Appendix E

Comments and Responses on Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
Appendix E: Summary Responses

The Federal Highway Administration, Western Federal Lands, thanks you for your comments on the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Alternatives. Approximately 270 comments were received.

All comments received on the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) are contained in this Appendix. Because of the large number of similar comments received, Summary Responses have been developed to provide a simplified, yet comprehensive format for a specific issue in one of the following ways:

- **Summary responses:** This section provides responses to similar comments received on the DEIS. To find responses to a specific comment, locate the comment in the appendix, note the corresponding response letter (A, B, or C, etc.), and refer to the corresponding lettered response in this section.

- **Unique comment responses:** Responses to unique comments are provided on the same page with the comment.

At the end of each summary response, any modifications made to the Miller Creek Road Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in response to comments are noted in italics.

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<th>Definition</th>
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<td>ADT:</td>
<td>Average Daily Traffic</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEQ:</td>
<td>Council on Environmental Quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEIS:</td>
<td>Draft Environmental Impact Statement</td>
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<td>EIS:</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPA:</td>
<td>US Environmental Protection Agency</td>
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<td>FEIS:</td>
<td>Final Environmental Impact Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>FHWA:</td>
<td>Federal Highway Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>ID:</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITE:</td>
<td>Institute of Transportation Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRTP:</td>
<td>Long-Range Transportation Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDT:</td>
<td>Montana Department of Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUTP:</td>
<td>Missoula Urban Transportation Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEPA:</td>
<td>National Environmental Policy Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRHP:</td>
<td>National Register of Historic Places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPG:</td>
<td>Missoula Office of Planning and Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROD:</td>
<td>Record of Decision</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEE:</td>
<td>Social, Economic, Environmental</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHPO:</td>
<td>State Historic Preservation Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIP:</td>
<td>Transportation Improvement Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIS:</td>
<td>Traffic Impact Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNM:</td>
<td>Traffic Noise Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USACE:</td>
<td>US Army Corps of Engineers</td>
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<tr>
<td>vpd:</td>
<td>Vehicles Per Day</td>
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</table>
A. Issue: Identification of Preferred Alternative

Topics under this issue include:

- Selection of Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative
- Comments in Opposition of Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative
- Comments in Support of Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative
- Comment Status of Alternatives 2B, 3B, or 4C
- Comments in Support of Alternatives 2B, 3B, or 4C

Many comments were received that voiced opposition to Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative. This section refers readers to sections of the EIS that support the selection of Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative. Some comments were received stating that there was little or no support for Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative. This section provides a summary of comments received that voiced opposition or support for the alternatives evaluated in the EIS.

This section also lists comments received from the US EPA, US Army Corps of Engineers, and local governmental entities.

Selection of Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative

Alternative 5A has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Table ES-1 and Section ES.5 in the EIS present the comparison of alternatives and reasons that Alternative 5A was identified as the Preferred Alternative. Also refer to Section 2.7 and Table 2-3 of the EIS for a summary comparison of the proposed alternatives. Additional clarification for selection of Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative is provided in the following summary responses.

Comments in Opposition of Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative

One hundred-three comments were received indicating opposition to Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative. Missoula County Commissioner Barbara Evans and the Missoula Fire Department each provided a comment letter in opposition to Alternative 5A.

The Cold Springs Elementary School Principal Webb Harrington provided a comment letter and comments at the public hearing with concern for traffic on Briggs Street associated with Alternative 5A. However, the concern for an increase in traffic along Briggs by the school is common to all the build alternatives, because they all include a signal at Miller Creek Road and Briggs.

Comments in Support of Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative

Thirty-seven comments were received indicating support of Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative. The US EPA and US Army Corps of Engineers provided letters in support of Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative. The Target Range Homeowner’s Association provided a response letter in support of Alternative 5A. The US EPA further commented: “Based on procedures US EPA uses to evaluate the adequacy of the
information and the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives in an EIS, the DEIS has been rated as Category LO (Lack of Objections).”

**Comment Status of Alternatives 2B, 3B, or 4C**

While the decision to select a preferred alternative is not based on numerical voting, the following table provides a summary of the comments received.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Comments Received In Support of Alternative</th>
<th>Comments Received in Opposition to Alternative</th>
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<td>2B</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>4C</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5A</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>103</td>
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**B. Issue: NEPA Process and Project Purpose and Need (32 and 21 comments received, respectively)**

Topics under this issue include:

- NEPA Process Milestones
- Public Notification
- Change in Purpose and Need
- The Preferred Alternative Related to the Purpose and Need
- Notice of Intent
- Inclusion of Old US 93 as a Design Component
- Purpose of Congressional Appropriation
- Local Land Use Plan Conformity
- Reasonable Alternatives for Old US 93

This section responds to comments received stating that the project and scoping do not comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), that the purpose and need should not have been changed from the original project intent to provide a second access and that the purpose and need was changed “at the last minute,” the public and businesses along Old US 93 were not sufficiently notified of both the change in purpose and need and the inclusion of Old US 93 as a design component with all alternatives, that the public was not given the opportunity to provide input to the project, that the Preferred Alternative does not meet the project purpose and need, that the Notice of Intent should have been reissued to include the revised purpose and need statement, that Old US 93 was included late in the process and therefore was not fully evaluated in the DEIS, that the DEIS must conform to the Congressional appropriation, that the project conflicts with local land use plans, and no reasonable alternatives for Old US 93 were considered in the DEIS.
NEPA Process Milestones

<table>
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<th>Milestone</th>
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<td>Project kick-off</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoping</td>
<td>May 2003 to March 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop alternatives</td>
<td>June 2003 to February 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed purpose and need, considered other existing corridors east of Miller Creek Road</td>
<td>March 2004 to June 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated traffic forecasts</td>
<td>June 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatives modified to include Old US 93</td>
<td>Fall 2005 to February 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish Draft EIS</td>
<td>September 2006</td>
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Public Notification

Publication of the DEIS and public review period is the formal milestone in the NEPA process where project findings are provided to the public and the public is given the opportunity to review and provide comment on the project proposal.

At the public hearing, the general public was given the opportunity to provide written and verbal comment on the document and the EIS process. The initial DEIS comment period took place from September 22, 2006 through November 6, 2006. However, due to the high level of interest, the public comment period was extended 30 days to December 6, 2006. Therefore, written comments, to be included in the official project record, were accepted for 75 days following the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register. Approximately 190 people attended the public hearing. Two hundred seventy (270) comments were received during the comment period, of which 65 comments were received at the public hearing.

Several methods of public notification, described below, were used throughout the course of the project. A complete list is included in Chapter 5.0 of the EIS.

- The comment period between September 22, 2006 and December 6, 2006, and the public hearing held on October 17, 2006 was the official opportunity for the public to review and comment on the DEIS.
- Methods used for public notification included the following (for dates and locations, see Sections 5.3 and 5.4 of the EIS).
  - Six public workshops and one community meeting were conducted by the project team at key points in the project. The public workshops were held to provide project information to the general public and obtain input on the project, whereas the community meeting was held to address concerns specific to residents in the Blue Mountain Road/Hayes Creek Road area. In addition, a citizen-sponsored public meeting was organized by the public and attended by FHWA representatives to discuss the US 93/Blue Mountain Road connection.
  - Newspaper announcements were made prior to every public meeting, DEIS document availability, and the public hearing. Newspaper flyer inserts were placed in The Missoulian newspaper. Newspaper announcements were printed in the The Missoulian, Missoula Independent, and Ravalli Republic.
• Press releases were emailed and/or faxed to The Missoulian, The Missoula Independent, KPAX-8 TV, KECI-13, KTMF TV, Montana Public Radio, KYSS FM, KBGA Radio at University Center, KMSO FM for public service announcements.
• The project Web site (www.millereis.com) contained meeting announcements, meeting displays and minutes, and electronic copies of documents available for public review, such as the DEIS.
• A project mailing list was developed and continually supplemented throughout the course of the project with addresses obtained from sources such as public meeting sign-in sheets and requests by the public to be added to the list for use in distributing project announcements and meeting invitations.
• In addition to the project mailing list, postcards and newsletters were also bulk mailed to large distribution areas within and adjacent to the study area. The bulk mailing areas continue to be updated with the intent to be inclusive of all persons interested in the project.
• Prior to the public hearing, posters were displayed at 29 study area locations, such as banks, gas stations, supermarkets, convenience stores, restaurants/bars, retail stores, coffee shops, and video stores to reach a wider audience.
• A project hotline (1-800-865-6905) was established to provide current project information and project status, and receive public comments.

Meetings with affected property owners and businesses:
• May 20-22, 2003: David Evans and Associates’ consultant team staff met with 16 property owners between May 20-22, 2003; and 12 business owners between October 20-21, 2003. Most of these businesses were located in the vicinity of Alternatives 2B, 3B and 4C. One business was located near Old US 93.
• Early June 2004: David Evans and Associates’ staff met with 11 businesses located along Old US 93, and attempted meeting with other businesses along US 93.

Change in Purpose and Need

It is not uncommon or inconsistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for a project’s purpose and need to be refined or modified as a result of the NEPA scoping process, when the project is studied in greater detail and public input is gathered.

The original purpose and need statement was developed based in part on the language contained in the Congressional appropriation funding application, which focused on the construction of a secondary access to US 93 from Lower Miller Creek Road. The funding application itself is not law, but provides background on why the appropriation was requested. Initial scoping and screening of alternatives occurred based on the original purpose and need statement. This resulted in all initial build alternatives to include a new bridge over the Bitterroot River.

A substantial amount of public comment was received concerning the initial build alternatives. Members of the public and resource agencies questioned the range of
alternatives and suggested analysis of improving the existing access along Miller Creek Road. Therefore, based on public and agency input, the original purpose and need statement was revisited and it was determined the statement contained text that narrowly limited the range of alternatives to construction of a bridge. Based on that determination, the purpose and need statement was modified in June 2004 by eliminating language that called for a specific solution (a secondary access) to improving access for the Miller Creek area. This resulted in a broader range of alternatives to be identified and fully assessed that met the modified project purpose and need identified during the NEPA process and led to consideration of a non-bridge alternative. The modified purpose and need statement was presented at the June 22, 2004 public meeting.

Refinement of the purpose and need statement is consistent with FHWA guidance that directs the purpose and need section be re-examined and updated as appropriate throughout the project development process. As the NEPA process moves forward, FHWA considers new information and comments in refining its NEPA analysis.

Public notification that the purpose and need statement was modified occurred as follows:

- June 1, 2004: The purpose and need was modified.
- June 6, 2004: Display ad in the Missoulian newspaper announcing the June 22, 2004 public meeting and stating the purpose and need had been modified.
- June 10-June 17, 2004: Display ad in The Missoula Independent announcing the June 22, 2004 public meeting and stating the purpose and need had been modified.
- June 4, 2004: Newsletter mailed to project mailing list announcing the June 22, 2004 public meeting and stating the purpose and need had been modified.
- June 7, 2004: Newsletter bulk mailed announcing the June 22, 2004 public meeting and stating the purpose and need had been modified.
- June 2, 2004: Press release distributed announcing the June 22, 2004 public meeting and stating the purpose and need had been modified.
- June 2004: Project Web site announcing the June 22, 2004 public meeting and stating the purpose and need had been modified.
- June 22, 2004: The modified purpose and need was presented at the fifth public meeting. Approximately 127 people attended this meeting.
- March 23, 2006: The modified purpose and need was displayed at the sixth public meeting. Approximately 168 people attended this meeting.
- March 27, 2006: Displays from March 23, 2006 were placed on project Web site.
- September 18-20, 2006: The DEIS Notice of Availability newsletter was mailed that included the modified purpose and need.
- September 18, 2006: Distribution of the DEIS, which included the modified purpose and need in Chapter 1.
- October 17, 2006: The modified purpose and need was included in the public hearing handouts and slide presentation.
The Preferred Alternative Related to the Purpose and Need

The Preferred Alternative meets the project purpose and need of providing safe and improved access between US 93 and the Miller Creek area as stated in the EIS. Please refer to Chapter 2.0 of the EIS, which fully explains the screening and assessment of all alternatives based on the criteria listed in Section 2.3. Additionally, Section 2.7 of the EIS provides the reasons that Alternative 5A was selected as the Preferred Alternative for best meeting the project purpose and need (see Table 2-3).

Notice of Intent

Per 40 CFR Section 1508.22, "Notice of intent" is a formal, legal notice that an environmental impact statement will be prepared and considered. The notice shall briefly (a) describe the proposed action and possible alternatives; (b) describe the agency's proposed scoping process including whether, when, and where any scoping meeting will be held; and (c) state the name and address of a person within the agency who can answer questions about the proposed action and the environmental impact statement.

The Notice of Intent (NOI) for the Miller Creek Road EIS project was published in the Federal Register on March 3, 2003 at the beginning of the project. It alerted the public and agencies about the project and that an EIS was being initiated, and included a general or initial purpose of the project.

It is not unusual for a project’s purpose to be refined and modified as a result of scoping and better understanding of project needs during the NEPA process, when the project is studied in greater detail and public input is gathered. Refinement of the purpose and need during the NEPA process does not require a NOI to be reissued and published in the Federal Register. The public and agencies were notified that the project purpose and need had been modified in the June 22, 2004 public meeting notices and it was presented at that meeting, where 127 people signed in. Methods used to advertise that public meeting are listed in the section above titled “Change in Purpose and Need.”

Inclusion of Old US 93 as a Design Component

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project began in March 2003, and is anticipated to conclude in early 2008. Old US 93 was included in the study area in June 2004, and inclusion of Old US 93 improvements with the build alternatives occurred shortly after that time. That occurred in conjunction with the modified purpose and need discussed above. However, it should be pointed out that the inclusion of Old US 93 improvements with all build alternatives (including the three bridge alternatives) did not occur as a result of the changed purpose and need, but because of the updated traffic volumes and traffic modeling.

Over the next two years, four build alternatives, which included improvements to Old US 93, as well as the No-Action Alternative, were fully evaluated and assessed in the Draft EIS (DEIS) document that was published in September 2006. These alternatives are presented and discussed in Chapter 2.0 of the EIS. Assessment of impacts and mitigation associated with all alternatives is discussed in Chapter 4.0 of the EIS.
Public notification of inclusion of Old US 93 occurred as follows:

- **June 22, 2004:** The first notification that Old US 93 was included in an alternative was at this public meeting. A presentation described how Old US 93 was included with Alternative 5A. In addition, the “Alternatives Dismissed and Advanced” wall display indicated that the Miller Creek Alternative (Alt. 5A) included Old US 93 and Old US 93 was included in the study area map displayed at the meeting.

- **March 23, 2006:** At this public workshop, attended by approximately 160 people, the transportation operation need for improvements to Old US 93 and adjacent intersections to be included with all the build alternatives as a result of revised traffic forecasting was presented.

- **September 20, 2006:** The inclusion of Old US 93 improvements as a necessary component of all the build alternatives was presented in the Notice of Availability/public hearing announcement newsletter, mailed September 20, 2006. The newsletter was mailed to all individuals on the project mailing list and bulk mailed within the study area.

- **September 22, 2006:** The inclusion of Old US 93 improvements with all the build alternatives was included in Chapter 2.0 of the DEIS.

- **October 17, 2006:** The inclusion of Old US 93 improvements with all the build alternatives was presented at the October 17, 2006 public hearing.

### Purpose of Congressional Appropriation

The appropriation of federal funds for transportation improvements requires that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process be followed. NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) require that a range of reasonable alternatives be developed, rigorously explored, and objectively evaluated, and reasonable alternatives cannot be constrained based on the intent of a Congressional appropriation. Other alternatives may be eliminated from detailed study with a brief discussion of the reasons for eliminating them.

The Public Lands Highways Discretionary Program FY 2002 Candidate Project Application for the Miller Creek project proposed that a new bridge be constructed across the Bitterroot River to access Highway 93. Three bridge alternatives from the Miller Creek area across the Bitterroot River to US 93 were fully evaluated in the EIS. The purpose of the federal appropriation, as stated in the application, was to address traffic capacity needs for the Miller Creek area based on future growth.

A substantial amount of public comment was received concerning the fact that the initial range of alternatives only considered bridge options across the Bitterroot River. Many people asked why no other alternatives, such as improving the existing access along Miller Creek Road, were considered. Based on these comments, an alternative to upgrade the existing access was added (Alternative 5A).

The revised traffic volumes further altered the alternatives into combinations, which included improvements to Old US 93 and adjacent signals to improve traffic flow. Based on current and forecasted traffic volumes for the study area, the bridge alternatives were found to not meet the purpose and need as well as Alternative 5A. This finding was unexpected, and it then became clear to the project team, SEE Team, and ID Team
(which included the US EPA, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and US Army Corps of Engineers) that the transportation needs could be met with fewer impacts by selecting Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative. In addition, USACE Section 404 permitting regulations require that the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative be selected. Alternative 5A has fewer environmental impacts than the three bridge alternatives.

The EIS fully assessed and evaluated bridge alternatives, as intended with the Congressional appropriation, as part of the reasonable range of alternatives required by NEPA. Three of the five alternatives fully evaluated in the EIS included a bridge across the Bitterroot River to access US 93. These were Alternatives 2B, 3B, and 4C. The other two alternatives were Alternative 5A, which involved improving existing access along Miller Creek Road, and the No-Action Alternative. All alternatives were assessed equally in the EIS. The reasons that Alternative 5A was identified as the Preferred Alternative are presented in Section 2.7 of the EIS. The Preferred Alternative does not preclude construction of a bridge in the future.

Scoping requirements under NEPA are defined in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1501.7. These requirements have been fully adhered to during this process. Scoping activities conducted included the public scoping meeting held on March 26, 2003 as stated in the Notice of Availability, public opinion surveys, public workshops, newsletter and postcard mailings, community meetings, visioning workshops, property owner meetings, and public hearing.

The public and agency scoping conducted for the Miller Creek Road EIS project, as detailed in Section 5.3 of the EIS, is also in compliance with 23 CFR 771.111. Early coordination and public involvement was conducted to provide public awareness of the project and project decision-making, and to ensure that interested and potentially affected parties had opportunities to provide timely input into the development of the project and be directly involved in major EIS activities.

**Local Land Use Plan Conformity**

Three of the five alternatives evaluated in the EIS include a bridge across the Bitterroot River to access US 93. The Preferred Alternative does not conflict with local land use plans that show a new bridge across the Bitterroot River. Although Alternative 5A does not include a bridge, it does not preclude construction of a bridge in the future.

Local land use plans were considered during development of the alternatives. Consistent with the 1997 Miller Creek Area Comprehensive Plan identified need, Alternative 5A would improve access to and from the Miller Creek area, as discussed in Section 1.3.2 of the EIS. A discussion of how each alternative complemented or conflicted with those plans is presented in Section 3.1, Figure 3-2, and Section 3.4 of the EIS. The plans used included:

- 1996 Maloney Ranch Miller Creek Area Transportation Study
- 1997 Miller Creek Area Comprehensive Plan Amendment
- 2001 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan
- 2004 Missoula Urban Transportation Plan Update
Reasonable Alternatives for Old US 93

NEPA requires that a range of reasonable alternatives be developed, rigorously explored, and objectively evaluated. Other alternatives may be eliminated from detailed study with a brief discussion of the reasons for eliminating them.

One alternative to avoid improvements to Old US 93 was to widen US 93 by adding two travel lanes (one northbound and one southbound). See Section 2.5.3 of the FEIS for a complete description of this alternative and associated impacts. This alternative was considered but eliminated from detailed study for the following reasons:

- Widening Buckhouse Bridge would result in additional impacts to fisheries, wetlands, vegetation, floodplain, and the Bitterroot River, and would increase project costs by $2.0 million to $5.0 million for upgrading Buckhouse Bridge.
- The Brooks Street/Reserve Street intersection would fail to meet operational standards.
- The potential for side-swipe crashes resulting from vehicles changing lanes due to merging within a relatively short distance would likely increase with an additional travel lane. Pedestrians crossing at the Brooks Street/Reserve Street intersection and the Miller Creek Road/US 93 intersection would need to cross two additional lanes of traffic.
- Widening US 93 near Blue Mountain Road would impact a protected historic ditch, requiring appropriate approvals and mitigation.

For these reasons, widening US 93 was not considered to be an acceptable solution due to the additional impacts to environmental resources and private property, and increased cost. However, even with widening US 93 south of Miller Creek Road, traffic projections and resulting congestion would require either widening US 93 north of Miller Creek Road or Old US 93 and adjacent intersection improvements.

Also see Issue F for more detail concerning why Old US 93 is key to solving the project’s traffic issues.

 Modifications Made to FEIS in Response to NEPA Process and Project Purpose and Need Comments

In response to comments received regarding the NEPA process and project purpose and need, modifications were made to the FEIS in sections ES.1, 1.1.1, 2.5.3, 2.6.1, and 4.1.3.
C. Issue: Funding (14 comments received)

Topics under this issue include:
- Cost Estimates for Build Alternatives
- Project Funding

This section responds to comments received stating that Miller Creek area developers should pay for a bridge, that Miller Creek property owners have been assessed funds to pay for a bridge, and that the cost estimates provided in the EIS are incorrect.

Cost Estimates for Build Alternatives

Section 2.8 “Preliminary Conceptual Cost Consideration” of the EIS presents the comparative cost estimates for the build alternatives and items included in those estimates. The cost estimates were provided in 2006 dollars in the DEIS, and are provided in 2007 dollars in the FEIS. Cost estimates for year 2012, which was assumed to be a future construction year within the five-year 2008 to 2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) planning timeframe, are also presented in the FEIS. The estimates were prepared using standard industry methods. The costs are based on the conceptual alternatives developed for the EIS analysis. The cost estimates will be further refined during final design. Contingency items associated with private property right-of-way impacts were included in the cost estimates to cover impacts that would arise during final design.

All bridge alternatives (2B, 3B, and 4C) include costs associated with the bridge and associated new roadway, Miller Creek Road Limited Improvements, Old US 93 improvements, and adjacent intersections. The cost estimate for Alternative 5A (Preferred Alternative) includes costs associated with Miller Creek Road improvements, Old US 93 improvements, and adjacent intersections.

Alternative 5A is not in Missoula's current TIP (2007-2011). The project would need to be included in a fiscally constrained LRTP (and currently it is not) prior to inclusion in the TIP. The preferred alternative is not considered to be of regional significance to the area. However, it would be in the mix of projects used to evaluate conformity during the current transportation plan process if the alternative proceeds successfully through the local transportation planning process. In addition, at least one subsequent phase (e.g., preliminary engineering, final design, right-of-way, utility relocation, or construction) of the project has to be included in the approved TIP (and it currently is not) before FHWA can sign the Record of Decision (ROD).

Missoula is currently working on the 2008 LRTP, and it is scheduled for completion in June 2008. During the long range transportation planning process, the project is weighed against other projects competing for local funding to develop a fiscally-constrained plan. All projects in the process are evaluated to determine the optimum mixture that best meets the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.
If the preferred build alternative is included in a fiscally constrained conforming transportation plan and TIP, the FHWA can sign a Record of Decision (ROD) for Alternative 5A. Conversely, if it is not in such plans, then FHWA could not sign a ROD advancing a build alternative. In addition, FHWA can delay issue of a ROD until the LRTP and TIP include the project or can select the No-Action Alternative. The relatively low cost of the preferred alternative compared to the other build alternatives may make it easier to identify funding to include the preferred alternative in local planning documents, given that this alternative adequately meets and enhances the overall plan’s goals and objectives to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods for current and future transportation demand. See Section ES.7 of the FEIS for definitions of the planning terms discussed here.

**Project Funding**

An environmental study is required for any project for which federal funds are used. Federal funds were obtained for the Miller Creek Road preliminary design and EIA, Montana, as worded in the federal appropriations bill. These funds were used to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

In general terms, the EIS process consists of identifying and evaluating alternatives, performing preliminary design, assessing impacts and mitigation for alternatives, developing preliminary costs for alternatives, identifying a Preferred Alternative, and identifying funding for the Preferred Alternative. This process is documented in two documents: the EIS and the Record of Decision (ROD), which completes the EIS process.

Funds required to perform final design and build a project cannot be known until a Preferred Alternative is identified and estimated costs for the Preferred Alternative are prepared, which is accomplished through the EIS process.

During the initial development plans for two major subdivisions in the Miller Creek area, the County's comprehensive plan identified the need for a secondary access into the Miller Creek area. A bridge was proposed at the Blue Mountain Road vicinity. The County began "saving" for the match money necessary to construct a bridge by assessing each new lot $1,800 to be paid into this fund. The fund was never intended to pay in whole for a new bridge.

The federal appropriation process was the primary funding vehicle hoped to pay for a second access or new bridge. The initial federal appropriation of $5 million was intended to prepare the NEPA study, not pay for project construction. The County has had plans to three-lane Miller Creek Road. When the Miller Creek Road EIS process identified a non-bridge alternative as preferred, the County staff decided to use the escrowed money for the County's local Miller Creek Road improvements.

Alternative 5A is not in Missoula's current TIP (2007-2011). The project would need to be included in a fiscally constrained LRTP (and currently it is not) prior to inclusion in the TIP. The preferred alternative is not considered to be of regional significance to the area. However, it would be in the mix of projects used to evaluate conformity during the current transportation plan process if the alternative proceeds successfully through the
local transportation planning process. In addition, at least one subsequent phase (e.g., preliminary engineering, final design, right-of-way, utility relocation, or construction) of the project has to be included in the approved TIP (and it currently is not) before FHWA can sign the Record of Decision (ROD). The Miller Creek Road reconstruction project included in the current TIP will construct a portion of the No-Action Alternative using local funds.

If the preferred build alternative is included in a fiscally constrained conforming transportation plan and TIP, the FHWA can sign a Record of Decision (ROD) for Alternative 5A. Conversely, if it is not in such plans, then FHWA could not sign a ROD advancing a build alternative. In addition, FHWA can delay issue of a ROD until the LRTP and TIP include the project or can select the No-Action Alternative. The relatively low cost of the preferred alternative compared to the other build alternatives may make it easier to identify funding to include the preferred alternative in local planning documents, given that this alternative adequately meets and enhances the overall plan’s goals and objectives to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods for current and future transportation demand.

See Section ES.7 of the FEIS for definitions of the planning terms discussed here.

FHWA guidance specifically contemplates that an FEIS may be approved and circulated to the public before fiscal constraint requirements have been met, as long as all pertinent consultation and information that supports the reasonable assurance that all of the transportation conformity requirements are met has been accomplished.

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**D. Issue: Bridge Alternatives (123 comments received)**

Topics under this issue include:

- **Why a Bridge Alternative was not the Preferred Alternative**

This section responds to comments received stating that a bridge is needed, and comments asking why a bridge alternative was not selected as the Preferred Alternative.

**Why a Bridge Alternative was not the Preferred Alternative**

Of the five alternatives fully evaluated in the EIS, three included a bridge crossing of the Bitterroot River to connect to US 93. Chapter 2.0 of the EIS explains the screening and assessment of all alternatives based on the criteria listed in Section 2.3. Section 2.7 of the EIS provides the reasons that Alternative 5A was selected as the Preferred Alternative for best meeting the project purpose and need.

The No-Action traffic model shows significant queuing along US 93 during the AM Peak period. During this time, the queues extend from Reserve Street, through Miller Creek Road, and beyond Blue Mountain Road. Due to the high volumes on US 93, Miller Creek Road traffic also experiences long queues attempting to gain access to US 93 during the AM peak period.
Based upon the projected increase in traffic on US 93, traffic modeling shows the majority of traffic exiting the Miller Creek area via a second bridge (Alternatives 2B, 3B, and 4C) during the AM peak period would be forced to merge into a long queue of traffic extending to, or past, Blue Mountain Road. Furthermore, most drivers would still have to travel through the Miller Creek Road intersection.

