

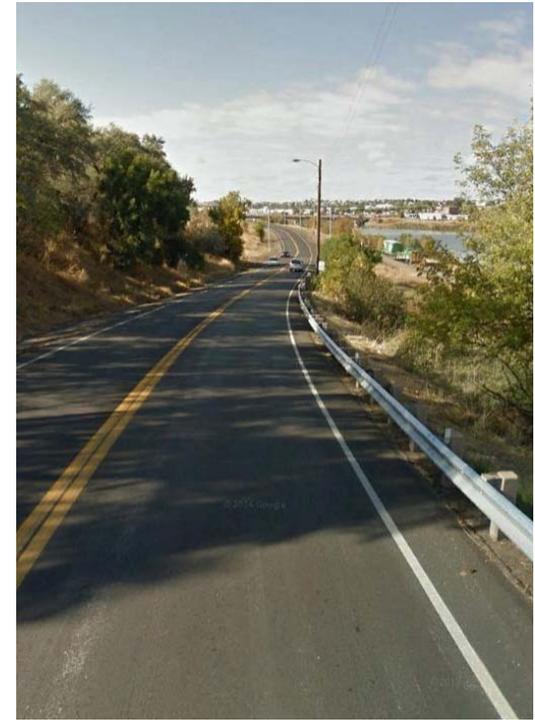


Appendix 2

Consultation, Coordination, and Public Involvement

PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Technical Memorandum



November 05, 2015



Prepared for:
Montana Department of
Transportation



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....	i
List of Figures.....	i
1.0. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Corridor Planning Process.....	1
1.2. Study Area.....	2
1.3. Goals of Public and Agency Outreach.....	2
2.0. Participation Procedures.....	4
2.1. Study Contacts.....	4
2.2. Media Coordination.....	5
2.3. Stakeholders.....	5
2.4. Study Website.....	5
2.5. Document Availability.....	6
3.0. Meetings.....	6
3.1. Advisory Committee Meetings.....	6
3.2. Informational Meetings.....	7
3.3. Resource Agency Meeting/Involvement.....	7
3.4. Considerations for Traditionally Underserved Populations.....	7
3.5. Accessibility.....	8
4.0. Overall Study Communication.....	8
5.0. Study Schedule.....	9

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Study Area Boundary.....	3
Figure 2: Study Schedule.....	9

Public and Agency Involvement Plan (PAIP)

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has identified a need to develop a corridor study along River Drive in Great Falls, Montana. The study, referred to as the *River Drive Corridor Study*, will identify feasible improvement options to address safety, operational, and geometrical concerns (i.e. road width, horizontal curves, vertical grades, approach density, etc.) within the study area based on needs identified by the public, the study partners, and resource agencies.

The purpose of the study is to develop a comprehensive, long-range plan for managing the corridor and determining what improvements could be made to improve the corridor based on identified needs, public and agency input, and financial constraints. Data examined will include geometric characteristics, crash history, operational characteristics, land uses, and environmental resources. The study will be a collaborative process between MDT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Great Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), local jurisdictions, other agencies, and the public aimed at identifying transportation needs and potential solutions.

The final study report will include a comprehensive package of feasible short- and long-term improvement options intended to address the transportation needs over the next twenty years. Identifying these improvement options will help the study partners define the most critical needs and allocate resources.

1.1. CORRIDOR PLANNING PROCESS

MDT established the corridor planning process to investigate improvement options for the corridor via the Pre-National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Study, as provided for in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The corridor planning process will inform any projects that may develop from improvement options identified in the study. The process will help advance viable options for use in the NEPA/MEPA process, while providing an opportunity for partner involvement at all stages.

The corridor study process involves early communication with interested parties to help identify needs, constraints, and opportunities to determine reasonable improvements given available resources and local support. Community, stakeholder, agency and other interested party involvement are important components in any successful planning process. For this study, a number of proposed involvement

strategies will aid in reaching the most people possible to elicit meaningful participation. These opportunities will achieve the following goals:

- Educate corridor users regarding the critical elements included in the Pre-NEPA/MEPA Corridor Planning Study process for the River Drive corridor in Great Falls.
- Provide opportunity for input and to solicit comments throughout the corridor planning study.
- Present findings and recommendations.

1.2. STUDY AREA

River Drive serves as a key route in the Great Falls transportation system that supports both local access and regional travel demand. The study area for the *River Drive Corridor Study* begins at the intersection with 15th Street N (Reference Post [RP] 3.4) and 38th Street N (RP 5.4). The corridor is classified as a principal arterial roadway on the Non-interstate National Highway System (NHS). The corridor is a designated truck route and provides access to several businesses, industrial areas, residential neighborhoods, community resources, and recreation. **Figure 1** presents the location of the corridor and the study area.

1.3. GOALS OF PUBLIC AND AGENCY OUTREACH

An initial step in the corridor planning process is to develop a *Public and Agency Involvement Plan (PAIP)* that provides for and identifies public, stakeholder, and other interested parties involvement activities needed to communicate information about existing and future corridor needs. The purpose of the *PAIP* is to establish a process that provides opportunities for interested parties to participate in all phases of the corridor planning process. The primary goal is to provide ongoing opportunities for involvement by members of the public, stakeholders, and resource agency representatives throughout the planning study process. Education and outreach are essential elements in keeping individuals apprised about the planning study process. Providing complete information, timely notices, and opportunities to comment, as well as ensuring full access to key decisions, will help achieve this goal.

2.0. PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

The *PAIP* describes the information and input opportunities that will be provided while developing the *River Drive Corridor Study*. This plan encourages active participation in identifying and commenting on study issues at every stage of the planning process. Participant involvement includes the following:

- The general public – residents of the city of Great Falls, Cascade County, and adjacent areas
- Landowners and business owners within the study area
- Resource agencies
- Stakeholders and outreach groups
- Other interested parties

This document contains descriptions of notification for informational meetings and other information. MDT, the Great Falls MPO, and Robert Peccia and Associates (RPA) will provide information regarding all aspects of the study to the public and interested parties and will seek their input throughout the process.

2.1. STUDY CONTACTS

All information published regarding the *River Drive Corridor Study* will have contact information for MDT and RPA. Comments can be submitted throughout the study process via the website (see **Section 2.4**) or by contacting those individuals listed below:

➤ **Dave Hand**

MDT Great Falls District Administrator
MDT Great Falls District
200 Smelter Avenue NE
PO Box 1359
Great Falls, MT 59403-1359
406-454-5880
dhand@mt.gov

➤ **Corrina Collins**

MDT Project Manager
MDT Statewide and Urban Planning
2960 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
(406) 444-9131
ccollins@mt.gov

➤ **Scott Randall**

RPA Project Manager
Robert Peccia and Associates (RPA)
825 Custer Avenue
PO Box 5653
Helena, MT 59604
(406) 447-5000
scottr@rpa-hln.com

2.2. MEDIA COORDINATION

Meeting announcements will be developed and advertised at least three weeks prior to informational meetings. The ads will announce the meeting location, time, and date, the format and purpose of the meeting, and the locations where documents may be reviewed (if applicable). The Great Falls Tribune will carry the display ads. Meetings may also be announced on local radio and/or television stations.

RPA will publish newsletters, flyers, or both, one month before each informational meeting. The newsletters will describe work in progress, results achieved, preliminary recommendations, and other related topics. RPA will deliver each newsletter and flyer to the Great Falls MPO, MDT, and select stakeholders for distribution and posting to their respective internet sites. Print copies of newsletters will be available at the public meetings.

2.3. STAKEHOLDERS

A stakeholder contact list will include individuals, businesses, or groups identified by the Great Falls MPO and MDT. The stakeholder list will identify individuals and groups with likely project interests and will enable actively seeking out and engaging them in all phases of the study process. A sign-in sheet for individuals who attend informational meetings will facilitate expanding the stakeholder list. Potential stakeholders include:

- City of Great Falls
- Cascade County
- Great Falls City Commission
- Malmstrom Air Force Base
- Great Falls Policy Coordinating Committee
- Great Falls Transportation Technical Advisory Committee
- Great Falls Northern Industrial Task Force
- Great Falls Transit
- Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
- BNSF Railroad
- Recreational Trails, Inc.
- General Mills, Inc.
- Montana Motor Carriers Association
- Great Falls Baseball Club
- Montana Veterans Memorial
- United States Forest Service
- Adjacent landowners and businesses
- Others as requested

2.4. STUDY WEBSITE

A study website will be used to encourage public interaction and to provide study information. The website will be hosted by MDT at the following address: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive/

The website will be updated as needed throughout the study process. The website will contain contact information, meeting announcements, frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the corridor study process, a description of the study, finalized documents, and interim memorandums. Upon completion, the following documents will be made available on the study website:

- Study Schedule
- Study Newsletters
- Public and Agency Involvement Plan
- Environmental Scan
- Existing and Projected Conditions Technical Memorandum
- Needs and Objectives Technical Memorandum
- Improvement Options Technical Memorandum
- Informational Meeting Presentations
- Public Draft Corridor Planning Study Report
- Final Corridor Planning Study Report

2.5. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

Electronic copies of study deliverables and technical memorandums will be posted on the study website. Additionally, hard copy materials may also be made available at the following locations:

- **City of Great Falls**
Planning and Community Development Department
#2 Park Drive South
PO Box 5021
Great Falls, MT 59403
- **Montana Department of Transportation**
Great Falls District
200 Smelter Avenue NE
PO Box 1359
Great Falls, MT 59403-1359

3.0. MEETINGS

The *River Drive Corridor Study* will require various planning and informational meetings. The following sections will describe the various functions that each meeting type will serve.

3.1. ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Advisory Committee meetings will be scheduled once a month over the 12-month study period. Groups included in the meetings will be the Great Falls MPO, MDT, FHWA, RPA, and others as appropriate. The meetings will track progress and address study development issues and questions. The meetings are important for the exchange of technical information and ideas during the development of the study. Throughout the meetings, the Advisory Committee will identify and discuss issues, problems, and possible solutions.

The Advisory Committee will consider all public comments received for the duration of the study. All comments received from the public will be considered. Public comments received on the draft report during the public comment period will be logged into a public comment matrix for consideration by the Advisory Committee. Written responses will not be offered to the individual making the comment unless a specific question response is warranted. Following publication of the draft report, an additional public comment matrix will be created to log public

comments received specific to the draft report. The matrix will contain written responses as applicable. All public comments received, and any provided responses, will be duly considered and placed in the appendices to the final report.

3.2. INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Two informational meetings will take place in Great Falls during the study. The first informational meeting will occur following evaluation of the existing conditions of the study area. The meeting will focus on introducing the study, presenting existing conditions, and discussing preliminary issues and concerns within the study area. The meeting will allow members of the public to provide information about existing conditions and provide input for the needs and constraints of the corridor.

The second informational meeting will occur following completion of the draft *River Drive Corridor Study* report. The purpose of this meeting will be to present the draft report and to discuss the recommended improvement options. Members of the public will be encouraged to provide feedback on the improvement options and draft report.

Comments will be considered throughout the planning process. An official comment period will be provided after the release of the draft report. Additionally, RPA staff will record comments and concerns at all informational meetings for consideration throughout the planning process.

3.3. RESOURCE AGENCY MEETING/INVOLVEMENT

A resource agency meeting will be scheduled and held at the MDT Planning office in Helena. Polycom arrangements will be provided at the MDT Great Falls District Office, as appropriate. The purpose of the meeting will be to present the findings of the draft *Environmental Scan* developed by MDT as well as the initial findings of the *Existing and Projected Conditions Report*. The resource agencies will be asked to help identify initial avoidance areas, mitigation needs, and opportunities.

3.4. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

Additional efforts are necessary to involve traditionally underserved segments of the population, including disabled, minority, and low-income residents. Including these groups will help to ensure planning that reflects everyone's needs. The following steps will help with these efforts:

- **Plan meeting locations carefully:** Hold informational meetings in locations that are accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a targeted population is located in a certain geographic part of a city or county, then the meeting location should be close to the area for convenience.
- **Seek help from community leaders and organizations:** To facilitate involvement of traditionally underserved populations, consult with community leaders and organizations representing these groups about the most effective ways to reach their members.

- **Be sensitive to diverse audiences:** At informational meetings, study partner staff and RPA will attempt to communicate as effectively as possible. Presenters will avoid using technical jargon, and staff will wear appropriate dress and adhere to common rules of conduct.

3.5. ACCESSIBILITY

The State of Montana attempts to provide accessible information and services to all individuals. MDT will employ the following measures for the *River Drive Corridor Study*:

- MDT will host informational meetings in locations that are accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- MDT and RPA will confer with the leaders of the communities and representative organizations about how best to involve traditionally underserved populations.

The following required ADA statement will be included on all published materials:

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided on request. Persons who need an alternative format should contact the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620. Telephone 406-444-9229. Those using a TTY may call 1(800)335-7592 or through the Montana Relay Service at 711.

4.0. OVERALL STUDY COMMUNICATION

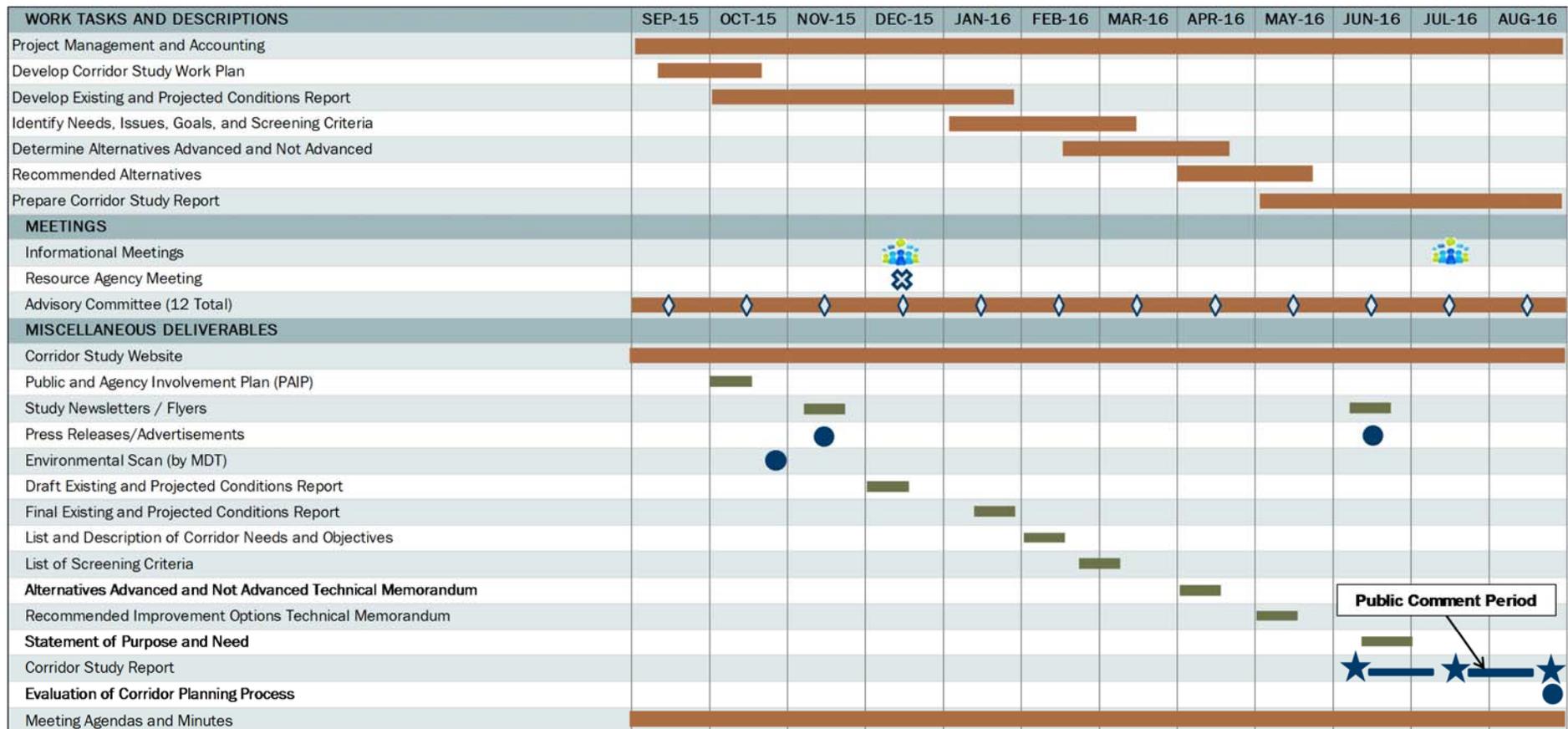
The *PAIP* establishes guidelines and procedures for encouraging participation. The following communication strategies and techniques will be used to distribute study information to the community at large and to seek a higher level of engagement. RPA will apply the techniques that best suit the *River Drive Corridor Study* development.

- All relevant deliverables and associated materials will be posted on the study website at the following address:
<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive/>
- Newsletters will be provided at least one month before each informational meeting.
- Press releases for the newspaper or other widely circulated publications will be developed.
- Technical memorandums will be provided to MDT for posting to the study's website. They will also be distributed to the Advisory Committee to provide a better understanding of proposed issues and recommendations and, in return, to provide the study partners with feedback and an opportunity for continual comment.
- Hard copies of all materials can be made available at the locations described previously.
- Upon request, special presentations may be made to groups and organizations.

Questions and comments from interested parties concerning the participation process, draft technical memorandums, draft *River Drive Corridor Study* documents, and other work products will be included in an appendix to the actual documents.

5.0. STUDY SCHEDULE

Adherence to the study schedule is important to stay on track and to keep all participating parties engaged. **Figure 2** contains the study schedule for the *River Drive Corridor Study*. It is RPA’s intent to adhere to this schedule.



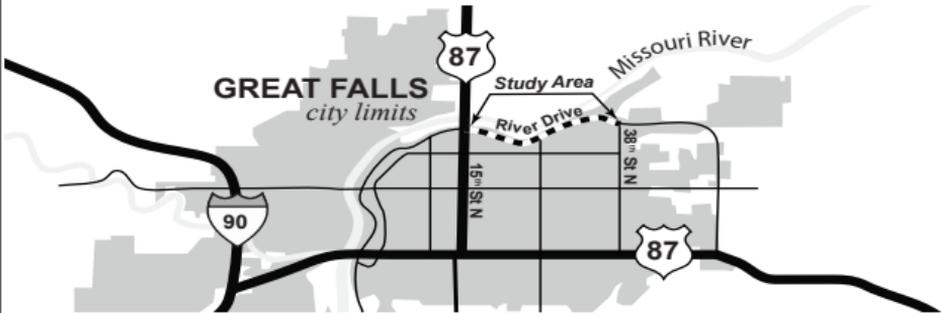
Public Meeting
 Advisory Committee
 Resource Agency Workshop

Figure 2: Study Schedule

To Discuss River Drive Corridor Planning Study

The Montana Department of Transportation, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration and in coordination with the Great Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization, is conducting an informational meeting to discuss the the River Drive Corridor Planning Study. The meeting is intended to inform interested parties about the scope and purpose of the planning study and to solicit input on existing conditions and concerns within the study area between 15th Street North and 38th Streeth North.

The meeting will be held in Great Falls on Thursday, Jan. 21, in the Gibson Room of the Great Falls Civic Center, 2 Park Drive South. The meeting will begin with a presentation at 6:30 p.m., followed by a question-and-answer period. Project team members will be available during the meeting to discuss the study. A study website can be accessed at: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive



This meeting is open to the public and attendance is encouraged. MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any department service, program or activity. For reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please contact Corrina Collins at (406) 444-9131 at least two days prior to the meeting.

Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request by contacting the Office of Civil Rights, P.O. Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620; (406) 444-9229; fax (406) 444-7243, or e-mail to aflesch@mt.gov. Those using a TTY may call (800) 335-7592 or through the Montana Relay Service at 711.

