

# MONTANA WILDLIFE & TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECT PROGRAM

## DETAILED PROJECT APPLICATION GUIDANCE

*Refer to this Detailed Project Application Guidance for instructions on completing each section of the application. Include the necessary attachments.*

*The on-line fillable project application form is available at:*

*["MWTP Project Application Form"](#)*

*Incomplete applications and applications received outside of each application cycle will not be evaluated during the current application cycle. The Committee encourages applicants to be as concise as possible, while still providing sufficient detail to understand all facets of the proposed project and evaluate the merits of the project based on the selection criteria.*

*Be sure to verify and provide all required attachments provided in Appendix C with your application form prior to submittal.*

### **I. APPLICATION INFORMATION (not scored)**

**A. Applicant Name, Affiliation, and Contact Information (mailing address, phone, email)**

**B. Contact Person and Contact information (if different than applicant)**

**C. Landowner and/or Lessee Name(s) and Contact information** Include names and property addresses of immediately adjacent and directly impacted landowners, both public and private. This information is available from [Montana Cadastral](#). Note whether you have discussed the project with these individuals. Discussion with adjacent landowners may not be necessary for some projects that are small scale, limited scope, and/or occur only within the highway right-of-way.

### **II. PROJECT INFORMATION (not scored)**

**A. Project Name** Use a descriptive project name that includes the general location and project type (e.g., Happy Valley Overpass; Underpasses Hwy 123 west of My Town; Wildlife Fencing at Cold Creek Bridge)

**B. County**

- C. Highway and Mile Markers** Mile Markers (MM) can be found by searching the Planning Tool. Include MM to the 0.10-mile if possible. Include discrete MM locations for spot improvements (e.g., sign location, structure, jump-out location). Include MM ranges for longer stretches of treatments (e.g., runs of fencing).
- D. Geographic Location** Described by Township Range Section (TRS), Lat/Long, or precise geographic location. TRS can be found on Montana Cadastral.
- E. Provide a brief overview of your project** Identify the challenge, proposed solution, and expected benefits.

### III. **NEEDS and BENEFITS (Max 20 points, Weighted x 3 = 60 points)**

- A. Describe the PURPOSE and NEED of your project. (Score 0-5)** Include a detailed description of the challenge, proposed solution, and expected benefit. This section should highlight the justification for your project. While this section should summarize the following B, C, and D responses, it should be able to stand alone as the primary story of the project's purpose.
- B. Describe and provide the DATA that support your project purpose and need. (Score 0-5)** Reference and/or provide the data summaries, analyses and other information sources used and describe how they support the project's purpose and need. Include both broad scale and localized (fine-scale, project level) data summaries and analyses, if possible. Identify sources for data and/or analyses. Include original data summaries or analyses as attachments.

Example data sources may include but are not limited to: Montana Wildlife & Transportation Partnership Planning Tool, scientific or practitioner literature citations and references, collar data from public agencies, camera trap data, documented observational data (tracks, hair, paths, etc.), analysis results from public agencies or university research, relevant citizen-science datasets, wildlife habitat/movement models from various sources, and local knowledge. Using the Planning Tool, identify the score of each of the project highway segments within the project area and the average score over all the segments in the project area. Describe how the Planning Tool informed the selection of the general project area.

- C. Describe your PROJECT PROPOSAL. Include a detailed description of the specific features and strategies proposed in your project. (Score 0-5)** Describe specific features and strategies for addressing each aspect of the purpose and need described above. Include number, size, location,

extent, length, etc. Projects can be a range or combination of scopes or scales (e.g., fencing, overpass, signage, or all of the above). Include whether the project is a proposal for new infrastructure or includes a retrofit or modification of existing infrastructure, or is a combination of the two.

- D. Describe the expected BENEFITS of your project (safety/connectivity). (Score 0-5)** Include case study examples, expert opinion, and/or scientific literature that support or illustrate the expected benefits of the proposed accommodation features and strategies of your project by showing the type and extent of the expected change in condition or consequences of project implementation. Describe how you expect your project to achieve these benefits. Describe how the project features and strategies reduce wildlife-vehicle conflict and/or help improve connectivity within the broader landscape.

#### **IV. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION (Max 20 points)**

- A. Describe the LANDOWNER and COMMUNITY involvement and support of your project. (Score 0-5)** There are several ways to demonstrate landowner and community involvement/support. Possible examples include project endorsements (i.e., letters of support), development of working groups or partnerships, public meeting comments, etc.

It is critically important to garner the involvement and support of the owners of property immediately adjacent to the project, or if consequences of the project have the potential to directly affect property owned or managed by others. This is true of all property outside of MDT right-of-way, be it private, public, tribal, or other. Additionally, potentially affected user groups and stakeholders (e.g., recreation groups, special interest groups, user/industry groups) should also be engaged, and include representation of different but relevant perspectives. Describe the extent to which you have engaged these individuals and describe their feedback on the project proposal.

- B. Describe the LAND PROTECTIONS and LAND USE on the properties adjacent to or directly affected by your project. (Score 0-5)** This can include conservation easements, land use/zoning type, restrictions, requirements, or covenants, public land, nearby conservation investments and activities, and adjacent current, planned, or future land uses and activities.