Alternative 5A provides the best operational performance for US 93 based upon future traffic projections, costs the least, and has the least impact to the human and natural environment. In addition, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulations require selecting the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (which is Alternative 5A) for issuance of a 404 Permit (see Section 4.10.9 of the EIS for this discussion).

Alternative 5A is expected to function at an acceptable LOS during typical weekday peak travel periods through the year 2025. However, a second connection to the Miller Creek area and other system improvements (including measures to reduce travel demand and/or increase capacity on the US 93 corridor) may be warranted if future traffic volumes on US 93 and Miller Creek Road exceed the year 2025 forecasts used for the Miller Creek Road EIS. If needed, the second connection and other system improvements will be complimentary to Alternative 5A.

The relatively low cost of Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative, compared to the other build alternatives, may make it easier to identify funding to include the project in the local fiscally-constrained Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), given that this alternative adequately meets and enhances the overall plan’s goals and objectives to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods for current and future transportation demand.

**Modifications Made to FEIS in Response to Bridge Alternative Comments**

In response to comments received regarding a bridge alternative, Section 2.7.1, “Why a Bridge Alternative was not the Preferred Alternative” was added to the FEIS.

### E. Issue: Need Second Access for Emergencies (51 comments received)

This section responds to comments received stating that a second access for the Miller Creek area is needed for emergency access and evacuation in case of fire.

The purpose and need statement reads, “The purpose of this project is to provide safe and improved access between US 93 and the Miller Creek Area.” It is acknowledged that emergency response and evacuation for the Miller Creek area would be enhanced by a bridge alternative and it was considered along with the costs, impacts, benefits, and how well each alternative meets the project’s purpose and need. Missoula County has no requirement to provide more than one access to a subdivision. Existing roads (Gharret Street to 39th Street) currently provide a second access route out of the Miller Creek area.
Although the Gharret Street corridor was eliminated as an alternative early in the process because routing more traffic on a daily basis past the middle school and neighborhood was considered undesirable, this route could be utilized in the event of an emergency evacuation.

After scoping for this EIS commenced, a new fire station was constructed (completed in March 2007) within the Miller Creek area. This new fire station greatly enhances fire and emergency response capability within the area. Missoula County was contacted regarding their Disaster Plan for evacuations. The plan contains broad information, such as which agencies are responsible for certain areas and which agencies have authority during an emergency/disaster, etc. Detailed evacuation plans for areas like the Miller Creek area have not been prepared because of the difficulty involved in planning for every type of emergency or disaster. There are several areas in Missoula with a similar situation as the Miller Creek area – that of an isolated residential area that backs up to open space with one primary access road.

Alternative 5A greatly improves traffic flow into and out of the Miller Creek area and adds additional travel lanes to Miller Creek Road improving emergency access. Compared to Alternatives 2B, 3B, and 4C, Alternative 5A would not include a new connection to US 93 and would not provide the same level of improved access for emergency service providers or for emergency evacuation of the area. However, Alternative 5A would still result in improved access and meets the purpose and need of the project.

**Modifications Made to FEIS in Response to Need for Second Access for Emergencies**

*In response to comments received regarding the need for a second access for emergencies, modifications were made to the FEIS in Tables ES-1 and ES-2, and sections 1.8 and 4.4.7.*

**F. Issue: Old US 93 and Adjacent Intersections – Traffic and Design**

(45 comments received)

Topics under this issue include:

- Why Old US 93 is Key to Solving Traffic Issues
- Intersection Operations with No-Action Alternative
- Signal Synchronization
- FEIS Design Revisions Along Old US 93 to Avoid and Minimize Impacts
- Access Issues-Missoula Country Club, Businesses, Post Siding Road
- Economic Impacts to Businesses
- Why Not Turn Old US 93 into a Two-Lane One-Way Southbound Road Funneling Traffic Off of Reserve Street?

This sections responds to comments received that asked why Old US 93 is included with all of the build alternatives, questioned how the Preferred Alternative would improve traffic flow, had concerns about adding a traffic signal on Reserve Street, and asked about signal synchronization and how it works. Also,
comments were received stating that the Preferred Alternative would increase traffic on Old US 93, creating access and economic impacts to businesses.

Also, several comments were received regarding impacts that widening Old US 93 would have on the Missoula Country Club.

**Why Old US 93 is Key to Solving Traffic Issues**

The project roadway system has three primary intersections. The three intersections of Reserve Street and Old US 93, Reserve Street and US 93 (Brooks Street), and US 93 (Brooks Street) and Miller Creek Road are in close proximity to one another. By splitting the traffic flows between US 93 and Old US 93 the roadway system will operate more efficiently and reduce intersection queuing and delay, ultimately reducing travel times both near-term and within the 20-year design horizon. By creating an integrated signal system between the three intersections and removing/reducing signal green times of redundant movements between these intersections, traffic can flow through the system more efficiently.

The need for improved traffic flow on the section of the US 93/Old US 93 corridor between Miller Creek Road and Reserve Street is predicated on year 2025 forecasts of substantial traffic growth on the major roadways serving this area, including US 93, Reserve Street, Old US 93, and Miller Creek Road, and the limited capacity of the current roadway system to accommodate the forecasted traffic. Approximately 50 percent of the traffic heading toward Missoula from the Bitterroot Valley and from the Miller Creek area is destined northbound along Reserve Street in the morning peak hour (AM peak) and conversely returning southbound along Reserve Street during the afternoon peak hour (PM peak). This primary northbound AM peak and southbound PM peak travel flow would be accommodated under all of the build alternatives by providing additional capacity for northbound and southbound traffic on Old US 93 and on Reserve Street between US 93 and Old US 93, thereby relieving the bottleneck at the intersections of US 93 (Brooks Street)/Miller Creek Road and US 93 (Brooks Street)/Reserve Street, and resulting in overall improved traffic operations along study area roadways.

Traffic flow along all study area roadways (US 93, Miller Creek Road, Reserve Street, Old US 93) would be improved by adding capacity to Old US 93 with an additional northbound travel lane, additional intersection approach lanes for the major travel movements, a new signal at Reserve Street with coordinated (synchronized) signal timing and progression at the three signalized intersections of US 93/Old US 93/Miller Creek Road, US 93 (Brooks/Reserve), and Reserve/Old US 93. This includes the replacement of the low-volume northbound left-turn movement from Reserve Street to Old US 93 with additional lane capacity on the southbound Reserve Street approach to US 93. These improvements would result in more even traffic distribution between US 93 and Old US 93. This more even split of traffic between the parallel facilities would allow the roadway system to operate more efficiently and reduce intersection queuing and travel delay through the frequently congested section of US 93 through the project area.

**Intersection Operations with No-Action Alternative**

Under the No-Action Alternative, no construction improvements would occur on Old US 93. However, as discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, traffic along Old US 93 is expected
to more than double between 2005 and 2025. The Old US 93 link between US 93 and Reserve Street is approximately 3,500 feet in length. In the AM, queues in the southbound direction at US 93 are approximately 300 feet, while queues in the northeastbound direction at Reserve Street are approximately 3,500 feet. During the PM, the queues in the southbound direction at US 93 are approximately 3,350 feet, while queues in the northeastbound direction at Reserve Street are approximately 2,625 feet.

Under the No-Action Alternative, the critical travel movements and overall operations at intersections on US 93 in the project area for year 2025 AM and PM peak hour are expected to deteriorate to failed conditions. Intersection operation failure is defined as lengthy delays resulting in long vehicle queues where the street system is totally saturated with traffic and movement is very difficult. (See Section 4.4.1.1 of the EIS.)

**Signal Synchronization**

Traffic signal synchronization provides coordination and timing of groups of traffic signals along a road, which improves traffic flow with minimal stops. The goal of synchronization is to get the greatest number of vehicles through multiple intersections with the fewest stops. The two closely-spaced signals along Reserve Street at US 93 and at Old US 93 would operate as an integrated signal system. The new signal at Old US 93 and Reserve will be synchronized with the existing signal at US 93 and Reserve.

In general terms, signal synchronization functions as follows: For example, a motorist is stopped at a signalized intersection and traffic is also stopped at the signalized intersection ahead. The signal at the intersection ahead turns green and traffic starts moving through it. Then the motorist's intersection signal turns green and traffic moves through it and is also able to move through the intersection ahead because it still has a green light. This way traffic moves continuously through both intersections without stopping. Red light signal timing is also synchronized to prevent vehicle queues from blocking intersections.

Coordinating the signals along Reserve Street at US 93 and Old US 93 in concert with the other proposed capacity improvements to Old US 93 would maximize utilization of the existing infrastructure by ensuring optimum travel speeds while reducing intersection delays. Signal synchronization on Reserve Street would be most efficient with the proposed improvements to Old US 93 due to the more balanced dispersion of traffic through these synchronized intersections that would occur with the additional capacity on Old US 93.

Traffic signal coordination would reduce the number of stops, thereby reducing the crash potential at intersections. Signal synchronization can also have a positive effect on air quality because moving vehicles produce fewer emissions in an area than vehicles idling in congested traffic conditions.

**FEIS Design Revisions Along Old US 93 to Avoid and Minimize Impacts**

**Design of Old US 93 as Proposed in DEIS [Note: The FEIS modifies this design]**

All of the build alternatives include improvements to Old US 93 and the adjacent intersections (see Section 2.6.2.1 of the EIS). Old US 93 would be widened to provide an additional northbound through travel lane and turning lanes at its intersection with
Reserve Street and US 93. Widening Old US 93 would have some impact to adjacent properties. Right-of-way would be required from the Missoula Country Club and the gas station/convenience store at the Old US 93 and US 93 intersection, and a construction easement would be needed from the Missoula Country Club and other businesses along Old US 93 for reconstruction of driveway entrances.

The DEIS stated that 2.3 acres of land would be acquired from properties adjacent to Old US 93. No right-of-way or construction easement would be needed from the Larchmont Golf Course (Missoula County Municipal Golf Course). The typical section of Old US 93 as proposed in the DEIS is shown below:

**Old US 93 Typical Section (looking east toward Reserve Street) as Proposed in DEIS**

*Northern Right-of-Way line is Missoula Country Club and Larchmont Golf Course property lines.*

With the design proposed in the DEIS, construction would extend approximately 10 feet onto Missoula Country Club property in two areas. These areas are located northeast of the current Missoula Country Club entrance adjacent to the eighth and ninth holes of the golf course. The two areas where encroachments would occur are located from approximately 300 feet to 600 feet west of Post Siding Road and from approximately 1,000 feet to 1,500 feet west of Post Siding Road. Both of these areas are adjacent to a golf course storage area and do not impact the eighth or ninth holes, fairways, or tee boxes.

During final design some additional right-of-way or construction easement may be deemed necessary. Final design means the level of detail necessary to finish the design and prepare for construction. According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing regulations 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 771.113(a), Timing of Administration Activities, final design activities cannot proceed until the FEIS has been approved and available for the prescribed period of time and a Record of Decision has been signed. A ground survey has not been performed for this project. Instead, aerial photography and mapping were used for conceptual design.

**Modified Design of Old US 93 in FEIS to Avoid and Minimize Impacts**

Based on public concerns regarding impacts to the Missoula Country Club, the Old US 93 typical section was revised to minimize impacts to the Missoula Country Club. The revised design for Old US 93 is described below and in Section ES.2, page ES-3, and Section 2.6.2.1, page 2-20 of this FEIS. These revisions to the Old US 93 proposed
typical section meet City of Missoula Standards and reduce impacts to properties adjacent to Old US 93 compared to the design proposed in the DEIS.

The modified typical section for Old US 93 eliminates the proposed drainage ditch and eight-foot shoulder and replaces it with an underground stormwater system with curb and gutter and a five-foot bicycle lane. The five-foot bicycle lane would replace the existing shoulder that may be used currently as a bicycle lane. Three-foot-high retaining walls are anticipated to be used behind the curb to further reduce right-of-way impacts, but the actual need for, and location of the retaining walls will be determined during final design. These revisions to the proposed typical section would reduce the impacts to the Missoula Country Club.

The revised construction footprint would result in the following impacts to the Missoula Country Club property:

- From the existing driveway entrance along the southwest property line toward US 93, approximately 30 feet of right-of-way would be acquired from the Country Club in order to accommodate the additional turning lanes at the Old US 93 and US 93 intersection. The area impacted is the landscaped area adjacent to the parking lot and entrance road. No impacts would occur to the parking lot.

- The existing entrance road to the Country Club would remain in its current location but would be shortened by approximately 30 feet to match the new Old US 93 edge of pavement.

- The only holes in the vicinity of Old US 93 are holes 8 and 9. The only impact that would occur to the Country Club along the southern property line east of the entrance road in the area of holes 8 and 9 fairway and rough is to portions of the vegetative hedge or gravel maintenance area. In order to accommodate the wider Old US 93 typical section, an area of right-of-way approximately 250 feet long by five feet wide would be acquired as permanent right-of-way. No impacts to the 8th and 9th holes, fairways, or trees along the fairways would occur.

- For the remainder of the property line to Post Siding Road, all permanent improvements would remain within the existing highway right-of-way. However, to provide access for construction of the improvements, a five- to ten-foot temporary construction easement may be needed from the Missoula Country Club. It is not anticipated that use of the golf course would be limited by the construction easement. The temporary construction easement would be defined during final design and coordinated between the property owner and the project owner.

This modified design of Old US 93 in the FEIS reduces the estimated right-of-way impacts along Old US 93 from 2.3 acres (as stated in the DEIS) to approximately 1.0 acre, of which 0.2 acre represents impacts to the Missoula Country Club. The following graphic presents the revised typical section for Old US 93:
This revised Old US 93 typical section (see Section 2.6.2.1 in the EIS) meets City of Missoula Standards and reduces impacts to properties adjacent to Old US 93 compared to the design shown in the DEIS. Although the revised design minimizes right-of-way and construction easement impacts, it will require additional walls and installation of an underground stormwater system.

Mapping and aerial photography show that the existing Missoula Country Club fence lies on the Old US 93 right-of-way line. Aerial photography also indicates that the hedge is located within the Old US 93 right-of-way. Where new right-of-way or a construction easement is needed on Missoula Country Club property for completing improvements and the fence or hedge is impacted, replacement fencing and landscaping would be provided by the project. Where existing fence and hedge is located on Old US 93 right-of-way and is impacted but right-of-way and construction easement are not needed, replacement fence and landscaping would be the responsibility of the Missoula Country Club. Approximate impacts to the Missoula Country Club are presented in the following figure:
Impacts to Missoula Country Club Associated with Modified Old US 93 Design

In the DEIS, it was proposed that the left-turn movement from Old US 93 to US 93 be eliminated for Alternative 5A. In response to public comments, the project team re-evaluated maintaining the left-turn movement from Old US 93 to US 93. However, MDT expressed concerns regarding the operations of the intersection if the left-turn movement was maintained. It was determined that the left-turn movement could be maintained during non-peak hours; however, it may need to be restricted in the future depending on intersection operations. While the exclusive left-turn lane is provided in other build alternatives (2B, 3B, and 4C), this left-turn movement under Alternative 5A is designed to occur as a shared left/through traffic lane during non-peak hours. This condition would result in increased delay for through traffic on Old US 93 destined to the Miller Creek area as drivers wait for left-turn movements to occur. The difference between Alternative 5A and the No-Action Alternative is that Alternative 5A would provide additional capacity in the form of an adjacent southbound through lane into the Miller Creek area, whereas the shared left/through lane provides the only through movement capacity under the No-Action Alternative.

With projected traffic increases, it will eventually be necessary to further increase or provide more efficient use of the available capacity of the Old US 93/Miller Creek Road/US 93 intersection. Increasing the capacity using available approach lanes would require a longer signal cycle length, beyond what may be acceptable to most drivers and to affected jurisdictions. Alternatively, it is possible to maximize the available capacity by removing an underutilized turn movement from the intersection. The left-turn lane from Old US 93 to US 93 has a low volume during peak and off-peak periods compared...
to other movements. Complete restriction of this left-turn movement may be warranted in
the future at the discretion of the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), who has
jurisdiction of US 93.

Access Issues-Missoula Country Club, Businesses, Post Siding Road

Whether or not improvements are made to Old US 93, traffic is expected to more than
double along Old US 93 between 2005 and 2025 (see Section 4.4.1.1 of the EIS). If
improvements to the Miller Creek area system (Old US 93, Miller Creek Road, Reserve
Street, and US 93) are not made, the system is expected to fail. Under the No-Action
Alternative, lengthy delays and long queues are expected as the street system becomes
saturated with traffic and movement becomes very difficult. Congested conditions on
Old US 93 without capacity improvements, including left-turn provisions, would make
access to and from adjacent businesses and Post Siding Road difficult. The Old US 93
link between US 93 and Reserve Street is approximately 3,500 feet in length. In
the AM, queues in the southbound direction at US 93 are approximately 300 feet,
while queues in the northeastbound direction at Reserve Street are approximately
3,500 feet. During the PM, the queues in the southbound direction at US 93 are
approximately 3,350 feet, while queues in the northeastbound direction at Reserve
Street are approximately 2,625 feet.

Under all of the build alternatives, traffic operations for the major traffic movements
would be improved over the No-Action Alternative. Traffic queues along Old US 93
under Alternative 5A are expected to be as follows:

AM Peak Period

- **Old US 93 and Reserve Street**: At the intersection of Old US 93 and Reserve
  Street, the northbound queue would extend approximately 400 feet from the
  intersection during the AM Peak period. This queue would impede access to
  business driveways near the Old US 93 and Reserve Street intersection.

- **US 93/Miller Creek Road/Old US 93**: At the intersection of US 93/Miller Creek
  Road/Old US 93, the southbound queue would extend approximately 300 feet
  along Old US 93 during the AM Peak period. The queue would end short of the
  Missoula Country Club entrance that is located 400 feet north of US 93.

PM Peak Period

- **Old US 93 and Reserve Street**: At the intersection of Old US 93 and Reserve
  Street, the southbound queue would extend approximately 400 feet along
  Reserve Street during the PM peak period.

- **US 93/Miller Creek Road/Old US 93**: At the intersection of US 93/Miller Creek
  Road/Old US 93, the southbound queue would extend approximately 600 feet
  north along Old US 93 during the PM Peak period. This queue would impede
  access to the Missoula Country Club golf course.

Under all of the build alternatives, access to adjacent businesses would be maintained.
Southbound drivers attempting to access businesses along Old US 93 and northbound
drivers turning into the Missoula Country Club and onto Post Siding Road would be
accommodated with a protected left-turn lane. Right-turn access onto Old US 93 from adjacent businesses would improve due to the addition of a second northbound travel lane on Old US 93 that would disperse traffic queues compared to the No-Action condition. Left turns onto Old US 93 from adjacent businesses and left turns onto Old US 93 from the Missoula Country Club and from Post Siding Road would become increasingly difficult due to increased traffic under all alternatives. Additionally, left turns onto Old US 93 from adjacent businesses would be difficult due to the additional northbound travel lane. However, it is expected that the new signal at the intersection of Reserve Street and Old US 93 would create gaps in southbound traffic that would allow this left-turn access. It is recognized that bicyclists and pedestrians may have out-of-direction travel by using the Old US 93/Reserve Street signal.

Economic Impacts to Businesses
The businesses between US 93 and Old US 93 currently have dual visibility and access via these two roadways. With the build alternatives, Old US 93 will be 15 to 20 feet closer to the existing businesses. Because the Old US 93 roadway improvements occur within the existing right-of-way, the proposed design does not require additional right-of-way from the businesses, with the exception of one business at the extreme southeast side of the proposed improvement. However, the build alternatives would eliminate parking that is occurring within the existing Old US 93 right-of-way. Any short-term economic impacts that might occur during construction would be offset by reduced congestion along Old US 93 and US 93 associated with Alternative 5A (Preferred Alternative). See Section 4.4 of the EIS.

Why Not Turn Old US 93 into a Two-Lane One-Way Southbound Road Funneling Traffic Off of Reserve Street?
This idea would work well in the PM but would greatly exacerbate traffic conditions in the AM peak period when high levels of traffic are heading northbound (eastbound) along US 93 and out of Miller Creek towards downtown Missoula. Without improvements to Old US 93 in the northbound (eastbound) direction, all of the traffic would be required to use US 93 between Miller Creek and Reserve Street. Similar to the No-Action Alternative, this would result in saturated conditions with extensive queuing throughout the study area. Additionally, this would require out-of-direction travel for patrons wanting to access businesses along Old US 93, as well as changing the access and circulation for businesses located between Old US 93 and US 93 (west of Reserve Street).

Modifications Made to FEIS in Response to Old US 93 and Adjacent Intersections – Traffic and Design Comments
In response to comments received regarding Old US 93 and adjacent intersections, modifications were made to the FEIS in sections ES.2, 1.4.1, 2.6.2, 4.4.1.1, 4.4.1.2, 4.4.2, 4.4.3, 4.5.2, 4.5.9, 4.6.2, 4.9.2, 4.17.2, 4.17.9, and 4.18.2, and Figures 2-5, 2-6, 2-18, and 4-7.
G. Issue: Missoula Country Club (MCC) (65 comments received)

Topics under this issue include:
- Missoula Country Club Golf Course Holes Eight and Nine, Landscaping
- Missoula Country Club Access During Construction
- Construction Easement
- Noise and Visual
- Air Quality
- Historical Property Status
- Liability for Errant Golf Balls

Many comments were received regarding impacts to the Missoula Country Club that would result from the widening of Old US 93. Members of the public thought there would be more impacts to the Missoula Country Club than were presented in the DEIS, including right-of-way, noise and visual, air quality, and construction impacts. Some comments stated that the Missoula Country Club was a historic property and that was not addressed in the DEIS.

Old US 93 traffic and design issues are discussed in the previous Issue F. Also, for details regarding right-of-way impacts and access to and from the Missoula Country Club, refer to Issue F.

**Missoula Country Club Golf Course Holes Eight and Nine and Landscaping**

Golf course holes eight and nine and the eighth and ninth hole tee boxes or fairways would not be impacted with the Old US 93 improvements as proposed in the DEIS or in the FEIS revised design. The greens, holes, tee boxes, or fairways were never proposed to be impacted. The only impact that would occur to the Country Club along the southern property line east of the entrance road in the area of holes eight and nine fairway and rough is to portions of the vegetative hedge or gravel maintenance area. In order to accommodate the wider Old US 93 typical section, an area of right-of-way approximately 250 feet long by five feet wide would be acquired as permanent right-of-way. No impacts to the eighth and ninth holes, fairways, or trees along the fairways would occur. The vegetative hedge will be preserved where possible. Where the vegetative hedge is impacted on Missoula Country Club property, replacement vegetation will be coordinated with the property owner during final design. Where vegetation exists within the highway right-of-way, the vegetation will be maintained where feasible and practicable.

From the existing driveway entrance along the southwest property line toward US 93, approximately 30 feet of right-of-way would be acquired from the Country Club in order to accommodate the additional turning lanes at the Old US 93 and US 93 intersection. The area impacted is the landscaped area adjacent to the parking lot and entrance road. No impacts would occur to the parking lot. The existing entrance road would remain in its current location but would be shortened by approximately 30 feet to match the new Old US 93 edge of pavement. A graphic depicting impacts to the Missoula Country Club associated with the modified Old US 93 Design can be found in Issue F.
Missoula Country Club Access During Construction

Access to and from the Missoula Country Club and Old US 93 after construction is discussed in Issue F.

As stated in Section 4.6.9 of the EIS, traffic will be actively managed by the contractor during construction. The public can expect public outreach efforts, such as public service announcements and signs, to educate the public about what to expect during construction. Although delays can be expected, access to and from the golf course property will be maintained.

Design and construction of any improvements along Old US 93 would include appropriate signage to alert drivers on Old US 93. Such signage could likely include a “Do Not Block Driveway” sign on Old US 93 to alert southbound (westbound) drivers of the need to maintain access to the Missoula Country Club driveway. A traffic management plan may be needed if large events like tournaments are expected to start or end during rush hour. This is true of all build alternatives.

Final design activities will include details for modified driveways and entrances to properties affected by construction. The details for a modified entrance to the Missoula Country Club would consider delivery truck-sized vehicles and include turning radii that would accommodate such a vehicle.

Construction Easement

A temporary construction easement may be necessary because the implementation of Alternative 5A (Preferred Alternative) would temporarily disturb land on the Missoula Country Club due to construction of a retaining wall(s). A temporary construction easement would allow construction access onto the Missoula Country Club property for a specific time and use. The property owner retains ownership and use of the property and may be compensated depending on the terms of the easement agreement. No permanent structure (wall or fence) would be located within the easement boundaries. It is not anticipated that use of the golf course would be limited by the construction easement. The temporary construction easement would be defined during final design and coordinated between the property owner and project owner.

Noise and Visual

Comments were received stating that the Missoula Country Club would experience more noise and visual impacts than those presented in the DEIS, that a noise measurement should have been taken at the Missoula Country Club, and an incorrect Activity Category “C” (which is for developed land, commercial area) was used to assess noise impacts for the Missoula Country Club.

The noise and air quality analysis followed standard FHWA and US EPA guidance for analysis methods. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Traffic Noise Model (TNM) was used to predict noise impacts, including impacts at the Missoula Country Club. The sound levels predicted at the Missoula Country Club are below the 66 dBA noise mitigation criteria, therefore, the Preferred Alternative would not result in noise impacts to the Missoula Country Club. Please refer to EIS Sections 4.8.2, 4.8.6, and 4.17.7 for more information.
For purposes of a noise impact analysis, the land use for the Missoula Country Club is described in the EIS as a privately-owned golf course of 104 acres. The Activity Category used to assess noise impacts to the Missoula Country Club was Activity Category “B” (“picnic areas, recreation areas, playgrounds, active sports areas, parks, residences, motels, hotels, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals”), not Activity Category “C” (developed lands, commercial areas).

The site along Old US 93 where noise measurements were taken (Noise Measurement Site 9 shown on Table 3-20 and Figure 3-16 in the EIS) is a commercial area (Activity Category C) across the street and to the east of the Missoula Country Club. The measurement was used to validate the Traffic Noise Model (TNM). Measurements do not need to be taken at all sites because the model allows the reasonable prediction of impacts at non-measurement locations. Noise levels for the Missoula Country Club were predicted at location MCR-R3, shown on Figure 4-7 of the DEIS (and Figure 4-8 of the FEIS). The location is east of the club house at the Missoula Country Club. Although Noise Measurement Site 9 is an Activity Category “C,” the noise impact criteria used to evaluate impacts at the Country Club was a Category “B” “recreation area” level of 66 dBA. Noise levels at the Missoula Country Club for all project alternatives are predicted to be below the noise impact criteria.

**Regarding the Hedge Serving as a Noise Barrier**

Although a hedge can provide a visual barrier, vegetation must be very thick (typically on the order of 50 to 100 feet) and dense to obtain a noticeable noise reduction. A chain-link fence does not reduce sound levels. Where the vegetative hedge is impacted on Missoula Country Club property, replacement vegetation will be coordinated with the property owner during final design and construction. Where vegetation exists on public property, the vegetation will be maintained where feasible and practicable. No noise or visual mitigation was determined necessary.