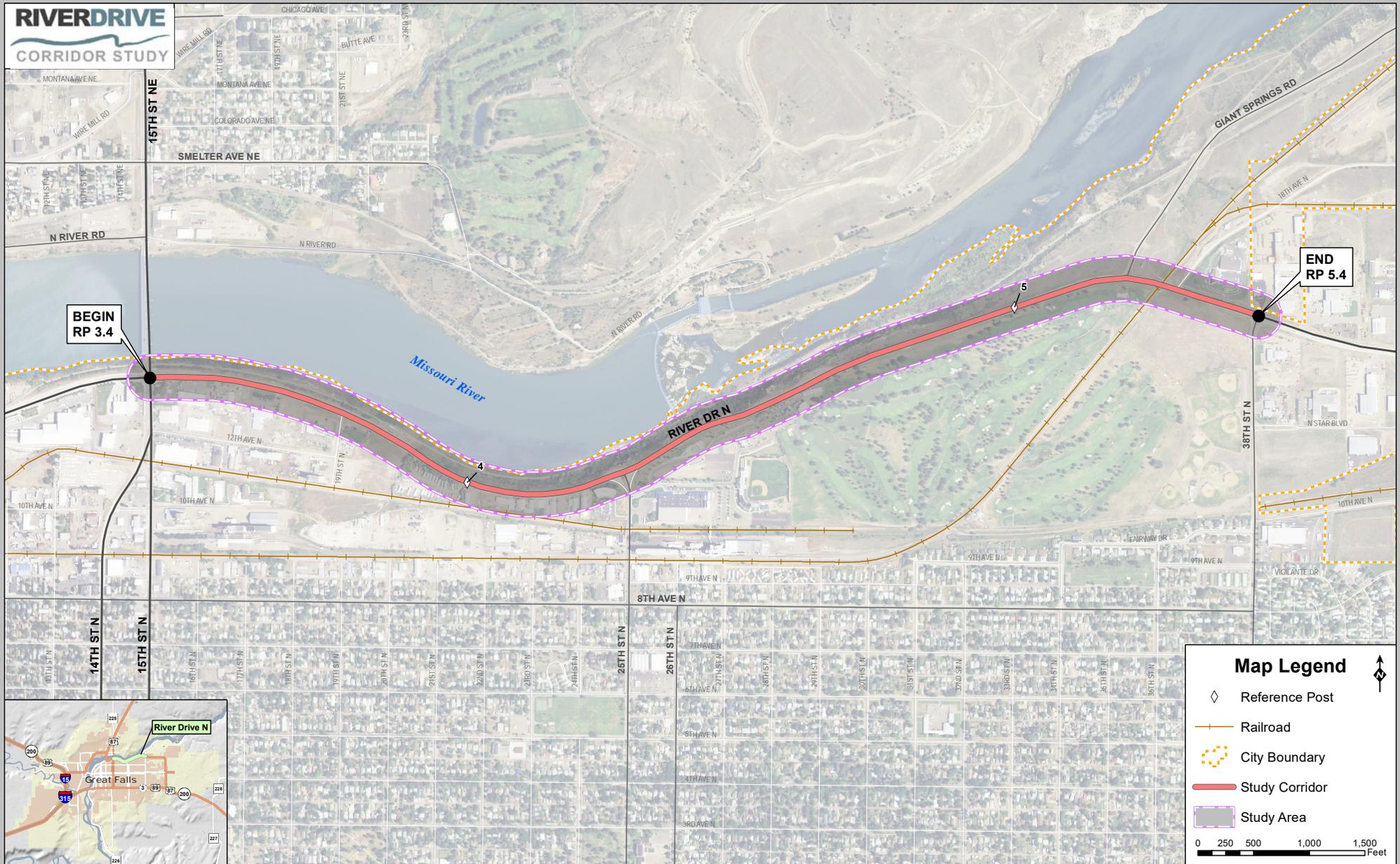
Comments may be submitted in writing at the meeting; by mail to Corrina Collins, Project Manager, MDT Statewide and Urban Planning, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001 or ccollins@mt.gov; or online at www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml

Please indicate comments are for the River Drive Corridor Study.

RIVERDRIVE CORRIDOR STUDY

15th Street North (RP 3.4) to 38th Street North (RP 5.4)

Study Area



TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Access and Right-of-way

- West of 25th Street North, businesses closely front the roadway which provides little room for ingress/egress and for parking.

Non-motorized

- The River's Edge Trail is located on the north side of the roadway.
- The Caboose Trailhead is located just east of 19th Street North and provides parking and access to the River's Edge Trail.
- There is a trail spur that terminates at the intersection with 19th Street North. There are no crossing treatments at this location.

Rail

- At-grade crossing between Giant Springs Road and 38th Street North.
- The crossing can be difficult to see due to roadway geometrics.

Freight

- The study corridor is a designated truck route and is part of the Northeast Bypass.
- Approximately 7.2 percent heavy vehicle traffic along the corridor.

Traffic Operations

- The intersection with 15th Street North is projected to experience a LOS of E during the AM and PM peak hours.
- The intersection with 25th Street North currently experiences a LOS of F during the PM peak hour. The intersection is projected to experience a LOS of F during the AM, noon, and PM peak hours.

Geometrics

- Two vertical curves do not meet current standards for rate of curvature.
- The grade between RP 3.8 and RP 4.0 exceeds current standards.

Safety

- Crash clusters were noted at the intersection with 15th Street North, at the Big Stack Mobile Home Court entrance, and at the intersection with 25th Street North.
- A trend of rear-end crashes was noted along the study corridor.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Physical Environment

- The roadway is constrained to the north by the Missouri River.
- The study area is located within the Great Falls MS4 area.
- There is a public water supply well located within the study area.

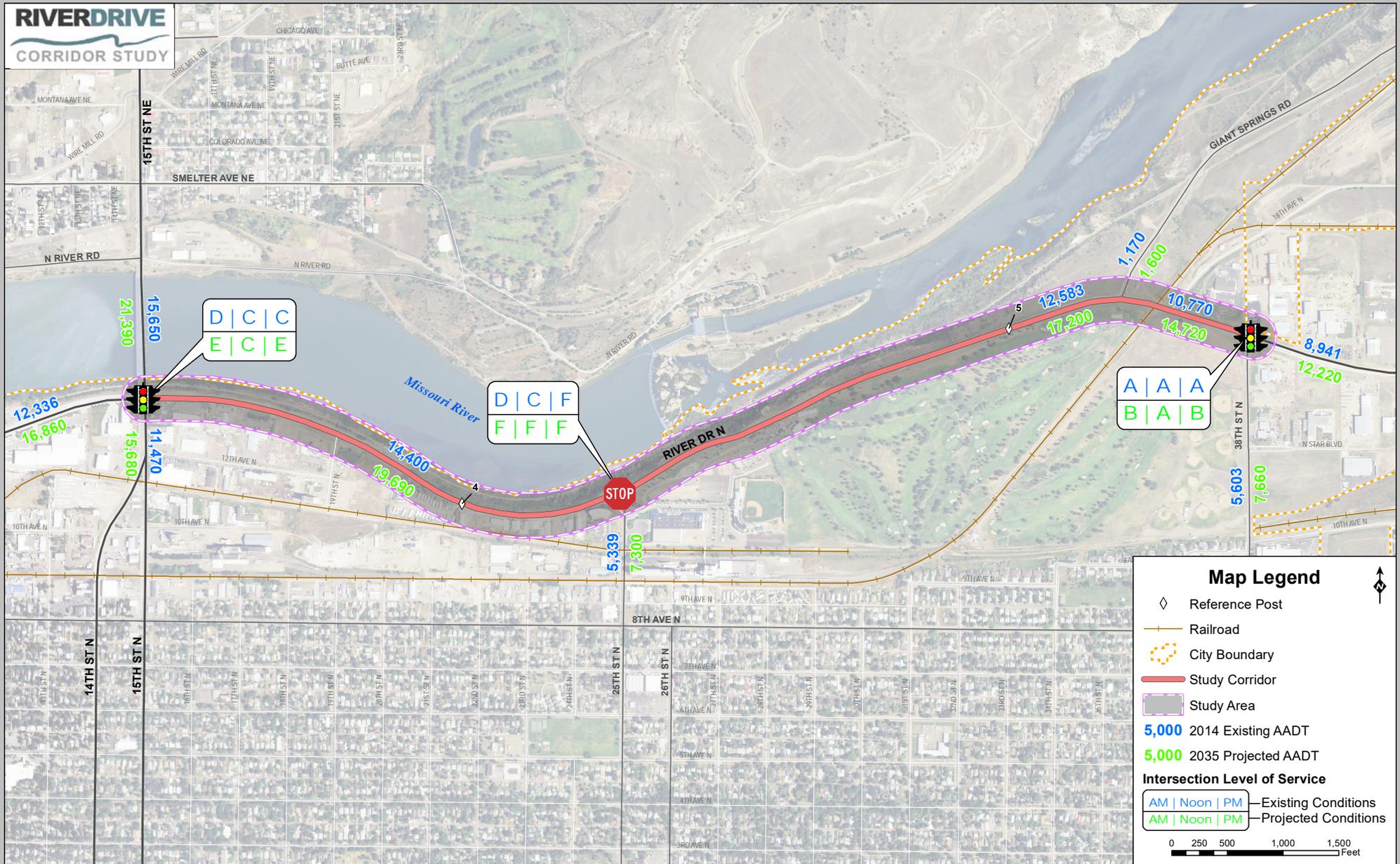
Biological Environment

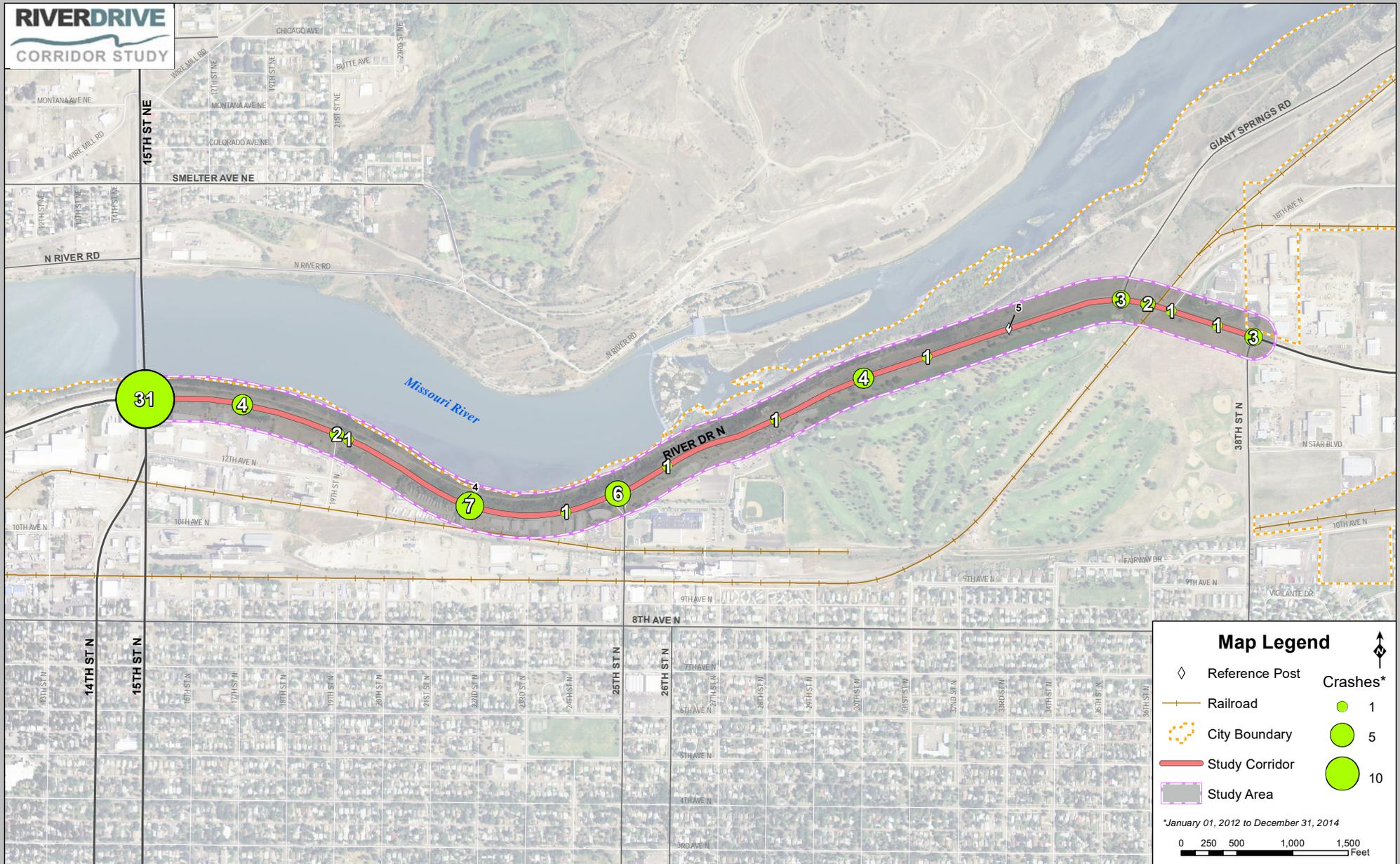
- Noxious and exotic plant species may be located within the study area.
- Two bald eagle nests are located within the general proximity of the corridor.
- Four threatened and endangered species are listed within Cascade County.
- Three species of concern have the potential to occur and breed within the study area.

Social and Cultural Environment

- Median income within the study area is likely below the statewide average.
- The minority population within the study area is likely higher than the statewide average.
- There are likely 4(f) and 6(f) resources within the study area.
- There are 10 historic-age properties adjacent to the study corridor.
- There are sensitive noise receptors within the study area.
- Visual resources include multiple scenic pull-outs, Black Eagle Falls, Veteran's Memorial Park, and the sandstone outcroppings along the cliffs.

Existing and Projected Traffic Conditions





RIVERDRIVE CORRIDOR STUDY

15th Street North (RP 3.4) to 38th Street North (RP 5.4)

Photos



Looking east near the intersection with 15th Street North (RP 3.5)



Looking west near the intersection with 15th Street North (RP 3.5)



Looking east at the intersection with 19th Street North (RP 3.7)



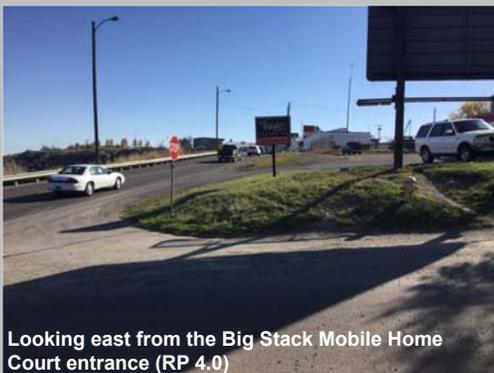
Looking west near the intersection with 19th Street North (RP 3.8)



Looking east near the Caboose Trailhead (RP 3.8)



Looking west at the Caboose Trailhead (RP 3.8)



Looking east from the Big Stack Mobile Home Court entrance (RP 4.0)



Looking west from the Big Stack Mobile Home Court entrance (RP 4.0)



Looking west near the business district (RP 4.1)



Looking east at the business district (RP 4.1)



Looking west at the business district (RP 4.2)



Looking west at the business district (RP 4.2)



Looking east at the intersection with 25th Street North (RP 4.2)



Looking north at the intersection with 25th Street North (RP 4.3)



Looking west at the intersection with 25th Street North



Looking east near the Veteran's Memorial Park (RP 4.4)



Looking west at the Veteran's Memorial Park (RP 4.4)



Looking west at the retaining wall near the Veteran's Memorial Park (RP 4.5)



Looking west from a scenic pullout (RP 4.6)



Looking east near the Eagle Falls Golf Club (RP 4.6)



Looking east at the Eagle Falls Golf Club (RP 4.6)



Looking east near Eagle Falls Golf Club (RP 4.8)



Looking north at the intersection with Giant Spring Road (RP 5.2)



Looking east at the railroad crossing (RP 5.2)



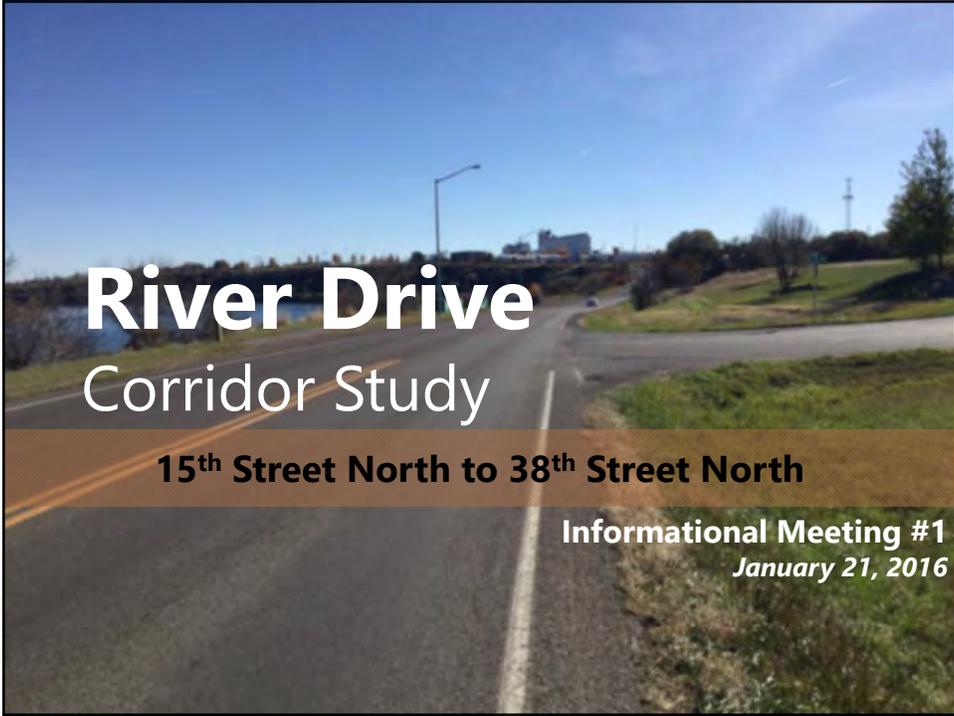
Looking west from the intersection with Giant Springs Road (RP 5.2)



Looking west at the railroad crossing (RP 5.3)



Looking west from the intersection with 38th Street North (RP 5.4)



River Drive
Corridor Study

15th Street North to 38th Street North

Informational Meeting #1
January 21, 2016



**Welcome
and
Introductions**



Title VI Considerations

This meeting is held pursuant to Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which ensures that no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination on the basis of a protected status during any MDT project.



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 3

Meeting Agenda

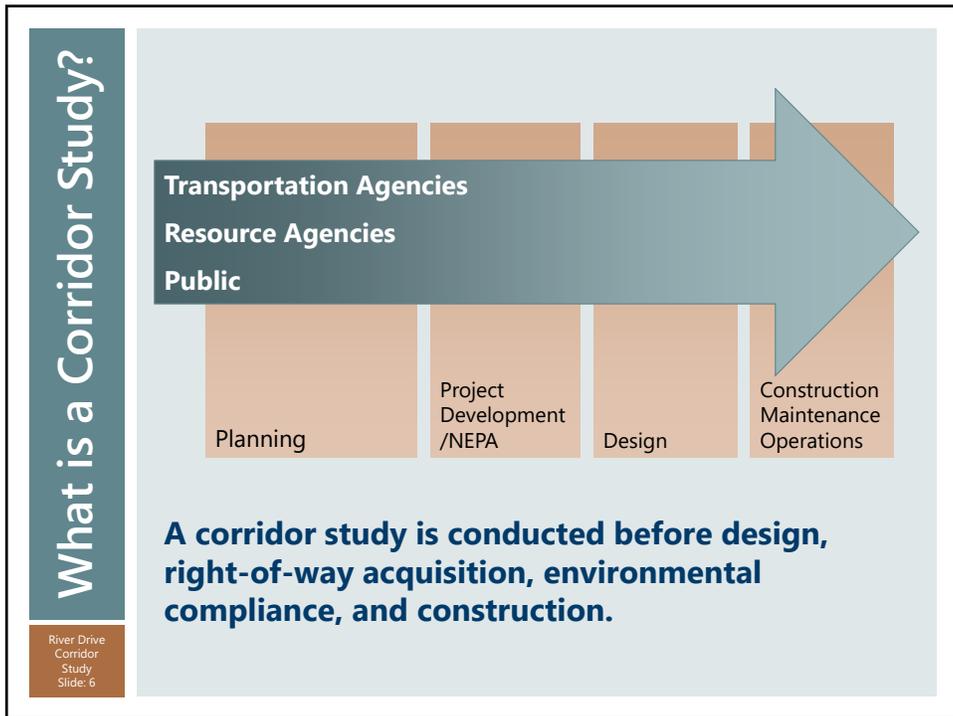
Presentation

- What is a Corridor Study?
- Key existing and projected conditions findings
 - *Transportation System*
 - *Environmental Conditions*
- Next Steps

Discussion Period



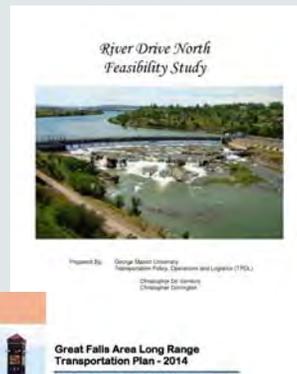
River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 4



Background

Past Planning

- 2009 LRTP
 - Develop a Feasibility Study
- Feasibility Study completed in 2009
- 2014 LRTP
 - Conduct a Corridor Study