This may include management direction that impacts the project area, including relevant plans, reports, or guidance from MDT, FWP, USFWS,

USFS, BLM, Tribes, or local government, such as county or city growth policies or management plans, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan, State Wildlife Action Plan, SO 3362 MT Action Plan, National Forest Plans, BLM Resource Management Plans, etc.

- C. Describe other PLANNED or COMPLEMENTARY EFFORTS (public or private) that add value to your project. (Score 0-5)** Describe any efforts completed, underway, or planned within or outside of the highway corridor and in the vicinity of the project that would add value to a wildlife accommodation project, and how these efforts would complement your proposed project. These may include but are not limited to human-wildlife conflict mitigation projects (e.g., securing attractants, electric fencing, range riders or shepherds), wildlife-friendly fencing projects, or habitat restoration projects. These may be associated with agencies, organizations, private individual efforts, or others. Identify the status of the effort and the implementing entity(ies).
- D. What PARTNERSHIPS are in place in support of your project and what ROLE does each partner play in project implementation? (Score 0-5)** Identify the project partners and describe the role of each partner in developing, implementing, and/or funding the project.

## **V. FUNDING (Max 10 points)**

**Note:** An example of a completed Project Budget Worksheet is included in Appendix B for your reference. Ensure you download the ["MWTP Project Budget Worksheet Template"](#) excel worksheet, save it to your computer under a new name, then upload and submit your completed worksheet with your project application. Complete both the Costs and Revenue tabs and submit one Project Budget Worksheet for your project. You are required to complete the non-shaded cells in the worksheet. All shaded cells are locked and will auto-populate based on formulas or standard values based on the information you provide.

- A. Provide the COST ESTIMATE for your project. (Score 0-5)** Provide the total estimated cost of project implementation, including project development, design, and construction to the extent possible. Include estimates for major line items in your proposal. Average bid prices from the most current year are available from the [MDT Contract Archives website](#). **Note:** These prices include labor and equipment costs associated with installation of that item. The contingency value capturing the risk of encountering unexpected conditions will auto-populate in the worksheet

based on the current level of project design and project complexity you select in the drop-down list. MDT will provide standard values for inflation and indirect cost allocation plan (ICAP) in the template on an annual basis. MDT personnel, engineering consultants, product or material vendors, or contractors may also be able to assist with cost estimation.

**B. Describe the FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS and SOURCES proposed for your project. (Score 0-5)** Describe the project funding plan, including a description (i.e., amount and status) of anticipated funding sources for your project. Indicate if funding is secured, pending, or possible and identify timeframes and steps required to secure funding sources. Identify the remaining gap between cost estimate and revenue if one exists. Describe opportunities and potential for procurement of additional funding for project implementation, if needed.

**Note:** The project does not need to be fully funded during the application phase. In the event a project moves into design, development, and implementation, all funding will need to be secured at that time.

## **VI. PRELIMINARY PROJECT FEASIBILITY and OPPORTUNITY (Max 25 Points)**

In Section VI, information requirements will depend on the scope of the project. All projects may not require each component listed below. To help with determining what is required, some information requests have been split between less complex projects and more complex projects.

**Less complex projects may include the following:** Minor fencing or wing-fencing, signing, vegetation management within the right-of-way (ROW), no major equipment operation or earth moving activities, minimal ground disturbance, limited design requirements, no system impact, authorizations limited to an encroachment permit authorized by MDT. A system impact is considered a disruption to traffic flow or the travelling public and any effects or modifications to infrastructure or appurtenances within the right-of-way of highways and roadways under MDT jurisdiction. An encroachment permit is an authorization granted by MDT for entities other than MDT to perform work or maintenance within the highway ROW. The [Encroachment Permit Application](#) is available on the MDT website and MDT personnel can assist you in completing the application process as needed.

**More complex projects may include the following:** Additions or modifications to existing infrastructure with system impact, longer stretches of wildlife exclusionary fencing with jump-outs, replacement of existing wildlife

crossings, new structures on any facility, projects where engineering and design is required, and projects likely to require authorizations and/or agreements from multiple entities/agencies. More complex projects will likely require an engineering survey and analysis of the proposal to determine the design and construction feasibility of the proposed project. This feasibility study can be performed by the applicant but is not required at the time of the application. If not completed, MDT or an outside firm may be required to perform the feasibility study prior to moving toward project design and implementation.

**A. Describe input received from ENGINEERING OR TECHNICAL EXPERTS regarding the reasonable feasibility of your project proposal. (Score 0-5)**

Describe engagement or consultation with MDT, FWP, and/or Tribal staff, other governmental personnel, or private firms. The consultation should include a high level review of the project proposal and identification of red flags, areas of potential concern, issues potentially requiring more in-depth analysis to resolve, etc. Essentially, the application requires that you gather and describe engineering and technical expert (e.g., hydraulics, geotechnical, structural) general review and preliminary input on your proposal. Document any endorsements, concerns, or potential drawbacks of your project identified through this consultation. At a high level, describe your proposal for engineering design, if anticipated, and include the name of the entity(ies) you expect will complete the design (e.g., MDT, private consultant firm, other). Less complex projects will not likely require a feasibility study. More complex projects will likely require a feasibility study, which will be implemented by the Partnership after a project is selected for further development and implementation through the Program.