**Air Quality**

Air quality impacts to the Missoula Country Club for all build alternatives were evaluated using standard methods, as discussed in Sections 3.7 and 4.7 of the EIS, and no air quality impacts were identified for any of the alternatives. High concentrations of carbon monoxide typically occur during winter inversion weather conditions and near heavily congested intersections controlled by traffic signals. The air quality analysis did not show air quality impacts at the worst performing intersections within the carbon monoxide non-attainment area including the intersection of Old US 93/US 93/Miller Creek Road. Future year (2011 and 2025) carbon monoxide concentrations were shown to be substantially lower than existing levels at the worst intersections in the non-attainment area. This pattern of decreased levels results from lower emissions from vehicles and should occur throughout the project area.

**Historical Property Status**

As discussed in Section 3.15 and 4.15 of the EIS, an assessment of cultural resource sites in the study area was conducted as part of the Section 106 and Section 4(f) historical properties analysis. The Missoula Country Club is not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) due to loss of integrity as a result of modifications.
made over the years. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with that finding in the EIS. Refer to the Cultural Resources Report, HRA, 2003 and Addendum to Cultural Resources Report, 2004 (listed on second page of Appendix C of the EIS) for a complete description of the Missoula Country Club historical status and findings.

Section 4(f) of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act of 1966, as amended, and codified in 49 United States Code (USC) Section 303, declares that “[i]t is the policy of the United States Government that special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites.” In accordance with the FHWA regulations, Section 4(f) requirements are applicable only to significant historic resources (i.e., those sites listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or sites otherwise determined significant by the FHWA Administrator [23 CFR Section 771.135(e) and FHWA Section 4(f) Policy Paper].

The Missoula Country Club’s non-Section 4(f) status is supported by the fact that it is not eligible for, or listed on, the NRHP (see Section 3.15 of the EIS) and that it is privately-owned and, therefore, is not a public recreation area (see Section 3.18.1 of the EIS). Based on the Revised FHWA Section 4(f) Policy Paper (March 2, 2005) Question 11A, the definition of applicability of Section 4(f) to golf courses has to do with ownership. The Missoula Country Club is a privately owned course and club for use of members only. It is not open for public use. Since Missoula Country Club is owned, operated, and managed by the private membership, it is considered private, even if it is occasionally open to public use for a charity or social event.

**Liability for Errant Golf Balls**

Liability for errant golf balls will remain as it is currently.

**Modifications Made to FEIS in Response to Missoula Country Club Comments**

In response to comments received regarding the Missoula Country Club, modifications were made to the FEIS in sections ES.3, 2.6.2, 3.3.5, 3.15, 3.18.4, 4.3.2, 4.4.2.2, 4.5.2, 4.5.9, 4.6.2, 4.8.2, 4.17.2, 4.17.9, 4.18, and 4.19.2.4, and Tables ES-1 and 4-37, and Figure 4-7.

**H. Issue: Miller Creek Road Issues (13 comments received)**

**Topics under this issue include:**

- No-Action Improvements and Traffic Operations
- Action Alternative Improvements and Traffic Operations
- Cut-Through Traffic/Briggs Street/Signal Improvements

Comments were received that voiced concern about impacts to Miller Creek Road, including increased traffic, increased cut-through traffic, proposed design and traffic signal for the north “Y” intersection, impacts to private property, desire for bike lanes, and Wal-Mart plans and access.
No-Action Improvements and Traffic Operations

Improvements to Miller Creek Road by the City, County, and/or developers are anticipated under the No-Action Alternative. See Section 2.6.1 of the EIS for a complete description. These improvements include an additional northbound through travel lane on Miller Creek Road, a new signal at the Briggs and Miller Creek Road intersection, realignment of the Upper Miller Creek Road and Lower Miller Creek Road intersection, left-turn lanes at intersections, and paved shoulders and sidewalks. Some additional vehicular capacity would be provided by these improvements, but they would not be adequate to accommodate forecasted traffic volumes. In addition, Wal-Mart improvements or access changes may result in increased volumes on Briggs. Compared to 2003 average daily traffic (ADT) traffic volumes, traffic on Miller Creek Road is expected to double by 2025 under the No-Action Alternative primarily due to the planned build-out of the Miller Creek area. The ADT on Miller Creek Road between US 93 and Briggs Street is expected to increase by approximately 117 percent of the existing daily volume, and the ADT on Miller Creek Road between Briggs and the north “Y” intersection is expected to increase by approximately 99 percent. See Section 4.4.1.1 of the EIS.

Build Alternative Improvements and Traffic Operations

To address 2025 forecasted traffic volumes and improve traffic operations, all build alternatives include improvements to increase the vehicular capacity of Miller Creek Road and project area intersections. These improvements include the addition of a northbound through travel lane on Miller Creek Road for the Bridge Alternatives (2B, 3B, and 4C) and an additional northbound and southbound through travel lane for Alternative 5A. For all build alternatives, new traffic signals are included at the Miller Creek Road and Briggs intersection and at the north “Y” intersection, which were assumed to be constructed as part of the local improvements assumed in the No-Action Alternative. Turning lanes would be added at the US 93 and Miller Creek Road intersection, the Briggs and Miller Creek Road intersection, and the north “Y” intersection. All left-turn lanes at the Miller Creek Road/US 93 intersection are dedicated left-turn lanes with associated left-turn signal arrows, with the exception of Old US 93 left turn to US 93, which would not have a dedicated left-turn lane but rather a combination left-turn/through lane. See Section 2.6.2 of the EIS.

Cut-Through Traffic/Briggs Street/Signal Improvements

Regardless of the alternative selected, traffic in the Miller Creek area is predicted to grow substantially over the next 20 years, and traffic by the Cold Springs Elementary School is going to increase whether or not improvements are made to the Miller Creek Road system. Traffic volumes on Briggs Street east of Miller Creek Road are expected to increase by 148 percent between 2003 and 2025 for the No-Action Alternative. For all build alternatives, there would be a small reduction in traffic past the school over the No-Action Alternative due to the proposed increased capacity on Miller Creek Road.

A signal at the intersection of Miller Creek Road and Briggs Street is warranted and is included under all of the alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative. While no “risk analysis” on Briggs or other roads was required or completed, the travel forecasts for Briggs revealed that the No-Action Alternative would result in the highest traffic
volumes on Briggs and Gharrett due to congested and constrained conditions on Miller Creek Road.

Regardless of the build alternative, signals will encourage cut-through traffic; however, the Preferred Alternative improves traffic movements during the AM and PM peak so that cut-through traffic is reduced when compared to the No-Action Alternative. All of the build alternatives would reduce the number of neighborhood cut-through trips on Briggs, Gharrett, and 39th Streets to and from the Miller Creek area compared to the No-Action Alternative by providing increased capacity on Miller Creek Road as the primary access route that will move traffic more efficiently into and out of the Miller Creek area.

Under the build alternatives, 2025 forecasted traffic volumes are expected to be reduced on Briggs and Gharrett when compared to the No-Action Alternative (see Table 4-4 of the EIS.) On Briggs, volumes would be reduced between 10 percent and 18 percent, and on Gharrett south of 39th Street volumes would be reduced between 3 percent and 12 percent, depending on the alternative. For Alternative 5A (the Preferred Alternative), the forecasted traffic volumes on Briggs and Gharrett would be expected to be reduced by 12 percent and 11 percent, respectively. This reduction in traffic volumes is expected to improve conditions over the No-Action Alternative, resulting in less traffic on Briggs and Gharrett.

**North “Y” Intersection (Upper Miller Creek Road at Lower Miller Creek Road)**

Currently, northbound traffic turning left onto Miller Creek Road from Lower Miller Creek Road experiences delays during AM and PM peaks. This back up is a recognized concern. All of the alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative, include improvements to the north “Y” intersection that will facilitate more efficient traffic movements.

It is assumed that the “Y” intersection will be reconfigured and a signal installed as part of the locally-funded city and county improvements in the No-Action Alternative. Under the build alternatives, the intersection of Upper and Lower Miller Creek roads would include turning lanes. To accommodate forecasted traffic volumes, there would be two northbound through travel lanes on Miller Creek Road north of the north “Y” intersection. Traffic traveling northbound on Upper Miller Creek Road to Miller Creek Road would be accommodated in a dedicated “bypass” lane and would not be required to stop at the signal. To eliminate conflicts between travel movements, this northbound through lane would be separated from the adjacent northbound left turn lane by a raised curb barrier that would extend through the intersection. According to traffic modeling, this signalized intersection would function sufficiently during 2025 peak travel periods with forecasted traffic volumes.

The proposed improvements for the “Y” intersection of Upper and Lower Miller Creek roads include flattening of the grade on both Upper Miller Creek Road and Lower Miller Creek Road as they approach the intersection. The existing grade of Upper Miller Creek Road at the intersection is approximately 12 percent and the proposed new grade would be 8 percent. The existing grade of Lower Miller Creek Road at the intersection is approximately 6 percent and the proposed new grade would be 4 percent.
None of the potential solutions reviewed during the alternatives development and analysis process were found to be as feasible as the intersection configuration shown in the EIS (Figure 2-10).

**Private Property Impacts**

Landowners affected by the project would be entitled to receive compensation for any land or building acquired and any damages to remaining land caused by highway construction, as discussed in Section 4.5.9 of the EIS. Wells, septic systems, fences, landscaping, and other improvements located on private property and impacted by the project would be replaced or compensation made to the landowner. These details are negotiated after final design is completed.

Costs for these impacts have been considered in the estimated costs for the project. Contingency items were included in the estimate to cover any of these impacts that would arise during final design.

**Wal-Mart Coordination**

Forecasted 2025 traffic volumes included in the EIS considered increases in traffic volumes associated with the proposed Super Wal-Mart development. The Missoula Office of Planning and Grants (OPG) should be contacted for the status of the development plans regarding the proposed Wal-Mart expansion.

For all build alternatives, the proposed improvements to Miller Creek Road include a slightly modified access to Wal-Mart, rather than a new access. The existing access is proposed to be relocated approximately 100 feet away from the Miller Creek Road and US 93 intersection to better accommodate proposed turning lanes and the intersection. Additionally, it is recommended that turn movements from this relocated access be restricted to right-in/right-out only.

Other access changes, such as eliminating access from Wal-Mart to Miller Creek Road or adding an access from Wal-Mart to Briggs, would be part of the proposed Super Wal-Mart development and not a part of this project.

**Bike Lanes**

Under all the build alternatives, bike lanes would be included on Miller Creek Road. However, bike lanes are not included on Upper and Lower Miller Creek Road south of the north “Y” intersection. Those improvements would be the responsibility of local jurisdictions concurrent with other roadway improvements.

**Modifications Made to FEIS in Response to Miller Creek Road Issues Comments**

In response to comments received about Miller Creek Road issues, modifications were made to the FEIS in Sections 2.6.2.2, 2.6.2.6, 4.4.1.6, 4.4.2.2, 4.4.3.2, and 4.6.7, and Table ES-1 and Figure 2-7.
I. Issue: Traffic Forecasting (63 comments received)

Topics under this issue include:

- Traffic Forecasting Methodology
- 2025 Average Daily Traffic Volumes
- 2025 Peak Hour Major Intersection Volumes
- Clarification of Traffic Forecasts in the EIS

Several comments were received that questioned the traffic forecasts developed for the project, that projected traffic volumes were too low, and that the Preferred Alternative would not solve traffic and access problems.

Traffic Forecasting Methodology

Travel forecasting methodology is described in the Miller Creek Road Transportation Analysis Technical Report (as amended March 2006). Traffic forecasting is based in part on vehicle trips generated by land use, for example residential or commercial land use. Methods for calculating and allocating the number of vehicle trips generated for a given land use are provided in the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation manual.

The travel forecasting methodology focuses on daily and peak hour vehicle trips. As a base for the Miller Creek area, the existing average daily traffic on Miller Creek Road of 12,000 vehicle trips per day is based on the 2004 MUTP update (see Figure 3-6 of the EIS). Anticipated growth in the area includes 1,380 new single-family residential dwelling units, expansion of the existing Wal-Mart, and likely, other smaller generating commercial land uses.

According to the ITE Trip Generation manual, a single-family detached home is expected to generate 9.57 daily vehicle trips. Therefore 1,380 dwelling units (at 9.57 vehicle trips per dwelling unit per day) is equivalent to 13,200 new vehicle trips per day. The traffic impact study was reviewed for the proposed Wal-Mart expansion. The report identifies approximately 630 additional daily vehicle trips along Miller Creek Road between Briggs Street and US 93. The 13,200 vehicles/day (dwelling units) and 630 vehicles/day (Wal-Mart expansion) were added to the existing 12,000 average daily traffic to arrive at 25,830. The EIS shows 26,000 vehicles/day in Table 3-9; the difference can be attributed to additional traffic generated by more intense commercial development served by Miller Creek Road located directly south of US 93 that was also not factored into the Miller Creek Road average daily traffic (ADT) forecast shown in the 2004 Missoula Urban Transportation Plan (MUTP). Please refer to Section 3.4 and 4.4 of the EIS. While expansion and growth in the Bitterroot Valley are accounted for in the overall growth forecasts for US 93 that were utilized for the project, only planned development that is approved or reasonably foreseeable was accounted for.

2025 Average Daily Traffic Volumes

Year 2025 forecast ADT volumes presented in the 2004 Missoula Urban Transportation Plan Update (MUTP) were used to analyze project alternatives and to prepare the Transportation Analysis Technical Report, November 2004 and amended March 2006,
prepared by David Evans and Associates, Inc. The future transportation system planning year for the MUTP is consistent with the 2025 forecast horizon year for the Miller Creek Road EIS and represents the 2025 “design” year for all of the Miller Creek Road EIS alternatives. Several related factors warranted revision of project level 2025 forecast ADT volumes on US 93 south of Reserve Street to levels that are substantially greater than the 2025 ADT volumes presented in the MUTP. These factors include:

- Current US 93 ADT volumes from the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) that already approach forecasted 2025 ADT volumes in the MUTP;
- Foreseeable population growth trends and development proposals in Ravalli County and in the Lolo area that exceed the demographic baseline forecasts utilized to prepare the MUTP; and
- Forecast volumes displayed in the MUTP that were based on a desired regional constrained “smart growth” policy objective, which are not consistent with current land use and transportation trends based on accelerated recent and foreseeable growth.

The revised 2025 forecast ADT volumes on US 93 at Buckhouse Bridge, south of the Miller Creek Road intersection, are based on the 2004 ADT count of 25,120 vehicles per day (vpd) [reported in Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Count Program], and a proposed annual average growth rate based on ten-year historic ADT counts along US 93 at the Buckhouse Bridge between 1994 and 2004. The computed annual average growth rate for this ten-year period is 2.22 percent, and results in a 2025 forecasted ADT of 39,900 vpd on US 93 at the Buckhouse Bridge. This growth rate was applied to estimate 2025 traffic volumes along US 93.

The MUTP and roadway capacity information provided by MDT were both used as references to assess the approximate daily capacity for this four-lane facility (including turn lanes at intersections). Estimated daily vehicle capacity for US 93 in the vicinity of Buckhouse Bridge could be 44,000 vpd, assuming LOS E operations for the existing facility. Estimated daily vehicle capacity represents a maximum finite capacity where extended vehicular delays occur when traffic flow is interrupted, such as at a signal, as experienced at Miller Creek Road and Reserve Street. The estimated daily vehicle capacity of the facility (approximately 44,000 vpd) when compared to the estimated forecast 2025 ADT (39,900 vpd) indicates that the applied growth rate is reasonable for a four-lane principal arterial, but would likely represent restricted flow conditions with regular delays during peak travel periods. The recommended projection for the Miller Creek and US 93 study analyses would suggest that peak period traffic may begin to divert to other facilities and spread to more hours to some extent due to restricted flow. This peak period diversion and spreading were accounted for in the related analysis of traffic distribution and peak hour factors.

Revised future traffic distribution throughout the Miller Creek analysis area was developed through a multiple step process that took into account several elements, including travel demand model distribution patterns, new ADT forecasts, and proposed Wal-Mart expansion impacts. First, the future traffic distribution in the Miller Creek analysis area was determined to be generally consistent with the traffic distribution developed for the project in 2004. Next, to account for the additional traffic from the
revised US 93 ADT forecast, the US 93 through volumes were adjusted. Finally, the volumes were adjusted to account for the proposed additional Wal-Mart development.

2025 Peak Hour Major Intersection Volumes

The 2025 forecast AM and PM peak hour intersection approach volumes, developed as the basis for the build alternatives traffic operations analyses, are based on the future daily traffic distribution volumes described in the previous section. The peak hour approach volumes were derived from daily traffic volumes using a percentage for peak hour travel. The starting point for this percentage was derived from 2003 ADT and 2003 peak hour link volumes, as was done for the original November 2004 analysis. In the original analysis, however, these percentages ranged from 7 percent to 11 percent during the PM peak hour, and were generally consistent with existing rural to suburban conditions. By 2025, the study area, including the Miller Creek area, will be characterized as representative of suburban to urban conditions with a relatively low portion of daily travel occurring during the AM and PM peak hours. Due to the increasingly urban condition of the study area, combined with spreading of commuter travel through a longer peak period (also known as “peak spreading”), it is expected that these percentages will decrease in the future.

For the revised analyses, the peak hour percentages of the daily volumes would likely range from between 6 and 9 percent - slightly less than existing conditions. The percentages would vary by roadway type and intersection approach. For example, the intersection of US 93 and Miller Creek Road is considered to have slightly different peak hour percentages on each approach of the intersection. The additional Wal-Mart trips and respective distributions are based on the Wal-Mart Traffic Impact Study (Wal-Mart TIS) prepared by CLC Associates (June 2005) and slightly modified to reflect the future growth in the Miller Creek area not accounted for in the Wal-Mart TIS. These intersection approach volumes were then adjusted to account for the additional Wal-Mart traffic within the Miller Creek analysis area. All peak period operations output is based on Synchro model results.

Clarification of Traffic Forecasts in the EIS

Some comments regarding traffic forecasts require a clarification of the traffic information presented in the EIS (i.e., some comments stated that Old US 93 would experience a 375% to 475% increase in traffic with the build alternatives, which is not the case). To clarify, build alternative traffic forecasts for year 2025 were compared to the year 2025 No-Action traffic forecasts – not to existing (year 2003) traffic volumes. For example, for Old US 93, existing (year 2003) traffic volume is 3,700, year 2025 No-Action forecasted traffic volume is 8,520, and year 2025 forecasted traffic volume for build alternatives is 20,300. This represents an increase of 138% from the year 2025 No-Action forecasted traffic volume of 8,520 to the year 2025 build alternatives forecasted traffic volume of 20,300. Information presented in this example is provided in Sections 3.4.1 and 4.4 of the EIS (specifically Table 3-9, Table 3-5 and Figures 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, and 4-5).

Modifications Made to FEIS in Response to Traffic Forecasting Comments

In response to comments received on traffic forecasting, modifications were made to the FEIS in Sections 4.4.1.1, 4.4.1.2, 4.4.1.6, 4.4.2.1, 4.4.2.2, 4.4.3.2, and 4.4.3.3.
J. Issue: US 93 Concerns (18 comments received)

Topics under this issue include:

- US 93 Access from Existing Roads
- Wildlife

Comments were received expressing concerns about US 93 access, how the project would impact traffic on US 93, and wildlife impacts.

**US 93 Access from Existing Roads**

Under any of the build alternatives, future traffic safety would be a concern for turn movements, particularly left turns, entering and exiting US 93 at minor intersecting approaches (roads and driveways, such as Hayes Creek Road). This would result in increased interaction of vehicles traveling at different speeds. Adequate gaps for left turns from minor approaches will diminish from current conditions under all alternatives because of increasing volumes and the high-speed traffic on US 93. With the exception of Alternative 3B, all alternatives would maintain the signal at US 93/Blue Mountain Road. When actuated to allow protected left turns from Blue Mountain Road to northbound US 93, this signal creates gaps in traffic that facilitate access to the highway from secondary roads and driveways (such as Hayes Creek Road) located north and south of the signal. However, the effectiveness of this signal at providing gaps is limited beyond a general distance of one-mile north and south of the signal due to dispersion of vehicle platoons (groups of vehicles) on this high-speed highway segment.

As a consideration of the safe operation of US 93, MDT emphasizes consolidated access points that could serve the broadest area adjacent to the highway. Providing access at a single location that serves a broad area and multiple properties is compatible with consolidation of access points to the highway, which enhances safety. MDT is implementing access management for US 93 south/west of Miller Creek Road, which should help mitigate safety problems associated with turning movements on and off the highway under all build alternatives.

**Wildlife**

Wildlife impacts and mitigation for impacts are discussed in Section 4.11 of the EIS. Traffic volumes will continue to increase on US 93 regardless of this project. The Preferred Alternative is not anticipated to put additional traffic on US 93. As traffic volumes on US 93 increase in the future, wildlife mortality rates would be expected to increase as well.
K. Issue: Speed Limits (7 comments received)

A number of comments expressed a need for speed control on US 93 or local roads. We understand and appreciate that concern. However, speed limit control and enforcement on US 93 and local roads is outside FHWA’s jurisdiction; that is the responsibility of local jurisdictions and the Montana State Highway Commission. This document will be forwarded to them regarding these concerns.

L. Issue: Cold Springs Elementary School (43 comments received)

Several comments were received expressing concern that the Preferred Alternative would increase traffic at Cold Springs Elementary School and create a safety concern for school children.

Regardless of the action taken, traffic in the Miller Creek area is predicted to grow substantially over the next 20 years and traffic by the Cold Springs Elementary School is going to increase. Traffic volumes on Briggs Street east of Miller Creek Road are expected to increase by 148 percent between 2003 and 2025 for the No-Action Alternative (see Table 3-9 in the EIS.) A signal at the intersection of Miller Creek Road and Briggs Street is warranted, and is included under all of the alternatives including the No-Action Alternative.

All of the build alternatives evaluated in the EIS would reduce traffic on Briggs Street compared to the No-Action Alternative. Average daily traffic (ADT) percent change is presented in Table 4-4 of the EIS. 2025 ADT for Briggs Street directly east of Miller Creek Road is 6,350 vehicles per day (vpd) under the No-Action Alternative. Estimated reduction in ADT on Briggs Street east of Miller Creek Road is:

- -10 percent for Alternative 2B
- -18 percent for Alternative 3B
- -15 percent for Alternative 4C
- -12 percent for Alternative 5A

The 2025 AM/PM peak hour volumes on Briggs Street east of Miller Creek Road are 685/605 under the No-Action Alternative. Estimated reduction in AM/PM peak hour traffic compared to the No-Action Alternative on Briggs Street east of Miller Creek Road is:

- -12 percent/-10 percent for Alternative 2B
- -19 percent/-17 percent for Alternative 3B
- -12 percent/-15 percent for Alternative 4C
- -10 percent/-12 percent for Alternative 5A

The No-Action Alternative and all of the build alternatives assume a signal at the intersection of Miller Creek Road and Briggs Street. Signals will encourage cut-through
traffic, particularly at Briggs Street and Miller Creek Road. However, the Preferred Alternative improves traffic movements during the AM and PM peak along Miller Creek Road so that cut-through traffic is reduced when compared to the No-Action Alternative. All of the build alternatives would reduce the number of neighborhood cut-through trips on Briggs, Gharrett, and 39th Streets to and from the Miller Creek area compared to the No-Action Alternative by providing increased capacity on Miller Creek Road as the primary access route that will move traffic more efficiently into and out of the Miller Creek area. Therefore, all build alternatives would result in a small reduction in traffic past the school over the No-Action Alternative.

While no “risk analysis” on Briggs or other roads was required or completed, the travel forecasts for Briggs reveal that the No-Action Alternative would result in the highest traffic volumes on Briggs and Gharrett due to congested and constrained conditions on Miller Creek Road. No changes to parking along Briggs Street in front of Cold Springs Elementary School are proposed under any of the build alternatives.

Although not part of this project, and although the future traffic volumes near Cold Springs Elementary School are predicted to be reduced with Alternative 5A compared to the 2025 No-Action volumes, the school may benefit from traffic calming techniques in the future to address traffic concerns. When a need arises, implementing these measures should be investigated in conjunction with the City of Missoula.

**Modifications Made to FEIS in Response to Cold Springs Elementary School Comments**

_In response to comments received about Cold Springs Elementary School, modifications were made to the FEIS in sections 2.6.2.6 and 4.3.2, and Tables ES-1 and 4-4._

**M. Issue: Project Construction Impacts (7 comments received)**

Comments were received voicing concern about impacts to private property, businesses, and traffic delays and access issues during construction of the project.

Construction of the Preferred Alternative would result in short-term construction impacts throughout the construction period. The extent of these impacts would depend on the construction methods used, which would be determined during the final design stage. However, construction would likely involve excavation, grading, paving, utility adjustments, and construction of retaining walls and stormsewers. Sequencing of construction packages and the overall timeframe of construction have not been determined, and would depend on minimizing construction impacts to residents and traffic, available funding, and coordination with local communities.

Construction associated with the Preferred Alternative could temporarily impair travel mobility, increase traffic congestion, and restrict access to residences and businesses. All lanes would not be under construction at the same time, which would reduce expected
disruptions. The public can expect public outreach efforts, such as public service announcements and signs, to educate the public about what to expect during construction. Although delays can be expected, access to and from the Miller Creek area will be maintained.

Also, construction activities could result in temporary increases in dust, noise, and runoff, and result in visual intrusions to motorists and residents. Construction would present the potential for exposure to, or accidental spill of, hazardous materials.

The project would provide employment for construction workers throughout the duration of the construction period. Therefore, much of the economic benefit would go to communities where these workers reside. In addition, the project would provide greater retail sales within the study area from construction workers.

Modifications Made to FEIS in Response to Project Construction Comments

In response to comments received about project construction, modifications were made to the FEIS in sections 4.5.2 and 4.19.2.4.

N. Issue: Transit, Rail, Bus Options (6 comments received)

Comments were received stating that the project needs to accommodate alternative modes of travel, such as transit, rail, and buses.

As discussed in Section 2.4.3, Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/Transportation System Management (TSM) of the EIS, in addition to the build alternatives, a Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative was developed. TDM strategies are designed to improve the efficiency of the existing transportation system by reducing or redirecting the demand for use of roadways and other facilities rather than increasing road capacity. They are typically designed to influence travel choices by providing alternatives to driving alone, and to emphasize reduction of peak-period and home-based work (commuter) trips. Using strategies that promote alternative modes, increase vehicle occupancy, reduce travel distances, and ease peak-hour congestion could extend the useful life of transportation facilities and enhance mobility options by maximizing the transportation usage of facilities. Within the Miller Creek area there is no known participation in existing TDM programs by businesses or residences.

TSM strategies manage the flow of traffic on existing major roadways through operational-oriented strategies without adding substantial new infrastructure that is typically more costly.

It was found that a stand-alone TDM/TSM alternative would not meet the purpose and need for the proposed action. The following TDM/TSM elements would be included in all of the build alternatives: bicycle and pedestrian facilities, coordinated signals, access management, and space under the bridge for a future trail (built by others) as part of the bridge alternatives 2B, 3B, and 4C.
As discussed in Section 3.4.5 of the EIS, the Miller Creek area is outside of the Missoula Urban Transportation District, and Montana state law requires a 51 percent vote of landowners in an area to be added to the transit district. The issue of transit expansion into the Miller Creek area would be beneficial in reducing some vehicular trips. The provision of public transit and ridesharing would be under the jurisdiction of local agencies rather than the FHWA.