Existing concerns

- Congestion
- Intersections
- Safety

Future concerns

- Growth
- Development



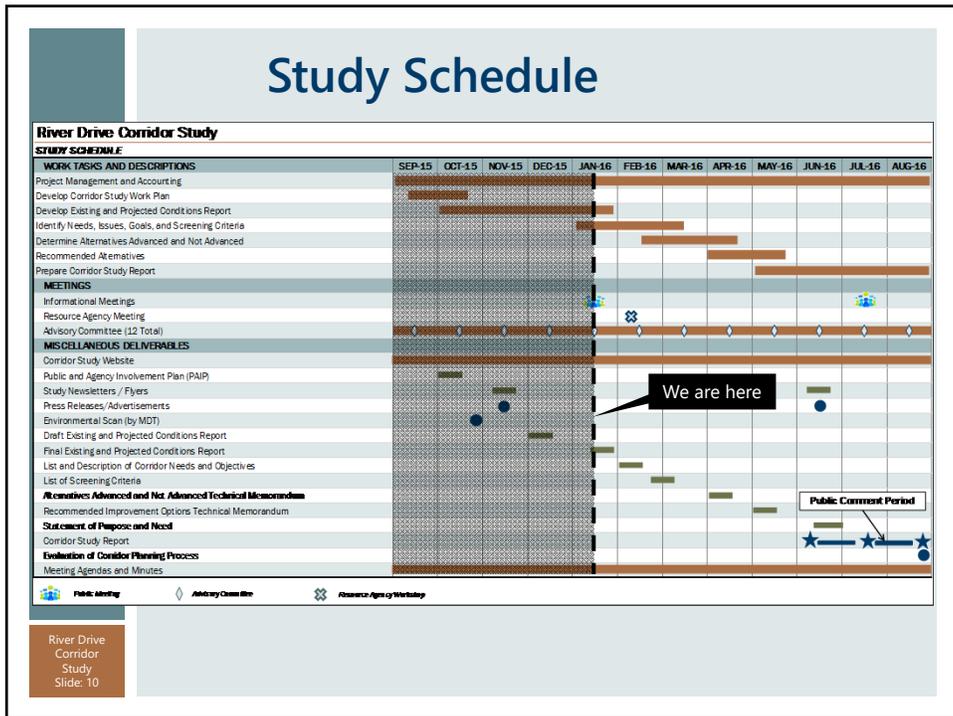
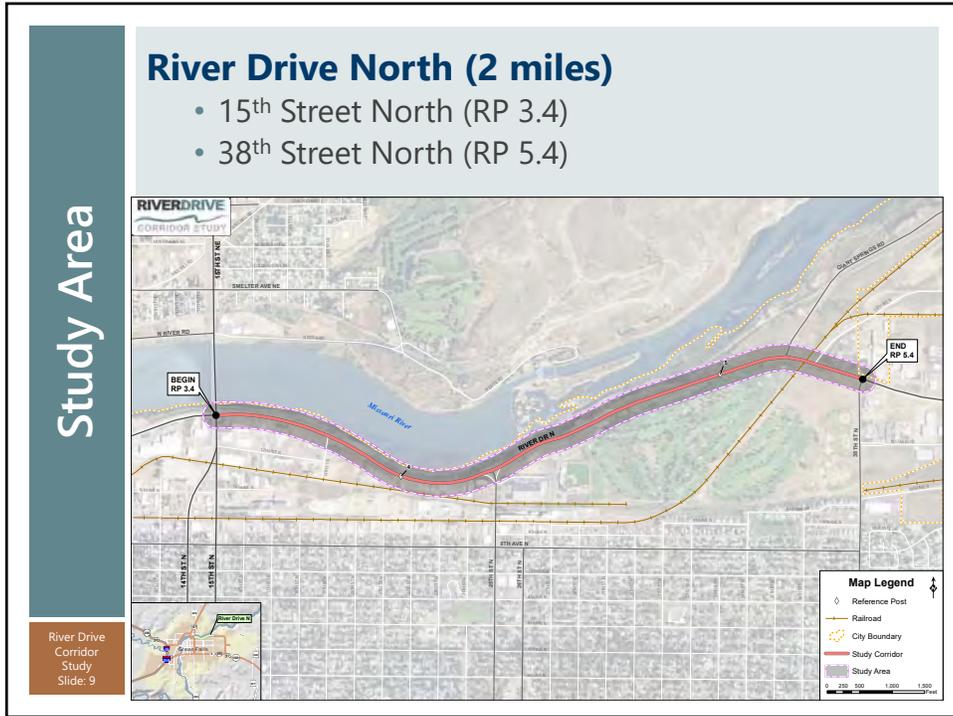
River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 7

Goals and Purpose of Study

- Identify needs and objectives
- Identify potential impacts and constraints
- Identify short- and long-range improvements
- Develop planning level cost estimates
- Develop information and data to be forwarded into the environmental process if a project moves forward from the study (dependent on available funds)



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 8

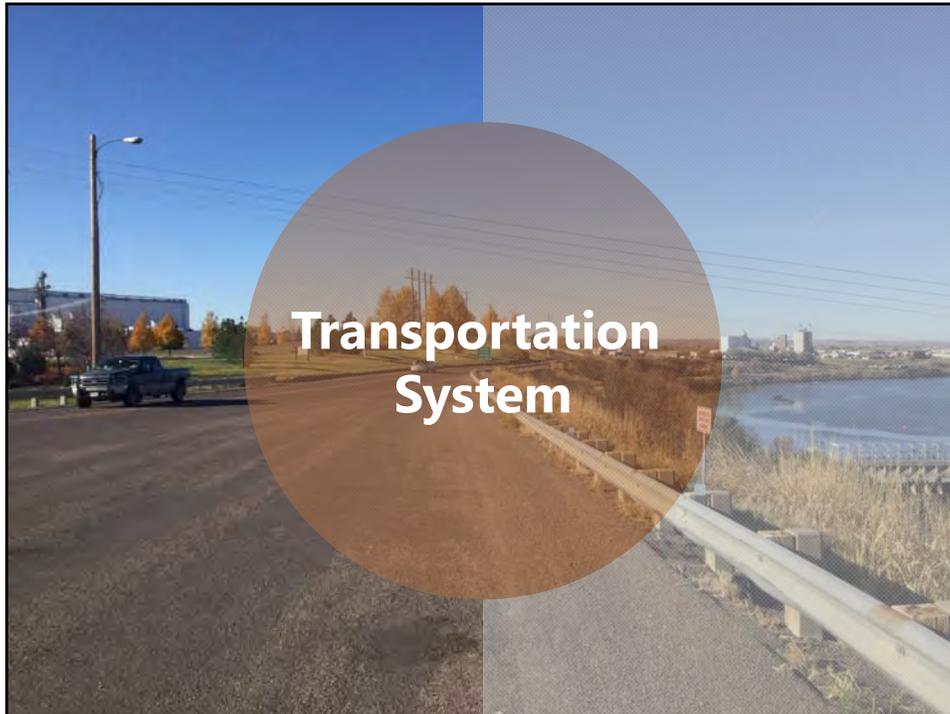


Public Involvement

- Two informational meetings
 - January 21, 2016
 - Summer, 2016
- Outreach to interested parties, stakeholders, resource agencies, as warranted
- Study newsletters
- Website
 - www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive/
- Other as needed



River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 11



Physical Characteristics

Principal arterial roadway

- National Highway System
- Designated truck route

Part of US Hwy 87 Bypass

- Connects 10th Ave S to 15th St N

Existing constraints

- Missouri River
- River's Edge Trail
- Park and recreational land
- Development

Two travel lanes

- Generally 4' shoulders
- Fair pavement condition

35 to 45 mph speed limit

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 13

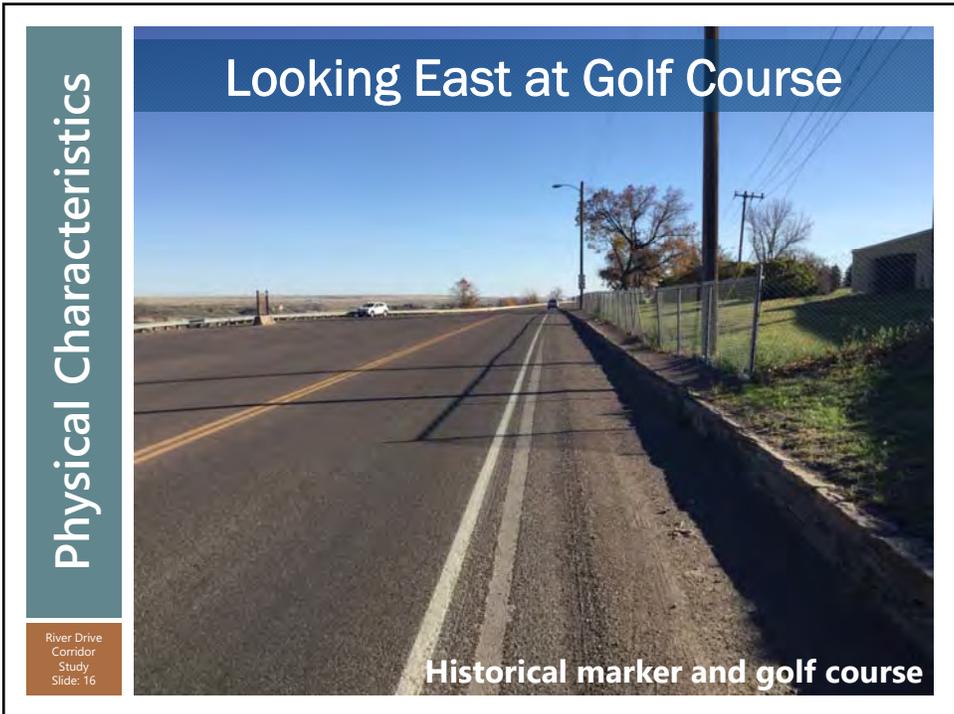
Physical Characteristics

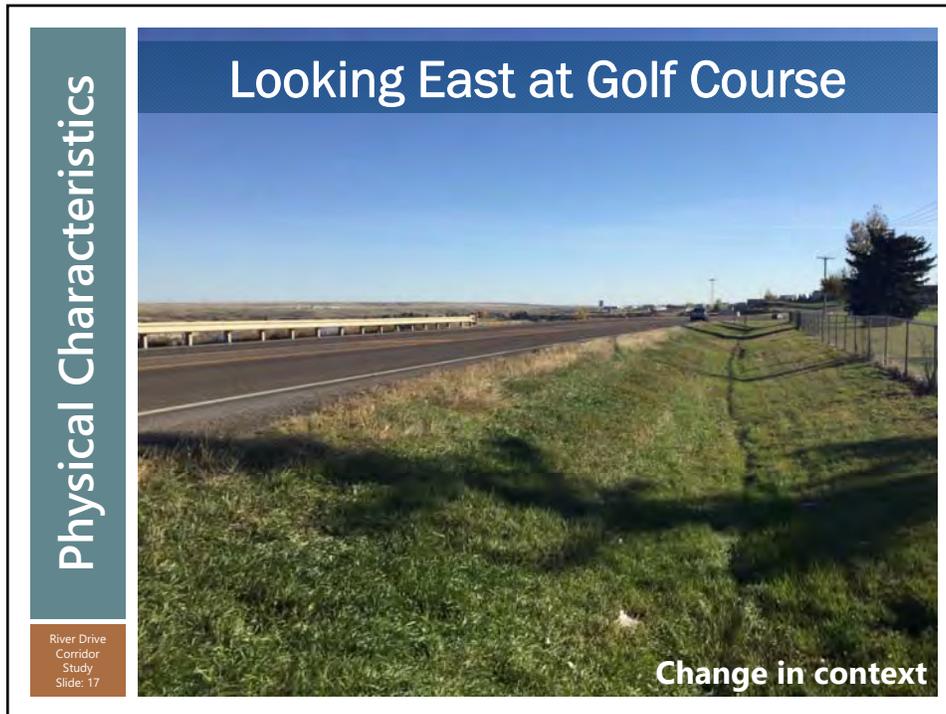
Looking East at Veteran's Memorial Park



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 14

Narrow width





Access and R/W

Businesses between 15th St N and 19th St N

- 7 approaches

Caboose Trailhead

Big Stack Mobile Home Court approach

- On a hill
- Difficult to see

Business access west of 25th St N

- Businesses closely front roadway
- No defined parking or access

Scenic pull-outs

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 18

Access and R/W

Looking West near 15th St N



River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 19

7 business approaches

Access and R/W

Looking West



River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 20

Big Stack Mobile Home Court approach

Looking East

Access and R/W



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 21

Lack of defined business approaches and parking

Looking West

Access and R/W



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 22

Lack of defined business approaches and parking

Access and R/W

Existing River Drive R/W

- Up to building fronts
- Includes parking areas



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 23

Non-motorized

River's Edge Trail

- North side of roadway
 - *Between 15th St N and Giant Springs Rd*
- Shared use path

19th St N crossing

- Trail spur terminates at 19th St N intersection
- No crossing treatments

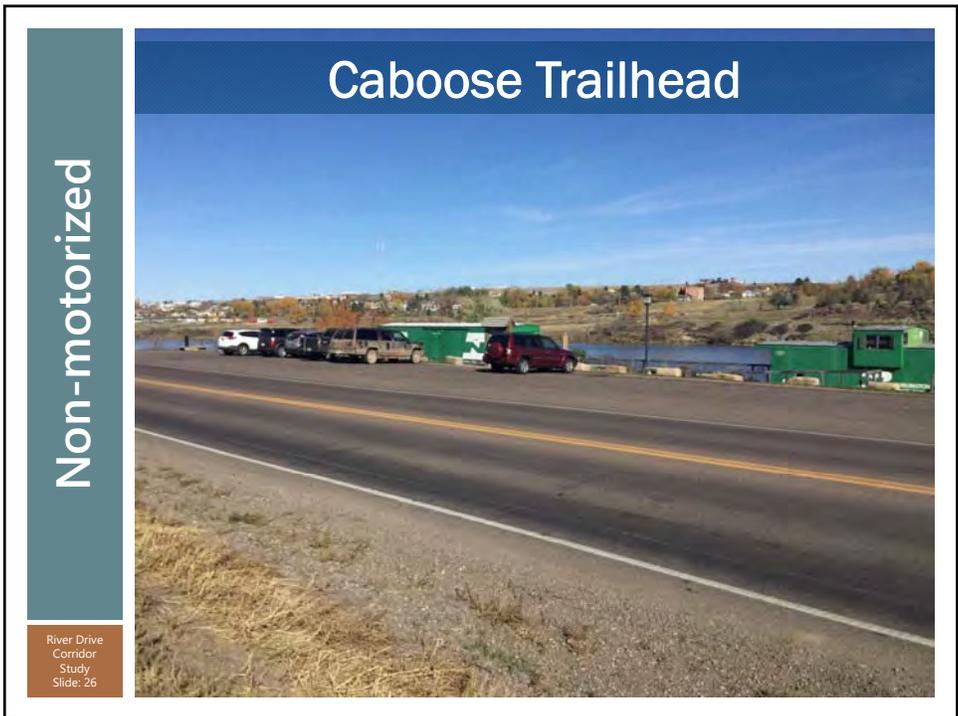
Caboose Trailhead

- Parking area and access for River's Edge Trail

East of Giant Springs Road

- Shared use path
- Connects River's Edge Trail to 38th St N

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 24



Rail and Freight

Rail

- BNSF rail line
- At-grade crossing between Giant Springs Rd and 38th St N
 - Post mounted flashing light signal

Freight

- Designated truck route
- Part of Northeast Bypass
- Local and regional freight traffic
- Multiple industrial and commercial freight generators
- New industrial park planned near 18th Ave N
- Approximately 7.2% truck traffic

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 27

Looking East at R/R Crossing

Rail and Freight



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 28

Looking West at R/R Crossing

Rail and Freight

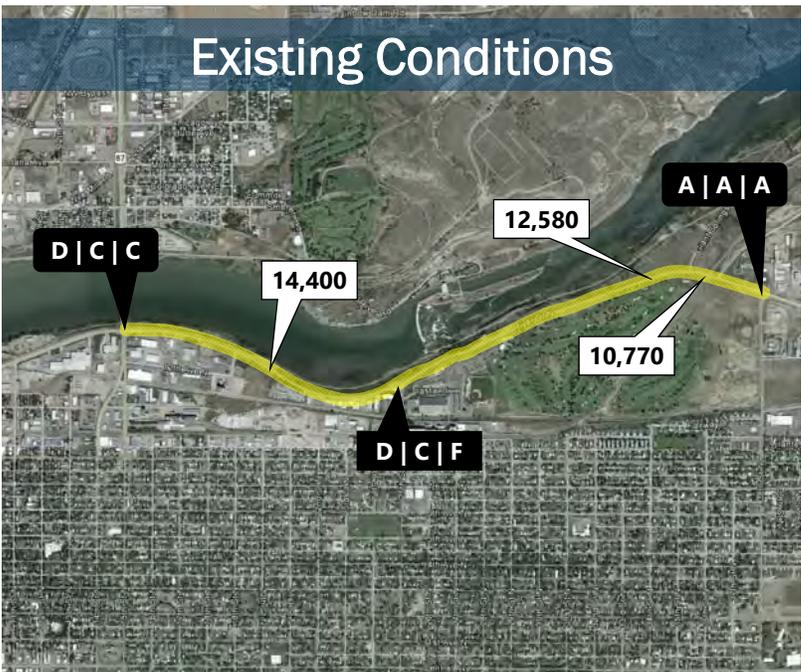


River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 29

7.2% truck traffic

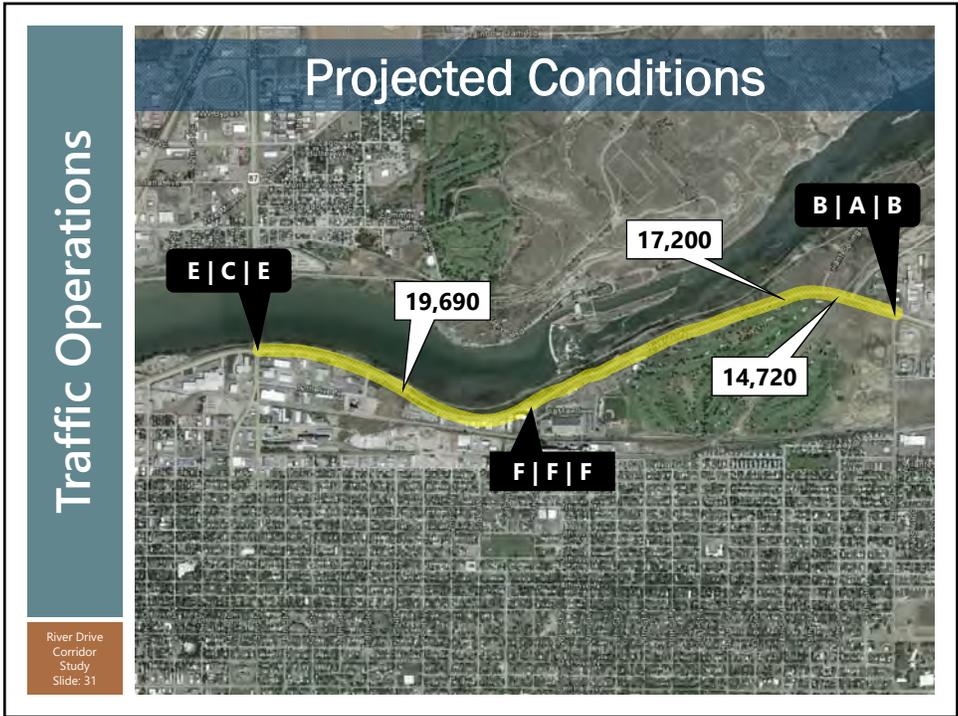
Existing Conditions

Traffic Operations



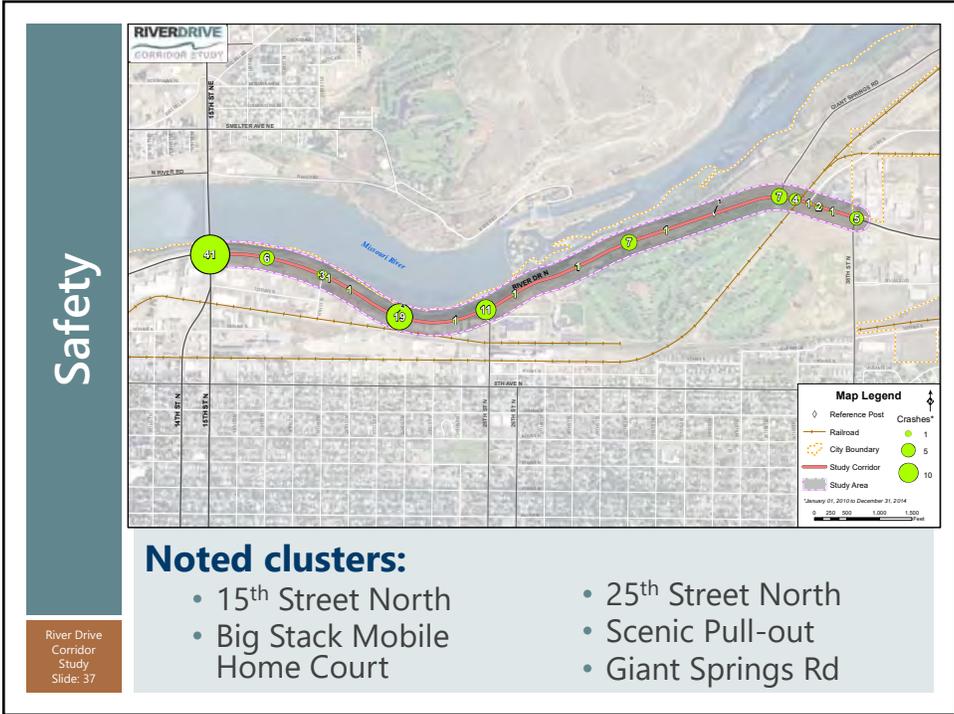
River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 30

