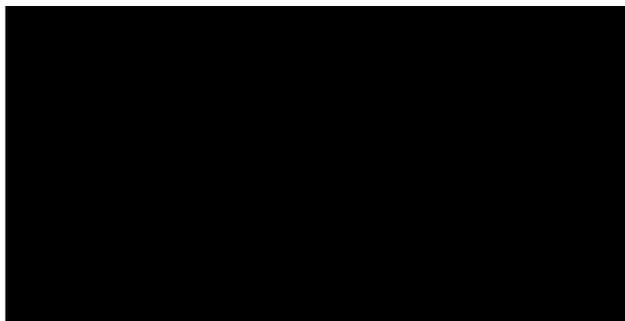
To Zia Kazimi, MDT Planning Division,

We moved from Montana to Florida in late 2006, but still own a house/property in the canyon on the Missouri River near Craig. After just coming back from a visit to MT a few weeks ago, we were dismayed at the storage of the railway cars on the tracks. Talk about ruining the scenery!! Then I kept seeing articles in the Independent Record & Tribune regarding turning the tracks into a trail.

My husband grew up in MT, but I grew up in mid-Missouri (Columbia). I am mentioning this because of my fond memories growing up enjoying the MKT trail in mid-MO. The old railway tracks no longer used were turned into a wonderful walking/biking/hiking trail. Please look into this trail in mid-Missouri and all the success to the surrounding communities it has brought to the areas, including tourism!

This exercise path would be an excellent addition to the GF/Helena areas. We would definitely support this path, & would utilize it every time we came to visit. We hope that opposition does not stop this trail from becoming a reality.

Sincerely,





Comment form

August 2008

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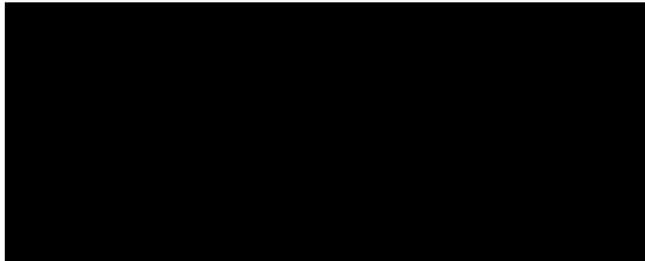
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Name and address **(Include physical address & email address, please):**



Comments: _____

The Rec Rd/Bike Path feasibility study demonstrates that such an entity could exist, without too much effort or cost. I'd suggest designing such a path in segments, beginning with a segment from the wolf creek bridge toward Hardy. I greatly support a Bike Path along the Rec Rd according to the logistics of your study.

respectfully submitted





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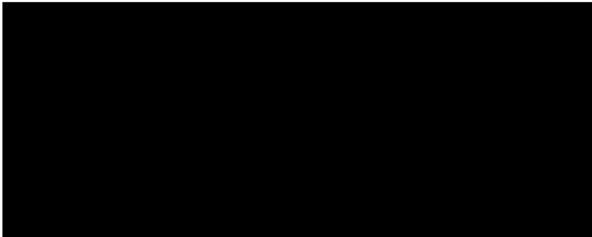
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Comments: _____

I feel the feasibility study for having a bike path immediately adjacent to the Recreation (Frontage) Rd shows that such an endeavor is possible & desirable.

I feel the project should go forward & segments of a bike path next to the Rec Rd begin to be created. I'd suggest beginning with a segment from the Wolf Creek Bridge toward Hardy. This segment offers the best "resistance" topographically & offers great vistas as well as accessibility.

I would definitely like to see a bike path created next to the Rec Rd. It offers a lot to MT citizens, without compromising anyone's property, it's accessibility & desirable.





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Name and address (Include physical address & email address, please):



Comments: A Bicycle / Ped. path from Helena to Great Falls would be a tremendous asset to our communities.

Multiple horizontal lines for writing additional comments.



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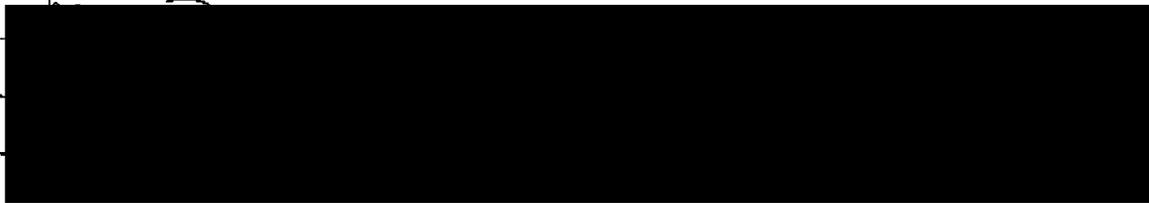
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Comments: Dear MDT

~~Thank~~ you I appreciate the time + effort your department put into the possible bike route between Helena + Great Falls.

However I believe there are many points on the route that do not seem safe to ride along it. I think a route near any roads would not encourage people to ride + if implemented would be a lot of time, effort + expense for something not that appealing to the public.

If the state should put in something with ~~of~~ this huge ~~of~~ effort it should be better thought through + in any area the public will use - + yes I ->

I believe a rails to trails type
bike route would be the
best use of the state's
time & effort.

Thank you for your time