**Modifications Made to FEIS in Response to Transit, Rail, and Bus Comments**

In response to comments received about transit, rail and buses, modifications were made to the FEIS in section 2.4.3.

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**O. Issue: Community Planning and Missoula Bypass (5 comments)**

Several comments were received that voiced concern about local and regional planning, such as a bypass, widening US 93, Reserve Street, and the East Side highway extension. Bypass and other regional network issues are beyond the scope of this project, which is limited to providing safe and improved access between US 93 and the Miller Creek area.

Previous planning efforts for the Miller Creek area resulted in the acquisition of federal funds to perform an Environmental Impact Study for the “Miller Creek Road preliminary design and EIA, Montana,” as stated in the appropriations bill. Please refer to Section 1.3.2 of the EIS that discusses the relationship to local and regional plans, and refer to Issues B and C in this appendix for additional information on compliance with local plans and project funding.

In addition to the local and regional plans discussed in Section 1.3.2 “Relationship to Local and Regional Plans” of the EIS, the Missoula Office of Planning and Grants (OPG) has initiated a project for the preparation of a multimodal, Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Missoula Transportation Study Area that complies with the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). There will be opportunities for the public to learn and discuss transportation challenges and opportunities in the area through this effort. You may contact the Missoula Office of Planning and Grants regarding these efforts.
## List of Comments

Please note: Some emailed comments include a confidentiality disclaimer; permission was obtained from those individuals to publish their comments in this FEIS.

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Comment # 1: Robert Stewart, US Department of the Interior

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Denver Federal Center, Building 56, Room 1003
Post Office Box 25007 (D-108)
Denver, Colorado 80225-0007

November 1, 2006

9043.1
ER 06/910

Mr. Theodore G. Burch
Federal Highway Administration, Montana Division
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Mr. Burch:

The Department of the Interior has reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Miller Creek Road, Missoula County, Montana, and has no comments.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Stewart
Regional Environmental Officer

cc: Craig Genzlinger, Project Manager

Response to Comment # 1

Thank you for your comment.
Comment # 2: John F. Wardell, US Environmental Protection Agency

Response to Comment # 2

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, F, G, H, J, and N.
Comment # 2 (continued)

EPA considers Alternative 5A to be the environmentally preferred alternative, and supports the position of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that Alternative 5A is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative that meets the project purpose relative to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines for Specification of Disposal Sites for Dredged or Fill Material (40 CFR Part 230) state that, “no discharge of dredged or fill material shall be permitted if there is a practicable alternative to the proposed discharge which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, so long as the alternative does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences.” A bridge with piers in the Bitterroot River would involve direct fill impacts in the river, and a new transportation corridor across the riparian area of the Bitterroot River that would result in additional adverse indirect and cumulative impacts to the riverine ecosystem. In addition, construction of a bridge would involve disturbances to river banks, the river channel, riparian areas and water quality, including habitat of the threatened bull trout. Alternative 5A has less aquatic impacts than the bridge alternatives, is practicable, and meets the project purpose, and is thus, most consistent with the 404(b)(1) requirements.

We do, however, have comments and questions regarding traffic flow and access relative to the preferred alternative, which are described in our more detailed comments. We also acknowledge that at some point in the future as the Miller Creek area and other areas east of the Bitterroot River experience continued population growth, a new road and Bitterroot River bridge may be needed. At this time, however, we believe that it is logical and appropriate to consider the less environmentally impactive and much less costly Alternative 5A to address the immediate traffic mobility and safety needs in the project area.

We also want to state that we fully support proposed provisions for public transit and ride sharing and the addition of pedestrian and bicycle facilities as part of the Miller Creek Road project. The DEIS states that nearly all trips in and out of the Miller Creek area are made by single occupancy vehicles, indicating that there is good opportunity for improved transportation demand management. We encourage development and implementation of transportation demand management strategies for the project area.

The EPA's further discussion and more detailed questions, comments, and concerns regarding the analysis, documentation, or potential environmental impacts of the Miller Creek Road Project are included in the enclosure with this letter. Based on the procedures EPA uses to evaluate the adequacy of the information and the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives in an EIS, the DEIS has been rated as Category LO (Lack of Objections). The review has not identified potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal, although the review disclosed opportunities to provide improved disclosure and application of mitigation measures with no more than minor changes to the proposal. A copy of EPA's rating criteria is attached.

The EPA appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the DEIS, and the opportunity to review the proposed project in the field. If we may provide further explanation of our comments please contact Mr. Steve Potts of my staff in Helena at 406-457-5022 or in Missoula at 406-329-3313. Thank you for your consideration.
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Sincerely,

[Signature]

John F. Wardell  
Director  
Montana Office

Enclosures

cc: Larry Svoboda/Julia Johnson, EPA 8EPR-N, Denver  
    Todd.N.Tilinger, COE, Helena
Comment # 2 (continued)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Rating System for Draft Environmental Impact Statements
Definitions and Follow-Up Action*

Environmental Impact of the Action

LO - - Lack of Objections: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

EC - - Environmental Concerns: The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce these impacts.

EO - - Environmental Objections: The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no-action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EU - - Environmentally Unsatisfactory: The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potential unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

Adequacy of the Impact Statement

Category 1 - - Adequate: EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis of data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

Category 2 - - Insufficient Information: The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

Category 3 - - Inadequate: EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act and or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

**Brief Project Overview:**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) prepared the Miller Creek Road DEIS to evaluate alternatives and environmental impacts associated with providing safe and improved access between US 93 and the Miller Creek area in Missoula County, Montana. The Miller Creek area of south Missoula is generally bounded by Miller Creek Road/Upper Miller Creek Road on the east and Lower Miller Creek Road on the west and south and extending to include areas to the south of the Miller Creek. Primary access to the Miller Creek area is currently provided by Miller Creek Road with an indirect access provided by Gharrett Street. The Miller Creek area is rapidly growing and the existing Miller Creek Road access to US 93 is at capacity. The proposed project is intended to address high congestion levels; roadway deficiency and safety concerns; provide pedestrian and bicycle facilities; and improve access for emergency service providers. Originally nine build alternatives were evaluated, and these were screened down to four alternatives which were evaluated in detail, along with the no action alternative. Alternatives evaluated include:

**Alternative 2B:** North Lower Miller Creek Grade-Separated Intersection with Limited Improvements to Miller Creek Road, which would involve building a new road with bicycle lanes and sidewalks that would extend north from the junction of Maloney Ranch Road and Lower Miller Creek Road on a bridge across the Bitterroot River to connect with US 93. With Alternative 2B, the bridge would cross over the Montana Rail Link (MRL) track and US 93 then descend to a location approximately 350 feet north of US 93. From this point, the road would curve to the east and south back to a new signalized intersection with US 93. This "T" intersection with US 93 would provide full movement access/egress to and from US 93.

**Alternative 3B:** Blue Mountain Road Grade-Separated Intersection with Limited Improvements to Miller Creek Road, which would involve building a new road with bicycle lanes and sidewalks extending Blue Mountain Road south in a grade-separated bridge crossing of US 93, the MRL track, and the Bitterroot River to connect to Lower Miller Creek Road in the Miller Creek area. A new two-lane access ramp would connect US 93 and Blue Mountain Road with right-in/right-out unsignalized intersections. This access ramp could connect with Blue Mountain Road in a modern roundabout or "T" intersection.

**Alternative 4C:** South Lower Miller Creek Interchange with Limited Improvements to Miller Creek Road, which would provide an interchange with the addition of ramp merge and diverge lanes at US 93, north of the intersection of US 93 and Hayes Creek Road. Two two-lane bridges would be required: one to cross over the Bitterroot River and MRL track, and a second bridge to cross over the US 93 mainline and interchange ramp transitions. East of the Bitterroot River, a new two-lane roadway with bicycle lanes and sidewalks would connect to the realigned segment of Lower Miller Creek Road.
Comment # 2 (continued)

Alternative 5A: Miller Creek Road At-Grade Intersection (Preferred Alternative), which would involve widening the segment of Miller Creek Road between US 93 and the north "Y" intersection to provide four travel lanes (two lanes in each direction) with a left-turn lane at the southbound and northbound approaches to Briggs Street, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks. A new signal would be installed at the intersection of Miller Creek Road and Briggs Street. The north "Y" would be realigned to the north and west of its current location to form a more perpendicular "T" intersection. A new signal would be installed at this intersection. Old US 93 between Brooks Street and Reserve Street would be widened to three lanes and a center left-turn lane plus bicycle lanes and sidewalks. A new signal would be installed at the intersection of Old US 93 and US 93 (Reserve Street).

Comments:

General

1. Thank you for providing the Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Table providing a comparative matrix showing environmental impacts and mitigation measures for the alternatives (Table ES-1). This table helps to define issues and provide a clearer basis of choice among alternatives for the decision maker and the public in accordance with the CEQ's rules for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1502.14). Thank you also for providing information to help the reader understand the process for evaluating and screening preliminary alternatives and advancing alternatives for more detailed evaluation (pages 2-2 to 2-14). We also appreciate the aerial photographs on which proposed features of the build alternatives have been superimposed (Figures 2-2 through Figure 2-18). These Figures and the associated discussion and presentation of the alternatives aid in promoting clearer understanding of the alternatives.

Alternatives

2. The EPA agrees with the identification of Alternative 5A, Miller Creek Road At-Grade Intersection, as the preferred alternative in the DEIS. The discussion regarding identification of the preferred alternative in Section 2.7 (page 2-31), and the comparative cost information for implementation of the alternatives in Table 2-4 (page 2-33) provides good rationale for selection of Alternative 5A as the preferred alternative. We note that it is stated on page 4-53 that Alternative 5A also has the least impact to US 93 traffic volume and overall flow. We suggest that this lesser impact to US 93 traffic volume and overall flow be included with the many bullets providing reasons for selection of Alternative 5A as the preferred alternative on page 2-31.

We consider Alternative 5A to be the environmentally preferred alternative, since it will avoid impacts to the Bitterroot River, riparian vegetation and associated wildlife habitat; minimize wetlands and floodplains impacts; reduce the extent of increases in impervious

* 1: Suggested change was made.
Comments

Comment # 2 (continued)

surface area and associated storm water runoff; has little or no effect to threatened and endangered species; has the least impact to US 93 traffic volume and overall flow; and adequately accommodates and enhances mobility and safety for multiple transportation modes through 2025. It is important to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial effects of riparian areas and floodplains, and avoid and/or minimize additional encroachments into riparian areas and floodplains.

We do recognize, however, that at some point in the future as the Miller Creek area and other areas east of the Bitterroot River experience continued population growth, a new access road and Bitterroot River bridge may be needed. We believe at this time, however, it is logical and appropriate to consider the less environmentally impactive and much less costly current preferred alternative to address the immediate traffic mobility and safety needs in the project area.

3. We fully support proposed provisions for public transit and ridesharing and the addition of pedestrian and bicycle facilities as part of the Miller Creek Road project. We note that the DEIS states that nearly all trips in and out of the Miller Creek area are made by single occupancy vehicles (page 1-7), indicating that there is good opportunity for improved transportation demand management. We encourage development and implementation of transportation demand management strategies (page 2-10).

Traffic Mobility

4. The new traffic signal that is proposed at the intersection of Old US 93 and Reserve Street is in close proximity to the traffic signal at the intersection of Reserve Street and Brooks Street. The DEIS states that although there will be two closely spaced intersections at these locations it is estimated that both intersections will operate effectively because of balanced traffic flows and due to an extra eastbound to northbound left turn lane from Old US 93 and removal of northbound and southbound left-turn movements (page 4-40). However, it is our understanding that heavy southbound traffic on Reserve Street often results in traffic backing up along Reserve Street north of its intersection with Brooks Street, back past its intersection with Old US 93. It would appear that a new traffic light at Old US 93 and Reserve Street has the potential to be problematic in regard to traffic flow on Reserve Street. We recommend additional discussion regarding traffic flow likely to result from these two closely spaced traffic lights at the US 93 and Old US 93 intersections along Reserve Street.

5. Much concern was evidenced at the October 17, 2006 public hearing on the Miller Creek Road EIS regarding potential restriction of access in and out of the Missoula Country Club after proposed improvements on Old US 93 are made. Table 4-5 (page 4-21) shows an estimated 138% increase in average daily traffic (ADT) volume on Old US 93 in comparison to no action (an increase of 11,780 vehicles per day, page 4-30). If many more drivers use Old US 93 it would appear that there would be potential for southbound

Responses

Response to Comment # 2 (continued)

* 2: Discussion of signal improvements was added as new Section 4.4.2.2.
### Comment # 2 (continued)

- **3:** Suggested change was made to Section 4.6.2.

- **4:** Suggested change was made to Section 4.5.2.

- **5:** Figure 2-7 was modified to eliminate confusion regarding proposed closed access.

- **6:** See Section 2.6 in the EIS. For the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 5A, the traffic signal at Miller Creek Road and US 93 would include a "clear-out cycle that would provide a green light to clear traffic off the railroad crossing prior to the crossing gates going down. This "clear out" cycle would run in conjunction with the left-turn lane signals defaulting to a stop condition to prevent turning movements from US 93 into the railroad crossing.
**Comment # 2 (continued)**

**Water Quality**

10. We note that the Bitterroot River and Miller Creek in the project area are listed under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act as water quality impaired by the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), and land development and highway, road and bridge construction are identified among the activities that may impact water bodies (page 3-58). It is important that the proposed road improvements be consistent with Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and Water Quality Restoration Plans being developed by the MDEQ to restore water quality in the Bitterroot River and Miller Creek.

We are pleased that the DEIS states that proposed road improvements will be designed to be consistent with TMDLs and Water Quality Restoration Plans prepared in association with TMDLs being prepared by MDEQ (page 4-90). We recommend that the FHWA coordinate with the MDEQ TMDL and Watershed Protection program staff to stay apprized of the water quality assessments and TMDLs for the Bitterroot River and Miller Creek, and to ensure MDEQ concurrence on, and coordination of proposed road improvement activities with the MDEQ's TMDL development for these impaired 303(d) listed water bodies (contact Robert Ray of MDEQ at 406-444-5319 and George Mathieu 406-444-7423).

11. We are also pleased that a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) employing BMPs for controlling erosion and sediment transport will be implemented in the project area, along with a revegetation plan, and winter maintenance BMPs (page 4-90). We are pleased that the preferred alternative will generate the lowest volume of surface water runoff from impervious surfaces of all build alternatives (page 4-86). We very much support proposed use of bioswales, detention ponds and/or infiltration beds to capture and treat roadway runoff (page 4-84), and the conduct of winter maintenance operations such as road sanding and snow plowing in a manner that avoids entry of sediment and pollutants into surface waters.

*7: These commitments will be taken into consideration during final design.

*8: Your concern will be forwarded to the Montana Department of Transportation for their information and consideration.
Comments

Comment # 2 (continued)

Groundwater/Sole Source Aquifer

* 9:  Improvements along Old US 93 and adjacent intersections include a curb and gutter and storm sewer connection along the south side. No direct impacts to surface drainage would occur in this area. With the Preferred Alternative, runoff would accumulate and drain from US 93 in a similar manner to existing conditions. Improvements to existing water quality facilities or a new detention pond would need to be constructed to handle the additional runoff volume created from the increased impervious surface area. Another water quality facility would be needed along Miller Creek Road to treat the increased runoff volume from the increased impervious surface area. This facility is recommended to be constructed in the 100-year floodplain to the west of Miller Creek Road and would then discharge to the Bitterroot River after treatment. Dry wells are only one of a number of water quality treatment facilities that will be considered during final design. However, much of the stormwater runoff will be contained in the stormwater sewer system along Miller Creek Road and US 93. Inclusion of dry wells was primarily a concern with the bridge alternatives in the area of the Missoula Valley Aquifer. The selection of an appropriate water quality treatment facility or facilities will be made based on their ability to meet US EPA and Missoula Water Quality District requirements and ensure protection of the Missoula Valley Aquifer.

12. As you know, the Missoula Valley Aquifer is the primary groundwater resource of the Missoula Valley, supplying 80 percent of the drinking water of Missoula County residents, and is designated a sole source aquifer under Section 1424(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (page 3-61). The Mountain Water Company water supply system relies on 37 wells drawing from the Missoula Valley Aquifer. The DEIS states that the depth to the aquifer varies from 10 to 100 feet (page 3-61), with an average depth to aquifer at the Buckhouse Bridge monitoring well site (in the project area) of 26.7 feet.

The DEIS indicates that dry wells may be proposed as a means of minimizing storm water runoff impacts associated with the proposed road improvements to the Missoula Valley Sole Source Aquifer (page 4-89). However there is not a definitive commitment that dry wells will be used, nor is there much information about design of the dry well treatment system. Dry wells can be an effective way to remove contaminants from storm water runoff, but we would like to see a more definitive commitment in the FEIS that dry wells would in fact be used to capture and treat roadway runoff, and would like additional information to assure that the proposed treatment system would effectively capture and treat roadway runoff and protect aquifer quality. Also, it is important that a regular dry well inspection and maintenance schedule be implemented, and that groundwater monitoring be performed to assure that dry wells provide effective treatment of storm water runoff from the roadway.

We are pleased that the Missoula Water Quality District operates 36 monitoring wells to assess aquifer water quality (page 3-63). We recommend that the FHWA work with the Missoula Water Quality District to provide additional information on the proposed dry well treatment system, including implementation of a regular dry well inspection and maintenance schedule, and assurance that the District’s groundwater monitoring program adequately assess impacts of pollutant delivery from roadway runoff through the dry well system to the Sole Source Aquifer. It is only through monitoring of groundwater quality that actual impacts to the aquifer can be determined, and adverse impacts mitigated. If you have any questions regarding the requested groundwater protection information please contact Mr. Christopher Guzzetti of EPA’s Region 8 Groundwater Protection Program Office in Denver at 303-312-6453.

Wetlands and 404 Permitting

13. Thank you for providing good analysis and disclosure regarding potential impacts to the 17 wetlands that cover approximately 5.6 acres in the project area (e.g., Figure 3-19 shows the general location of delineated wetlands, and Figures 2-6, 2-12, 2-13, 2-14, 2-15, 2-16, and Figure 2-18 show the wetland locations in relation to the conceptual designs for alternatives; and DEIS Sections 3.10, 4.10 and Appendix D includes clear discussion and disclosure of potential impacts to wetlands). We are pleased that the preferred
Comment # 2 (continued)

alternative would minimize impacts to wetlands (i.e., estimated impacts to 0.2 acres of non-jurisdictional wetlands, page 4-92).

As noted in the DEIS, the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines for Specification of Disposal Sites for Dredged or Fill Material (40 CFR 230) state that “no discharge of dredged or fill material shall be permitted if there is a practicable alternative to the proposed discharge which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, so long as the alternative does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences” (page 4-93). We agree with the discussion and conclusion reached in the DEIS (page 4-94) that identifies Alternative 5A as the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative that meets the project purpose relative to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

We support the position of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that an alternative that includes construction of a bridge with placement of fill material in the Bitterroot River would not be in compliance with the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines as long as a non-bridge alternative with less aquatic impacts, such as Alternative 5A, were practicable and met the project purpose. As the DEIS states, a bridge with piers in the Bitterroot River would involve direct fill impacts in the river, as well as adverse indirect and cumulative impacts to the riverine ecosystem (page 4-112). Also, during bridge construction disturbances would occur to river banks, river channel, riparian areas, and water quality, including habitat of the threatened bull trout.

* 10: Bill Rule and Denise Martin were contacted in March 2007 to obtain requested information. They provided ARMs and Montana Codes Annotated to be referenced in the EIS; these were added to Section 4.16.9, “Hazardous Waste Mitigation.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 2 (continued)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 2 (continued)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is likely to result in fewer indirect effects than the other build alternatives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Recreation Impacts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Figure 2-18 (page 2-30) shows realignment of the Wal-Mart access from Miller Creek Road in Alternative 5A, and realignment/expansion of the Miller Creek Road into open space parklands currently surrounding the Wal-Mart store. It would be of interest to identify the acreage of open space parklands around the Wal-Mart store that would be lost due to these proposed changes. We support retention and preservation of the open space parklands around the Wal-Mart store as much as possible.</td>
<td><strong>11:</strong> As shown on Figures 3-1 and 3-2 of the EIS, the undeveloped land is designated for highway/heavy commercial and/or residential land use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. As you know some citizens in the Blue Mountain area have been concerned about potential impacts to the Lolo National Forest's Blue Mountain Recreation Area from Alternative 3B. DEIS Section 4.18.5 regarding to impacts to Parks and Recreation Areas with Alternative 3B (which would connect the Miller Creek area to US 93 at Blue Mountain Road) states that there would be no direct impacts to the Blue Mountain Recreation Area (page 4-141). The DEIS, however, estimates that there would be a 13% increase in traffic on Blue Mountain Road with Alternative 3B in comparison to no action (page 4-156). If it is believed that this increase in traffic along Blue Mountain Road with Alternative 3B would have no direct, indirect or cumulative effects to the Blue Mountain Recreation Area, we recommend that the rationale supporting this conclusion be provided in the FEIS.</td>
<td><strong>12:</strong> The rationale for this conclusion is that the 13% increase in traffic will be negligible and will not have measurable impacts to the Blue Mountain Recreation Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. We are pleased that a quantitative CO hot spot analysis and qualitative PM10 hot spot analysis was conducted for localized air quality impacts for the preferred alternative, and that these analyses predict no exceedances of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for CO and PM10 (page 4-66). We are also pleased that signalized intersection operation improves in almost all cases between the No-Action Alternative and the build alternatives, and that it is anticipated that ADT levels will not be large enough to trigger concerns for mobile source air toxics (MSATs, page 4-74).</td>
<td><strong>13:</strong> Based on FHWA guidance and general technical information on sources of PM2.5, we would only expect PM2.5 to be a pollutant of concern for a highway project that involves very high numbers of diesel fueled vehicles, such as a port or bus terminal. The Miller Creek project alternatives do not include components that would indicate PM2.5 is a pollutant of concern for the project, and we did not focus on it in the EIS. The differences in vehicle miles traveled between alternatives are not large (refer to Table 4-21 of the EIS), and as a result, the Miller Creek Road project would not be expected to have much effect on PM2.5 emissions. In the recently completed Missoula Montana Source Apportionment Research Study, diesel exhaust, street sanding, and automobiles were found to represent approximately 6 percent of the total primary PM2.5 emissions inventory.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A** = Reference number for summary response issue

Appendix E: Comments and Responses
Comment # 2 (continued)

values shown in the table.

20. In addition, we recommend that more detail be provided in the FEIS in regard to minimizing the dust and other emissions during construction and from the indirect impacts (rock crushing and other material production and processing) as well as dust and mud tracking. In addition we recommend mention of limiting diesel emissions by reduced idling and modern diesel engines and/or use of Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel in the construction equipment.

21. We note that impacts to air quality are not identified among the cumulative impacts discussed in DEIS Section 4.23. The direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the project will include impacts to air quality. Increased driving, development activities, emissions from production of construction materials such as rock crushing and cement plants, wood burning stove use, and all other emissions associated with the development facilitated by this project will likely increase pollutant emissions to the air.

Response to Comment # 2 (continued)

* 14: Section 4.7.11 of the DEIS includes a discussion of dust and mud tracking, and reducing MSAT (which includes diesel) emissions. The potential use of ultra-low sulfur diesel is mentioned. Rock crushing and other material production and processing are not mentioned. These activities would normally be regulated under local stationary source permitting programs and would not normally require mitigation through the NEPA process.

* 15: You are correct that air quality impacts were not included in the cumulative impacts section of the DEIS. However, the direct and indirect impacts, including a number of the specific activities that you mention were discussed in the air quality section of the DEIS (see Sections 4.7.1 and 4.7.2). Cumulative impacts include the incremental impact when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. In regard to air quality, it is difficult to conclude that increased emissions, or air quality impacts from increased emissions will occur. Despite widespread development since the late 1970s, air quality has improved substantially in most areas of the U.S. and pollutant emissions have generally either decreased, or increased into the 1980s and then decreased (http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/trends/index.html). In addition, EPA has promulgated regulations that will decrease emissions from diesel engines and reduce regional haze. These regulations can be expected to further reduce emissions in the future. The CO hot spot analysis for this project showed lower expected pollutant concentrations in future years relative to existing conditions for this project.

To summarize, although additional development is expected, it is difficult to conclude that the development will result in air quality impacts. In addition, the Missoula area has been redesignated as a CO attainment area by the US EPA, and the transportation plan, including the Miller Creek Road project, has been found to conform with the CO emissions budgets in the maintenance plan.
Comment # 3: Todd N. Tillinger, US Army Corps of Engineers

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, OMAHA DISTRICT
HELENA REGULATORY OFFICE
10 WEST 15TH STREET, SUITE 220
HELENA MT 59601

December 1, 2006

Helena Regulatory Office
(406) 441-1375 Phone
(406) 441-1380 Fax

Subject: Corps File Number 2003-90-136
Miller Creek Road - Environmental Impact Statement
Comments on Draft EIS

Mr. Craig Genzlinger, Operations Engineer
US Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration - Montana Division
2880 Skyway Drive
Helena, Montana 59602

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

This letter is in response to your request that the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) provide comments on the subject project DEIS. The project area is along Miller Creek Road near the southwest edge of the City of Missoula in Missoula County, Montana.

Alternatives: Construction of a new bridge over the Bitterroot River is required with some, but not all, of the build alternatives. The Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines for Specification of Disposal Sites for Dredged or Fill Material found at 40 CFR 230 states that “no discharge of dredged or fill material shall be permitted if there is a practicable alternative to the proposed discharge which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, so long as the alternative does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences.” For the purpose of this requirement, practicable alternatives include, but are not limited to activities which do not involve a discharge of dredged or fill material into the WUS or discharges of dredged or fill material at other locations in WUS. An alternative is practicable if it is available and capable of being done after taking into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics in light of overall project purposes.

CEQ regulations found at 40 CFR 1500.2(c) require that environmental review for required permits should be integrated into the NEPA process so that the alternatives analysis and permit review procedures can be done concurrently rather than consecutively. This prevents un-permittable alternatives from being carried forward in the NEPA process. Normally, for projects expected to require a Section 404 permit, this review takes the form of a Draft 404(b)(1) Analysis. Such an analysis is not included in the PDEIS, perhaps because the impacts are expected to be minor. Nonetheless, as stated above it is required that the review and analysis be

* 16: Mr. Tillinger was contacted on December 15, 2006 to discuss that a Draft 404(b)(1) analysis was included in the DEIS as Appendix D.
Comment # 3 (continued)

done concurrently and it is recommended that a Draft 404(b)(1) Analysis be performed and included with the EIS.

Selection of an alternative that requires a new bridge over the Bitterroot River cannot be justified by stating that the small amount of wetland fill associated with a build alternative would be avoided. Alternatives that require a new bridge over the Bitterroot River will require discharges of fill into WUS. Besides the direct impacts of the fill in the river, there will be adverse indirect, secondary, and cumulative impacts on the riverine ecosystem as a result of the creation of a new transportation corridor across the riparian area of the Bitterroot River. All of these adverse riverine and riparian impacts would outweigh the adverse effects of filling a small amount of wetland under a no-bridge alternative. Riverine and riparian impacts are avoided by selection of an alternative that requires no new river crossing. Alternative 5A appears to have no other significant environmental consequences, and it was noticed that it was also the least costly build alternative carried forward. Because Alternative 5A satisfies the project purpose and is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative to the aquatic ecosystem, any of the build alternatives requiring a new bridge over the Bitterroot River could not and would not be permitted under Section 404.