For less complex projects, describe utilities present in the project area, right-of-way considerations (ROW) (e.g., coordination with adjacent landowners as appropriate, if the project occurs entirely within or extends outside of MDT right-of-way), structural conflicts (e.g., impediments to tying fencing into the existing structure), general accessibility and terrain descriptions (e.g., wet/dry, flat/mountainous), roadway grade (e.g., elevated/fill or lower/cut, flat), and vegetative communities (e.g., forested, dryland pasture, wetland, riparian, agricultural cropland) and distribution.

For more complex projects, address the items noted above and describe consultation with MDT or an outside firm and the input received, including any engineering evaluations completed. This could include conceptual sketches, drawings, and maps. Describe any structure proposals (e.g.,

bridges, culverts). Discuss potential impacts to the traveling public, anticipated project schedule and duration, ROW considerations and possible agreements or acquisition needed. Describe your proposal for engineering design and include the name of the entity(ies) you expect will complete the design, if anticipated (e.g., MDT, private consulting firm, other).

**B. Describe input received from WILDLIFE BIOLOGISTS, TRANSPORTATION ECOLOGISTS, or OTHER EXPERTS regarding the identified challenge, purpose and need, proposed solution, and expected benefits. (Score 0-5)** For all projects, describe consultation with MDT, FWP, and/or Tribal biologists and the input received regarding the challenge, purpose and need, proposed solution, and expected benefits associated with the project. Other road ecology experts or scientists can be consulted for additional support of your proposal. The consultation should include a high level review of the project proposal and identification of red flags, areas of potential concern, issues potentially requiring more in-depth analysis to resolve, etc. Essentially, the application requires that you gather and describe biologist, transportation ecologist, or other expert general review and preliminary input on your proposal. Document any endorsements, concerns, or potential drawbacks of your project identified through this consultation.

**C. Describe your proposal for CONSTRUCTION of your project. (Score 0-5)** For less complex projects, construction is typically expected to be completed by the applicant or their agent, through an MDT encroachment permit. Describe the general proposal for construction of the project features, including work activities, methods, equipment, and traffic control needs or plan. Identify what entity(ies)/contractor(s) will be responsible for the construction of the project, if known. Contractors need to be licensed and bonded with the state.

For more complex projects, construction is typically let to contract through a formal process. Describe the proposal for construction of the project (e.g., MDT contract administration, applicant hired contractor, other). Identify what entity(ies)/contractor(s) will be responsible for the construction of the project, if known. Contractors need to be licensed and bonded with the state.

**D. Describe your proposal for POST-CONSTRUCTION MONITORING of your project effectiveness and benefit. (Score 0-5)** All projects will require some post-construction monitoring. Not all wildlife accommodation projects necessitate a comprehensive research study to evaluate

accommodation effectiveness in providing safe passage for wildlife and reducing wildlife-vehicle conflict. In-depth research may be warranted for projects that employ novel strategies or designs (e.g., animal detection systems, experimental or unique design or material products) and/or for species for which there is limited research regarding interactions with highway corridors or use of crossing structures. For other projects using more standard strategies and designs, simply comparing 5-year pre- and post-construction wildlife-vehicle conflict rates (crash and carcass data) and determining rates of use vs. refusals (i.e., permeability metrics) will usually provide sufficient evaluation of wildlife accommodation project effectiveness. The deployment of camera traps to monitor the use and refusal of crossing structures and movement at the fence ends and/or jump-outs can help capture changes in movement and permeability/connectivity.

Describe your monitoring plan and personnel/entity(ies) expected to evaluate and document to what extent you are achieving the purpose and expected benefits of the project, lessons learned, and any unforeseen consequences or adaptive management recommendations.

- E. Describe your proposal for SHORT AND LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE and OPERATION of the proposed infrastructure and features associated with your project. (Score 0-5)** Maintenance of project features on the Interstate system and long-term inspection, maintenance, repair, and replacement of structures or other major facilities on state highways is expected to be MDT responsibility. Maintenance agreements may be required. Operation of implemented project features (e.g., power, solar, lights, cellular, VMS signs, electronics, etc.) may also be executed through agreements. MDT is only able to sign agreements with entities that exist through statute (e.g., local governments, government agencies, tribal governments, MPO's), not with private individuals, NGO's or community groups. Therefore, it is recommended that you engage a qualified representative in your project collaborative.

For all projects, day-to-day maintenance (e.g., vegetation management, fence repair, etc.) is expected to be performed by the applicant or their agent. If the project was executed through an encroachment permit (i.e., less complex projects), it is expected that the permit would extend to the maintenance activities. If no encroachment permit was obtained for the project (i.e., more complex projects), an encroachment permit will be necessary for the performance of maintenance activities.



Describe your proposal for the short- and long-term maintenance and operation of the project features and identify the responsible party(ies) or individuals. Include a proposed schedule and means of inspection of the affected features.

