ABOUT THE PROJECT
This spring and summer, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) in conjunction with Riverside Contracting will continue construction of Phase 3 of the Belt N & S project at Armington Junction, which is the intersection of US 87 and US 89 near Belt.

This project will:
- Reconstruct approximately 3.5 miles of existing roadway on US 87, including widening the roadway to five lanes starting after the Belt Creek bridge in the westbound direction towards Belt and Great Falls.
- Construct a roundabout at Armington Junction.
- Construct a new bridge over Belt Creek, a new culvert over Neil Creek, and a new culvert at Frenchman’s Coulee.

WHY ARMINGTON JUNCTION?
Armington Junction is the intersection of two major highways, US 87 and US 89. Additionally, it serves as an entrance to a rest area and weigh station. Together, this creates confusion for motorists and additional conflict points at which vehicles can crash into one another, which is a major safety concern.

A crash history analysis performed for Armington Junction for a 10-year period reported nine crashes, including one fatality and fifteen injuries. In addition, news reports documented an additional three fatality crash in 2013 and four fatality crash in 2019 near Armington Junction.

Crashes at rural intersections often are at high speeds, which tend to result in severe injuries or fatalities. Approximately 1/3 of annual intersection fatalities in the United States occur along rural, two-lane highways. The crashes at Armington Junction followed this trend, and MDT’s crash analysis showed that the intersection is not operating at a desired level of safety.

MDT is committed to creating a solution to eliminate serious injuries and deaths at this intersection.

The goal of the Armington Junction project is to improve the safety of all travelers. After studying four alternatives and consulting with the public and key stakeholders, MDT has determined a roundabout is the safest option.

Roundabouts:
- eliminate the deadliest T-bone style crashes through their circular shape and one directional traffic flow.
- make things easier on drivers by removing the most problematic cross-traffic and left-hand turning maneuvers.
- allow drivers to simply slow down, look to their left, and gently merge into the roundabout before traveling around the circle to their destination.
The Armington Junction Project is funded through the National Highway System (NH) Program, which finances highway and bridge projects to rehabilitate, restore, resurface, and reconstruct non-Interstate National Highway System routes. MDT’s five Districts are allocated NH funds by Montana’s Transportation Commission based on system performance; the Great Falls District has utilized its allocation to fund this project.

**WHAT TO EXPECT DURING CONSTRUCTION**

Construction is scheduled to begin in mid-April and be substantially complete by fall. The traveling public should expect 15-minute delays, flaggers, temporary stoplights, and pilot cars.

**PROJECT COST**

The improvements at Armington Junction include building the roundabout and widening current roads to meet safety and design standards. The cost of the Armington Junction roundabout and intersection will be approximately $19.4 million.

Roundabouts not only save lives, but money too. The Canyon Ferry and Lake Helena Drive roundabout not only reduced crashes by 70% and eliminated fatalities over a five-year period, but the six-year cost savings of installing the roundabout was nearly $6 million.

**STAY IN THE KNOW**

You can receive detailed updates about when construction will occur and what the impacts will be through the following:

- **Email** melissas@strategies360.com
- **Text** "belt" to 406-226-1603*
- **Call** public involvement lead Melissa Shannon at 406-422-2922
- **More info** mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/armingtonjunction/

*Texting alerts are not managed by MDT and may have different privacy and security policies. For more information see simpletexting.com/privacy-policy/

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**DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE LARGE TRUCKS**

The Armington Junction Roundabout will be the largest single-lane roundabout in Montana. The large size will ensure that it will accommodate a variety of large, oversize, and overweight vehicles, including trucks carrying wind farm blades and U.S. Air Force munition haulers.

The interior section of the roundabout containing patterned concrete is called the “truck apron.” Its purpose is to accommodate wheels of trucks and long vehicles so they may safely travel through the roundabout. The truck apron is specially designed with a flat slope and low height to accommodate low-clearance vehicles and trailers.

**SLOW FOR THE ZONE.**

Give workers a brake.

When traveling during construction season, watch for the “cone zone” and for workers on the highway. These workers spend their days working a short distance from fast moving vehicles, and while they make every effort to work safely, they are counting on you to pay attention, slow down, and be careful as you pass through a work zone.

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