Wetlands: After reviewing the project alternatives carried forward, it is apparent that wetland impacts with each alternative are minimal. Even so, the Corps requires that impacts on WUS be avoided wherever practicable. Unavoidable impacts must be minimized, and compensatory mitigation is required for unavoidable impacts to all waters of the United States, not just wetlands. As stated in the document, a compensatory mitigation plan must be included in any future permit applications for the project, and it is suggested that a plan be developed for inclusion in the Final EIS.

If you have any questions please call me at (406) 441-1375 and reference Corps File Number 2003-90-136.

Sincerely,

Todd N. Tillinger, P.E.
Project Manager

Response to Comment # 3

* 17: Once final design is complete and wetland impacts can be more precisely identified, a compensatory mitigation plan can be developed, if necessary.
Comment # 4 Jim Skinner, Montana Department of Transportation

December 6, 2006

Mr. Craig Genzlinger, PE
Project Manager
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

Subject: Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement – Montana Department of Transportation Comments

Craig;

We have reviewed the subject document and have the following comments:

Page ES-16
Section ES.6 - Other Major Governmental Actions

• In accordance with state law, the Montana Transportation Commission is the only entity that can award contracts on, or delegate authority to others to let contracts on Montana’s highway system. The language in this section of the DEIS should describe this authority.

  For your reference, the Montana Code Annotated describes the Commission authority as follows;

  60-2-111. Letting of contracts on state and federal-aid highways. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2), all contracts for the construction or reconstruction of the highways and streets located on highway systems and state highways as defined in 60-2-125, including portions in cities and towns, and all contracts entered into under 7-14-4108 must be let by the commission. Except as otherwise specifically provided, the commission may enter the types of contracts and upon terms that it may decide. All contracts must meet the requirements of Title 18, chapter 2, part 4. When there is no prevailing rate of wages set by collective bargaining, the commission shall determine the prevailing rate to be stated in the contract.

  (2) The commission may delegate the authority, with all applicable statutory restrictions, to award any contract covered by this section to the department or to a unit of local government.

  (3) The commission may award contracts for projects that the department has determined are part of the design-build contracting pilot program authorized in 60-2-135 through 60-2-137.

Response to Comment # 4

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter I.

* 18: Suggested change was made to the FEIS.
Comment #4 (continued)

Page ES-16
Section ES.7 - Major Unresolved Issue

* 19: Discussion of project funding was added to “Major Unresolved Issue” section in the Executive Summary.

* 20: Miller Creek population increase “to 7,250” is correct.

* 21: Agency coordination with MRL occurred and is documented in Chapter 5 and Appendix A of the EIS. See also Section 2.6.2.2 of the EIS.

* 22: Figure 3-5 currently shows the urban boundary. Roadway functional classifications were added as suggested.

* 23: Suggested changes were made.

Appendix E: Comments and Responses
### Comments

**Comment # 4 (continued)**

*24*

Section 3.4.1.1 Roadway System Inventory

- Table 3-7 - revise the functional classifications based on the official federally approved functional classifications as illustrated on the corrected attachment. Also attached is a current functional classification map of the project area for reference.

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 4 (continued)**

*24: Suggested changes were made to the FEIS.*

---

*25: Suggested change was made to the FEIS.*

---

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft document. If you have any questions or need clarification, please don’t hesitate to contact me at (406) 444-9233.

Sincerely,

Jim Skinner, Manager
Program & Policy Analysis Section
Rail, Transit & Planning Division

Copies:    Dwane Kailey, PE, Missoula District Administrator
           Sandra Straehl, Rail, Transit & Planning Division Administrator
           Danielle Bolan, PE, State Traffic Engineer
           Shane Stack, Missoula District Engineering Design Manager
           Jean Riley, P.E., Environmental Services Bureau Chief
           Susan Kilcrease, Missoula District Environmental
Response to Comment # 4 (continued)

Map Legend

- Principal Arterial - Interstate
- Principal Arterial - Non Interstate
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector (Rural) Collector (Urban)
- Minor Collector (Rural)
- Local

Missoula Urban Boundary

Existing Miller Creek Area Roadways: Jurisdiction and Functional Classification

Response

Comments (continued)
Table 3-7

Existing Miller Creek Area Roadways: Jurisdiction and Functional Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadway Segment</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Functional Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US 93 (Brooks Street from Buckhouse Bridge to Reserve Street, and Reserve Street north of Brooks Street)</td>
<td>MDT</td>
<td>Principal Arterial (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 93 (west of Buckhouse Bridge)</td>
<td>MDT</td>
<td>Principal Arterial (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller Creek Road (Brooks Street to Upper/Lower Miller Creek Road - north &quot;Y&quot; intersection)</td>
<td>City of Missoula</td>
<td>Regional Collector (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old US 93 (north &quot;Y&quot; intersection to Linda Vista Boulevard)</td>
<td>City of Missoula</td>
<td>Local Collector (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Miller Creek Road (south of Linda Vista Boulevard)</td>
<td>City of Missoula</td>
<td>Regional Collector (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Miller Creek Road (east of Maltney Ranch Road)</td>
<td>City of Missoula</td>
<td>Minor Arterial (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Vista Boulevard</td>
<td>City of Missoula</td>
<td>Collector (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Street (Brooks Street to 39th Street)</td>
<td>City of Missoula</td>
<td>Regional Collector (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garrett Street</td>
<td>City of Missoula</td>
<td>Collector (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briggs Street</td>
<td>City of Missoula</td>
<td>Local Collector (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39th Street</td>
<td>City of Missoula</td>
<td>Collector (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Mountain Road</td>
<td>Missoula County</td>
<td>Collector (Rural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Avenue (Clemens Road to Reserve Street)</td>
<td>Missoula County</td>
<td>Collector (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayes Creek Road</td>
<td>Missoula County</td>
<td>Collector (Rural)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Missoula Office of Planning and Parks (OPP)

While the predominant travel flow on US 93 through the project area is in the southbound (westbound) direction during the typical weekday PM peak traffic period, the directional flow is more evenly split with approximately 65 percent of travel in the southbound (westbound) direction and 35 percent of travel in the northbound (eastbound) direction. Travel on US 93 is relatively evenly split in both directions during most other times including weekends. Directly north and east of the Miller Creek area, US 93 traffic splits at the intersection of Brooks and Reserve Streets. In the AM peak period, approximately 45 percent of northbound (eastbound) traffic from Brooks Street turns north on Reserve Street; in the PM peak period, approximately 45 percent of southbound traffic from Reserve Street turns southbound (westbound) on Brooks Street.

Miller Creek Road, which collects predominantly commuter traffic generated within the Miller Creek area, experiences highest flows in the northbound direction during weekday AM peak periods and predominantly southbound flows during weekday PM periods. The signalized intersection of US 93 and Miller Creek Road accommodates most traffic movements between the Miller Creek area and US 93. At this intersection, the northbound to eastbound right turn is the critical movement during the weekday AM peak period, and the reverse movement—westbound to southbound left turn—is most critical during the weekday PM peak period. The combination of heavy volumes on US 93 eastbound and Miller Creek Road northbound during the typical AM peak period results in congestion on northbound Miller Creek Road with vehicle queues that extend south more than 0.5 mile through the north "Y" intersection.

Traffic flowing through the north "Y" intersection is highest in the northbound (Upper Miller Creek Road) and eastbound (Lower Miller Creek Road) directions during the weekday AM; the reverse flow is the highest of all movements during the weekday PM. Traffic flow is generally more balanced throughout the project area during other times of typical weekdays and on weekends.
Response to Comment # 5:

* 26: The second paragraph on page 2-18 was modified as follows: In the DEIS, it was proposed that the left-turn movement from Old US 93 to US 93 be eliminated for Alternative 5A. That movement could be maintained during non-peak hours; however, it may need to be restricted in the future depending on intersection operations. While the exclusive left-turn lane is provided in other build alternatives (2B, 3B, and 4C); this left-turn movement under Alternative 5A is designed to occur as a shared left/through traffic lane when not restricted. This condition would result in increased delay for through traffic on Old US 93 destined to the Miller Creek area as drivers wait for left-turn movements to occur. The difference between Alternative 5A and the No-Action Alternative is that Alternative 5A would provide additional capacity in the form of an adjacent southbound through lane into the Miller Creek area, whereas the shared left/through lane provides the only through movement capacity under the No-Action Alternative.

With projected traffic increases, it will eventually be necessary to further increase or provide more efficient use of the available capacity of the Old US 93/Miller Creek Road/US 93 intersection. Increasing the capacity using available approach lanes would require a longer signal cycle length, beyond what may be acceptable to most drivers and to affected jurisdictions. Alternately, it is possible to maximize the available capacity by removing an underutilized turn movement from the intersection. The left-turn lane from Old US 93 to US 93 has a low volume during peak and off-peak periods compared to other movements. Complete restriction of this left-turn movement may be warranted in the future at the discretion of the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), who has jurisdiction of US 93.
Comment # 6: Barbara Evans, Missoula County Commissioner

December 5, 2006

Mr. Craig Genzlinger
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
2880 Skyway Drive
Helena, MT 59602

RE: Miller Creek DEIS

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

Please consider this letter my formal comment on the Miller Creek DEIS.

I have been a Missoula County Commissioner for nearly 28 years. I have lived in this geographical area for all of that 28 years. I have heard the comments and the requests of the people of this area and have tried to respond to their needs.

Several years ago, I traveled to Washington with Charlie Brown, who was, at that time, the president of the Homeowners Association for the Miller Creek area. We were able to convince our Congressional representatives to appropriate $5 million to study ingress and egress to the Miller Creek area. The purpose of the study was to find a second access and the main suggestion was a bridge across the Bitterroot River to U.S. Highway 93 South on the other side of the river. There is overwhelming support by the residents of the area for a bridge and they have made that very clear at every hearing.

The last time I inquired as to how much of the $5 million was left, I was told that it was around $2 million. I'm asking you to use the remaining money to rethink this issue and find an acceptable second way in and out of Miller Creek.

I have a great number of problems with the “Preferred Alternative.” Merely widening Miller Creek Road and the road to the north, between the County Club and the businesses that border the road on the east, is not the answer. I do not believe that merely widening Miller Creek Road meets the intention of the appropriation given by Congress; nor does it provide answers to the problems that still exist.

These are some of the problems that I see with the preferred alternative:

- There are two landowners on the east side of Miller Creek Road that have NOT agreed to the purchase or donation of their property for the expansion of the road. Their property is critical to this project.
- One of the potential ways to reduce traffic is, of course, to add mass transit to the mix. The Director of Mountain Line has evaluated this proposal and said it does not meet the needs of the bus company.

Response to Comment # 6

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters C, D, F, G, H, L, and N.
### Comment # 6 (continued)

- **27**: Briggs Street has been identified as part of the preferred alternative to take much of the traffic load; however, Cold Springs Elementary School is located on that street. The principal of the school is very much opposed to this, as am I.

A copy of the letter from Cold Springs Principal Webb Harrington is attached. I have also enclosed a letter from Kelly Willis, a member of the Missoula Country Club. I totally agree with the content of both letters.

There are roughly an additional 1,000 homes that have been approved for the Miller Creek area and the current problem will only get worse. When the project "creeped" into the County Club area, none of the folks along the road were consulted. If I'm not mistaken, that is one of the requirements.

**DEEDS**

WE NEED A SECOND ACCESS INTO AND OUT OF MILLER CREEK.

I ask you to disapprove this alternative. It is my understanding that Jan Brown attended a hearing with the citizens that testified as to their frustration and lack of support for the preferred alternative. As she is going to be leaving the position, I ask that the new director have a similar hearing to listen to, in person, the concerns of the people.

I understand that the FHWA will work with local government on this matter. I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Barbara Evans
Missoula County Commissioner

BE/opr
Enclosures

### Response to Comment # 6 (continued)

- **27**: The project includes installing a light and adding turning lanes at the intersection of Briggs Street and Miller Creek, but does not include any improvements along Briggs Street. The FEIS discusses expected traffic impacts on Briggs Street that will result from any of the build alternatives and provides a comparison to expected traffic that would occur under the No-Action alternative. All of the alternative evaluated would reduce traffic on Briggs Street compared to the No-Action Alternative. Average daily traffic (ADT) percent change is presented in Table 4-5 of the FEIS.

- **28**: During the last four years of the NEPA process, multiple public meetings and the public hearing for the DEIS have been held to identify public comments and concerns. All analysis and information gathered during the ongoing process will be reviewed and carefully considered prior to making any final decision. Opportunities for additional comments will be provided during circulation of the Final EIS.
### Comments

**Comment # 6 (continued)**

Barbara Evans - Miller Creek EIS

From: "Kelly M. Wills" <kmwills@GARLINGTON.COM>
To: <craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov>
Date: 12/6/2006 10:49:42 AM
Subject: Miller Creek EIS

Dear Mr. Genzlinger,

I and my family are members of the Missoula Country Club. I am aware of the Miller Creek Bridge Project that is being administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). I have reviewed information concerning the project and the draft EIS issued by FHWA. I believe the draft EIS violates the dictates of the Public Lands Highway Discretionary Program project application which was to:

- **Proposed Work**: Transportation improvements to the Miller Creek area will include a new bridge to be constructed across the Bitterroot River to access Highway 93. A new road will also be constructed to the bridge from Lower Miller Creek road.

- **Project Purpose & Benefits**: The need is for two accesses out of the Miller Creek area. The new bridge will make that possible. This will improve the health and safety of the public. In an emergency the two ways out will add to the safety and welfare of the public.

The draft EIS further appears to violate the Purpose and Need statement as expressed in the FHWA’s NEPA study:

- The primary purpose of the Miller Creek Road project is to provide a safe, multi-modal secondary access to US 93 from Lower Miller Creek Road. This access will be compatible with local and regional plans, provide for bicycle/pedestrian connectivity, provide additional truck and vehicular access, and support transit and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) activities.

The needs for the project include:

- Consider development and planned growth within the Miller Creek area.
- Dispersion of traffic and provisions for efficient and safe movement to, from and within the study area and US 93.
- Provisions for access that can accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit.
- Provision of alternate access for emergency service providers.

With the draft EIS, the FHWA has reluctantly chosen to abandon the stated purpose and intent of the Project. According to Preferred Alternative SA as articulated in the pending draft EIS, the Project does not include a new bridge or even provide a second access to the Miller Creek area from U.S. Highway 93. Instead, the FHWA has spent nearly $35 Million (and counting) to simply recommend a band-aid solution to an increasingly congested and problematic traffic area affecting our community. The FHWA recommends, among other things, the widening of Miller Creek Road, the expansion of Old Highway 93 and resulting condemnation of a portion of Missoula Country Club and other businesses properties, and re-designed traffic control devices on various Missoula streets – a far cry from the Project’s original purposes, needs and goals.

Further, the FHWA began the EIS process in 2003 and clearly identified Old Highway 93 as being outside the boundaries and scope of the Project study area. Our Club and other businesses impacted by the Project had no fair notice or expectation that our properties would be impacted by the Project. Moreover, throughout the EIS process, the FHWA did not seek input from our Club regarding any expansion of Old Highway 93. In fact, the FHWA did not present its expansion alternative until 2006 – nearly 3 years into the EIS process. As a result, the FHWA failed to adequately consider the impacts on our Club and identify reasonable alternatives to mitigate those impacts.

We believe the draft EIS is deficient in many aspects and the FHWA’s Preferred Alternative SA is a major and unexpected deviation from the original purpose of the Project and fails to conform to the stated purpose behind the appropriation or the underlying application. We believe the FHWA is moving ahead with this Project in total disregard of the appropriations process. We further believe that this Project, if completed pursuant to Preferred Alternative SA, will make it difficult if not impossible for our Club to continue to operate as a golf course after more than 50 years of service, benefit and enjoyment to our community and the State of Montana.

We have also expressed these concerns to our United States Senators and Congressmen. We hope that your office will respond to the petition.

Barbara Evans
Missoula Country Club

**Response to Comment # 6 (continued)**

This letter was an attachment to Barbara Evans’ letter. It was also received as a separate comment letter, and is contained in this appendix under Comment # 261. Please refer to that comment number for a response.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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</table>
| **Comment # 6 (continued)**

will take our concerns to heart and issue a revised draft EIS that is consistent with the stated purpose and guidelines for the sturdy.

Thank you.

Kelly M. Wills

garlington & robinson
199 W. Pine P.O. Box 7909
Missoula, MT 59807-7909
Main Line: 406/523-2500
Fax: 406/523-2595

| **Response to Comment # 6 (continued)** |

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### Comments

**Comment # 6 (continued)**

**Cold Springs School**

2625 Briggs  
Missoula, MT 59803  
Phone (406) 542-4010  
Fax (406) 542-4012

October 17, 2006

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

I am writing to formally express concern about the potential negative impact of Alternative SA on westbound traffic on Briggs Street. Cold Springs Elementary School is located at 2625 Briggs. The school serves Upper Miller Creek, Linda Vista, and Maloney Ranch subdivisions. These three attendance areas are growing as new homes are being built and a great number of parents from these areas drop off and pick up their children on Briggs.

Traffic is already a concern on Briggs. The Missoula Police Department does an outstanding job supporting the school's efforts to provide for the safety of students and adults on Briggs in front of Cold Springs Elementary. They are a calming presence in the area, but we still have several close calls every week because of traffic.

The plan to put a light at Briggs and Miller Creek will increase westbound traffic on Briggs. Presently residents of the area (including University of Montana students and high school students from Sentinel High School) use 39th and Garrett to access Briggs as a shortcut to Miller Creek Road. A traffic light at Briggs and Miller Creek would encourage more westbound traffic on Briggs during peak travel times. Drivers now have to wait for a chance to break into the flow of north/south traffic on Miller Creek Road. This wait discourages many from using Briggs.

Beach Transportation accesses our bus lane via Briggs. Parents, despite discouragement from the school, use Briggs to drop off and pick up children at peak travel times during the day. The safety of these activities would be negatively impacted by increased westbound traffic on Briggs.

A further concern is the future access for the proposed Super Wal-Mart. Presently the Wal-Mart Corporation has kept all egress and ingress for their store off of Briggs. They have done this at the school's request and we hope that this will not change with a new size. Any ingress or egress for the Super Center would add another layer of safety concerns for students on Briggs.

Sincerely,

Webb Harlington  
Principal  
Cold Springs Elementary School  
Missoula, Montana 59803  
406-542-4010

C: Missoula County Commissioners  
Mayor John Engen  
Missoula Police Department

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 6 (continued)**

This letter was an attachment to Barbara Evans’ letter. It was also received as a separate comment letter, and is contained in this appendix under Comment # 11. Please refer to that comment number for a response.
<table>
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<tr>
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| **Comment # 7: Don Nicholson, Missoula City Councilman**

*(Retyped from handwritten letter for improved legibility)*

Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
11-2-06

I would challenge your assessment that 5A "adequately accommodates . . . multiple transportation modes through 2025." – This is just not true –

If 5A is our only possibility, than a grade separation should be incorporated at the upper/lower Miller Creek Road intersection

I believe 2B or a version close to its configuration which could eventually be a part of a Western Parkway (bypassing Missoula) is a superior alternative – 3B does not fit up with this idea because Blue Mtn Road is so expensive and difficult to build.

Donald Nicholson
Missoula City Councilman

| **Response to Comment # 7**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, H, and O.

* 29: Based on the forecast travel demand and proposed improvements under Alternative 5A, this alternative would improve conditions for vehicular and non-motorized travel compared to the No-Action Alternative. Geometric improvements and addition of a signal at the Upper/Lower Miller Creek Road intersection were determined to be the most feasible means of accommodating forecast traffic and non-motorized uses, and a grade separation of this intersection is not warranted.
Comment # 8: Steve King representing the City Council Public Works Committee

From: Steve King [mailto:SKing@ci.missoula.mt.us]
Sent: Monday, November 06, 2006 2:00 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek EIS comments

Mr. Genzlinger,

Attached above is a copy of Missoula City Council resolution number 7038. The resolution states support for construction of a secondary access into the Miller Creek area and three lane reconstruction of a portion of Miller Creek Road.

Attached below is a copy of the minutes from the October 11, 2006 City Council Public Works committee:

Steve King gave an update on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Miller Creek Road improvements.
• This is a study to help improve the Lower Miller Creek Road area access.
• The City Council passed a resolution on March 13, 2006 in support of construction of a secondary access in that area.
• The Feds are seeking public comment and Steve distributed a comment sheet available for people reviewing the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Steve also passed out a newsletter summarizing the EIS and its alternatives. The DEIS is available to the public at City Hall and in the public library.

The Committee discussed:
• Ed Childers said this alternative 5A, Miller Creek Road widening would result in the least impact of traffic volumes on Highway 93. He prefers the three-lane intersection and bridge for increased traffic. There will be a public hearing on the DEIS on Tuesday, October 17, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Quality Inn.
### Comments

**Comment # 8 (continued)**

- In answer to a question from Bob Jaffe, Steve King said the Department of Transportation (DOT) study on the corridor to Florence may, in the future, expand Highway 93 with a series of connections.
- Don Nicholson said the 5A Alternative would work well. Steve King said the bridge is superior for extending additional road capacity to areas south of Missoula.
- Dick Haines said without the bridge they would not be served as well. He wanted to know if public comments would really be listened to by the Feds or is this already set in stone. Steve King said he would put into the record at the public hearing that the City Council and the County are not in favor of the five-lane for alternative Miller Creek Road.
- Dick Haines discussed:
  1) Having a street light is a better alternative.
  2) 2B Alternative is needed, plus a bridge at North Miller Creek. The Fire Station needs a way to get across the river.
  3) City Council should be on record to support Miller Creek Alternative 2B.

**Response to Comment # 8 (continued)**

Steve King asked for direction from the Committee. Jack Reidy said to keep this item on the agenda for further discussion.

### Responses

- Both the Missoula City Council and City Administration favor construction of a second access into the Miller Creek area. It is recognized that an improved Lower Miller Creek Road would improve traffic flow for the neighborhood, but that an additional access into the neighborhood is preferred for safety and public convenience. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of the City of Missoula.
Comment # 8 (continued)

RESOLUTION NUMBER 7038

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SECONDARY ACCESS INTO THE MILLER CREEK AREA AND THREE LANE RECONSTRUCTION OF A PORTION OF MILLER CREEK ROAD

WHEREAS, the Missoula City Council supports the enhancement of public health, safety, and convenience for the citizens and visitors to the City of Missoula by the construction and maintenance of adequate public roadways to support planned urban land uses;

WHEREAS, the City of Missoula, in conjunction with the community’s Metropolitan Planning Organization in partnership with Missoula County, the Montana Department of Transportation, and other interested agencies has adopted the 2004 Missoula Urban Transportation Plan Update which documents regional transportation goals;

WHEREAS, a portion of the Transportation Plan identifies existing and projected traffic capacity deficiencies in the Miller Creek area of southwest Missoula due to the inadequate existing road systems and a lack of secondary access for the neighborhood;

WHEREAS, the City of Missoula, Missoula County, area developers and property owners are currently working on a project for the reconstruction of a portion of Miller Creek Road from the intersection of Upper and Lower Miller Creek Road to Briggs Street which includes three traffic lanes, curbs, sidewalks, bicycle lanes and drainage improvements in conformance with the adopted Transportation Plan and pre-existing developer agreements;

WHEREAS, area developers and property owners are paying for the improvements to Miller Creek Road in conformance with pre-existing developer agreements and subdivision conditions;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration is working in conjunction with Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization agencies on an environmental impact statement for enhanced access into the Miller Creek area;

WHEREAS, the environmental impact statement is considering the option of constructing a secondary access into the Miller Creek area via a new bridge across the Bitterroot River connecting to U.S. Highway 93;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Missoula City Council hereby expresses support for the reconstruction of Miller Creek Road to a three lane road from Mocking Bird Way on Upper Miller Creek Road to Briggs Street in conformance with the Missoula Transportation Plan and pre-existing developer agreements;

AND, also supports the Federal Highway Administration’s completion of the Mill Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement identifying a preferred alternative which includes construction of a secondary access into the Miller Creek area via a new bridge across the Bitterroot River to U.S. Highway 93.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 13th day of March, 2006.

ATTEST:

/s/ Martha L. Rehbein

Martha L. Rehbein
City Clerk

APPROVED:

/s/ John Engen

John Engen
Mayor

Reference number for summary response issue

Appendix E: Comments and Responses

E-31
Response to Comment # 9

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, E, F, and H.

* 30: Regarding your concern for providing access to the Miller Creek area in the event that Miller Creek Road becomes impassable, we acknowledge that a bridge alternative would provide a secondary access should such a situation occur. However, Alternative 5A (Preferred Alternative) would provide a wider cross-section with additional lanes on Miller Creek Road, which would provide flexibility for alternate lane usage should some lanes become impassable. Overall traffic congestion on Miller Creek Road would be improved with Alternative 5A compared to the No-Build Alternative.

* 31: We understand and appreciate your concerns regarding public safety for residents of the Miller Creek area. We acknowledge that emergency response and evacuation for the Miller Creek area would be enhanced by a bridge alternative, and that was fully considered along with the costs, impacts, benefits, and how well each alternative meets the project’s purpose and need. Although Missoula County has no requirement to provide more than one access to a subdivision, the Miller Creek area has a secondary access route to use in the event of an emergency via Gharrett Street to 39th Street. Alternative 5A would improve traffic flow on Miller Creek Road, US 93, and area roadways which would enhance the ability for existing roads to evacuate the Miller Creek Road area or provide emergency response to areas to the south.
Comment # 10: Webb Harrington, Cold Springs Elementary School Principal

(Weber Harrington) Good evening, I'm Webb Harrington. I live on Nicole Court and my mailing address is P.O. Box 6032. I'm the Principal at Cold Springs Elementary School. Cold Springs is located at 2625 Briggs. Alternative 5A, the Preferred Alternative, is going to impact Briggs greatly. The number projected for Briggs is underestimated due to the increase in westbound traffic. Currently we do have several problems with traffic around our school and the Missoula Police Department has been helping us through their presence in calming the speeding and just people not acting prudently which has been helpful but my fear is with a light at Briggs. Right now there is a deterrent. A lot of our residents including high school students of which I have one and U of M students that live in our area, their natural way home is on 39th and then up Garrett and across to Briggs. Because it is so hard to get off of Briggs onto Miller Creek right now, that is pretty much a deterrent that keeps people from using that route. If you put in a light as in the Preferred Alternative, I fear that those numbers will greatly increase. I represent a school that has approximately 500 students. Four times a day parents are dropping off and picking up and while I discourage them from using Briggs, as a parent as many of you know, when you are in a hurry you are going to take the path of least resistance, and that is the front of my school which is on Briggs. Kids are dropped off and picked up there during critical traffic times – high peak traffic times, especially in the morning and at night. So I have a real safety concern for my students because of the light proposed for Briggs. I believe the westbound traffic is going to greatly increase from what it is right now.

Another impact of Alternative 5A is that the egress out of Wal-Mart would be eliminated on Miller Creek. The natural assumption is that Wal-Mart will want another egress for the one they had on US 93 and that would probably be on Briggs. Wal-Mart Corporation was pretty nice to Cold Springs School when they built the existing store. They agreed not to put an egress or ingress on Briggs because of the safety issues we expressed at that time. In fact, they built us an outdoor classroom and they've just been wonderful to us. But I believe when you take away the egress on Miller Creek they are bound to want to use one on Briggs which will impact the school again and not only the traffic, the Bitterroot traffic coming and going, but our own from our neighborhood coming and going from Wal-Mart but also the delivery trucks which are huge. I just have a fear for the safety of students and families dropping off and picking up on Briggs and I needed to bring that to your attention. I appreciate the time.

