

The long road to project completion . . .

Development Phase 12 months

- Project nominations from the public, local governments, management systems, and districts
- Project analysis and review
- Performance objectives review
- Add project to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- Public involvement
- Comment review
- Funding level evaluation
- Transportation Commission approval
- Project programming
- Federal authorization to proceed

Survey Phase 8-24 months

- Preliminary field review
- Preliminary environmental studies
- News release/public hearing
- Preliminary right-of-way reports
- Engineering studies
- Survey
- Traffic noise impact study
- Establish alignment and grade
- Air quality studies
- Letter of Intent
- Address environmental concerns
- Scope of Work
- Traffic studies
- Bridge size studies
- Soils study
- Hydraulics study
- Start plan preparation
- Biological impact study

Design Phase 15-24 months

- Develop detailed designs
- Water quality study
- Hazardous materials study
- Surfacing and geometrics (horizontal and vertical alignment of the road)
- Additional survey
- Electrical plans
- Irrigation study and design
- Bridge and hydraulic designs
- Formal public hearing
- Signing and pavement-marking plans
- Erosion control details
- Traffic maintenance measures

Right-of-Way Phase 6-12 months

- Obtain regulatory permits
- Final plan details
- Final bridge plans
- Final right-of-way plans
- Negotiate railroad agreements
- Negotiate utility agreements
- Stake centerline
- Relocate utilities
- Negotiate for right-of-way
- Acquisition
- Relocation assistance
- Environmental mitigation
- Plans check

Construction Phase 8-24 months

- Advertise
- Accept bids
- Determine if contractor has met all requirements
- Bid letting
- Transportation Commission awards contract
- Construction

Building a road project involves years of research, planning, design, engineering, and budgeting. Keeping the public involved throughout the process is essential. Factors that go into planning include environmental impact studies, safety considerations, public input, traffic patterns, and land use plans. The amount of available funding must also be considered. Local government officials, legislators, individual citizens, and the Transportation Commission (a panel of private citizens appointed by the governor) all work together in deciding where to spend the money. Once project priorities and funding are set, preliminary engineering can begin.

MDT carries out studies to find the best design for the project. Engineers consider the features of the land, its present use, and existing conditions. In addition, the Department must do a great deal of work to determine the impact the project will have on the natural environment, communities, the economy, and the public. Once again, public input is essential.

In designing the project, engineers must decide how wide the road will be, where to put access points, what safety features to include, where signs and markings should be, and which materials to use. Computer modeling, aerial photography, and survey data are some of the inputs used to create the best possible design.

After engineers complete the project plan, right-of-way agents contact landowners who will be affected by the project. The agents calculate a fair market value for any property used for the road and help landowners relocate if necessary. Utility agents contact utility companies about relocating gas, electric, telephone, water, and sewer lines and obtain the proper permits.

Prior to construction, MDT invites contractors to bid on the project. Once the project is awarded and construction begins, MDT inspectors ensure that contractors meet the specifications for the project.



It can take 7 to 8 years to complete a road project.

Frequently Asked Questions About Building a Road . . .

- Q. Who nominates projects?
- A. Project nominations can come from various sources: MDT management systems, District Administrators, and other interested parties such as the public or other government agencies.
- Q. How does a project get selected?
- A. MDT reviews, analyzes, and evaluates nominated projects using the Performance Programming Process (P³). This procedure screens proposed projects against established performance measures. Only projects that contribute to meeting MDT's performance goals move to the next stage. MDT engineers and staff then visually inspect the proposed site to determine if the project is feasible. Finally, MDT submits the projects to the Montana Transportation Commission for its approval. Once the Commission approves the projects, project development begins.
- Q. How can I become involved in project selection?
- A. MDT generally publishes a new Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) every year. The draft STIP is released for a 30-day public comment period. MDT announces the release of the draft in its *Newsline* newsletter. The STIP is also available at your local library, on the MDT Web site www.mdt.mt.gov, or you can request a copy by calling MDT's toll-free number at (800)714-7296.
- Q. Whom should I contact for information on MDT projects?
- A. Project Analysis Chief
Montana Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
- E-mail: mdtstip@mt.gov
Phone: (406)444-3423 (voice)
(406)444-7671 (fax)
(800)714-7296 (toll free)

You may also contact the MDT district offices listed on the back of this brochure.

Phone Numbers for MDT District Offices:

1. (406)523-5800
(888)231-5819 (toll free)
2. (406)494-9600
(800)261-6909 (toll free)
3. (406)454-5880
(888)730-0898 (toll free)
4. (406)345-8200
(888)689-5296 (toll free)
5. (406)252-4138
(888)863-8465 (toll free)



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Building a Good Road Takes Time



An overview
of the road design and
construction process