Location/Label	Traffic Volume
D C C	14,400
D C F	12,580
10,770	10,770
A A A	12,580









Environmental Resources

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 39

Physical Environment

- Soil Resources and Prime Farmland
- Geologic Resources
- **Water Resources**
- Air Quality
- Hazardous Substances

Biological Environment

- Vegetation
- **General Wildlife**
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- **Species of Concern**

Social and Cultural Environment

- **Population Demographics and Economics**
- **Land Ownership**
- **Recreational Resources**
- **Cultural Resources**
- Noise
- **Visual Resources**

Water Resources

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 40



Groundwater

- One public water supply well
- Two private wells

Wildlife

White-tail and mule deer

- Near golf course

Missouri River fishery

Bald Eagle nests

- Near study area

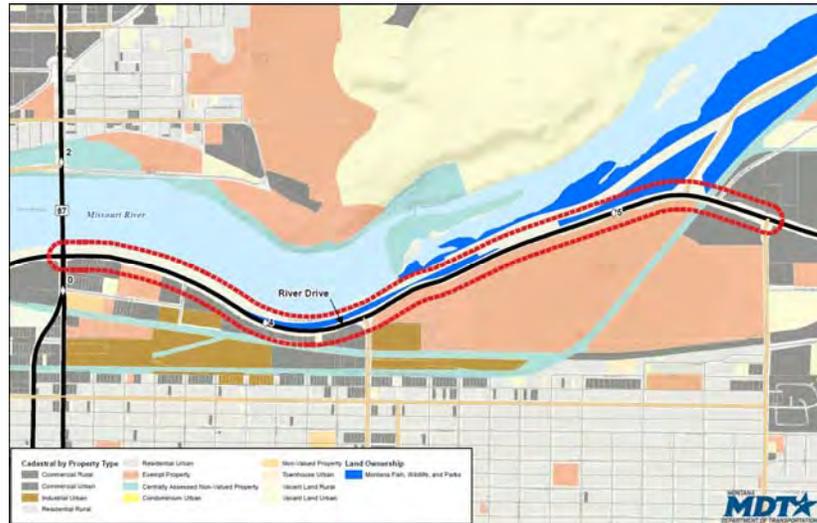
Plains Spadefoot

- Record from 1992 near railroad tracks



River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 41

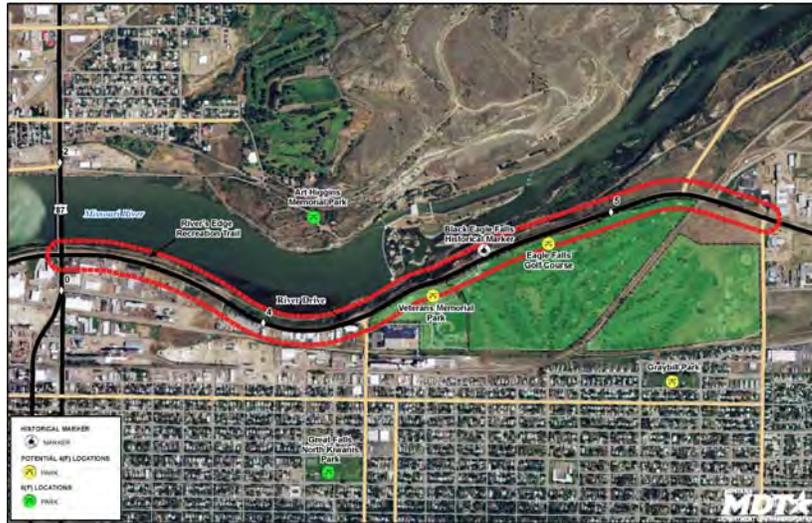
Land Ownership



- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park
- Government
- Residential

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 42

Recreational Resources



- River's Edge Trail
- Veteran's Memorial Park
- Eagle Falls Golf Course
- Centene Stadium
- Giant Springs State Park

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 43

Visual Resources

Multiple scenic pull-outs

- Black Eagle Falls
- Cliffs

River's Edge Trail

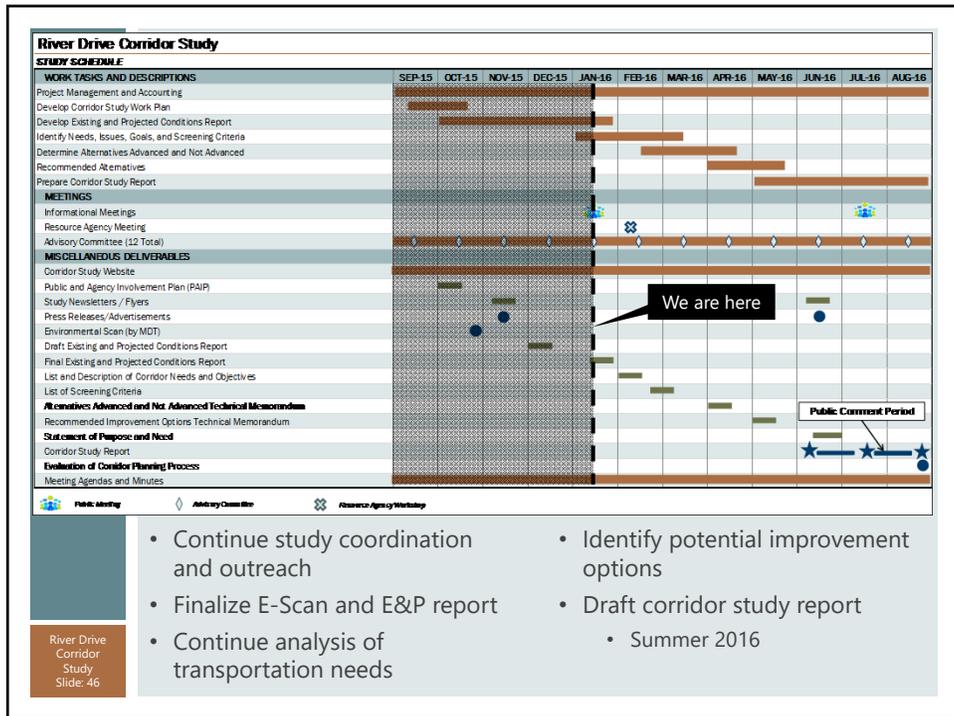
- Caboose Trailhead

Parks

- Veteran's Memorial Park
- Eagle Falls Golf Course



River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 44



Submit Comments

- **Comment sheets**

- **Study website:**

www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive

- **Study Contacts:**

Corrina Collins
MDT Project Manager
(406) 444-9131
ccollins@mt.gov

Dave Hand
*MDT Great Falls
District Administrator*
(406) 454-5880
dhand@mt.gov

- **Info on newsletter**

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 47

Meeting Minutes

Informational Meeting – Number 1

MEETING DETAILS

Location: Great Falls Civic Center, Gibson Room
2 Park Drive South, Great Falls, MT

Date: January 21, 2016

Time: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

MEETING NOTIFICATION AND OUTREACH

A press release for the meeting was released to area media outlets on January 13, 2016. Display ads were printed in the Great Falls Tribune on January 3rd and January 17th. Information about the meeting was posted to the study website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive. A study newsletter was distributed to identified stakeholders and adjacent landowners prior to the meeting.

Meeting minutes are intended to capture the general content of meeting discussions and to document comments made by attendees. Meeting minutes may include opinions provided by attendees; no guarantees are made as to the accuracy of these statements and no fact checking of specific statements is provided or implied from the publishing of final meeting minutes.

ATTENDANCE

Approximately 23 people attended the meeting, 15 of which signed the sign in sheet (see attached). The following Advisory Committee Members attended the meeting:

- Dave Hand (MDT Great Falls)
- Steve Prinzing (MDT Great Falls)
- Christie Mcomber (MDT Great Falls)
- Jerilee Weibel (MDT Great Falls)
- Corrina Collins (MDT)
- Dave Dobbs (Great Falls)
- Andrew Finch (Great Falls)
- Scott Randall (RPA)
- Jeff Key (RPA)

AGENDA

The first informational meeting for the River Drive Corridor Study was held on Thursday, January 21, 2016. The purpose of the meeting was to inform interested parties about the scope and purpose of the planning study, to solicit input on the existing conditions, and to understand roadway concerns within the study area that may be relevant to the planning effort. The meeting began at 6:00 PM and concluded at 7:30 PM.

INFORMATIONAL MEETING #1

Scott Randall provided a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation focused on the purposes of a corridor planning study and the existing and projected conditions analysis of the study area. A discussion period was held following the presentation. Attendees were asked for questions and comments on the presentation. In addition, comment sheets were available for all member of the audience. A summary of the comments and questions received during the meeting is presented below:

Traffic and Non-motorized

- Curious about the traffic projections. Where did the 1% growth come from? Is this from a singular study or a combination of other reports? *Scott explained that we looked back at the historical growth over 20 years, but also had the benefit of the recent LRTP Travel Demand Model. All indications pointed to a 1% growth being quite realistic and legitimate.*
- Lots of use at the scenic pull-out. It might be worth looking at an additional access from the golf course directly across the pull-out. Maybe even a tunnel for pedestrians to access the Trail. The tunnel would have to be ADA accessible if under the roadway.
- Don't forget about pedestrian needs throughout the corridor.
- Truly hope that the alternatives developed look at a bigger vision for the community and not just what can be fit within the physical constraints as they are now. Also see an important need to accommodate non-motorized uses both across the roadway and along the roadway. With improvements to the 25th Street N pedestrian network, we will be dumping pedestrians at the intersection of 25th Street N and River Drive N, and then where do they go?

Freight and Rail

- Just last week the train blocked the roadway well over an hour. Blockages of 15 to 30 minutes are routine.
- With the AgriTech Park to the northeast, and the eventual construction of Walmart on the east end of town, the roadway will experience much higher traffic volumes. This needs to be incorporated into your traffic projections and operational analysis. *Scott explained that those influences are captured in the regional Travel Demand Model prepared for the Long Range Transportation Plan; which is how we arrived at our growth projections.*
- The slope (i.e. grade) of the roadway west of 25th Street N is a big safety concern; especially when it is icy and trucks are having to decelerate (to stop) or accelerate (to get up the hill).

Access / Right-of-way

- Pulling out of businesses is very difficult. Much easier to take a right out of business approaches than try to turn left out of the approaches. There are no stop lights on the corridor that could give "gaps" for turning traffic who have to deal with the steady traffic stream from the east. Traffic from the west not so bad because there are gaps introduced at the 15th Street N signal.
- There is narrow right-of-way in front of Service Master and Irrigation Company. He has had it surveyed in the past and the right-of-way is generally at the fire hydrants

Lighting

- Last Spring, the overhead lights were turned off. Instantly made the road dangerous in her opinion; now very dark. Not sure why they were shut down – rumor was nobody

wanted to pay to keep the lights on. *A clarification was made that the lights were removed and not shut off.*

Environment

- The deer population has exploded over the last few years. We have at least a dozen on any given day in the golf shop area.
- Concerned about erosion on the north side of the roadway. During especially wet springs, water seeps out of the north face and carries silt and debris down on the Rivers Edge Trail. Seems fairly random based on precipitation, but there are some areas that flow coincident to watering activities at the golf course. This points to maintenance concerns on the trail, but also long-term stability of the roadway itself if erosion continues to occur on the north side. Will send pictures to RPA Project Manager by email.

Other

- Space is constrained. Have you thought about using the abandoned railroad track for perhaps a one-way couplet (i.e. westbound on River Drive N and eastbound on abandoned railroad track)? *Christie Mcomber explained as part of a graduate student thesis analysis the abandoned railroad was examined for possible use, but there were numerous hurdles identified that included ownership patterns, the ability to tie roadways together at intersections and other physical constraints.*
- Just want to thank MDT and the City for embarking on this study process. It's been a long time coming and am glad that some progress is being made.

After concluding the question/answer portion of the meeting, the attendees were invited to review the displays and ask any further questions. The meeting concluded at 7:30 PM.

To Discuss River Drive Corridor Planning Study

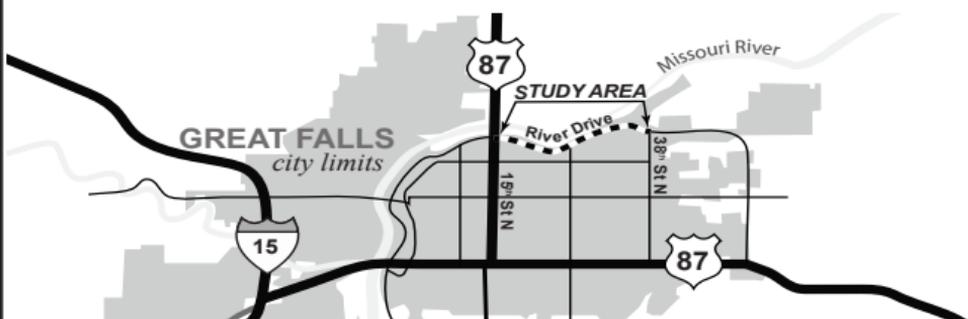
The Montana Department of Transportation, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration and in coordination with the Great Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization, is conducting an informational meeting to discuss the River Drive Corridor Planning Study of River Drive North between 15th Street North and 38th Street North.

The meeting will be held on Wednesday, Aug. 3, in the Resource Center Room of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, 4201 Giant Springs Road. The meeting will begin with a presentation at 6:00 p.m., followed by a question-and-answer period. Project team members will be available during the meeting to discuss the study.

The meeting is intended to present the recommended improvement options developed for the corridor and to gather community feedback on the draft corridor planning study report.

Beginning July 29, the report may be viewed at:

www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive

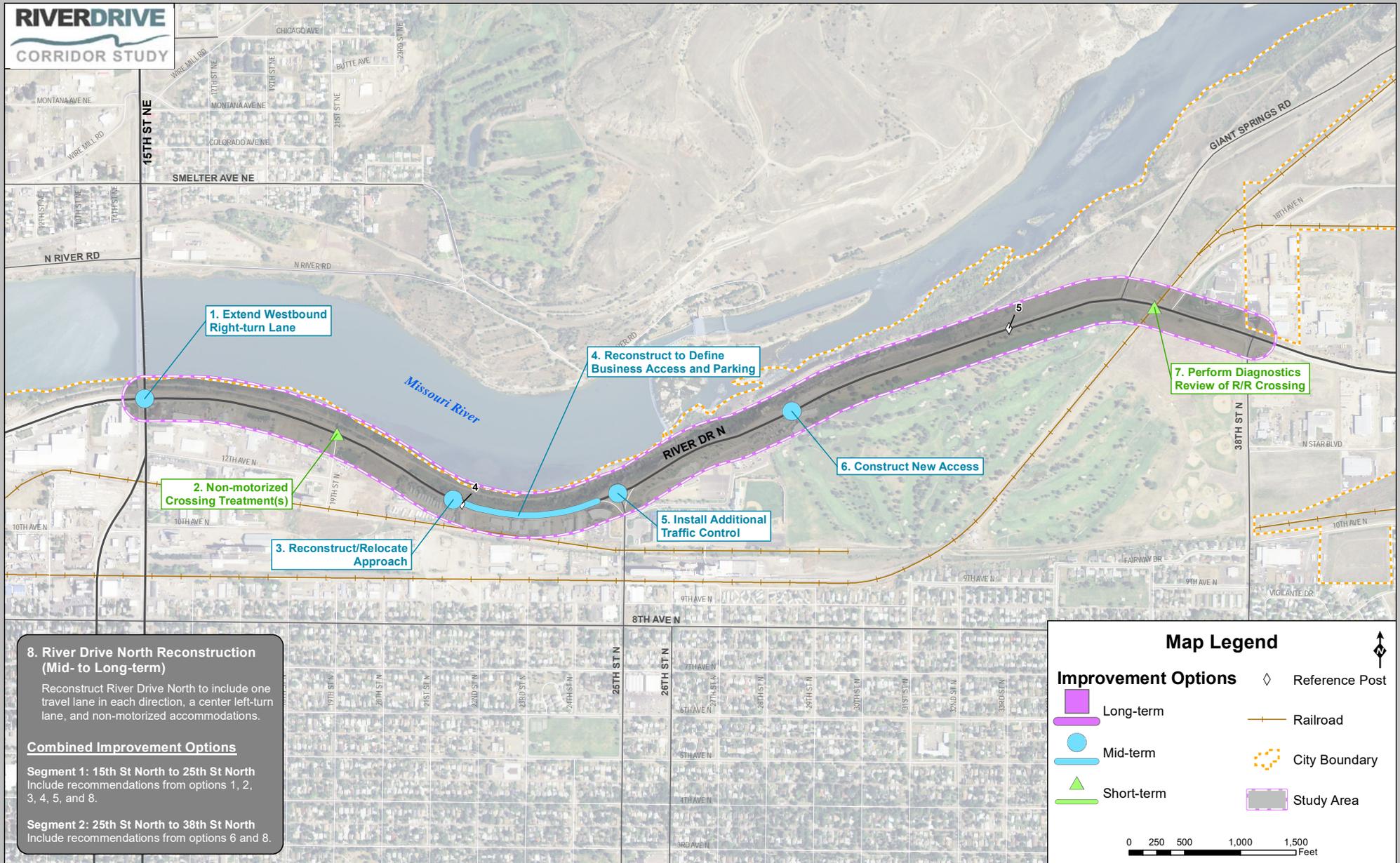


This meeting is open to the public and attendance is encouraged. MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any department service, program or activity. For reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please contact Corrina Collins at (406) 444-9131 at least two days prior to the meeting.

Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request by contacting the Office of Civil Rights, P.O. Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620; (406) 444-9229; fax (406) 444-7243, or e-mail to aflesch@mt.gov. Those using a TTY may call (800) 335-7592 or through the Montana Relay Service at 711.

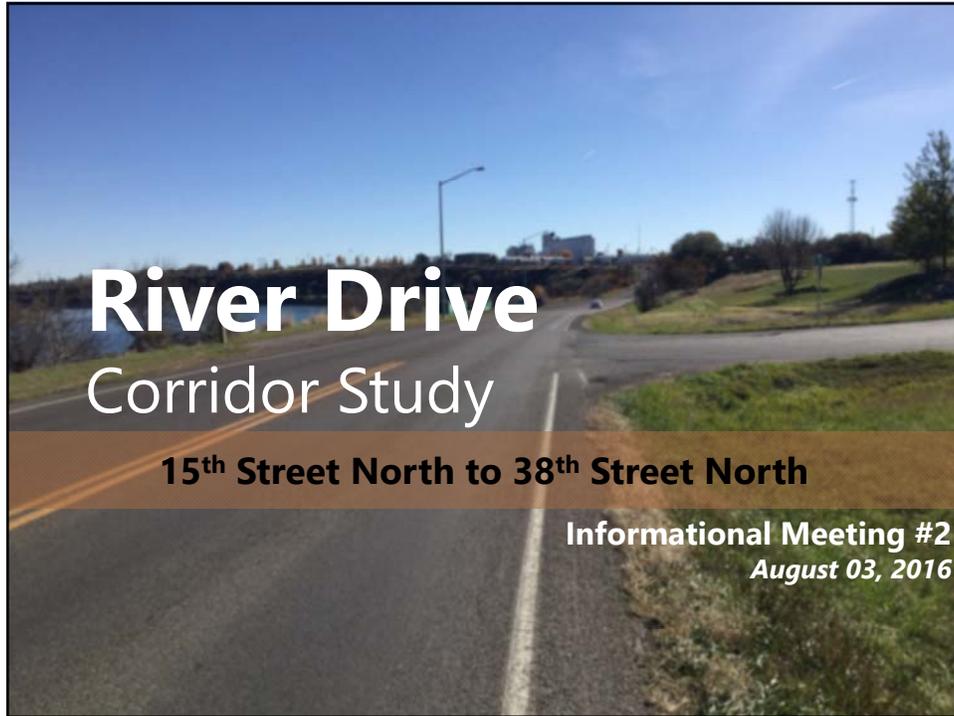
Comments may be submitted in writing at the meeting; by mail to Corrina Collins, Project Manager, MDT Statewide and Urban Planning, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001; or online at:
www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml

Please indicate comments are for the River Drive Corridor Study.