Response to Comment # 10

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters H, I and L.
Comment # 11: Webb Harrington, Cold Springs Elementary School Principal

Cold Springs School

2625 Briggs
Missoula, MT 59803

October 17, 2006

Mr. Genzlinger:

I am writing to formally express concern about the potential negative impact of Alternative 5A on westbound traffic on Briggs Street. Cold Springs Elementary School is located at 2625 Briggs. The school serves Upper Miller Creek, Linda Vista, and Maloney Ranch subdivisions. These three attendance areas are growing as new homes are being built and a great number of parents from these areas drop off and pick up their children on Briggs.

Traffic is already a concern on Briggs. The Missoula Police Department does an outstanding job supporting the school’s efforts to provide for the safety of students and adults on Briggs in front of Cold Springs Elementary. They are a calming presence in the area, but we still have several close calls every week because of traffic.

The plan to put a light at Briggs and Miller Creek will increase westbound traffic on Briggs. Presently residents of the area (including University of Montana students and high school students from Sentinel High School) use 39th and Garrett to access Briggs as a shortcut to Miller Creek Road. A traffic light at Briggs and Miller Creek would encourage more westbound traffic on Briggs during peak travel times. Drivers now have to wait for a chance to break into the flow of north/south traffic on Miller Creek Road. This wait discourages many from using Briggs.

Beach Transportation accesses our bus lane via Briggs. Parents, despite discouragement from the school, use Briggs to drop off and pick up children at peak travel times during the day. The safety of these activities would be negatively impacted by increased westbound traffic on Briggs.

A further concern is the future access for the proposed Super Wal-Mart. Presently the Wal-Mart Corporation has kept all egress and ingress for their store off of Briggs. They have done this at the school’s request and we hope that this will not change with a new store. Any ingress or egress for the Super Center would add another layer of safety concerns for students on Briggs.

Sincerely,

Webb Harrington
Principal
Cold Springs Elementary School
Missoula, Montana 59803
406-542-4010

C: Missoula County Commissioners
Mayor John Engen
Missoula Police Department

Response to Comment # 11

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters H, I, and L.
Comment # 12: Gerard P. Berens

TARGET RANGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
"Rural By Design"
3416 SOUTH AVENUE WEST - Target Range, Montana, 59804
Phone 543-5334 - Fax 543-6973 - Email, GerardPBerens@bresnan.net
Gerard Berens, President 542-0167 Charlene Miller - Sec / Treasurer 543-5334. Paul Lasby, Vice Pres. - 543-8540.
Billy Bennett, Area 1, 721-0629; Anne Rupkalvls Area 2, 549-6098 Carol McQuade, Area 3, 728-5072; Fred Stewart
Area 4, 549-9017; Helen Orendain, Area 5, Sue Mathewson, 728-5249; Wally Sept 543-6837

Mr. Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
Project Leader, Miller Creek Road EIS

* 32: Your comments have been noted.

We would like to acknowledge the major shift in direction for the Miller Creek Road DEIS as a result of the new purpose and need statement that allowed you to focus on how to best alleviate the serious traffic problems encountered by residents of Miller Creek. You are now looking at how to “provide safe and improved access between US 93 and the Miller Creek area” rather than how to make another point of access into Miller Creek by building a bridge across the Bitterroot River. You are to be commended for listening to comments and suggestions from many individuals including our members at your earlier scoping and public involvement sessions. We want to again thank Mr. Genzlinger and other members of the team for agreeing to attend a public meeting arranged by our organization at the Target Range School in February, 2004, to hear the concerns we had with the direction the study was originally taking.

What a difference the alternatives in the DEIS are compared to the alternatives that were originally presented in 2003! It is particularly interesting to note that as a result of the new purpose and need statement, all alternatives are addressing congestion at the existing intersection of Miller Creek Road and US 93.

Our organization wants to go on record as supporting the Preferred Alternative- 5A for the following reasons:

- It is clearly the most effective of all alternatives at improving expected future traffic volumes in terms of operations and volumes of traffic at US 93/Miller Creek Road intersection, and this is where the critical need for improvement exists.
- It has the least negative impact of all alternatives in terms of:
  1) conversion of residential and commercial land use to transportation use
  2) farmland or agricultural uses
  3) fewest overall right-of-way and access requirements
  4) no impacts on the Bitterroot River!
  5) no dredge/fill materials in “Waters of the United States”
  6) no effects on riparian or grassland wildlife habitat
  7) least fill within the floodplain
  8) no impacts on bull trout
  9) shortest construction period and least effect on US 93 traffic operations
- Preliminary cost assumptions show this alternative, at $13.0 million, is less than one third the cost of the next cheapest alternative, 3B, at $42.5 million.

Response to Comment # 12

* 32: Your comments have been noted.
Comment # 12 (continued)

- It is the only build alternative that addresses improving traffic flows for Miller Creek residents without exporting negative impacts to other communities adjoining Miller Creek.

In summary, Alternative 5A clearly is best at meeting the purpose and need identified for this project and we strongly support this alternative as the Preferred Alternative. Thank you for your conscientious efforts and willingness to meet with us and other members of the public.

Sincerely,

Gerard P. Berens

Points of Clarification

* 33: Reference to the Target Range School meeting was added to Section 5.3.5.

* 34: The forecasted 4% increase in ADT under Alternative 3B compared to the No-Action is reasonable (see section 3.4.1.1 and Table 3-8). A travel time comparison study conducted during a congested weekday AM period in 2004 revealed that a route using Blue Mountain Road and South Avenue that also accounted for reduced travel time associated with a new South Avenue bridge for travel between the intersections of US 93/Blue Mountain Road and Reserve Street/South Avenue is substantially longer and requires slower travel speeds compared to the primary route on US 93.

* 35: The forecasts for all alternatives evaluated were based on a future (year 2020) transportation system that consists of programmed projects and other reasonably foreseeable actions. The baseline transportation network used for the evaluation of all alternatives included projects identified in the adopted Missoula Urban Transportation Plan such as the planned South Avenue Bridge. While no current funding may be available to complete that project, the year 2020 forecasts incorporated this project based on availability of funding and advancement of the project to construction by the year 2020.
Comment # 13: Bob Giordano

(Bob Giordano) 91 Campus Drive, Box 1412. I actually live up in the Rattlesnake. I wasn’t going to speak but that last comment made me want to because I think more dialogue is what is needed. I’ve run the Missoula Institute for Sustainable Transportation for the last ten years and I’ve put a lot of thought and work into what is going to make our transportation work. It is all connected, this whole valley is connected. Next week there is a meeting in this room about 93 South – are we going to have six lanes, seven lanes, a train service coming up from the Bitterroot? Just recently I found out that a connection from Florence into Miller Creek via extending the east side highway was ruled out. I think that is a good thing to rule out. I don’t think we need seven lanes for Highway 93. I’ve thought a lot about it and I think a train service would be an amazing thing from Hamilton perhaps past Missoula. If we can build a true multi-modal transportation system with connected bike and walk trails, bus service, trains, and a good driving system, all these things could work well together. When I think of Missoula, I think it would work well for everyone. This area might be the most challenging, it doesn’t have many services and people like their space; they want to be able to drive where they need to. But hearing every comment, everyone is saying we have more and more traffic. We may need to do things a little bit differently – oil prices are going up, there are air quality issues, so I want us to put our heads together and figure out how we can retain quality of life and Montana values but maybe do it so it isn’t just never-ending traffic. Our website is www.sustainabletransportation.com

I want to hear from you because if I’m going to start saying in the meeting next week, let’s start doing trainings and not continue 93. If you like that please let me know, if you can’t stand that idea, let me know and let me know why because I’m looking at the math and seeing that there could be a little train station right at the Wal-Mart parking lot. Could you walk or bike to the train coming into Missoula and walk to another destination – possibly once a week and not every day? What I’m getting at is let’s figure out something a little different. I would love to see trains statewide so you could really do a few different things. We’ve had trains in the past and maybe it is time that we bring them back. I do like a three-lane instead of a five-lane for Lower Miller Creek. I find that five lanes are hard to cross on foot or bike and you are switching lanes and they can cause more congestion than they solve. Let’s work together on this thing.

Response to Comment # 13

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, H, N, and O.
Comment # 14: Stephen G. Earle

From: Steve Earle [mailto:searle@mountainline.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2006 10:23 AM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek EIS

I would like to ask that you consider the following comments in regard to your draft of the Miller Creek Road improvement EIS:

1. Concerning alternatives that best lend themselves to building a better infrastructure for public transit – I believe alternatives 2B and 4C provide the best opportunities for our transit system to expand into the Miller Creek area. These alternatives secure sufficient right of way that could be used for bus stops, shelters and passenger amenities. They also illustrate several key locations where park and rides for transit, carpools and vanpools could potentially be established.

2. Alternatives 2B and 4C also illustrate key crossings with the existing rail infrastructure and adjacent property that is not currently developed commercially. This land could be used to establish park and rides and passenger boarding and de-boarding centers in the event that passenger rail (using DMU’s) is established as a TDM measure in the 93 corridor.

3. As far as I can see, the preferred alternative (5A) does not secure enough right-of-way to create a useful transit corridor along the existing Miller Creek Road nor does it provide adequate access to any new park and ride locations. There simply won’t be room to build bus stops and other passenger amenities. Overall, more consideration to planning for future development of fixed route bus transit and passenger light rail transit needs to be more clearly addressed in the illustrations for each of the alternatives before a ROD is made. When this is done I think the public will become aware that the preferred alternative does the least to meet the future needs of public transit.

Stephen G. Earle
Mountain Line General Manager

Response to Comment # 14

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter N.
**Comment # 15: Carol Key**

Carol Key 4440 Nicole Court. My husband and I are both Miller Creek residents. We are both members of Missoula Country Club so we feel we will be impacted by this. I guess my first gut reaction to this is how can you spend three million dollars on this and be so far off course. The original objective of this and the need is a second access for Miller Creek. This is something desperately needed not only for the ease of access but also for emergency and safety concerns. We have no other way out of there. We realize that an access involving a bridge will have costly and major impacts, but I also feel that the impacts of this new alternative have not been well enough studied and are being down-played. We are going to have major traffic right by an elementary school. We have stop lights at practically every intersection out there. People’s residential accesses are going to be severely limited. The businesses on Old 93 are going to have their access and who knows what else limited. Of particular concern of mine is what it is going to do to the golf course. I’m a life-time golfer and I love the sport. You have got two fabulous golf courses in this town. They are not really telling us what is going to happen to them and how they are going to be damaged and how they are going to be able to be accessed; and they are going to be damaged. When you are done with all the impacts, the schools, the stop lights, the residential, the damaging of the golf courses, what you are going to have in the end is one access to Miller Creek. You have not solved any problems; you have put a band-aid on a symptom.

What has been lacking from the very beginning many years ago is the foresight and the planning and the follow through to institute a project that stands the test of time. We need someone, some group, some government agency to take the initiative, to have the foresight and to stand up for an alternative that will last a long time and a second access to Miller Creek is what that is.

**Response to Comment # 15**

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, E, F, G, H, L and O.
Comment # 16: Phoebe Patterson

(Phoebe Patterson) 107 Morningside Court in Missoula, Montana 59803. The reason we are doing an Environmental Impact Statement is because Richard Nixon signed a law call NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act. They have to follow the procedure that was signed in 1970. Personally I studied that Act as an undergraduate student; as a graduate student here at the University of Montana, and I have been what is known as a NEPA practitioner since 1984 putting these things together. So I want a little credibility with you because I’m not an attorney but I make a living doing this and last year every single paycheck I got was from teaching how to write environmental impact statements.

As community members I have a little bit of bad news for you, projects are not stopped because someone did not like the alternative selected; that is not a reason to stop a project. Projects are stopped or tied up in lengthy and costly litigation under the Administrative Procedure Act namely, in this case, were the procedural requirements of writing the impact statement followed? That is what I teach. So the process that was followed to produce this document is what can get somebody in trouble.

With that I have the following comments on the procedure to date: the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Sorry, 40 CFR 1502.19 says “agencies shall circulate the entire draft unless it is really big then you will circulate the executive summary except that the entire statement shall be furnished to any person, organization, or agency requesting the entire Environmental Impact Statement.” I have a home office full of these things. I do not have the time to go down to a government office during business hours and get this document, and I teach how to write them. I have no idea how you folks can. I hereby request that one of these be sent to my home address. I also suggest in compliance with the regulations that you have a signup sheet of whoever else in this room would like a copy of this so they can have a look-see at it in more than 20 minutes.

Back to the analysis, they are required in this document to discuss cumulative effects. That is what the two predecessors have briefly touched upon. Cumulative effects – I spend a three-day session teaching this, “Are the effects from your proposed action when added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable...” My two predecessors have hit the nail on the head of reasonably foreseeable actions that we know are going to take place based on some of these proposals. They are not addressed in here. We are woefully silent on cumulative effects not only in transportation, water quality, land use, farm land, social, transportation, safety, economic, air quality, wetlands, and I stopped taking notes, do not mentioned cumulative effects. If you have any direct or indirect effects from your proposal you naturally must address the accumulation of that activity in context of what might take place. I brought some case laws and cited them. Again I make a living at this. I would love to take this one on and I can’t wait to get my own copy and use it in my training session.

Response to Comment # 16

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letter B.

* 36: Your comment has been noted.

* 37: The DEIS was made available for public review at several area locations and on the project Web site. A hard copy or CD version was sent to all individuals who made a request. A summary of DEIS alternatives was included in the Notice of Availability newsletter that announced availability of the DEIS for public review.

* 38: A hard copy of the DEIS was sent via Federal Express to Ms. Patterson on October 18, 2006.

* 39: The introduction to Chapter 4.0, Section 4.23 and pages 4-151 through 4-160 of the DEIS described the cumulative effects analysis process and presented cumulative impacts for all resource categories.
Comment # 17: Karen Brakefield

(Karen Brakefield) 4319 Miller Creek Road, Missoula, MT 59803. There are three homes that are going to be directly impacted by this no matter what happens. So my comments are directed basically to that and are directed to the purpose. If you read on the bottom of the summary statement that you received, the purpose is “to provide a safe and improved access between Highway 93 and Miller Creek Road.” I’m going to first read my comment and then I have one from a neighbor who could not be here and he provided me a letter to read if I have the time.

I reside at 4319 Miller Creek Road in a home nearly 100 years old that was a faculty house at the oval at the University and moved to its present site in 1960. When we purchased our home on Miller Creek Road in 1994, we were aware of developer’s plans to build in the Miller Creek area. At that time I remembered the Belkers were granted permission by the county or the city to expand only if the developers made provision for a second way out of the Miller Creek area and that there was a bridge to be built, by the developers, to address this issue. I was told there was to be money set aside from the sale of the lots to provide for funding the project. As the years went by I was told that the bridge was being worked on, such as, investigating the funding for the project. It has been 12 years to this date and I don’t see a bridge. Where is the money and why are there so many houses and no bridge?

In 2000 Wal-Mart approached the city for permission to expand and Wal-Mart would provide the funding for all the improvements addressed in 5A from Briggs Street to US 93 including addressing all the concerns of the three homes directly affected by these changes. The city of Missoula declined. In the beginning of the year 2000 many areas around the Missoula area were in danger of fires springing up in the areas around Missoula including the Upper Miller Creek area. We became aware then more than ever of the need for more than one exit out of the Miller Creek area in the event of an encroaching fire. The band-aid approach in Preferred Alternative 5A does nothing to address the safety concerns for any of the homeowners living in the Miller Creek area. It is naive to believe that any alternative that does not include bridging the Bitterroot and providing a second way out for thousands of homeowners in the Miller Creek area is a responsible decision. Please weigh carefully the responsibility of the cost of a human life.

Response to Comment # 17

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters C, D, E and H.
Comment # 18: Carl Thompson

(Carl Thompson) 3221 Helena Drive, Missoula. I’ve lived there since 1982 so I’ve seen quite a bit of happenings in the Lower Miller Creek area. I would like to say right off the bat so you don’t misinterpret me, I don’t like the 5A Preferred Alternative. I don’t think it will work. I think there are some flaws in the whole process. First of all I think that switching the purpose and need from the second access to a “safe access out of the drainage” was kind of a slick move and I don’t think that was proper. I think the 5A plan with the surface improvements is totally inadequate for handling the traffic that needs to come out of that neighborhood. Lower Miller Creek would carry about 20,000-25,000 cars per day, which for a reference point would be equivalent to the traffic that is now traveling on Russell Street between the river and 3rd Street and that is a three-lane section of road. So you can kind of imagine how that residential area would be impacted with that type of traffic. Then you mix in the traffic that will be coming down the hill, so you’ve got approximately 40,000 cars per day, which is more or less what we are dealing with on Reserve Street in that section between the Y and Brooks Street. Then you start throwing in traffic on top of that generated by Wal-Mart and you’ve got one single huge congestion point. So I would submit that the safety of the ingress and egress into the Miller Creek area is not going to be helped at all by this surface treatment.

I also see that there are no plans for intersection improvement at Linda Vista Blvd. and Lower Miller Creek Road which is going to be a very congested intersection. The use of the traffic signals at the Y and down at Briggs I guess I don’t feel are going to be good. You’ve got great problems coming into the signal and you are going to have tremendous delays dealing with the roads. I just don’t think there is the capacity on the road system, as proposed, for dealing with the traffic that we have.

The idea of a bleeder road up to Reserve Street on Old 93, maybe or maybe not, but to have a signal up at Old 93 and Reserve I think is going to be an absolute failure because of the dead space that is going to be between Old 93 and Brooks Street. I just don’t think, given the volume of traffic and dead space in there and the amount of time that it is going take for that signal to function and cycle, that the traffic is going to be able to move from there. So I foresee a tremendously gridlocked section of town. The south end of Missoula just won’t move. Basically this whole plan shift from a second access to the surface improvements, in my opinion, is tremendously flawed and has no merit.

Response to Comment # 18

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, H, and I.

* 40: Traffic modeling indicates that the Linda Vista Boulevard and Lower Miller Creek Road intersection will function effectively with forecasted traffic; therefore, no improvements are needed.
Comment # 19: Bob Beach

(Bob Beach) 4810 Miller Creek Road, Missoula, MT 59803. We've lived at this property for 40 years this past June. We have not met the purpose and need that we first started out with without a bridge. We've got to have a bridge! I'm willing to work with anybody and everybody to make the intersection is much safer. I want it safe for our school children down at Cold Springs. That is a mess if you go down there during the day and right after school. I run about 35 units through there a.m. and p.m. plus noon, hauling school children and a light possibly could work but it puts the traffic in front of Cold Springs which we do not need for our school children.

As far as Wal-Mart is concerned, no one will tell me what the status of Wal-Mart is. How is it going to come out? Is it going to come out on Briggs Street? They won't say. I've asked but nobody seems to have that privilege to give me any information.

Again we need a bridge, Janice, we need a bridge badly! I read where we couldn't have a bridge because the footings weren't strong enough. Have you ever been to Hamilton? We just finished a beautiful bridge at Hamilton over the Bitterroot River, why can't we do the footings similar to what they did there? We have the same soil here as they do there. There might be an alluvial fan here or there or something that is a little softer but we can dig deeper; we've got construction equipment that will make bridge abutments safe. Anyway, the purpose and need has not been met by not having a bridge in our entrance and exit to Miller Creek.

Response to Comment # 19

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, H, and L.

* 41: It is feasible to build a bridge. Soil conditions were not the reason Alternative 5A was selected as the Preferred Alternative. See also Summary Response Issue D "Bridge Alternatives."
**Comment # 20: Brad Dantic**

Brad Dantic 4019 Bellecrest Drive. First I want to say that this must be a hard job for Craig and his colleagues to hear all the negative public comment. I want to compliment them on all their hard work but all their hard work misses the mark. I want to comment on two things that relate to the NEPA process. What I’ve been able to gather so far is that we went to Congress with an application that said “Congress, we need money to study and identify alternative access, a secondary access to the Miller Creek area,” that is the content of our application. That is the basis on which Congress awarded to us five million dollars for the Federal Highway Administration to conduct an EIS to identify an alternative access to the Miller Creek area. After three and a half years of that process, the Preferred Alternative does not include what Congress’s intent was – to spend five million dollars to provide an alternative access. So number one, I don’t think the EIS fulfills the intent of Congress in appropriating the five million dollars. That is not what we went to Congress and asked for money for – to expand these service routes.

Second regarding the NEPA process, I’m commenting as the President of the Country Club this year, so I’m here commenting in the interest of the Missoula Country Club. We feel that we were snookered in the process. Originally the notice of intent that was published in the Federal Register said that we were going to consider a build alternative and a no-build alternative. The build alternative would connect US 93 and provide a new structure crossing the Bitterroot River. In the notices that occurred throughout 2003, Old Highway 93 was never included in the study area. If you look at the boundaries, Old Highway 93 was always excluded from the study area. Therefore, if you had an interest from the Missoula Country Club, you had no reason to comment on this project because there was no discussion of the expansion of Old Hwy 93. What was being discussed throughout the process was, consistent with Congress’s intent, where are we going to put a bridge across the Bitterroot River. So throughout the process we weren’t invited to comment, they didn’t send us surveys, they didn’t ask about our opinion, they didn’t ask about how it will affect our Country Club, they didn’t ask about the affect it is going to have on Old Highway 93 and the businesses like Bitterroot Motors, the Hotel, the Motel. All these businesses are on Old Highway 93. We were excluded from that process. Then about a year and a half into the process, understanding that there was clear opposition to the bridges, they changed the purpose and need so they don’t have a second access point and for the first time we were affected because now the Federal Highway Administration is starting to consider the expansion of Old Highway 93. But even at that point, they still didn’t call us and ask for our opinion or give us a survey or ask us how it would affect the Club. The only notice we got was a published notice in the newspaper and even in those published notices in the newspaper, we were still excluded from the study area. So you would never know, from all the notices throughout the entire process, that they were considering the expansion of Old Highway 93. November of 2005 was the first time we heard there was going to be an expansion of Old Highway 93. So I guess in this NEPA process, we don’t feel like we’ve been included in the process. We think we have been excluded. We don’t think the Draft Environmental Impact Statement considers the affects on our Club in air quality, noise, or the economic impacts to the Club. I don’t know the last time the Federal Highway Administration had a golf outing, but you don’t play on a 16-hole golf course.

**Response to Comment # 20**

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, and G.

* 42: The appropriation of federal funds for transportation improvements requires that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process be followed. NEPA requires that a range of reasonable alternatives be developed and evaluated, and reasonable alternatives cannot be constrained based on the intent of a Congressional appropriation. Three bridge alternatives were fully evaluated in the EIS. (Also refer to Response Issue B, under “Purpose of Congressional Appropriation.”)

* 43: Old US 93 was introduced to the public at the June 22, 2004 public meeting as a component of Alternative 5A. In addition, the March 23, 2006 public meeting presented the Old US 93 improvements as common to all of the build alternatives. According to the public meeting sign-in sheets, the Missoula Country Club General Manager, Neil Michelson, attended this meeting. At this meeting there was no apparent controversy related to the Old US 93 proposed improvements. Comments were received from Neil Michelson at the March 23, 2006 meeting regarding possible impacts to the golf course hedge.

* 44: Changing the purpose and need did not eliminate any bridge alternatives, it allowed for a broader range of alternatives to be considered in addition to the bridge alternatives. Inclusion of Old US 93 improvements with all build alternatives did not occur as a result of changing the project purpose and need. Old US 93 improvements were included with all build alternatives, including the three bridge alternatives, because updated traffic volumes and traffic modeling revealed that solely providing a bridge across the Bitterroot River would not sufficiently improve access for the Miller Creek area due to congestion on US 93 and nearby roadways.

* 45: Publication of the DEIS and public review period is the formal milestone in the NEPA process where project findings are provided to the public and the public is given the opportunity to review and provide comment on the project proposal (see also Response Issue B).
**Comment # 20 (continued)**

It will have a dramatic effect. We think if it impacts our club enough, the EIS is deficient in that it does not adequately address the costs of the right-of-way because if it affects our club enough, you might as well condemn the entire club. You can’t condemn two holes without condemning all 18 and the cost of that is far in excess of $1.2 million.

Finally, I’m not sure that everybody understands this, but there is a subtle note in this EIS, and it is buried in page 462 of the document somewhere, but Alternative 5A does not include a left-turn lane at the light at Old Highway 93 and US 93. So what the Country Club members will be left with is this: I can come out to the gate, we’re leaving, and I can turn left across 20,000 cars per day, which is not a safe alternative, or I can turn right and go down to the light and my house is to the left and I’m not going have any way to get home to Missoula, Montana. I’m going to have to go right to Lolo and flip a U-turn somewhere or go through the light and flip a U-turn up the Miller Creek area somewhere. So in that respect I think the EIS is lacking. Those are my initial comments and I’ve already shared comments in another room.

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**Response to Comment # 20 (continued)**

* **46:** Golf course holes eight and nine and the eighth and ninth hole tee boxes or fairways would not be impacted with the Old US 93 improvements as proposed in the DEIS or in the FEIS revised design. Please refer to Response Issue G.

* **47:** As mentioned under Response Issue F, in the DEIS the left-turn movement from Old US 93 to US 93 was eliminated. In the FEIS, that movement could be maintained during non-peak hours; however, complete restriction of this left-turn movement may be warranted in the future, at the discretion of MDT who has jurisdiction of US 93.
Comment # 21: Glen Bumgardner

(Glen Bumgardner) 6205 Saint Thomas Drive. My wife and I live so close to Upper Miller Creek Road and also we work at times that are not high traffic volume times, so no matter what we do I don’t think it will impact our normal daily routine and the chance of us using a bridge in any of these alternatives, because we are so close to Upper Miller Creek Road, are very minimal. However, that being said, I’m still very much against the Preferred Alternative because the main point was another access/another bridge. People who have lived here for awhile have heard the story of Reserve Street. It was projected with a certain amount of traffic and it was supposed to last for ten years before we even had any amount of congestion and the day that Reserve was built and everybody started using it, it was like it was immediately filled to the brim. So I talked to some traffic engineers that say these forecasts about future use are like any kind of forecasts, you are trying to guess the future. If you are an engineer or somebody who does statistics, you can write some figures down and do some scientific analysis but it still turns out to be a scientific guess. You know, there are people who live in Miller Creek that still don’t even know that they’ve got this huge apartment complex to the south going in. We see all these empty spots and all these new home sites and common sense says that there is no way you are going to make Lower and Upper Miller Creek be a viable one-way exit out of the area. So although we don’t plan to use the bridge, we still feel the pressure of all the people trying to squeeze their way out. The Preferred Alternative has some bells and whistles that make it sound like a nice deal and it is much less expensive, but in life you’ve seen that sometimes you take the cheap thing or take the low bid, and then later on you find out you pay an even bigger price than you would have paid if you had gone the right way. If we put the bridge in and find out we need some more bells and whistles, it is going to be a whole lot better than to have spent all our money on the bells and whistles that even with the No-Build Alternative we are going to get to a certain degree anyway and then have to go back and try and find money for a bridge. Again, the bridge was the main focus of this a long time ago.

One of the things you see and why this Preferred Alternative was picked is because it uses words like “acceptable” and “adequate.” I’m saying that when we are doing this, we don’t want to do that route. We want to think past the Reserve Street mistake. We want to think about a realistic idea about what the future is and how we want it to be, not so much for the old timers but for your children.

Response to Comment # 21

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, H, and I.
Comment # 22: Skip Koprivica

(Skip Koprivica) 621 Parkview Way. I'm here to speak on behalf of the Missoula Country Club. The main thing I want to bring up is the fact that if you were to take land away from the Missoula Country Club, or severely affect the access to the Country Club, it is going to have a terrible effect on the Club. I feel our Club has helped benefit the community of Missoula for many years. Over the years we've hosted numerous fund raising events such as Community Care, Camp Make-A-Dream, Grizzly Round Ball, Jaden Fred, Lions Club, Miller Barber Pro Am which benefited the University of Montana, Chamber of Commerce, and for the last fifteen years the Missoula Country Club has hosted, at no charge, the High School Fund Raising Golf Tournament which has raised over $250,000 for high school golf programs. We know that Loyola would not have a golf program or golf team were it not for the fund raiser. In 2006 we raised $24,900 for the four high school golf teams. The Missoula Country Club has also provided a very worthwhile golf experience for amateur golfers throughout the State of Montana. We've hosted the following events on numerous occasions: The Men's State Amateur Championship which we held this year; The Men's Mid-Amateur Championship; The Men's State Amateurs; The State Senior's Tournament; The Ladies' State Amateur; The Junior State Tournament; The State AA High School Tournament; as well as the Men's USJA Senior Qualifier. We feel the Missoula Country Club has been very community oriented. Also the Missoula Country Club allows the four high school golf teams as well as the University of Montana ladies team to play at the Missoula Country club at no charge.

Response to Comment # 22

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters F and G.
Comment # 23: Mike McCourt

(Mike McCourt) 305 High Park Way in Missoula. I am a member of the Missoula Country Club and I'm also currently on the Board of Directors. I don't want to rehash what Brad and others have said about the major concern that almost all of us have and that is there really needs to be a serious look at getting a bridge and solve this problem. It is not going to happen with proposal 5A and it certainly won't happen for our membership in any of these proposals if Old 93 remodel is part of the picture. So maybe to carry on a bit with what Brad had to say, I just want to ask a few basic questions or at least have you consider a few basic questions that I've heard from members of our Club. (1) How will people enter and exit the Club during and after construction? It is almost obvious to all of us that the only option you are going to have to come out of and into the golf course is by turning right. Well, that causes a lot of problems for us. (2) Are there any safety considerations for getting in and out of businesses along Old Highway 93? I didn't see any of that in the Draft EIS. (3) What about emergency situations? We had an emergency this month when one of our members had a severe heart attack in our Club. We called 911 and had people assisting him; we had the ambulance and the EMT people there within a few minutes. I just really hate to think that what might look like if we were dealing with a kind of Reserve Street out there. There would be times when we couldn't even get an ambulance or fire truck in for an emergency situation.

One thing I would like to mention is that we don't really have an idea of how much land or how encroachment will be handled under 5A. As Brad said, no one has come to talk to us about it; nobody has been out there showing us where you might want to go. It is hard for us to envision what you have in mind because we've been left out of the process basically from the beginning. Finally what about noise pollution, air pollution? If you were a golfer would you like to be standing on our 8th tee box at 5:00 with a new highway out there and cars bumper-to-bumper exhausting and sitting there to catch a light in either direction? That is certainly not part of the aesthetics of being outdoors for golfers or anybody else.

In conclusion I would like to make a couple of recommendations to you. I would say to go back to the drawing board and do the project correctly by addressing the original intent of the Miller Creek study. I think we are getting a long ways away from that. Also don't assume the Missoula Country Club will respond enthusiastically to this project when we feel our course is being threatened with land taking, noise and air pollution, and serious ingress and egress issues. Our members feel that your proposal 5A, as well as the other options involving the remodel of Old Highway 93, are nothing more than a band-aid approach failing to address the much larger growth and traffic problems facing the Miller Creek area and Missoula in general. Finally, please don't create a traffic nightmare like we have out at the intersection of Mullan Road and Reserve. Mullan and Reserve are fine examples of the quick cheap fix, rather than getting it right the first time. So you have an opportunity here to go back and get it right the first time.

Response to Comment # 23

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, G, and M.
Comment # 24: Bob Cole

(Bob Cole) 4805 Miller Creek Road. As far as being impacted, we are probably going to be one of the most impacted along with Bob Beach and several other neighbors around there with the most land being taken away from us. So you can see that I'm a little bit upset with this alternative especially since every year for the last 15 to 20 years when we've had meetings on what we need at Miller Creek we said, “A bridge.” And every meeting they come back to me asking what we want and we say, “a bridge.” I don't know how many times we have to say it and I don't know how many times you have to tell the people who are running all the way from the city, to the county, all the way to the U.S. government that we really need a second access to this area. Also I don't think they are looking at the big picture. I do not think they really have the build-outs on this area. There is an awful lot of land up there that is open and an awful lot of land that is owned by older people who have ranches of 15 to 20 acres that can multiply the build-out compared to just the Maloney Ranch. I feel that if they really got the whole build-out on it, they would really find that even with four lanes for five blocks, it is not going to solve the problems of Upper and Lower Miller Creek. What are they going to do with the bike paths? Are the contractors going to continue the bike paths up through there, or sidewalks or so on and so forth when they build on or are they just going to fiddle-fart around like they've been doing. I know the contractors have been working hard to get this done and we've been working with them but one of the major stipulations that we've had with this particular piece of road is that they finish it all the way to the light. Because Wal-Mart has come and said they might help finance that from Briggs to the light, they want to just build it from the Y to Briggs, and we say, “No we need it to the light.” The light is the major problem with the back-up right now. If they fix that intersection, even just abandoning that intersection, we would move enough traffic in the morning to handle the traffic now but it will not handle, even with the big four-lane road here, the traffic that is going to come down there after the complete build out. Like everybody has said, we really need to have the bridge across for emergency access and just to get the big picture. A lot of people have talked about the bypass that might come through down the east side of the Bitterroot. Well, it is going to need a bridge. So why not build the bridge now in line with where that bypass might go and save ourselves a lot of money down the way.

Response to Comment # 24

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, E, H, I and O.
Comment # 25: Martin King

(Martin King) P.O. Box 4747, Missoula, Montana. I’m an attorney and that is why I gave you my post office address. I’ve been asked to speak on behalf of the Missoula Country Club who obviously has major problems and concerns about this project and frankly was not provided adequate notice and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that has been generated doesn’t address all of the impacts that are going to place as a result of this project.

In regard to the notice, as many have already pointed out, this started out as a project concerning a second bridge or a second road into the Miller Creek area. At some point, unbeknownst to my client, the project changed and encompasses now Old Highway 93. What they are proposing to do with Old Highway 93 is widen it to basically four lanes; two travel lanes in one direction and one travel lane in another direction with a turn lane and also bike lanes and sidewalks. What that is going to do is not clear in the Environmental Impact Statement but the fact is that the businesses located on the strip between Old Highway 93 and Highway 93, almost without exception, had no information or knowledge that what was happening to Old Highway 93 as part of this project. In other words, we’ve got a bait-and-switch situation which is they looked first at another access road to Miller Creek but are now sliding in this Old Highway 93 without proper notice to the various interested individuals. More importantly is that the Environmental Impact Statement that we are now reviewing doesn’t address the impacts that are going to take place and I’m focusing primarily on Old Highway 93. If you read through the Executive Summary, they tell us there will be no change in land use. Well, I’m telling you if they take the 8th tee box and the 9th fairway of the Missoula Country Club that is no longer going to be a golf course and no longer going to be a Country Club and the land use there is going to change significantly. That issue was not addressed even in passing in the Environmental Impact Statement.

They also use a phrase called “environmental justice” and I’m not exactly sure what that means, but nowhere under that heading or in the document itself do they talk about things like the impact from golf balls that are going to be next to this five-lane highway. Now if you’ve seen Brad play golf, you realize that is a serious issue. They also reportedly did a study about noise in the Environmental Impact Statement and yet they said noise wasn’t going to be an issue. I’ll tell you that if you have a four or five-lane highway right next to a golf course, noise is an issue and yet they didn’t address that at all. Going through the Environmental Impact Statement they made some reference that they are going to build a berm along the Country Club. They don’t describe where the berm is going to be located; how big the berm is going to be; whether or not it is going to protect the fairway; whether or not it is going to protect the tee box; what the impact is going to be; or really any of the other issues.

As you go through their Environmental Impact Statement there are numerous impacts they haven’t addressed nor have they addressed the mitigation of those impacts either. The treatment or what they are going to do to Old Highway 93, according to their proposal, is going to exist on any one of the

Response to Comment # 25

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F and G.

* 48: Environmental Justice refers to Executive Order 12898, which requires federal agencies to consider and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal projects on the health or environment of minority and low-income populations.
Comment # 25 (continued)

alternatives they are proposing. So the proposed construction and changes to Old Highway 93 they envision will happen under any alternative except the No-Build Alternative. Now an Environmental Impact Statement by law under NEPA is supposed to present to the reviewing public various alternatives that they can review and examine. They have presented us with different alternatives for some of these other surface streets but as far as Old Highway 93 they have not done that. I would suggest to you that is not in conformity with the NEPA statute in terms of their Environmental Impact Statement.

Finally, as many have already said before me, the improvements to Old Highway 93 don't have anything to do with what is happening at Miller Creek. I think the proper thing to do and what I would urge the Federal Highway Administration to do is to omit Old Highway 93 from this project, get their sights and their mind in the right direction and do what all of you have suggested, which is let's construct another access road into Miller Creek.
Comment # 26: Bill Ritchie

(Bill Ritchie) P.O. Box 70, Florence, Montana 59833. My wife and I are fairly new to the Missoula area at least living here. We’ve come here every year fishing and decided to move to Missoula because of all the wonderful things and the environment in the area around here but traffic isn’t one of them. When you look at south Missoula, you see a city that has basically been hacked together by expediency. You see alleys that have been turned into roads and buildings are built on them and you don’t see the result of a reasonable and logical plan. As this city grows, and it is growing rapidly and will continue to grow rapidly for the very reasons we moved here, everything needs to be coordinated in the flow of traffic. My objections to what I see being done here is that it is one more band-aid as others have said. I’m not going to talk too much about Highway 93 although I am in the Country Club and improvements as you call them to Old Highway 93 are only going to slow down traffic. One of my concerns is that we come up from the Bitterroot and when you start funneling things with more traffic lights and jamming more stuff into that location around the golf course and around Reserve, you are going to have to lengthen those lights and it is going to slow people coming in from the Bitterroot which is growing rapidly. It is my understanding that those traffic counts have not been included in the study and have not been analyzed but they are going to be just as critical as the flow from Miller Creek that goes through those intersections if not more so. So I believe that if you are going to make a decision on that you have to consider all the impacts and the impacts you are going to affect whether the Bitterroot Resort goes in with 2,200 new homes. Those things are not considered in here and need to be considered in a long-term plan that looks at a bypass that will make the south part of the city livable.

Response to Comment # 26

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, G, H, I, J, and O.
Comment # 27: George Stern

I'm here principally as a member of the Missoula Country Club. My concern is for the golf course. I share all the concerns the people who live in Miller Creek have expressed tonight, but the golf course is mainly my concern so I'm concerned only about the issues relating Old Highway 93. Just as Martin King said, this is something that was slipped into the program at the last minute after public comment was made and there is nothing in this impact statement that deals in any way, shape, or form about what the impact to the County Club is. They are going to widen this road by 70+ feet and that has to come from somewhere. If it doesn't come from the Country Club then it has to come from a lot of other businesses but I have to assume some of it is coming from the Country Club. For those of you who haven't played at the Country Club, it is a tight, narrow, relatively short course and there is not a lot of space. You invade the 8th and 9th holes; there is no place to put the 8th and 9th holes. You would have to move the whole course in another direction; it is not just one little patch job, it's the whole thing. This is not being considered and this is a critical issue. We have 450 golf memberships, we've got a bunch of social memberships, corporate memberships and most of those are married couples. We are talking about well over 1,000 people. There are 70,000 people in Missoula so it is a sizeable percentage of the population and I can tell you we're all objecting to this plan.

Old Highway 93 has nothing to do and is irrelevant to getting in and out of Miller Creek. There is no reason to be touching that road. I look at your propaganda here and it says that the impacts to the Missoula Country Club property along Old Highway 93 are the same with all the build alternatives. Well that is because they put Old Highway 93 into all the alternatives; there is no alternative that doesn't include that. It wasn't in there when the original proposal went through for the bridge to Blue Mountain Road. It wasn't needed then and it is not needed now; it is irrelevant. Go back to the original plan.

You look at all these dollar alternatives and if you think I believe that your Preferred Alternative is really $32 million cheaper than the other three, you've got to be kidding. But I'll tell you what, you can take Old Highway 93 out of all these and they are all cheaper, and you can save us some tax dollars.

Response to Comment # 27

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, C, E, F, and G.
### Comments

**Comment # 28: Allen Kessler**

(Allen Kessler) 2755 Ancabide Lane in Missoula and that's on the upper section of Miller Creek Road. As a taxpaying citizen I appreciate the Federal Highway Administration's fiscal responsibility. At the same time I want my tax dollars used wisely with good benefit. Alternative 5A does not meet any of my concerns: (1) It doesn't lessen traffic load on Miller Creek Road, (2) it does not address single-access safety concerns, (3) it increases the traffic load at a primary Missoula access – Highway 93 South and Miller Creek Road, (4) it increases traffic load on Highway 93, Old Highway 93, and Reserve Street. I feel it is an engineering decision based on economics with less priority placed on common sense, the right thing to do, and most importantly the concerns and myriad impacts to the residents of Miller Creek Road and the Linda Vista areas who will be most directly affected.

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 28**

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, E, F, H, I and J.
Comment # 29: Janet Donahue

(Janet Donahue) 901 Valley Wind Lane, in the Big Flat, Missoula Montana. I used to be an elected official and I always enjoy public comment and I especially enjoy it now. I'm a member of the Missoula Country Club and one of its worst golfers. There are a few people out there that can attest to that. So if you are driving down Old Highway 93 you won’t have to worry about my balls being out in the highway because mine don’t get that far. I do have some concerns about the reconfiguration of Old Highway 93 and as has been said before the reconstruction is in every alternative. So there is no alternative for us. The north side of the County Club is part of the University property, part of the county property, and part of the city property. I’m wondering if the federal government wants to pay for moving the club house, the parking lot, the entrance to the facilities, two holes, and put in trees that are of the same age that we have out there now, and if you are I would prefer that you take that money and put in a bridge.

I also would like to know how using Old 93 improves the long-term traffic flow out of Miller Creek. It seems like we are using a frontage road, which has turned into a frontage road, as another parallel highway to the new U.S. 93. The Country Club has been there for almost 80 years and it seems to me that is pretty historic.

It also seems that you are making accommodation for Wal-Mart and that is very interesting to me because I was on the County Commission when Wal-Mart was first denied a building permit for that spot. I think Colleen Dowdall can tell you that the Wal-Mart folks waited until I went off the County Commission to resubmit the plan and it was approved 2:1. They had also been to the city to expand to a Super Wal-Mart and that has been denied and yet we are making accommodation for a Super Wal-Mart. Take that money and put in a bridge!

Finally I feel that clearly this is not a long-term alternative. The bridge is the alternative for long-term. It feels like the emperor with his new clothes, it’s got to be there somewhere, we just can’t see it.

Response to Comment # 29

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, F, G and H.
Comment # 30: Steve McCool

(Steve McCool) 7215 Beryl Lane, Missoula, Montana, up in Woodland Heights. What I’m going to say probably isn’t going to get me any applause. I’m not speaking so much in favor of Alternative 5A because it seems pretty clear in listening to the people here that there needs to be greater consideration of the impacts from that design. But I want the people here to understand that there are other people who are opposed to the other designs and you haven’t heard from any of those. I’ve been to a whole bunch of these meetings on this project, specifically one that was held over at Target Range School several years ago in which the audience applauded for not having a bridge, so I’m kind of wondering what happened to everybody’s attitudes toward all of this. I think those other alternatives, and all of them are going to affect me, we don’t want a road near Hayes Creek, a bridge and interchange; that would dramatically affect a lot of people.

More important I would like to say is that this problem goes back to decisions made a long time ago without really thinking them through. In terms of what the gentleman from Florence talked about planning and thinking about the future. We are not doing that; we are doing everything incrementally and then we end up with these problems. We need better leadership in making these decisions and thinking them through. The second thing I want to say something about this process and it is much better now than it used to be, but it isn’t one part of the community against another part of the community and that is not right. We should be working together to solve this problem and not me against you because, as I said, I have a very different feeling on this access.

Response to Comment # 30

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, F, G, H, and O.
Comment # 31: Charlie Brown

(Charlie Brown) 6640 Linda Vista Blvd. in the Miller Creek area, upper Miller Creek specifically. I want to welcome you all here tonight because I've been to several meetings with Blue Mountain folks and I wasn't sure I was going to get out alive a few times. I have served as President of the Upper Linda Vista Homeowners for several years in the 90s and served on the Miller Creek Comp Plan. In 1995 we started what was known as the Miller Creek Comprehensive Plan Planning Committee. All the homeowner's from Miller Creek as well as engineers and developers, city and county officials, took part in that study to determine what plan would be implemented for Miller Creek. That plan, as we studied it, became very apparent that no matter what was approved that the growth in Miller Creek was going to be very, very significant. As a result of that, we worked with Commissioner Barbara Evans, we went to Washington D.C., which we do annually to lobby for money for Missoula. After three years we asked Congress, specifically Senator Burns and Senator Baucus, for funding to study the possibility of a bridge for another ingress/egress out of Miller Creek. That is how this came about so all of you know.

When we received notification that we were going to get the money to study this process, we were quite excited. And as you say when Craig was doing the presentation, the two primary things we looked at were different locations for bridges. During that process one of the locations was one where the county had access all the way to an old bridge site which joins Blue Mountain. Jim Weaver, who was then the head of the Missoula Department of Transportation, thought it was a great place to put the bridge and was very supportive of us and our efforts to get the funding. What happened then, as this gentleman pointed out, was there seemed to be a great deal of divisiveness among homeowners and the first meeting I attended I was accused of writing this as a sneaky way to get a bypass across Missoula. That's not going to happen, folks! To build a bypass across Missoula through Blue Mountain Road would take more money than the State Transportation Plan every year, so put it out of your mind because it isn't going to happen.

So we pretty well way-layed that and it wasn't even on the City County Transportation Plan and that argument went away very quickly. The next thing we were told is that it would have a tremendous impact on Miller Creek Road. These folks have done that study and it was about a three to five percent increase in traffic on that road. What people were told there by a select small group was that people coming into town would say it was a beautiful day in the morning so they would take a narrow shaded two-lane road to a one-lane bridge and up on South Avenue into Missoula. To tell you how exaggerated this actually got, I was getting calls at home from concerned mothers who live on South Avenue saying that you people in Miller Creek are forcing traffic on South Avenue and our children area in danger – that is how exaggerated this got.

Unfortunately though I feel that the feds and this planning process was skewed because of that attitude. That is why I'm here tonight. We went from two bridge proposals and an improvement on Miller Creek Road to this Preferred Alternative. As you've heard, and I'm not going to reiterate what everyone has already said tonight, the primary reason that I wrote this and that all the people in Miller Creek wanted
### Comment # 31 (continued)

This was a safety issue. I just want to quote to you something from the study that was in the paper, “additionally the proposal to make improvements on Miller Creek is the least environmental, social, and the least impacts on the population.” Ladies and gentlemen, if Environmental Impacts aren’t designed for human beings, I want to know what they are designed for. This is going to have a tremendous impact on Miller Creek and the residents who live there. I would encourage you to call, write your senators and congressman and tell them that you want a bridge at Miller Creek and that you want this re-studied. And as you can see we’ve all been ignored. This alternative is not something the people from Miller Creek ever wanted. So all I can tell you is to call your congressman and your senators and tell them that you are really outraged that this is the Preferred Alternative.

### Response to Comment # 31 (continued)
Comment # 32: Sue O’Neil

(Sue O’Neil) 2605 Willow Wood Court, which is on the corner of Gharrett and Willow Wood. I’m usually one of the silent majority, the ones that let somebody else do your talking and don’t have to speak. But in this case I’m going to speak out and it really is on two areas that concern me. I’m a golfer; my husband and I belong to the Missoula Country Club and it is going to have a great impact on that club. But again the plan when this started was to get a second access out of Miller Creek and this isn’t doing it. It doesn’t address how it is going to affect the businesses, and specifically I’m concerned about the Country Club because that is where we spend a lot of time. You’ve heard tonight from lots of people from the Country Club who are speaking on this – the safety issues, the access, the constant … what I think they will have to do is to move the entrance to the club because of the safety issues and the access issues.

The one thing I hadn’t considered until I came here was Wal-Mart. We are very close to Wal-Mart. When the traffic has to go back up Miller Creek to Briggs by the school and you’ve heard the concerns about going by the school, then that traffic is going to go over to Gharrett which is already very busy and we’ve heard nothing about what the impacts will be on either Briggs or Gharrett, and then back down onto 39th and we haven’t heard what kind of impact that will have on Gharrett or 39th. Right now I’m a little concerned if Wal-Mart doesn’t put in a new entrance on Briggs that they are going to punch a hole at the end of our one street cul-de-sac to get another access into Wal-Mart and none of this is being addressed on how that will affect this. I do not think that this has been studied sufficiently; it is going to impact us in the neighborhood and I don’t think people are aware of that. So as part of the silent majority, tonight I’m speaking up and thank you for the opportunity.

Response to Comment # 32

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, G, H, and L.
Comment # 33: Paul Marshall

(Paul Marshall) 1580 Crest Haven. To be clear I oppose any improvement on Old Highway 93 and the process in general. I am the Assistant Manager at Missoula Country Club and I want to get on the record a couple of things about the Country Club because I fear that people making decisions will walk away thinking it’s just a Country Club; it’s a bunch of rich spoiled people and that is not the case. I can tell you right now for a fact that the Missoula Country Club is very family oriented. People join the Missoula Country Club because it is a place to bring their children; we have a pool and we have one the finest teach golf professionals in the state in Skip Koprivika; their kids learn how to play golf there and they spend time there as a family.

Secondly, I would like to point out that the Country Club is very blue collar; you can always get on the course. The reason is because we all work. The members at the Missoula Country Club work and because of that there is always a tee time available and that is why people like it. These are working families; they are not children of privilege, they are people who have chosen to invest some disposable income into their family life-style and their social communities. Also, as Skip pointed out earlier, the Country Club does a tremendous amount of work within the community. It is a place where people come to be part of the community. It is a private country club but it doesn’t feel that way; we have a lot of public events there and a lot of public gatherings.

Then lastly one of the things I want to point out is that the Country Club is a very good employer. During the summer we have probably eighty full-time equivalents working there and we provide good benefits as is represented by our very low turnover. I really think that the alternative you have impacting the ingress and egress could substantially affect the Country Club to the point where it might not be a viable entity and the club will be at risk or at least there would be a severe impact.

Response to Comment # 33

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, and G.

* 49: The mitigation required for each of the build alternatives is described in Chapter 4 on the FEIS. It is not clear what mitigation dollars you are referring to. However, in the August 2006 Alternatives Memorandum, conceptual costs for noise and environmental mitigation have been included. These cost estimates are appropriate for the mitigation described in the FEIS. However, costs may increase as final design and project permitting occur. Since the preferred alternative does not include a new bridge crossing and the associated permitting, mitigation costs will be relatively low for Alternative 5A, the Preferred Alternative.

References:

A = Reference number for summary response issue

Appendix E: Comments and Responses
### Comments

**Comment # 34: Tom Russell**

(Tom Russell) P.O. Box 1018, Lolo, Montana. I'm the course superintendent of the Missoula Country Club so obviously I'm near all the thoughts of everyone else that has spoken on behalf of the Country Club. I wanted to discuss a little bit again on the Old 93 proposition. My concern is that there is an easier alternative; basically this gives us one more north bound lane. Just looking at it, if they would put in a continuous right-turn lane along side Wal-Mart, the traffic flows all the time out of Miller Creek. We already have the widest road in Montana with 93, repaint it and it has another lane heading toward Brooks and you've kind of solved the same thing without any construction. So rather than rebuild a road that affects the golf course and all the other businesses put in a continuous right-hand lane and it is a better stop-gap than the one we are talking about right now. We are all probably in agreement that this is a stop-gap. But this one eliminates one light and the two lights that are close together on Reserve in the potential dead space. You already have a double-turn lane there and if you can pull out of Miller Creek directly to that, I think you would solve some of the problem anyway. Thank you.

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 34**

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters F and G.

* 50: This is not a recommended course of action. Although the additional lane would add capacity in the northbound direction, this lane would have to end somewhere, likely just east of Reserve Street. When the lane ends, traffic will merge causing an additional back up point. Additionally, it does not provide another route for traffic to use during the PM peak period which causes every vehicle to proceed through the Reserve Street/US 93 intersection. The Reserve Street/US 93 intersection does not have the capacity to accommodate this traffic. If the system is not split, using both Old 93 and US 93, it will result in saturated conditions throughout the study area and operational failure.
Comment # 35: Bob Knapp

(Bob Knapp) 4290 Wild Fox up in the Rattlesnake. So I'm quite sensitive to the single-lane or single-way out. That is something we are always concerned about. I agree totally the purpose of the money that went into this whole thing from the get-go is not being met. So I'm very opposed to anything that does not include a bridge over the Bitterroot. What this plan does, this 5A, is makes the traffic coming into Miller Creek worse. We have a lot of traffic in and out of the club. We have 450 playing members, we have probably 50 social members who are all families with little kids that come to use the pool in the summer, we have tournaments that bring in 100 to 200 people, and at the same time one day this summer Neil was able to also sandwich in a very large wedding of 240 people – that's a lot of traffic. On top of that we have 50 employees and we have a delivery truck from Cisco bringing in food. It is a small tractor trailer and he comes in and out every day and we have the beer truck that comes in every day; we drink a lot of beer out there. There is lots of traffic in and out. I would not like to see any of our members and certainly not the trucks exit into 30,000 cars per day and make a left turn leaving the club to go east on 93. They would have to be nuts and they would tie up traffic because they are just slow getting out. So they have to make a right turn to be practical. They can't turn left and go up in Missoula. No. They would go into Miller Creek and turn left on Briggs and go past the school with a lot of small children and you're bringing all this passenger and truck traffic into these grade-level residential streets. I think that is crazy. It hardly qualifies as a safe alternative.

We were definitely omitted throughout this process. I found the EIS on the web today and I noticed several things. There is one page for the Table of Contents for Appendix B and it lists the following public involvement information is not included in the Appendix but is available on the project website and it lists 19 public notices. Those that apply to us and 5A are numbers 18 and 19. Years went by before our involvement. Of course people objected to the bridge but not in the context of this as an alternative. So we were left out and snuck in at the last minute. I don't get a good feeling from that at all. There is little to no mention of the impact on the club – it is mentioned in passing, "There will be impact." I asked one of the engineers earlier today, we have a concrete bicycle path which is the lane closest to the Country Club property; our property line is pretty much the hedge. I asked what happens to the runoff from these five lanes of concrete and he said it runs off on the ground. I said well we spend half a million dollars per year maintaining the Country Club course and you are not going to run all that oil and stuff on the ground. He said well maybe we'll have a ditch. Well where does the ditch go? Well that hasn't been considered and someone mentioned they had been told a berm. My argument was not about the handling of the runoff but rather to point out the inadequacy of their study as it impacts the Country Club. I could go on but my time is up. Thank you.