Improvement Options

Improvement Option	Description	Implementation Timeframe	Cost Estimate	Potential Funding Source	
SPOT IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS					
1.	15th Street North Intersection	Extend the westbound right-turn lane to accommodate vehicle queues.	Mid-term	\$180,000	NH
2.	19th Street North Intersection	Evaluate and install enhanced non-motorized crossing treatment(s)	Short-term	\$2,000 (advance signing) \$40,000 (rectangular rapid flashing beacons)	NH TA
3.	Big Stack Mobile Home Court Approach	Reconstruct or relocate the existing approach to River Drive North.	Mid-term	\$900,000 (existing location) \$500,000 (new connection to 19 th Street North)	NH HSIP Local Private
4.	Business District Access	Reconstruct roadway to provide for a center left-turn lane, bike lanes, and sidewalk on the south side.	Mid-term	\$1,500,000	NH Local Private
5.	25th Street North Intersection	Install additional traffic control such as a traffic signal or roundabout in coordination with corridor improvement options.	Mid-term	\$2,600,000 (Signal) \$4,000,000 (Roundabout)	NH STPU HSIP CMAQ
6.	Eagle Falls Golf Club Access	Construct a new access along River Drive North near Eagle Falls Golf Club.	Mid-term	\$60,000 (without westbound left-turn lane) \$320,000 (with westbound left-turn lane)	Local Private
7.	Railroad Crossing Review	Perform a diagnostics review of the railroad crossing.	Short-term	\$30,000	NH
8.	River Drive North Reconstruction	Reconstruct to include one travel lane in each direction, center left-turn lane (where appropriate), and non-motorized accommodations.	Mid- to Long-term	\$6,000,000 to \$8,000,000 (Segment 1) \$8,500,000 to \$11,400,000 (Segment 2)	NH HSIP CMAQ
COMBINED OPTIONS					
1.	Segment 1 – 15th Street North to 25th Street North	Include recommendations from options 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8.	Mid- to Long-term	\$9,400,000 to \$14,500,000	NH HSIP STPU CMAQ Local Private
2.	Segment 2 – 25th Street North to 38th Street North	Include recommendations from options 6 and 8.	Mid- to Long-term	\$8,600,000 to \$11,800,000	NH HSIP CMAQ Local Private



Title VI Considerations

This meeting is held pursuant to Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which ensures that no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination on the basis of a protected status during any MDT project.



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 3

Meeting Agenda

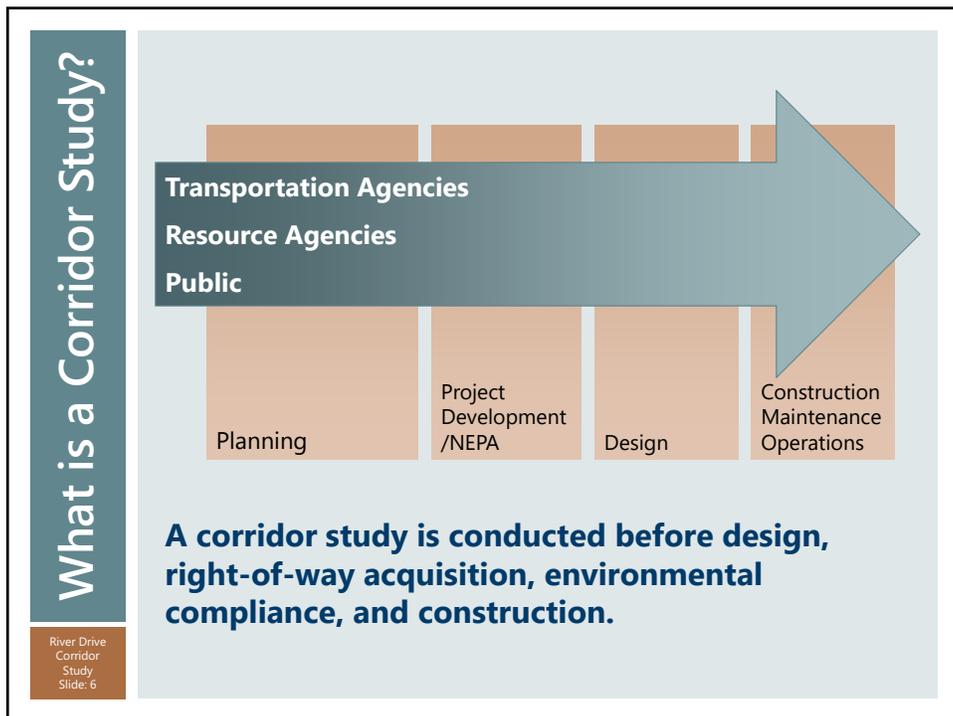
Presentation

- What is a Corridor Study?
- Areas of Concern
 - Transportation System
 - Environmental Considerations
- Needs and Objectives
- Recommended Improvement Options
- Next Steps

Discussion Period



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 4



Study Area

River Drive North (2 miles)

- 15th Street North (RP 3.4)
- 38th Street North (RP 5.4)

RIVERDRIVE CORRIDOR STUDY

Map Legend

- ◇ Reference Post
- Railroad
- City Boundary
- Study Corridor
- Study Area

0 250 500 1,000 1,500 Feet

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 7

Background

Past Planning

- Past LRTPs
- Feasibility Study completed in 2009
- 2014 LRTP
 - Conduct a Corridor Study

Existing Concerns

- Congestion
- Intersections
- Safety

Future Concerns

- Growth
- Development

Prepared By: Georgia Mason University Transportation Policy, Operations and Logistics (TPO)

Great Falls Area Long Range Transportation Plan - 2014
Great Falls Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
March 17, 2014

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 8

Goals and Purpose of Study

- Identify needs and objectives
- Identify potential impacts and constraints
- Identify short- and long-range improvements
- Develop planning level cost estimates
- Develop information and data to be forwarded into the environmental process if a project moves forward from the study (dependent on available funds)

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 9



Physical Characteristics

Principal arterial roadway

- National Highway System
- Designated truck route

Part of US Hwy 87 Bypass

- Connects 10th Ave S to 15th St N

Existing constraints

- Missouri River
- River's Edge Trail
- Park and recreational land
- Development

Two travel lanes

- Generally 4' shoulders
- Fair pavement condition

35 to 45 mph speed limit



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 11

Geometrics

Looking East Near Trailhead



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 12

Access and R/W

Businesses between 15th St N and 19th St N

- 7 approaches

Caboose Trailhead

Big Stack Mobile Home Court approach

- On a hill
- Difficult to see

Business access west of 25th St N

- Businesses closely front roadway
- No defined parking or access

Scenic pull-outs



River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 13

Freight and Rail

Rail

- At-grade crossing
- New development

Freight

- Designated truck route
- 7.2% heavy vehicle traffic



River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 14

Non-motorized

River's Edge Trail

- North side of roadway
 - Between 15th St N and Giant Springs Rd
- Shared use path



19th St N crossing

- Trail spur terminates at 19th St N intersection
- No crossing treatments

Caboose Trailhead

- Parking area and access for River's Edge Trail



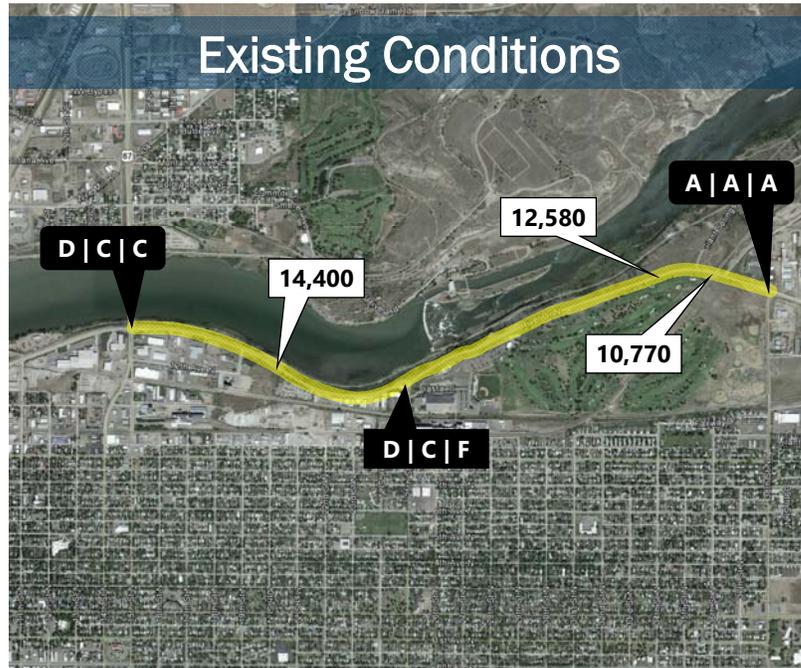
East of Giant Springs Road

- Shared use path
- Connects River's Edge Trail to 38th St N

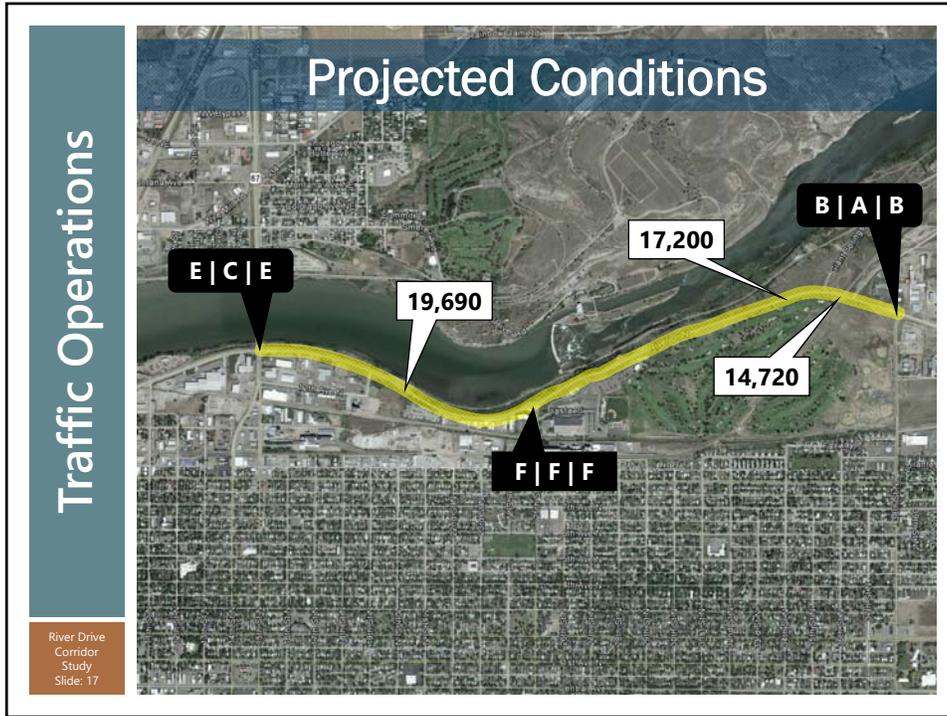
River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 15

Traffic Operations

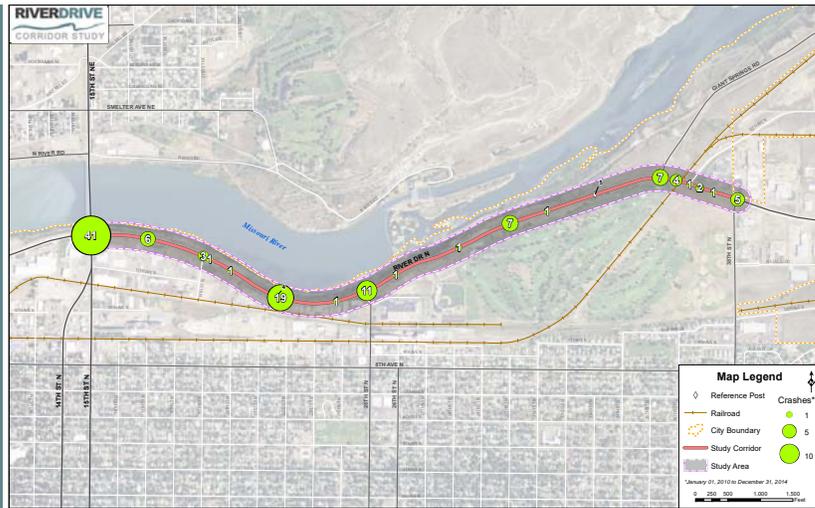
Existing Conditions



River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 16



Safety



Noted clusters:

- 15th Street North
- Big Stack Mobile Home Court
- 25th Street North
- Scenic Pull-out
- Giant Springs Rd

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 19

Environmental Resources

Physical Environment

- Soil Resources and Prime Farmland
- Geologic Resources
- **Water Resources**
- Air Quality
- Hazardous Substances

Biological Environment

- Vegetation
- **General Wildlife**
- **Threatened and Endangered Species**
- Species of Concern

Social and Cultural Environment

- **Population Demographics and Economics**
- **Land Ownership**
- **Recreational Resources**
- **Cultural Resources**
- Noise
- **Visual Resources**



River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 20



Needs and Objectives

Need 1: Improve the Safety of the Corridor

Objectives (To the Extent Practicable)

- Reduce the frequency and severity of crashes.
- Improve roadway elements to current design criteria.
- Reduce vehicle conflicts.

Needs and Objectives

Need 2: Accommodate Existing and Future Demands

Objectives (To the Extent Practicable)

- Reduce corridor congestion.
- Improve operations to achieve LOS standards.
- Accommodate large vehicles and freight movements.
- Accommodate non-motorized use.

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 23

Needs and Objectives

Need 3: Minimize Adverse Impacts to the Environmental Characteristics of the Study Area

Objectives (To the Extent Practicable)

- Minimize adverse impacts to the Missouri River and surrounding wetlands.
- Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to historic, cultural, archaeological, and recreational resources.
- Preserve the scenic character of the corridor.

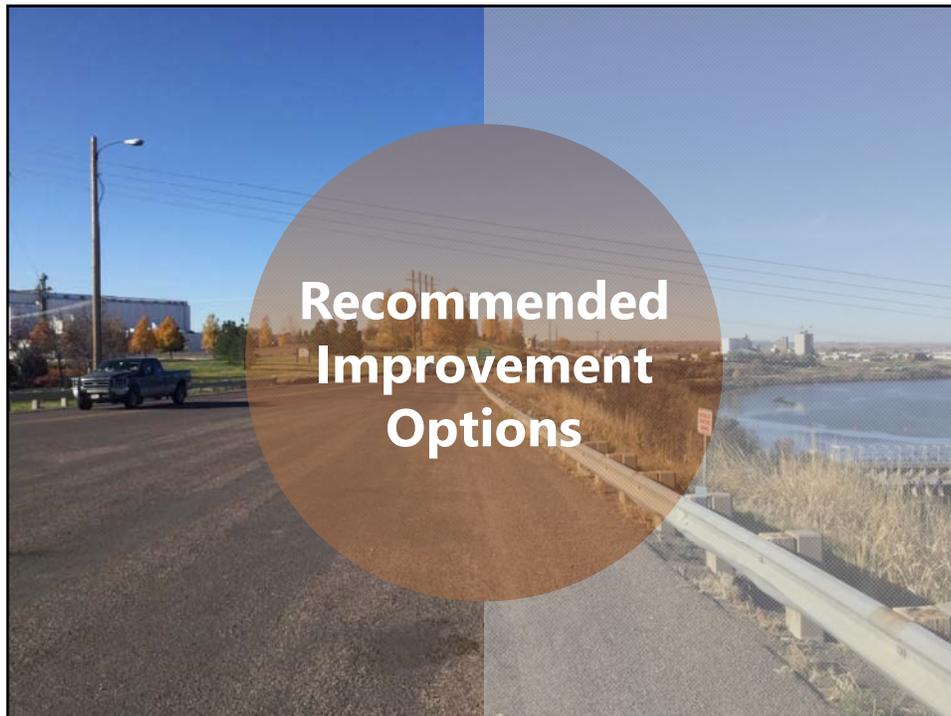
River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 24

Needs and Objectives

Other Considerations

- Local and regional planning efforts
- Funding availability
- Construction feasibility and physical constraints
- Impacts to existing residents and businesses in the area

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 25



Spot Improvements

1. 15th Street North Intersection

- Extend WB right-turn lane



2. 19th Street North Intersection

- Enhanced non-motorized crossing treatment(s)



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 27

Spot Improvements

3. Big Stack Mobile Home Court Approach

- Reconstruct or relocate



4. Business District Access

- Reconstruct roadway

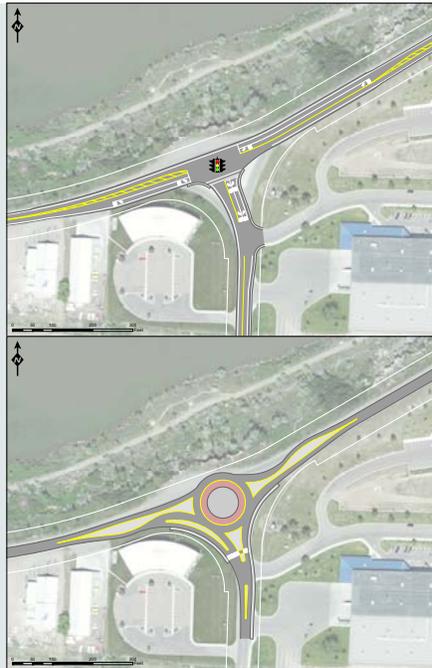


River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 28

Spot Improvements

5. 25th Street North Intersection

- Traffic signal or roundabout



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 29

For conceptual purposes only

Spot Improvements

6. Eagle Falls Golf Club Access

- New access along River Drive



7. Railroad Crossing

- Diagnostics review of crossing



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 30

Spot Improvements

8. River Drive North Reconstruction

- One travel lane in each direction
- Center left-turn lane (where appropriate)
- Non-motorized accommodations



Segment 1 (15th Street North to 25th Street North)



Segment 2 (25th Street North to 38th Street North)

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 31

Combined Options

1. Segment 1 (15th Street North to 25th Street North)

- 15th Street North – Extend WB right-turn lane
- 19th Street North – enhanced non-motorized crossing treatment
- Big Stack Mobile Home Court Approach – reconstruct or realign
- Business District Access – reconstruct
- 25th Street North – traffic signal or roundabout
- River Drive North Reconstruction



River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 32

Combined Options

2. Segment 2 (25th Street North to 38th Street North)

- Eagle Falls Golf Club Access – new access
- River Drive North Reconstruction



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 33

**Conclusion and
Next Steps**



Next Steps

- Receive and consider comments on draft corridor study report from:
 - Public
 - Stakeholders
 - Resource agencies
- Review with study planning team
- Prepare final corridor study report
- Post to study website, distribute, and conclude process

Comment period runs
from July 29, 2016
through August 31, 2016

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 35

Implementation

- Depends on availability of funds.
- Required steps:
 - Identify and secure a funding source(s)
 - Follow MDT guidelines for project nomination and development

or

 - Coordinate with MDT via the System Impact Action Process (SIAP)

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 36

Submit Comments

- **Comment sheets**

- **Study website:**

www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive

- **Study Contacts:**

Corrina Collins
MDT Project Manager
(406) 444-9131
ccollins@mt.gov

Dave Hand
*MDT Great Falls
District Administrator*
(406) 454-5880
dhand@mt.gov

- **Info on newsletter**

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 37

SIGN-IN SHEET



Informational Meeting #2 – August 3, 2016

Name	Address	Email
Scott Randall	ROBERT PERCIN & ASSOCIATES	SCOTT@RPA-HLV.COM
ANT Dickhoff	3027 3 rd Ave S GF, MT 59406	adickhoff@gmail.com
Corrina Collins	Montana Dept of Transportation	ccollins@mt.gov
Bill Bronson	733-32nd Ave. N.E. GF-MT 59404	bill.bronson@bresnan.net
Don Ginnaty	1209 15 th St. N. Great Falls, MT 59401	gtflooring@yahoo.com
Randy Gray	2114 3rd Ave N. GF, MT 59401	randygray@gmail.com
William Sunwall	709-2nd Ave N. GF 59401	lsunwall@gfddevelopment.org
Debra Wam	1500 Kuersten N. 59401	deb.evans@earthlink.net
Andrew Rich	city of great falls	arich@greatfallsmt.net
DAH HUGSTIS	2901 4 th & 1/2 N. GF	kyso@corp@gmail.com
Chris Ward	3621 7 th Ave S	christopher.ward@gf.com
Stuart Lewin	615 3 rd Ave N	stuartlewin@gmail.com
Connie Caonetti	1205 Buena Dr Gts	ccramer@greatfallsmt.net
3 Court	1205 Buena	
BRUCE POLLINGTON	3217 8 th Ave S	bruce60s@gmail.com

Meeting Minutes

Informational Meeting – Number 2

MEETING DETAILS

Location: Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, Resource Center Room
4201 Giant Spring Road, Great Falls, MT

Date: August 3rd, 2016

Time: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

MEETING NOTIFICATION AND OUTREACH

A press release for the meeting was released to area media outlets on July 27th. Display ads were printed in the Great Falls Tribune on July 17th and July 31st. Information about the meeting was posted to the study website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive. A study newsletter was distributed to identified stakeholders and adjacent landowners prior to the meeting.

Meeting minutes are intended to capture the general content of meeting discussions and to document comments made by attendees. Meeting minutes may include opinions provided by attendees; no guarantees are made as to the accuracy of these statements and no fact checking of specific statements is provided or implied from the publishing of final meeting minutes.

ATTENDANCE

Approximately 20 people attended the meeting, 15 of which signed the sign in sheet (see attached). The following Advisory Committee Members attended the meeting:

- Steve Prinzing (MDT Great Falls)
- Jerilee Weibel (MDT Great Falls)
- Corrina Collins (MDT)
- Andrew Finch (Great Falls)
- Scott Randall (RPA)
- Jeff Key (RPA)

AGENDA

The second informational meeting for the River Drive Corridor Study was held on Wednesday, August 3rd, 2016. The purpose of the meeting was to present the draft corridor study report and to discuss the recommended improvement options. The meeting began at 6:00 PM and concluded at 7:30 PM.

INFORMATIONAL MEETING #2

Scott Randall provided a 40-minute PowerPoint presentation focused on the corridor study report and specifically the recommendations made in the report. A discussion period was held following the presentation. Attendees were asked for questions and comments on the presentation and report. In addition, comment sheets were available for all member of the audience. A summary of the comments and questions received during the meeting is presented below:

- Consider the long-term vision of the corridor when implementing short-term improvements.
- Need a formal overlook with designated parking and defined access points.
- The intersection with Giant Springs Road has operational issues and is tough to see.
- Rail traffic seems to be increasing.
- East/west left-turn phasing at the intersection with 15th Street North should be considered.
- A roundabout at the intersection with 25th Street North is a good idea if it is designed to accommodate large trucks.
- Consider how construction would affect adjacent businesses.
- A pedestrian refuge island should be considered at the intersection with 19th Street North.
- There are some drainage issues that should be addressed near the business district.

After concluding the question/answer portion of the meeting, the attendees were invited to talk informally with the project team and to submit written comments by August 31st, 2016. The meeting concluded at 7:30 PM.



January 14, 2016

To: Resource Agency Distribution

Subject: River Drive Corridor Study

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has initiated a corridor planning study to explore potential needs for improvements to River Drive North in Great Falls, Montana. The study is a collaborative process between MDT, the Federal Highway Administration, the Great Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization, other agencies, and the public aimed at identifying transportation needs and potential solutions. The study will focus on the two mile segment of River Drive North between the intersections with 15th Street North (Reference Post [RP] 3.4) and 38th Street North (RP 5.4). The study area includes a 200-foot buffer on both sides of the roadway (total buffer width of 400 feet).

MDT invites you to attend a resource agency meeting to discuss environmental conditions in the study area. The meeting is intended to identify any issues or concerns regarding environmental resources that may be affected by potential future improvement options.

When: **Wednesday, February 03, 2016 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

Where: **MDT Planning Division** **MDT Great Falls District**
Conference Room A or Conference Room
2960 Prospect Avenue 200 Smelter Ave NE
Helena, MT 59601 Great Falls, MT 59403

Please review the draft environmental scan report in advance of the meeting. An electronic version of this document (with attachments) is provided on the enclosed CD. Please provide written comments on the enclosed report by **February 12, 2016**. Additional information about the study is available on the study website: <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive>.

If you are unable to attend the resource agency meeting, please forward these files to an appropriate agency designee. Please contact Corrina Collins, MDT Project Manager, (406) 444-9131, ccollins@mt.gov, by **January 29, 2016**, to confirm your participation in the resource agency meeting.

Thank you in advance for your agency's input.

Sincerely,

Tom Martin
MDT Environmental Services Bureau Chief

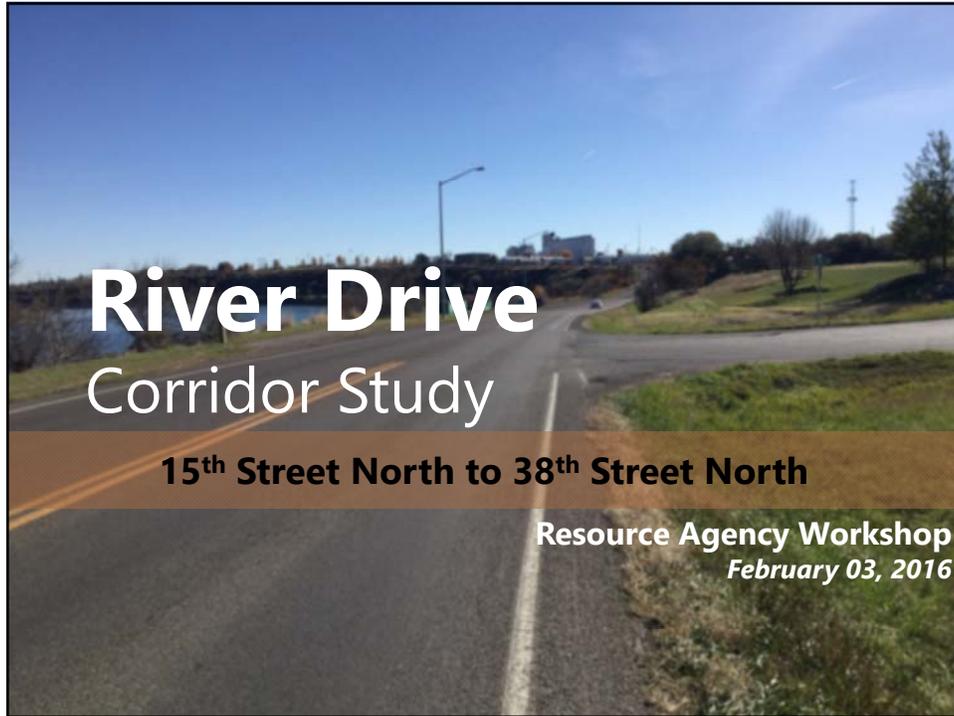
Enclosure

Resource Agency Distribution:

Julie Dalsoglio, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
David Fronczak, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mike McGrath, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Todd Tillinger, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Renee Lemon, MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Gary Bertellotti, MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Grant Grisak, MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Mark Schlepp, MT Fish Wildlife, and Parks
Jonathan Ferree, MT Fish Wildlife, and Parks
Allan Kuser, MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Vicki Robinson, MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Jon Kenning, MT Department of Environmental Quality
Dean Yashan, MT Department of Environmental Quality
Stephan Carpenedo, MT Department of Environmental Quality
Charlie Sheets, City of Great Falls (floodplain administrator)
Ellen Sievert, Great Falls Historic Preservation Officer

Copies (without enclosure):

Corrina Collins, MDT
Douglas Lieb, MDT
File



Meeting Agenda

Presentation

- What is a Corridor Study?
- Key existing and projected conditions findings
 - *Transportation System*
 - *Environmental Conditions*
- Next Steps

Discussion Period



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 3



What is a Corridor Study?

Transportation Agencies
Resource Agencies
Public

Planning Project Development /NEPA Design Construction Maintenance Operations

A corridor study is conducted before design, right-of-way acquisition, environmental compliance, and construction.

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 5

Study Area

River Drive North (2 miles)

- 15th Street North (RP 3.4)
- 38th Street North (RP 5.4)

RIVERDRIVE CORRIDOR STUDY

Map Legend

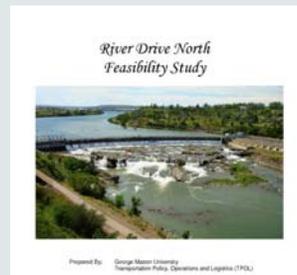
- Beltline/Interstate Road
- Railroad
- City Boundary
- Study Corridor
- Study Area

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 6

Background

Past Planning

- Past LRTPs
- Feasibility Study completed in 2009
- 2014 LRTP
 - Conduct a Corridor Study

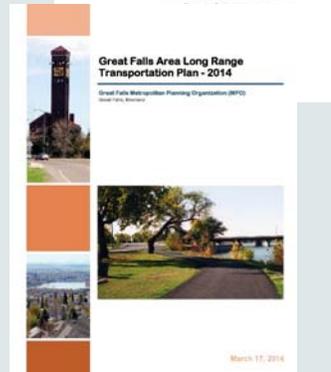


Existing concerns

- Congestion
- Intersections
- Safety

Future concerns

- Growth
- Development



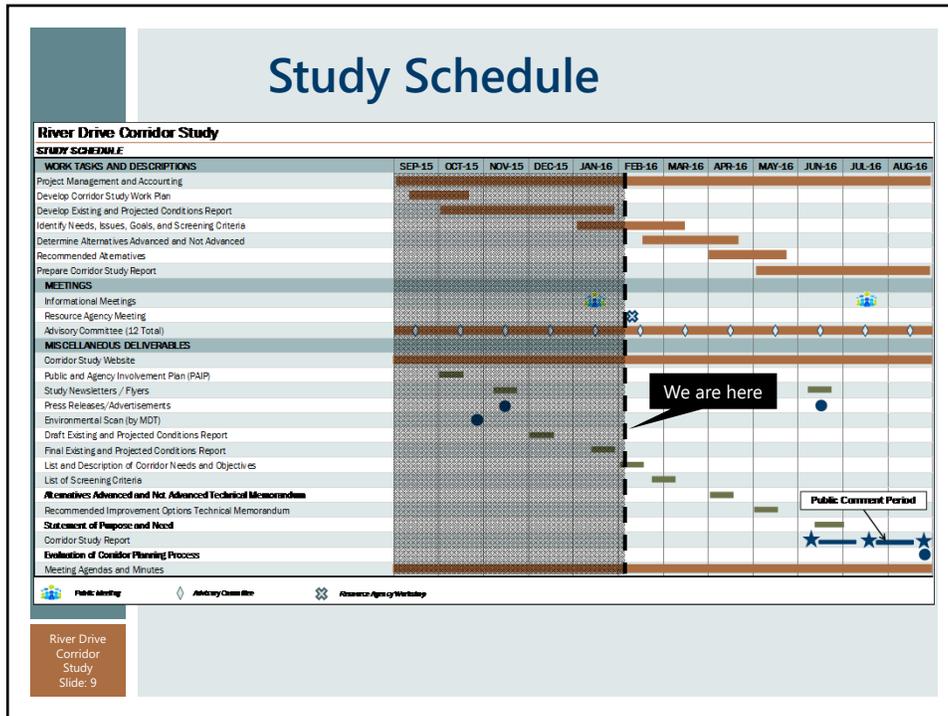
River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 7

Goals and Purpose of Study

- Identify needs and objectives
- Identify potential impacts and constraints
- Identify short- and long-range improvements
- Develop planning level cost estimates
- Develop information and data to be forwarded into the environmental process if a project moves forward from the study (dependent on available funds)



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 8

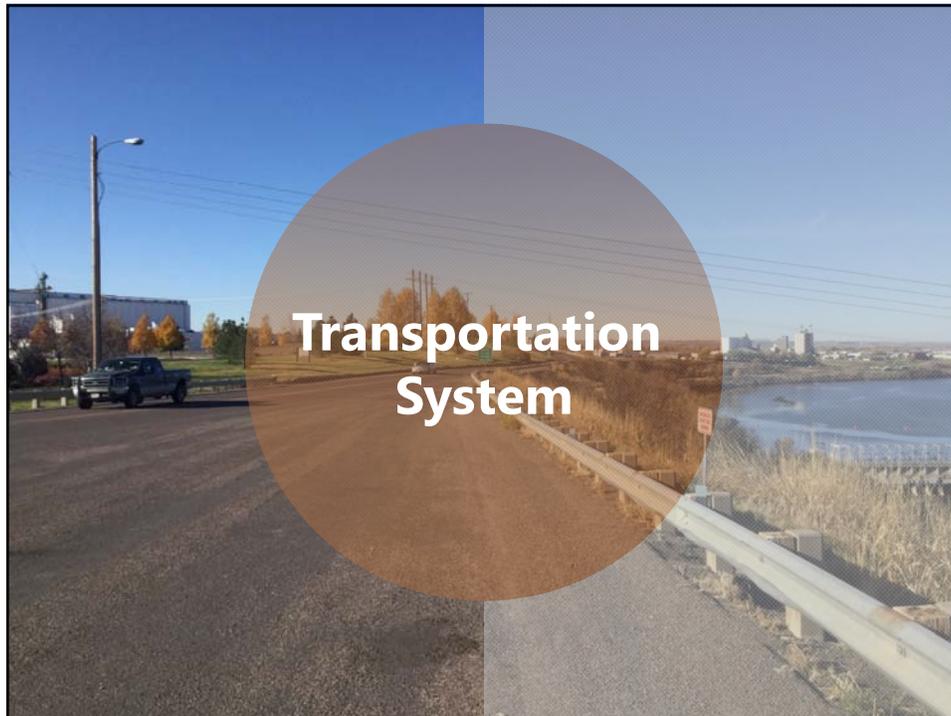


Public Involvement

- Two informational meetings
 - January 21, 2016
 - Summer, 2016
- Outreach to interested parties, stakeholders, resource agencies, as warranted
- Study newsletters
- Website
 - www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive/
- Other as needed

The screenshot shows the MDT website for the River Drive Corridor Study. It includes sections for 'Overview', 'Objectives', and 'Contacts'. The 'Overview' section describes the study's purpose and the role of the Advisory Committee. The 'Contacts' section lists key personnel like Carrie Lott and Scott Rowland.

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 10



Physical Characteristics

Principal arterial roadway

- National Highway System
- Designated truck route

Part of US Hwy 87 Bypass

- Connects 10th Ave S to 15th St N

Existing constraints

- Missouri River
- River's Edge Trail
- Park and recreational land
- Development

Two travel lanes

- Generally 4' shoulders
- Fair pavement condition

35 to 45 mph speed limit

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 12



Physical Characteristics

Looking East at Golf Course



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 15

Historical marker and golf course

Physical Characteristics

Looking East at Golf Course



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 16

Change in context

Access and R/W

Businesses between 15th St N and 19th St N

- 7 approaches

Caboose Trailhead

Big Stack Mobile Home Court approach

- On a hill
- Difficult to see

Business access west of 25th St N

- Businesses closely front roadway
- No defined parking or access

Scenic pull-outs

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 17

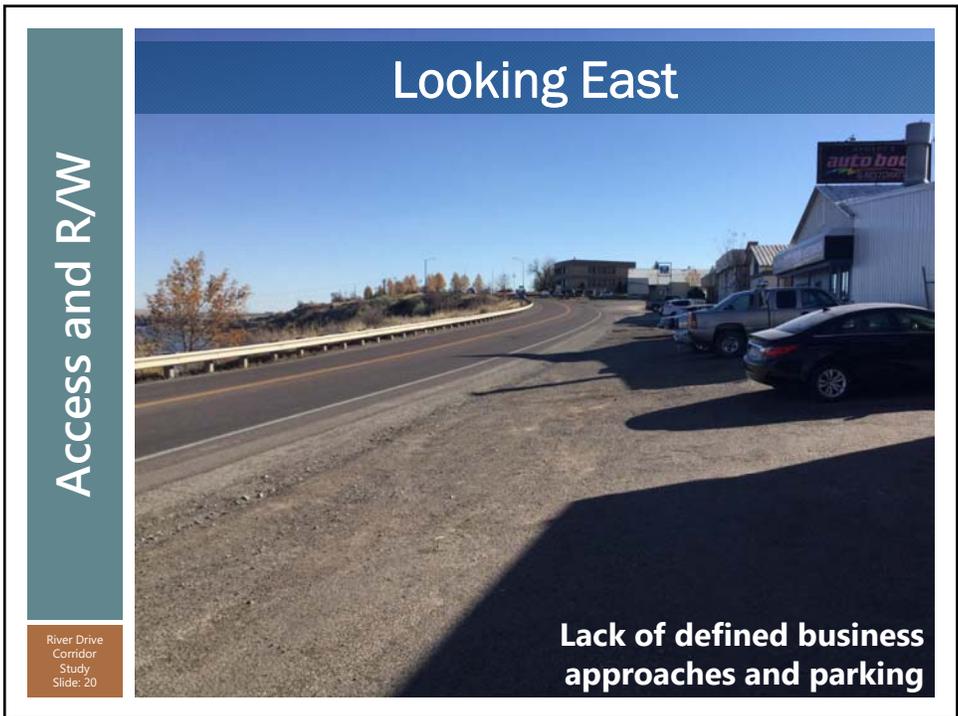
Access and R/W

Looking West near 15th St N



7 business approaches

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 18





Non-motorized

River's Edge Trail

- North side of roadway
 - *Between 15th St N and Giant Springs Rd*
- Shared use path

19th St N crossing

- Trail spur terminates at 19th St N intersection
- No crossing treatments

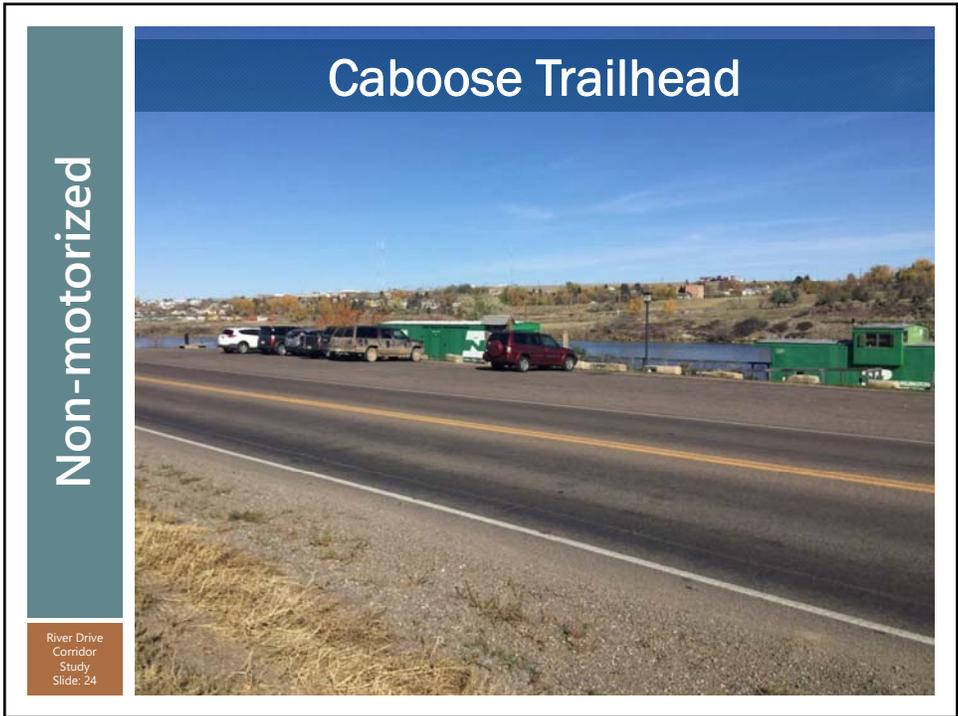
Caboose Trailhead

- Parking area and access for River's Edge Trail

East of Giant Springs Road

- Shared use path
- Connects River's Edge Trail to 38th St N

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 22



Rail and Freight

Rail

- BNSF rail line
- At-grade crossing between Giant Springs Rd and 38th St N
 - Post mounted flashing light signal

Freight

- Designated truck route
- Part of Northeast Bypass
- Local and regional freight traffic
- Multiple industrial and commercial freight generators
- New industrial park planned near 18th Ave N
- Approximately 7.2% truck traffic

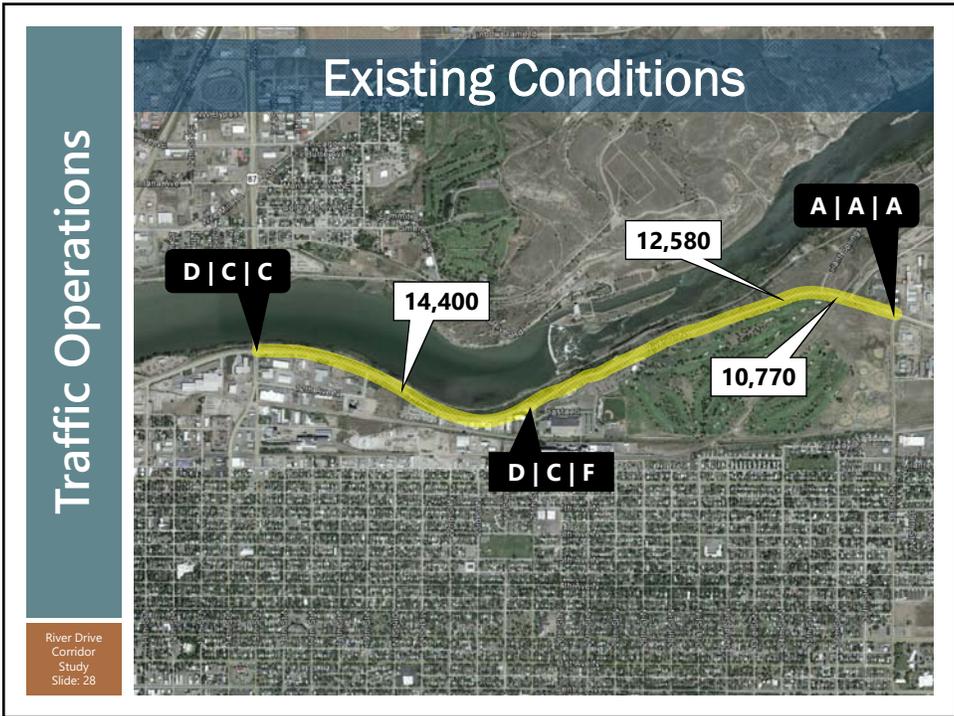
River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 25

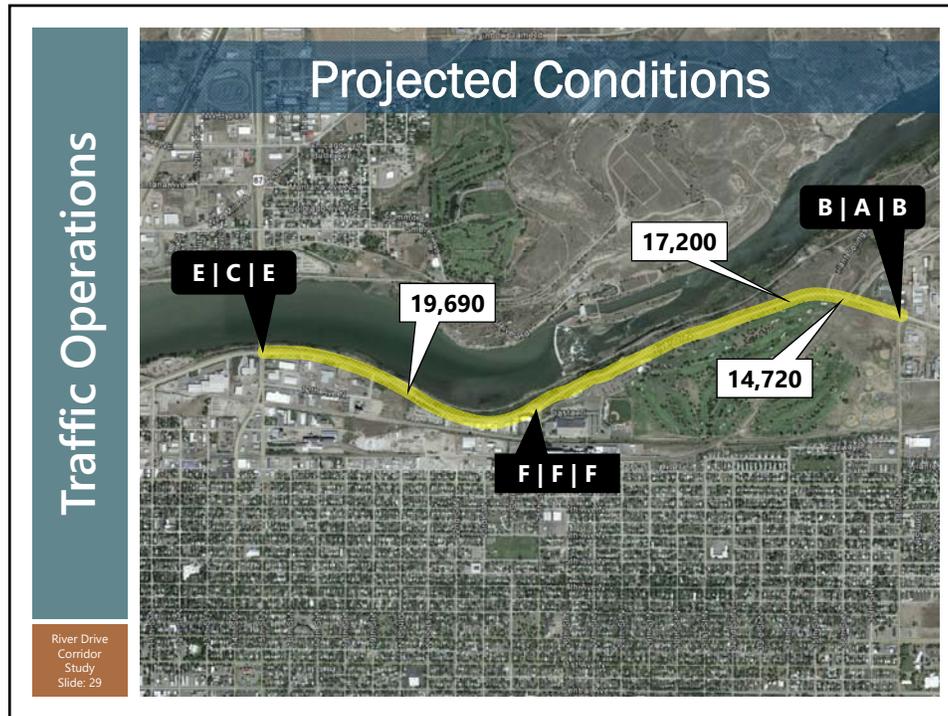
Looking East at R/R Crossing

Rail and Freight

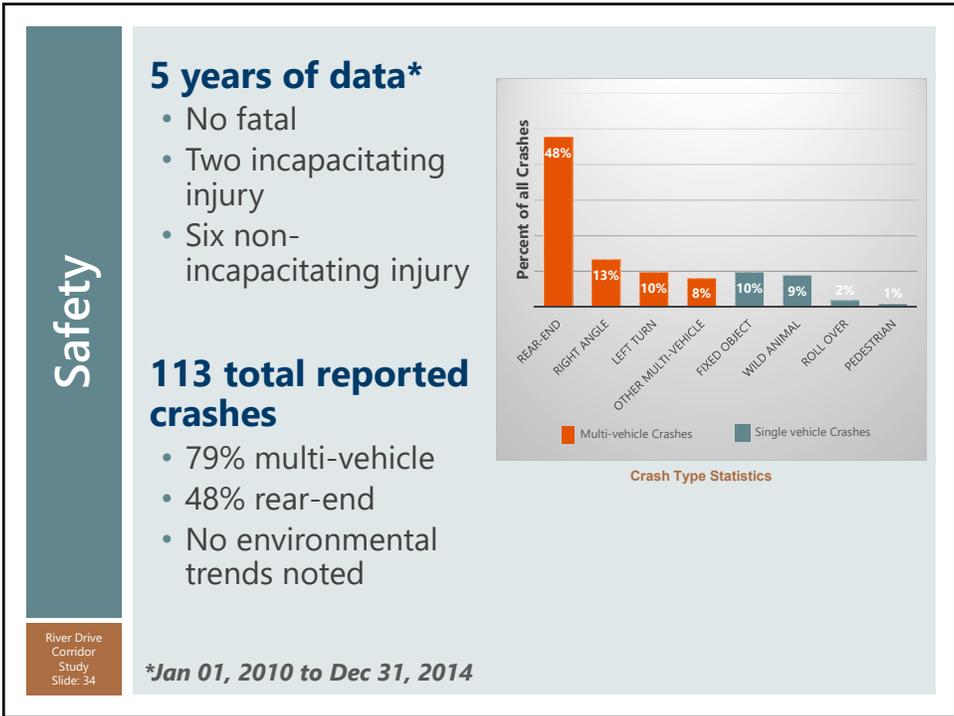


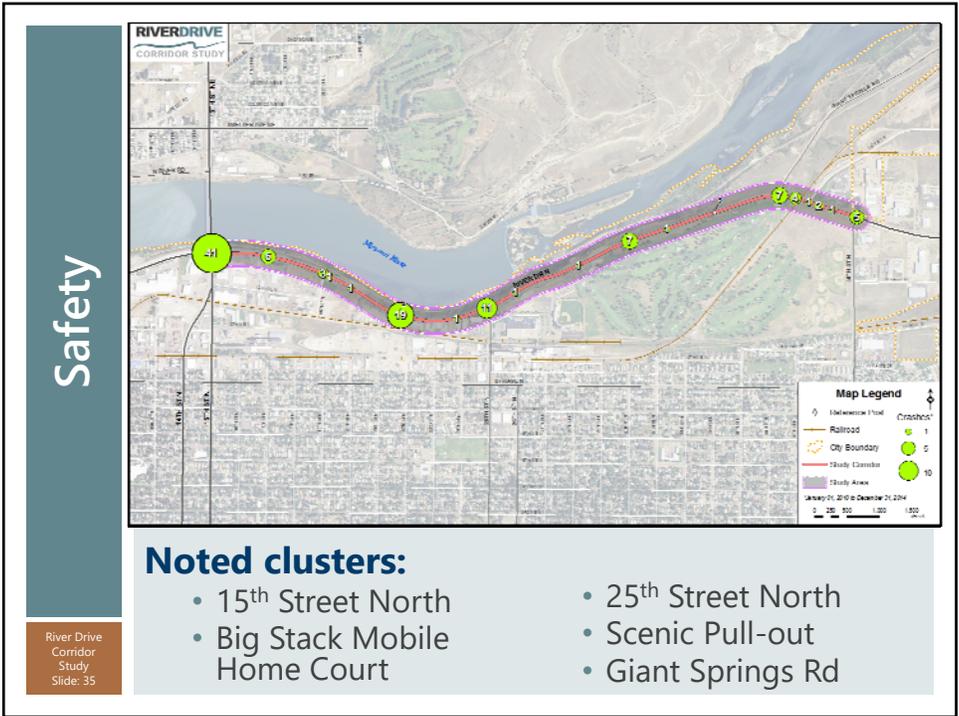
River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 26











Environmental Resources

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 37

Physical Environment

- Soil Resources and Prime Farmland
- Geologic Resources
- Surface Water
- Groundwater
- Floodplains and Floodways
- Hazardous Substances

Biological Environment

- Vegetation
- General Wildlife
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Species of Concern

Social and Cultural Environment

- Population Demographics and Economics
- Land Ownership
- Recreational Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Noise
- Visual Resources



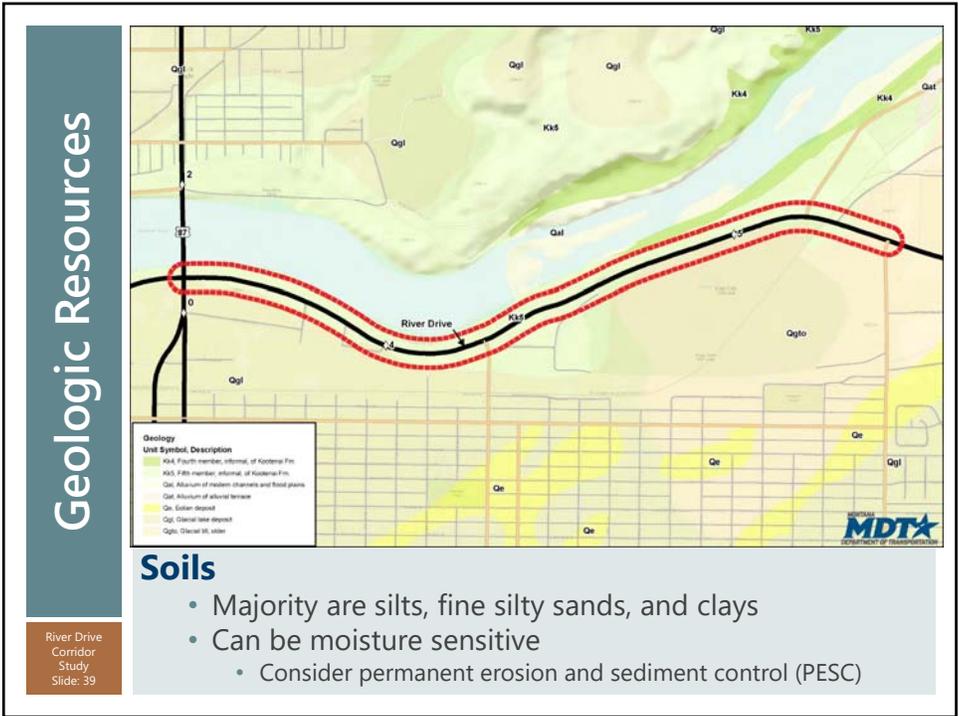
Soil Resources and Prime Farmland

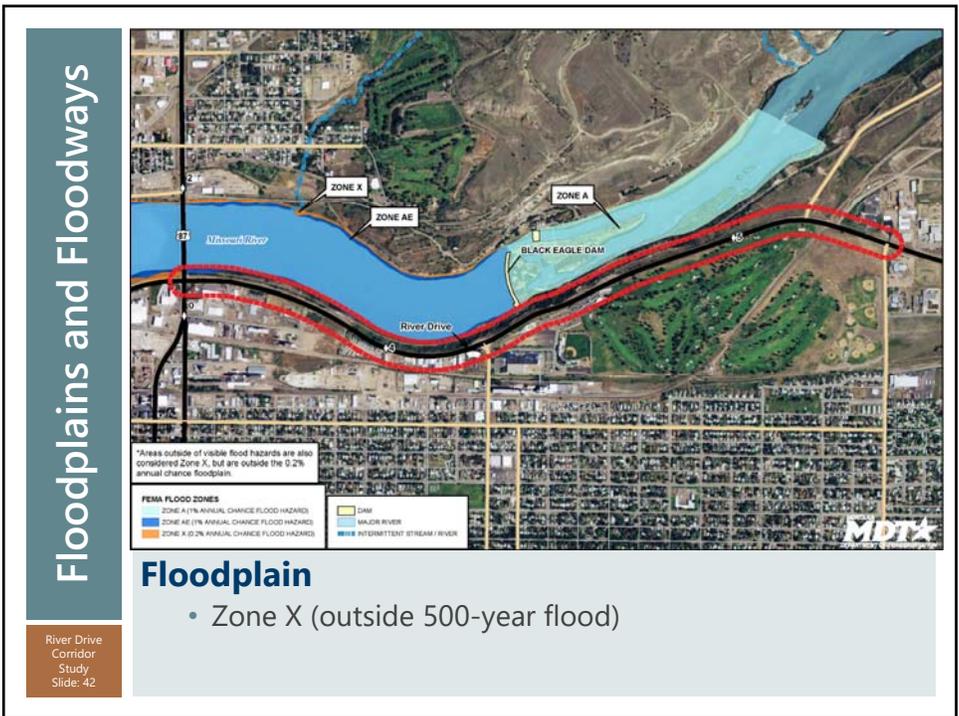
River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 38



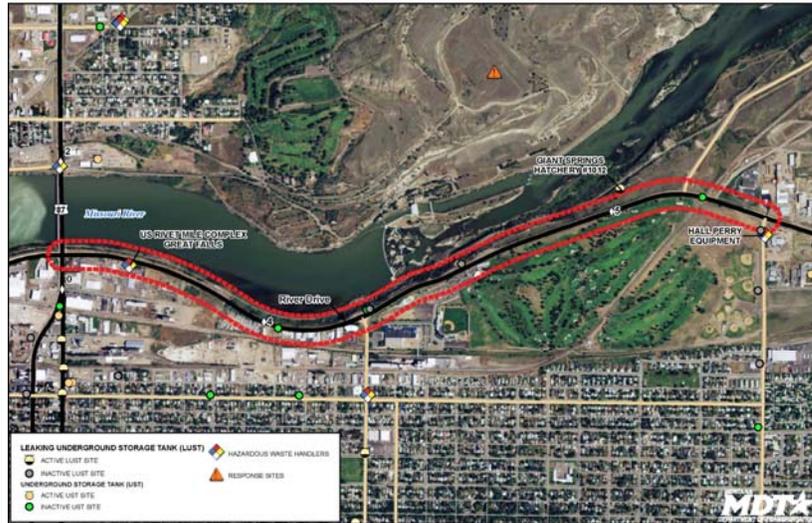
Farmland

- Some farmland of statewide importance
- Majority already developed





Hazardous Substances



Hazardous Substances

- No active UST
- One active LUST – low threat of contamination
- Two small quantity hazardous waste handling facilities

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 43

General Wildlife

White-tail and mule deer

- Near golf course

Missouri River fishery

Bald Eagle nests

- Near study area

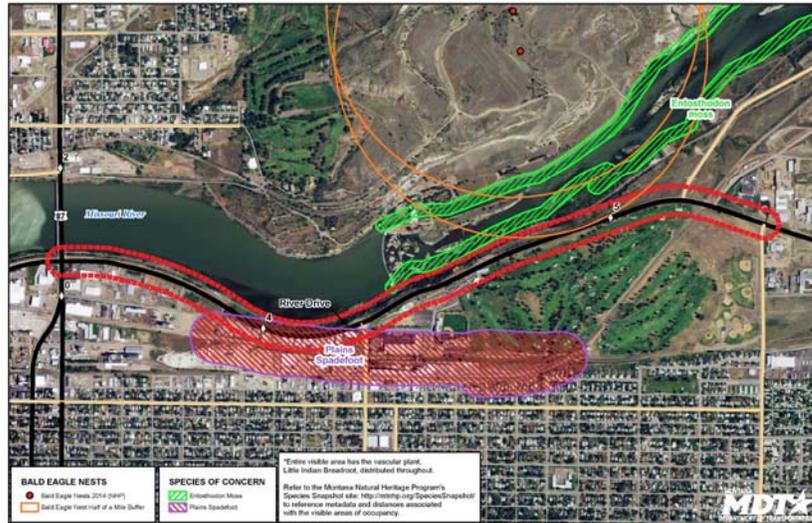
Plains Spadefoot

- Record from 1992 near railroad tracks



River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 44

Species of Concern

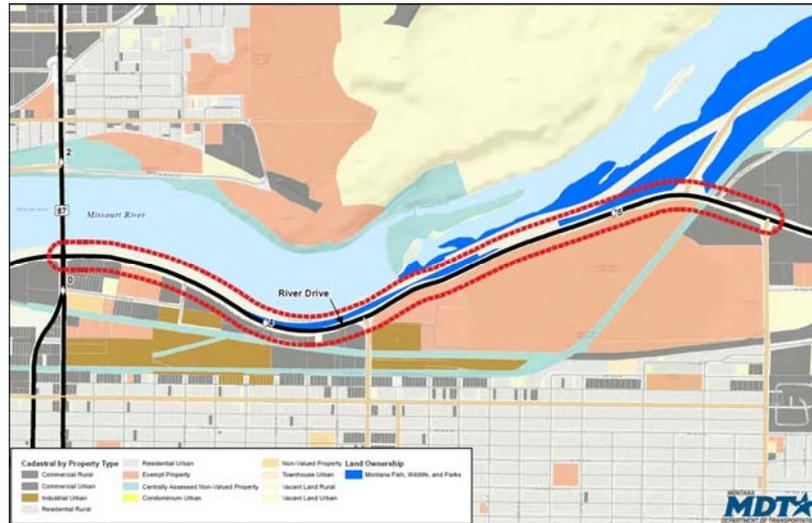


Species of Concern

- Bald Eagle
- Plains Spadefoot (1992)

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 45

Land Ownership



- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park
- Government
- Residential

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 46

Recreational Resources



River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 47

- River's Edge Trail
- Veteran's Memorial Park
- Eagle Falls Golf Course
- Centene Stadium
- Giant Springs State Park

Visual Resources

Multiple scenic pull-outs

- Black Eagle Falls
- Cliffs

River's Edge Trail

- Caboose Trailhead

Parks

- Veteran's Memorial Park
- Eagle Falls Golf Course



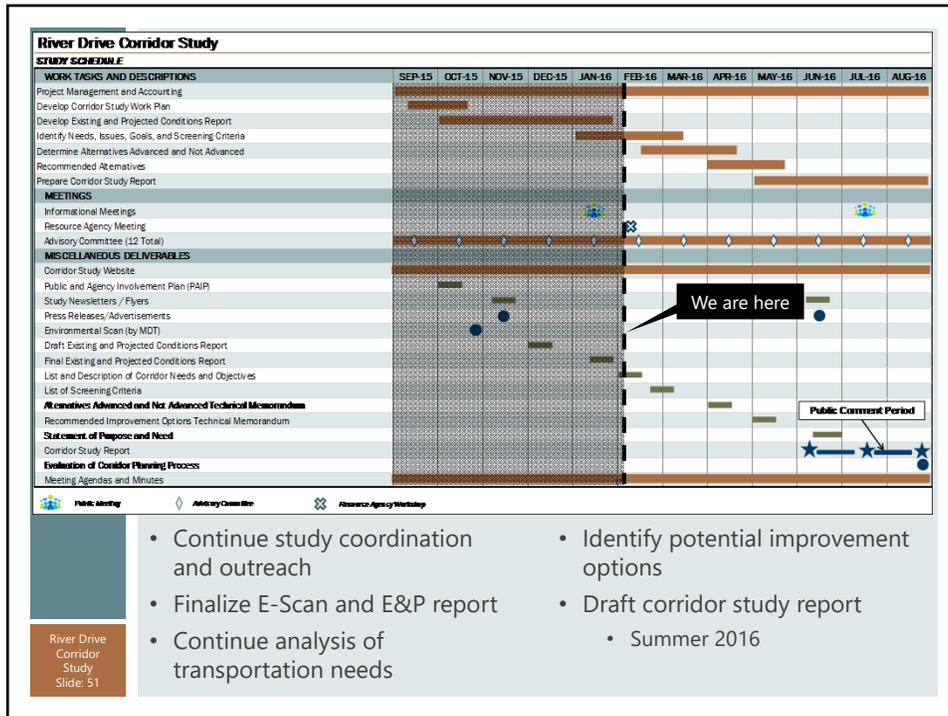
River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 48



Environmental Scan

- Draft Environmental Scan has been completed (November 2015)
- Provide comments by February 12
- Helps provide information to develop needs and compare conceptual improvement options
 - Areas of concern?
 - Greater or lesser impacts?
 - Can potential impacts be avoided, minimized or mitigated – and at what cost?
 - Procedural requirements and regulatory compliance?

River Drive
Corridor
Study
Slide: 50



- Continue study coordination and outreach
- Finalize E-Scan and E&P report
- Continue analysis of transportation needs
- Identify potential improvement options
- Draft corridor study report
- Summer 2016

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 51

Contacts

- **Study website:**
www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive
- **Study Contacts:**
 - Corrina Collins**
MDT Project Manager
(406) 444-9131
ccollins@mt.gov
 - Dave Hand**
MDT Great Falls District Administrator
(406) 454-5880
dhand@mt.gov

River Drive Corridor Study Slide: 52



Contacts:

Dave Hand
MDT Great Falls District Administrator
(406) 454-5880
dhand@mt.gov

Corrina Collins
MDT Project Manager
(406) 444-9131
ccollins@mt.gov

Scott Randall, PE, PTOE
RPA Project Manager
(406) 447-5000
scottr@rpa-hln.com

Website
www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive

Public Involvement Opportunities

An informational meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 21st** in the Gibson Room of the Great Falls Civic Center, 2 Park Drive South. The meeting will begin with a presentation at 6:30 PM, followed by a question and answer period. Time for informal discussions with the project team will also be available.

The meeting is intended to inform interested parties about the scope and purpose of the planning study and to solicit input on existing conditions and concerns that may be relevant to the planning effort. We encourage you to attend and provide feedback about your issues, concerns, and/or support for the study. More information on the study is available at: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive

Community input is a very important part of the process, and interested parties are encouraged to attend and participate. Comments and concerns may be submitted in writing at the meeting; by mail to Corrina Collins, Project Manager, MDT Statewide and Urban Planning, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001; or online at: www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml

Please indicate comments are for the *River Drive Corridor Study*. MDT considers all comments regarding the potential issues and concerns within the study area.

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any service, program or activity of our department. If you require reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please call Corrina Collins at (406) 444-9131 at least two days before the meeting.

50 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$2.79 per copy, for a total cost of \$139.50, which includes \$115.00 for printing and \$24.50 for distribution.



ROBERT PECCIA & ASSOCIATES
PO Box 5653
825 Custer Ave
Helena, MT 59604

RIVERDRIVE CORRIDOR STUDY

this issue

- Study Description P.1
- What is a Corridor Study? P.1
- Study Area P.2
- Schedule P.2
- Key Findings P.3
- Public Involvement Opportunities P.4
- Contacts P.4



Please join us for an informational meeting on Thursday, January 21st at 6:30 PM. The meeting will be held in the Gibson Room at the Great Falls Civic Center.

Study Description

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and in coordination with the Great Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is developing a corridor planning study of River Drive North between 15th Street North and 38th Street North.

The study, referred to as the *River Drive Corridor Study*, will identify feasible improvement options to address safety, operational, and geometrical concerns (i.e. road width, horizontal curves, vertical grades, approach density, etc.) within the study area.

The purpose of the study is to develop a comprehensive long-range plan for managing the corridor and determining what improvements can be made to improve the corridor based on identified needs, public and agency input, and financial constraints. The study will include a package of feasible short- and long-term improvement options intended to address the transportation needs over the next twenty years. Identifying these improvement options will help the study partners define the most critical needs and allocate resources.

What is a Corridor Study?

A *Corridor Study* is a planning-level analysis undertaken before conducting project-level environmental compliance activities under the National and Montana Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA/MEPA). Corridor studies involve early communication with interested agencies and the public to help identify needs, constraints, and opportunities for a corridor and to determine if there are implementable improvements, given available resources and local support.

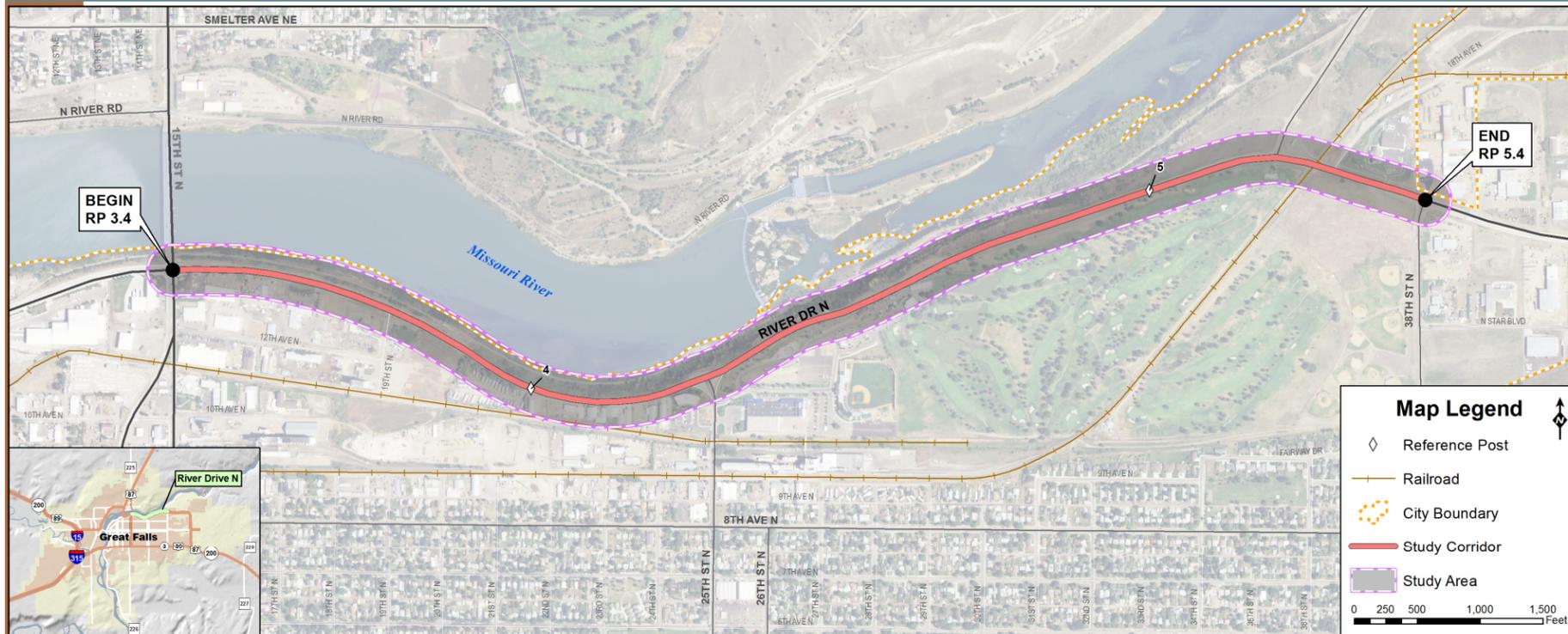
Corridor studies are planning activities rather than design or construction projects. The studies are designed to facilitate a smooth and efficient transition from transportation planning to project development and environmental review if a project is forwarded. The studies include consideration of multiple improvement options to address the needs and objectives within the study area. The planning process is distinct from NEPA/MEPA environmental compliance documentation and from the design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction phases of an individual project.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided upon request. Persons who need an alternative format should contact the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620. Telephone (406) 444-9229. Those using a TTY may call 1(800)335-7592 or through the Montana Relay Service at 711.



Study Area

River Drive North serves as a key route in the Great Falls transportation system supporting both local access and regional travel demands. The study area for the *River Drive Corridor Study* begins at the intersection with 15th Street N (Reference Post [RP] 3.4) and ends at the intersection with 38th Street N (RP 5.4). The study corridor is a designated truck route and provides access to several businesses, industrial areas, residential neighborhoods, and community resources.



Schedule

The *River Drive Corridor Study* began in September, 2015 and is expected to be completed by August, 2016.

WORK TASKS AND DESCRIPTIONS	SEP-15	OCT-15	NOV-15	DEC-15	JAN-16	FEB-16	MAR-16	APR-16	MAY-16	JUN-16	JUL-16	AUG-16
Project Management and Accounting	[Solid bar]											
Develop Corridor Study Work Plan	[Solid bar]											
Develop Existing and Projected Conditions Report		[Solid bar]										
Identify Needs, Issues, Goals, and Screening Criteria					[Solid bar]							
Determine Alternatives Advanced and Not Advanced						[Solid bar]						
Recommended Alternatives							[Solid bar]					
Prepare Corridor Study Report									[Solid bar]			
MEETINGS												
Informational Meetings												
Resource Agency Meeting												
Advisory Committee (12 Total)												
MISCELLANEOUS DELIVERABLES												
Corridor Study Website												
Public and Agency Involvement Plan (PAIP)												
Study Newsletters / Flyers												
Press Releases/Advertisements												
Environmental Scan (by MDT)												
Draft Existing and Projected Conditions Report												
Final Existing and Projected Conditions Report												
List and Description of Corridor Needs and Objectives												
List of Screening Criteria												
Alternatives Advanced and Not Advanced Technical Memorandum												
Recommended Improvement Options Technical Memorandum												
Statement of Purpose and Need												
Corridor Study Report												
Evaluation of Corridor Planning Process												
Meeting Agendas and Minutes												

Key Findings

The following initial considerations have been identified through on-site reviews and preliminary data analysis. This list is not all-inclusive and is subject to change over the course of the planning process.

Transportation System

Access and Right-of-way

- West of 25th Street North, businesses closely front the roadway which provides little room for ingress/egress and for parking.

Non-motorized

- The River's Edge Trail is located on the north side of the roadway.
- The Caboose Trailhead is located just east of 19th Street North and provides parking and access to the River's Edge Trail.
- There is a trail spur that terminates at the intersection with 19th Street North. There are no crossing treatments at this location.

Rail/Freight

- There is an at-grade crossing between Giant Springs Road and 38th Street North.
- The study corridor is a designated truck route and is part of the Northeast Bypass.
- The route currently experiences approximately 7.2 percent heavy vehicle traffic.

Traffic Operations

- The intersection with 15th Street North is projected to experience operational deficiencies during the AM and PM peak hours.
- The intersection with 25th Street North currently experiences operational deficiencies during the PM peak hour.

Geometrics

- Two vertical curves do not meet current standards for rate of curvature.
- The roadway grade between RP 3.8 and RP 4.0 exceeds current standards.

Safety

- Crash clusters were noted at the intersection with 15th Street North, at the Big Stack Mobile Home Court entrance, and at the intersection with 25th Street North.
- A trend of rear-end crashes was noted along the study corridor.

Environmental Considerations

Physical Environment

- The roadway is constrained to the north by the Missouri River.
- The study area is located within the Great Falls Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) area.
- There is a public water supply well located within the study area.

Biological Environment

- Noxious and exotic plant species may be located within the study area.
- Two bald eagle nests are located within the general proximity of the study corridor.
- Three species of concern have the potential to occur and breed within the study area.

Social and Cultural Environment

- The median income within the study area is likely below the statewide average.
- The minority population within the study area is likely higher than the statewide average.
- There are likely cultural, historic, and/or recreational resources with special significance within the study area.
- There are 10 historic-age properties adjacent to the study corridor.
- There are sensitive noise receptors within the study area.
- Visual resources include multiple scenic pull-outs, the Black Eagle Falls, the Veteran's Memorial Park, and the sandstone outcroppings along the cliffs.

RIVERDRIVE CORRIDOR STUDY

this issue

Corridor Planning Study Highlights	P.1
Corridor Needs and Objectives	P.2
Improvement Options Summary	P.2
Improvement Options Map	P.3
Contacts	P.4
Public Involvement Opportunities	P.4
Next Steps	P.4



Corridor Planning Study Highlights

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and in coordination with the Great Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), has developed a corridor planning study of River Drive North between 15th Street North and 38th Street North. The purpose of the study is to determine potential improvement options to address safety and operations within the transportation corridor based on identified needs.

River Drive North serves as a key route in the Great Falls transportation system supporting both local access and regional travel demands. The study corridor is a designated truck route and provides access to several businesses, industrial areas, residential neighborhoods, and community resources.

The corridor planning study was developed through a collaborative process with MDT, the Great Falls MPO, and FHWA and involved focused outreach to the public, stakeholders, and resource agencies. An evaluation of known and publically available information was conducted. Activities completed for development of the study include the following:

- Research and analysis of existing roadway conditions
- Research and synthesis of known environmental resources and applicable regulations in the study area
- Identification of corridor issues and areas of concern
- Consultation and coordination with local officials, stakeholders, resource agencies, and public
- Identification of corridor needs and objectives
- Development of corridor improvement options with consideration of costs, available funding, feasibility, public input, and known resource constraints
- Documentation of potential funding mechanisms for improvement options

The draft *River Drive Corridor Study* will be made available for review and comment on July 29, 2016. Copies can be accessed via the study website at www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive. The deadline for receiving comments is August 31, 2016.

INFORMATIONAL MEETING #2

Please Join Us!

Great Falls:

Wednesday, August 3rd
6:00 PM

Resource Center Room
Lewis and Clark
Interpretive Center
4201 Giant Springs Road

Purpose:

Informational Meeting #2 is being conducted to present improvement options developed for the corridor and to gather community feedback on the draft corridor study report.

Corridor Needs and Objectives

Based on the analysis of existing and projected conditions of the study area, the following need and objectives were established. They were used in the development of improvement options.

Need 1: Improve the Safety of the Corridor

Objectives (To the Extent Practicable)

- Reduce the frequency and severity of crashes.
- Improve roadway elements to current design criteria.
- Reduce vehicle conflicts.

Need 2: Accommodate Existing and Future Demands

Objectives (To the Extent Practicable)

- Reduce corridor congestion.
- Improve operations to achieve LOS standards.
- Accommodate large vehicles and freight movements.
- Accommodate non-motorized use.

Need 3: Minimize Adverse Impacts to the Environmental Characteristics of the Study Area

Objectives (To the Extent Practicable)

- Minimize adverse impacts to the Missouri River and surrounding wetlands.
- Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to historic, cultural, archaeological, and recreational resources.
- Preserve the scenic character of the corridor.

Other Considerations

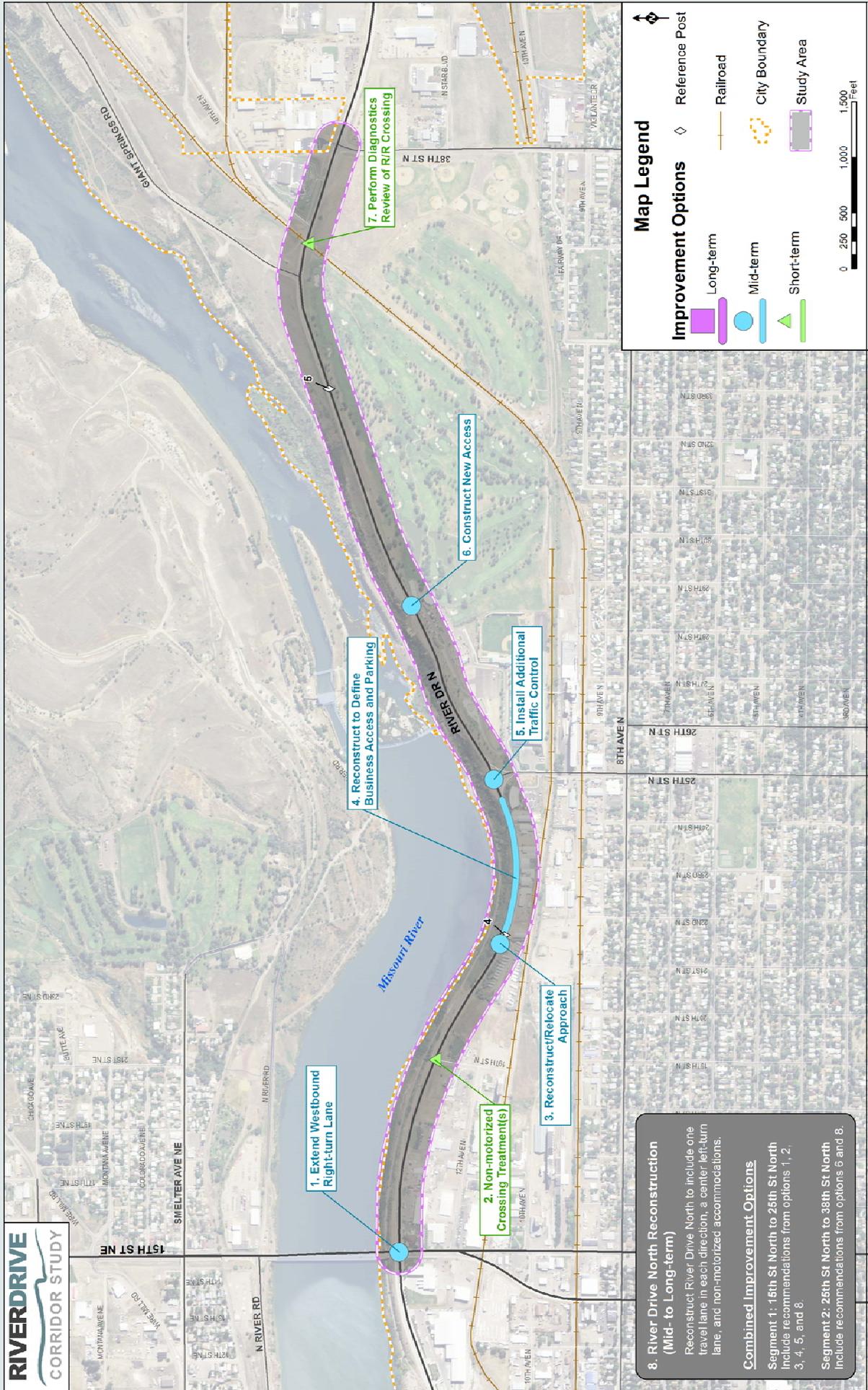
- Local and regional planning efforts
- Funding availability
- Construction feasibility and physical constraints
- Impacts to existing residents and businesses in the area

Improvement Options Summary

The following table is a summary of the potential improvement options, along with planning-level cost estimates. Implementation of any of the improvement options may require close coordination with resource agencies to identify areas of sensitivity.

Improvement Option	Description	Cost Estimate
SPOT IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS		
1.	15 th Street North Intersection	Extend the westbound right-turn lane to accommodate vehicle queues. \$180,000
2.	19 th Street North Intersection	Evaluate and install enhanced non-motorized crossing treatment(s) \$2,000 (advance signing) \$40,000 (rectangular rapid flashing beacons)
3.	Big Stack Mobile Home Court Approach	Reconstruct or relocate the existing approach to River Drive North. \$900,000 (existing location) \$500,000 (new connection to 19 th Street North)
4.	Business District Access	Reconstruct roadway to provide for a center left-turn lane, bike lanes, and sidewalk on the south side. \$1,500,000
5.	25 th Street North Intersection	Install additional traffic control such as a traffic signal or roundabout in coordination with corridor improvement options. \$2,600,000 (Signal) \$4,000,000 (Roundabout)
6.	Eagle Falls Golf Club Access	Construct a new access along River Drive North near Eagle Falls Golf Club. \$60,000 (without westbound left-turn lane) \$320,000 (with westbound left-turn lane)
7.	Railroad Crossing	Perform a diagnostics review of the railroad crossing. \$30,000
8.	River Drive North Reconstruction	Reconstruct to include one travel lane in each direction, center left-turn lane (where appropriate), and non-motorized accommodations. \$6,000,000 to \$8,000,000 (Segment 1) \$8,500,000 to \$11,400,000 (Segment 2)
COMBINED OPTIONS		
1.	Segment 1 – 15 th Street North to 25 th Street North	Include recommendations from options 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8. \$9,400,000 to \$14,500,000
2.	Segment 2 – 25 th Street North to 38 th Street North	Include recommendations from options 6 and 8. \$8,600,000 to \$11,800,000

Improvement Options





CONTACTS:

Dave Hand

MDT Great Falls District
(406) 454-5880
dhand@mt.gov

Corrina Collins

MDT Project Manager
(406) 444-9131
ccollins@mt.gov

Scott Randall, PE, PTOE

RPA Project Manager
(406) 447-5000
scottr@rpa-hln.com

Website

www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided upon request. Persons who need an alternative format should contact the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620. Telephone (406) 444-9229. Those using a TTY may call 1(800)335-7592 or through the Montana Relay Service at 711.

Public Involvement Opportunities

An informational meeting will be held on **Wednesday, August 3rd** in the Resource Center Room of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, 4201 Giant Springs Road. The meeting will begin with a presentation at 6:00 PM and will be followed by a question and answer period. Time for informal discussions with the project team will also be available.

The purpose of the meeting is to present the recommended improvement options and gather feedback on the draft corridor study report. Starting July 29th, the draft report will be made available for review on the study website (www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive).

Community input is a very important part of the process, and interested parties are encouraged to attend and participate. Comments and concerns may be submitted in writing at the meeting; by mail to Corrina Collins, Project Manager, MDT Statewide and Urban Planning, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001; or online at: www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml

The deadline for receiving comments is August 31, 2016.

Next Steps

After the public comment period closes, comments will be reviewed, and the *River Drive Corridor Study* will be finalized. The ability to implement improvement options for River Drive depends on the availability of existing and future federal, state, local, and private funding sources. At the current time, funding has not been identified to complete the improvement options contained in the study.

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any service, program or activity of our department. If you require reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please call Jan Nessel at (406) 556-4707 at least two days before the meeting.

75 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$4.49 per copy, for a total cost of \$336.75, which includes \$300.00 for printing and \$36.75 for distribution.