Response to Comment # 35

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, G, H, and L.

* 51: The appropriation of federal funds for transportation improvements requires that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process be followed. NEPA requires that a range of reasonable alternatives be developed and evaluated, and reasonable alternatives cannot be constrained based on the intent of a Congressional appropriation. Three bridge alternatives were fully evaluated in the EIS. (Also refer to Response Issue B, under "Purpose of Congressional Earmark.")

* 52: Under the No-Action Alternative, lengthy delays and long queues are expected as the street system becomes saturated with traffic and movement becomes very difficult. Congested conditions on Old US 93 without capacity improvements, including left turn provisions, would make access to and from adjacent businesses difficult. Under all of the build alternatives, traffic operations for the major traffic movements would be improved over the No-Build Alternative. (Also refer to Response Issue F, under "Access Issues-Missoula Country Club, Businesses, Post Siding Road.")

* 53: You are correct that later in the project process, due to a change in the future traffic forecasts, the project study area was expanded to evaluate broader traffic deficiencies. This resulted in the improvements identified along Old US 93. The public was notified through a number of methods. The DEIS and the public review period are the formal required milestones to gain public input on the proposed alternatives.

* 54: Golf course holes eight and nine and the eighth and ninth hole tee boxes or fairways would not be impacted with the Old US 93 improvements. The greens, holes, tee boxes, or fairways were never impacted. The vegetative hedge will be preserved where possible. The modified typical section for Old US 93 eliminates the proposed drainage ditch and eight-foot shoulder and replaces it with an underground stormwater system with curb and gutter and a five-foot bicycle lane. (For more information, see Response Issue F, under "Modified Design of Old US 93 in FEIS to Avoid and Minimize Impacts, and Issue G, “Missoula Country Club Golf Course Holes Eight and Nine, Landscaping.”)
### Comments

**Comment # 36: Neil Michelson**

Neil Michelson 4005 Duncan Drive. I just first want to take a moment and thank all of the people who are here tonight to voice their concerns not just the people that I recognize as Missoula Country Club members. I'm the General Manager of the Missoula Country Club and the reason I want to come up and I don't want to take a lot of time because everyone has heard time and again what the concerns are. I just want to say that it is very important that all of the people in this room who have concerns share their concerns with their friends who will be impacted. I think clearly this is an opportunity, as somebody said, to do things right. It would be foolish to take this opportunity and loose it by doing something that would be sort of stop-gap. As we all know, the purpose of the EIS was to define a second access point. I think we really need to hold the process and their feet to the fire and make sure that is what happens. Thank you all for your support and I urge all of you to communicate with all your friends. It is not really a matter of if this will happen but certainly **when** and we can direct how it happens. Thank you very much.

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 36**

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D and G.
Comment # 37: Don Nordstrom

(Don Nordstrom) 4975 Lower Miller Creek. I have lived at Lower Miller Creek for over 30 years. When I first lived there only two or three cars per day went by and now there are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of cars and the building has just started. We have Missoula here, the Bitterroot coming in here, and we have Miller Creek coming in here (referring to graphic) and these are all squeezed together by the river. Because of the power of Wal-Mart we will soon have the Super Wal-Mart all squeezed together down into this little southwest corner of Missoula. We cannot continue to increase and increase and increase the traffic into this area and into this bottleneck. We will at some point need to have a bypass that goes directly west of Missoula up to the freeway probably along with a road down the east side of the Bitterroot. This will be necessary. We need to think now and do the alternative that will best connect up to this inevitable occurrence that I've just alluded to. Alternative 5A does none of that. Alternative 5A is basically like sprinkling magic highway dust on a small bottleneck; it will not help a thing. In my opinion if Alaska can spend $250 million to build a bridge to nowhere, we can have our bridge.

Response to Comment # 37

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, H, I, and O.
**Comment # 38: Woody Wilson**

(Woody Wilson) 2768 Carla Joe Lane. I'm a recent member of Upper Miller Creek but I've lived there long enough to know there are problems there. I do agree with all that has been said thus far. Just north of Carla Joe Lane on down to St. Thomas there is a tremendous amount of land that has been surveyed for development, so the problem is going to increase right in that area. I lived there long enough to know, I go down and turn onto Upper Miller Creek and go down the hill. The thing I don't like is the speed, they get to traveling about 55-60 mph and they come to the traffic pattern down below at 35 mph. If there was a light at the Y junction, as they go down the hill the congestion gets worse and with a light back up at the Y is going to get backed up. There is something that has to be done about regulating the speed. Other than I have no more comments but I agree with what's been said.

**Response to Comment # 38**

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters H, I, K.
Comment # 39: Rick Snowden

(Rick Snowden) 2836 Carla Joe Lane, prior to that I lived at 6005 April Lane in the Lower Miller Creek area, so I’m familiar with that part of town and have been for quite a long time. I am a Missoula Country Club Member; that ground has been well covered. I’m also the General Manager of Bitterroot Motors and I have some real concerns about the project. We have over 100 employees; we have an untold number of customers around the neighborhood of 150 to 200 per day coming in and out of the store as well as technicians taking cars on test drives after repair. Old Highway 93 serves as a very safe access out for us. If all those people were to try and go in and out of the front of the store there would be a lot of accidents. That road behind us, the traffic is much lighter now and speeds are much lower. It’s built up over the years but it is still manageable. With what I see here, we will still have a lot of high speed traffic in front of the store and now we will have a lot of high speed traffic behind the store. We had one severe accident this summer and I can see a lot more coming. We enjoy about 40-50-60 parking spaces that are actually on easement land; it is not Bitterroot Motors land. We would have to give those up. What I see is a lot of danger for us. I’m speaking very immediately; this isn’t a long-range view, this is tomorrow. If this happens, we are going to be looking at this every day.

The one other safety feature that disturbs me, we have large convoy trucks routinely and currently they use that back road very safely to off-load vehicles. When a driver isn’t aware of that space back there, we’ve had on occasion drivers parking in front, which there is room to do and it is legal but again the speed of the traffic in front of the store and visibility issues of off-loading large numbers of vehicles every day is a concern. If we lose that space behind us, we will have a problem that will have to be taken someplace else, which is a small problem and it’s our problem but it is a safety issue which should be taken into account. There is a cost benefit in every decision you make and I’m sure there are some benefits to what you’re proposing taking some of that traffic on that road. In my experience in living up Miller Creek it seems to me a great deal of the problem is right at the intersection. It could be managed from the light back up to Briggs without another light at Briggs simply with more lanes and better light management, you can disperse the cars. There is nothing that can be done about all the cars that are coming down without another alternate exit. So those are some minor points.

I would also like to say that I’ve played golf at Larchmont ever since that course opened and all the golfers I don’t think would appreciate any more traffic that you are proposing. There is no overriding benefit for this compared to the cost.

Response to Comment # 39

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, G, I, and K.

* 55: All build alternatives include improvements to Old US 93 that will eliminate the Bitterroot off loading area. Improved driveways with large turning radii can be provided to allow trucks to enter onto your property for off loading if there is available space. Otherwise, off loading would need to occur in the legally available area in front of your business.

* 56: See Section 2.6.2.6 of the DEIS/FEIS for a detailed description of the Preferred Alternative. More lanes from Briggs to the light are included in the current design(s). A light is warranted and necessary at Briggs to allow for safe left and right turns onto Miller Creek Road. The light provides the additional benefit of a protected crossing of Miller Creek Road for pedestrians and bicyclists.
Comment # 40: Mike Walker

(Mike Walker) 4830 Jaiden Lane. I’m here tonight basically feeling a triple whammy, so to speak, as a homeowner at Linda Vista, I’m also a parent with two kids going to school at Cold Springs, and a member of the Missoula Country Club. I don’t know that it can get a whole lot worse. Everything that has been said so far I concur with even with the gentleman that lives across the river that really doesn’t want an interchange going in his backyard. I think everything has to be thought out but with growth it is going to be give and take in all directions and somebody is going to suffer whether it’s an expressway going through the Big Flat or what is proposed here today.

To get right down to where it started with Webb Harrington, my main concern chiefly is the safety of my kids and Cold Springs right now is a beautiful little neighborhood school that we choose this area to live in for these reasons. We’ve lived there since 1996 and I’ve watched the traffic grow and there are definitely safety issues with the school without a doubt. Last Tuesday there was an ice cream social and I would venture to say there were 70 to 75 cars parked along Briggs and that is how you access the school for a function. I coach soccer with my kids, we practice regularly at the school five nights a week and on Saturday and once again we have the same issues – accessing the school and unloading kids to play sports. That is through the YMCA program; it has nothing to do with the public school system. So when we moved into the neighborhood, I kind of envisioned the kids riding their bikes to school, which if you live there, there is no way in hell ... I see somebody riding their bike about once a day and it scares the duff out of me as I drive by them. Obviously the road needs to widen. What’s proposed is beyond the scope of what’s needed.

Speaking from a Country Club standpoint, the 93 thing should just be pulled out of it. It wasn’t in the original scope of it and really it is just generally a bad idea to put up a light on Reserve there.

As a homeowner if you rode to work with me a couple of weeks, you would realize that this is a waste of $20 million. The traffic already backs up to the Y where the cars intermittently let each other out and to put a light there would simply back it up for several miles which in the winter would be a pretty massive safety concern. All of that I would venture to guess isn’t in that six inch thick document and it should just be started over and re-thought out from the beginning.

Response to Comment # 40

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, G, H, and L.
Comment # 41: Andy Shott

(Andy Shott) 336 Connell, Missoula, Montana, and I'll get back to that in a minute. I don't mind repeating a lot of what's been said because I think it is real important that you hear it. I'm a member of the Missoula Country Club. I don't know if you know about the Missoula Country Club or if you've been out there, but it is one of the great walking courses in the state and in the area that I've ever been on. In the 1930s the first grass green in Montana was built there. It is built in a relatively small space and there is no room to expand it. All over the country they are expanding golf courses, this one is a classic, small, easily walked course and I guarantee you that if what is proposed is done to Old Highway 93, this course will be gone and wiped away forever. There is no way to mitigate it; there is no room for it. I think as far as where Old Highway 93 and Lower Miller Creek and Highway 93 meet up, and where Reserve Street and Old Highway 93, both ends are Old Highway 93 there, I think it is absolutely true with the growth and the amount of traffic that is going to be going through that area, you are going to end up with something that is like Mullan and Reserve which was totally over-used from the very minute it was built and is a total disaster and there is no way around it and no way to stop it, and you will have done a whole lot of damage to Bitterroot Motors and other businesses along there. You will have destroyed a Country Club and you will have created a huge problem which does not mitigate what you are trying to do.

Finally I said I was going to get back to what my address is. My address is 336 Connell because I once talked to my wife about moving up the Rattlesnake and she said no way because some time there is going to be a fire and there is only one way out of there. And that is the same problem you have with Miller Creek. When you have this huge thing with only one way out of Miller Creek, sometime there is going to be a disaster and if you don't plan for it now with another bridge, then that disaster is going to be greater than you can ever imagine. We don't know when it will happen, but if it isn't planned for now, then you are going to remember it or somebody will remember that you were told this was going to happen. It is not going to be great having to build another bridge but that is what was originally talked about and that is really what is needed – another way out of Miller Creek to prevent an even greater disaster from fire.

Response to Comment # 41

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, E, F, G, H, and I.
Comment # 42: John Davries

(John Davries) 401 Dearborn, Missoula, Montana 59801. At the risk of a little overkill I too am a member of the Missoula Country Club. Having lived in this community for 40 years and have been a member for 37 years and served as its president at least three times and on the Board of Directors an equal number of times. So it is an organization I pay an awful lot of attention to and have participated in for a long time. My wife says too frequently, but nonetheless I still do. My basic concern is one of safety. We have a large junior golf program; we also have a fairly large swimming program. One thing about the Country Club Golf Course is that everybody is time conscience and then line conscience because everybody has a tee time. We have approximately 30,000 rounds per year played on that golf course so there are an awful lot of people entering and exiting that golf course. An awful lot of times there are women taking their kids to swimming lessons and to junior golf, and let me tell you the more cars you pack on 93 the riskier the drivers will become because if there is a little gap they will try and sneak in and get in particularly if there is only one way to go and that is exactly what is going to happen. So we don't have a great situation now but, let me tell you, we will create a very dangerous situation if we adhere to the existing proposed plan. There are a lot of other things I could talk about, but everybody has covered them well and with that I'll say amen.

Response to Comment # 42

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters F and G.
Comment # 43: Dick Haines

(Dick Haines) 5935 Saint Francis Drive. One of the reasons I'm interested in all of this is I'm a Councilman from this area too. Craig, I think you have a couple of problems with this. One is I think there has been a monumental shift from the purpose of this EIS over to something other than what the original purpose was. As I understand it, the second exit was one of the reasons for doing all of this and I don't see it in there now. While I feel very strongly that Miller Creek is going to need something done to it, I don't think you are even planning in the Preferred Alternative is going to answer that. I think you've heard enough about that tonight so I won't talk any more about it.

What I think is that you need the Preferred Alternative highly modified but I think we also need something else and it is not 3B, the Blue Mountain Road because there are enough problems there. I think you've been over that road and I've talked to some of the state highway department people and I don't know how you would ever squeeze in a road between the mountains and the river and the irrigation ditch and everything else. I know that you couldn't do it for anything reasonable in terms of cost. So what I think you need to do besides do something to Miller Creek is we need Alternative 2B. It is north and basically undeveloped land; it would put people across the river; and most of all and you've heard me on this theme song before, it could be the start of the western bypass. I just wonder how much longer the FHWA and the Montana Department of Transportation and Missoula County and to some extent the City of Missoula can keep squirming away from dealing with that issue. As I understand it we have something like 91 subdivisions coming on line between Missoula and Hamilton and we have now around 35,000 cars per day, so it's not going to get any easier. I don't think Brooks and Reserve all by themselves are the answer unless you want to make a seven or eight lane road out of Reserve Street. The bypass around the west end of town also to me is not necessarily a bypass but it is a good way to access the City of Missoula and that would work, not only for people coming out of the Ravalli County but people coming from Lake County and all that because it would cut across Seventh, South, Broadway, and all those east-west streets which mean two or three exits going up through there. People coming into town for business, for their jobs, or for whatever reasons are going to have to access Missoula and it would make it much easier to handle that traffic. Right now we are having a big hullabaloo over the traffic on Arthur, well that traffic wouldn't have to exit there to come on through on the freeway and go on north or south or come into town if they want to do it. It would be much easier to do that and it would take that issue off the books too. I would really like to see this looked at.

To paraphrase this there is an old saying, how do you eat an elephant – one bite at a time. Well when you are dealing with this issue, it pays to walk around the critic before you grab hold of the thing and start gnawing on it. I think you've got to look at how big the job is, what all the things are that are connected – I see the traffic from Ravalli County, the traffic from Lake County, the traffic from Mineral County, the traffic coming out of Miller Creek which is going to be enormous, all dealing with some of the same issues. I don't think we can take one particular part of it and say we are going to just build a bridge or just build the Miller Creek change. I think we have to look at the whole transportation system around Missoula. We've got four agencies in there that have been very reluctant to do that. I don't know how much longer everybody can bury their head in the sand and get away from dealing with it.

Response to Comment # 43

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, H, and O.
Comment # 44: Gene Peterson

(Gene Peterson) 3320 Bancroft, Missoula, Montana. I didn't want to speak because when you criticize someone, it means you loose a friend and I need all the Christmas cards I can get and at my age I need six people to help lift the basket. Friends, you should be embarrassed at this presentation. The City, the County, the State, and the Federal engineers and the Department of Transportation have so horribly messed this up. I've never been to a hearing and I've been to a lot, where it is 100% against. Obviously you didn't talk to anybody. You haven't done your job. The best predictor of the future is to look at the past; it took us probably 20 years to fund and plan Reserve Street, and Reserve Street was inadequate from the first year and we now have the most dangerous intersection at Reserve and Mullan that has been built in the State. I live on Bancroft and come up at 7:45 in the morning on 39th Street. 39th Street at the top of the hill at Stevens is solid cars all the way to Wal-Mart. At 5:30 I'm the other way and at the top of the hill it is solid cars back to the golf course at the University and those are one lane. I noticed the fire department at Russell – how can the fire department get out of there and go to any kind of emergency up or down 39th and we spent all that money. Broadway is another one for you. That is bad planning; we can't have it! This is an example here – you can't run another street parallel to 93 and make another 93 and put a stop light at Briggs. That is just a really, really bad plan! So I think you can get an idea of what is happening here. You will be unhappy with me for criticizing but Bill Wickman used to do a TV ad that said "if that guy worked for me, he wouldn't work for me." That is what is happening here. My final question will be, are all of the engineers disgruntled Bobcats?

Response to Comment # 44

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, F, H, and I.
Comment # 45: Hal Ort

(Hal Ort) 550 Big Flat Road, which is about a quarter mile up from the intersection with Riverside Road which is just the other side of McClay Bridge. I was pleased that Charlie Brown reminded me about what went on – he was right, there were a couple of meetings where he was lucky to get out alive. Then Dick Haines reminded us about the things we considered when we talked about a bridge at Blue Mountain Road. I don’t know if you all have traveled down Blue Mountain Road from 93 but if you think you are going to dump a bunch of traffic from 93 onto Blue Mountain Road, forget it. That traffic goes over a one lane bridge which goes in front of Target Range School which goes down South Avenue and past a whole bunch of private residences and churches and things. It’s good that it came up again because you may have forgotten that. Then I look at this other alternative which isn’t going to work either. When it all started I got a little perturbed and I can sympathize with the Country Club people on that because this thing is growing. We just found out about it and found out that the study area didn’t even include outside the Bitterroot River. So we weren’t included in the study area until we said, “you think this is not going to have an impact on us?” Things got changed and they started including it in the study area just like the Old 93 – they go into that and they don’t even let the Country Club know that they are now in the study area. I think you’ve got to do some learning here because you are making the same mistakes you made to begin with. I just want to make sure you don’t forget all the things we found when we considered that bridge leading traffic onto Blue Mountain Road. That is not a road that is going to take a lot of traffic and I looked at the traffic forecast, at that time I really questioned it, now before we’ve done anything except paved Blue Mountain Road, the traffic down Big Flat Road and Blue Mountain Road going across a one-lane bridge – traffic now at rush hour stacks up on either side of McClay Bridge. If you lead more traffic on, the kids at Target Range School are going to be put into jeopardy. So forget that alternative too.

Response to Comment # 45

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, and F.
Comment # 46: Dan Cederberg

(Dan Cederberg) 6700 Driftwood, Missoula, MT, which is in Ravenwood which is just east of Linda Vista. I’ve lived up there for more than 23 years. Back in 1994 I worked on the Miller Creek Plan. I was actually Chairman of the Public Involvement Committee. At that time there were two things that were in the plan. One thing was that we needed a second egress from Miller Creek. That came out in the plan and I’ve got the plan here, and it is written into the plan. It was clear, there was consensus about that. The second thing was we needed something done now. We started in 1994 and we finished in 1997, we are now in 2006 and nothing has been done. Back then when we looked at it, the bridge at Blue Mountain Road was two to three million dollars to build. If I read the paper correctly, they are talking about $42 million now to do that alternative. My comment would be, let’s go back to what we did. We did that as a bunch of citizens for free back in 1994 to 1997 and we came up with an idea that would work. They’ve been studying this now and they’ve spent three million on the study and they are going to spend another two million. They are spending more on the study than what we could have built the bridge for back in 1997 and we could have been using the bridge for ten years. It is time to do what we said with this plan that had a lot of public involvement back in the 1990s. Let’s build the bridge at Blue Mountain Road; get it done; get our safety egress and do it as soon as we can before it costs us $100 million.

Response to Comment # 46

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, C, D, E, and O.

* 57: The $42 million planning level cost estimate in the Draft EIS for Alternative 3B includes construction, mobilization, right-of-way costs as well as a contingency factor. It is difficult to compare this cost with the cost you developed without knowing what your cost included.
Comment # 47: Fred Stuart

(Fred Stuart) 4675 South Avenue West. It is in the Target Range area so this is another one of those minority comments. I’m on the Board at Target Range Homeowners Association and we’ve gone on record as supporting the Preferred Alternative as being the alternative that best meets the purpose and need as it is currently stated. There are three bridge alternatives analyzed in this study so it is not like there hasn’t been a look at a bridge. My feeling is that growth and the impacts associated with growth are very hard and in Missoula we are all trying to deal with that. It is interesting to hear about Cold Springs School because as mentioned just a moment ago, in the Target Range area we have the same concern about the Target Range School, the high schools, and what is going to happen as far as traffic coming down South Avenue. So I think where the problems really get magnified is when there is a feeling of one community that the impacts are being transferred from one community over to another community. In looking back at 1993-97 when you were doing your study it was prior to a lot of the development that has taken place in Miller Creek. So what do we do about growth so that the impacts don’t affect everybody? I don’t think there is any simple answer; there really isn’t any simple answer. We’ve got kids at Cold Springs School, are they more or less important than kids at Target Range School? We’ve all got our own neighborhoods that we’re concerned about and care deeply about so it is really tough to try and figure out how to deal with the impacts that come with development and growth without impacting other people in other neighborhoods. So I’m just asking that we somehow try and balance those things in terms of impacts in one area versus impacts in another area.

From our perspective in the Target Range area, with our Board and with the purpose and need that is stated, we feel that the Preferred Alternative is the most efficient way of doing that but we certainly acknowledge the impacts associated with growth in the Miller Creek area and the difficulties there. So there is no easy answer, if there were, we wouldn’t be here.

Response to Comment # 47

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters I and L.

* 58: Thank you for your input regarding the Preferred Alternative.
### Comments

**Comment # 48: Paul B. Wilson**

(This comment letter was submitted and read aloud at the public hearing by Sarah Wilson and Karen Brakefield.)

October 17, 2006

Dear Planners,

This letter is in response to the Preferred Option plan for dealing with the incredible amounts of traffic now being funneled down Miller Creek Road because of the unbridled development that has been allowed to take place in the Miller Creek area over the last one and one-half decades. Literally thousands of new homes have been built in the Miller Creek area amounting in numbers to a city larger than Hamilton, Montana. This means that there are now tens of thousands of automobile trips passing out of Miller Creek Road onto Highway 93 that were not there previously.

For years we have been told that as a response to the privilege of being allowed to enjoy the profits from these years of unrestricted development, the developers would be ultimately be required to provide a new exit from the Miller Creek area by building a bridge across the Bitterroot River. Now we are being presented with an alternative plan that would place a four-lane thoroughfare, a new service street and two stoplights in the lower section of Miller Creek Road, presumably providing the ability for even increased thousands of vehicles to pass in front of our homes.

This plan is being proposed as the preferred plan since it is low impact and least expensive. I agree that it is low impact and least expensive for the developers, but it is certainly neither low impact nor least cost for the Miller Creek three homeowners who live between Briggs and Mabelle. Not only does it place a four-lane thoroughfare in front of their houses, but also drives a new service street through their front yards eradicating landscaping, destroying property values, and directing traffic right in front of their windows. Worse, this service street ends in an intersection with Old Miller Creek Road, New Miller Creek Road (the thoroughfare) and Briggs that could have only been planned in hell. Old Miller Creek Road and Briggs are funneled together only a few feet away from New Miller Creek Road in a manner that makes all of the traffic from the Mabelle area not only merge with that from Rio Vista but also do an immediate 180° turn onto New Miller Creek Road thoroughfare. I cannot imagine how this traffic flow can be managed, but I guess we people in the neighborhood are expected to sort it out somehow on our own—small cost compared to allowing developers to escape unscathed with their hordes of gold.

The truly tragic quality of this plan is that after all of the damage has been done to the quality of life of the three families, after the values of their properties have been inestimably lowered, and after their journey to work has been elevated from miserable to excruciatingly hazardous, the solution is only temporary. Within another decade, developers will have continued to build new homes increasing traffic sufficient to overwhelm even four lanes. At that point a bridge will have to be built anyway. But hey, with any kind of luck by that time the developers will have gotten out of Dodge, their vast profits will be safely tucked into Swiss bank accounts, and they will be sipping a cool one on a beach in Cancun. Of course, the bill will have to be paid by our children and us.

Sincerely,

Paul B. Wilson

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### Responses

**Response to Comment # 48**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, and H.

**Comment # 49:** We are aware that each lot in the Miller Creek area has been assessed for transportation improvements. The money collected is being held by the County in escrow and is currently approximately $1.7 million. The funds will be used by the County to make transportation improvements Miller Creek Road from the north "Y" to Briggs Street. These improvements are the No-Action Alternative improvements assumed along Miller Creek Road. The project is in the design stage with a contract to build expected next summer. The County and City are working on an inter-governmental agreement to use funds, since most of the land is in the City.
Comment # 50: Ken Barbian

(Ken Barbian) 5039 Geraldine Court which is in the Maloney Ranch area. I want to say first that I do not support the Preferred Alternative. I do support an alternate access route out of Miller Creek area. I also want to make a statement to a couple of the gentleman who spoke that were kind of in the minority, I was also a minority because my wife is a teacher at Target Range Elementary School and I spoke there when there was comment period about the bridge and I didn't get any applause. I was for the bridge. A lot of people on that side of Highway 93 are against a bypass. I think that is what they are very much concerned about.

I'm here to say that I think we need an alternate exit out of the Miller Creek area. I don't know where that bridge might be proposed or whether it would be connected to a bypass or not. I would probably be for Alternative 4C which is the Hayes Creek area. In line with the comments from the Target Range area I don't know if a bridge coming out of the Miller Creek area is going to affect traffic highly through that Target Range area. People have said that they would use McClay Bridge which is a one-lane bridge to try and get across to go up South Avenue. Bottom line, it is a difficult situation. Two communities are kind of opposing each other, but I'm living in the Miller Creek area and we need an alternate exit out.

Response to Comment # 50

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, and O.
Comment # 51: Kandi Matthew Jenkins

(Kandi Matthew Jenkins) 1211 Cooper Street. I’m running in House District 96. I’ve been involved in situations in Missoula since 1999 and I see that this situation is just like many we’ve had to deal with and that is the cart before the horse. Before they started developing up the Miller Creek area they should have had that exit area already designated so that people’s safety wouldn’t have to be compromised. The other thing, because I’m looking at the legislature, one of the things the legislators do is to worry about the money and how it is spent. I would hate to see one more penny spent on this survey of everybody’s tax dollars when you have already defined what you need as an access to get out of that area as a safety issue. So I hope they will build a bridge in one of the places that to me looks good, but I wouldn’t let them spend one more tax payer dollar. That is your dollar, that is my dollar, that’s somebody’s dollar and if they have spent all that money to give you what you didn’t want, don’t let them spend any more and make them do what you want them to do because you are paying for it. They should have done it a long time ago before they put those kids and families in jeopardy in Miller Creek. They already learned a lesson from Grant Creek and the Rattlesnake and they’ve been trying to figure out ways to deal with the safety issues up there. So make them do what you what you want them to do because you are paying the bill. I really think it’s been necessary for a long time and it’s just another cart-before-the-horse situation that we deal with in Missoula all the time.

Response to Comment # 51

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, E, and O.
Comment # 52: Kathy Ogren

(Kathy Ogren) 3495 Lorraine Drive, which is up on the hill. I have probably more interest than anyone in this because Alternative 5A ended up in Miller Creek and Alternative 3B the one big alternative in Blue Mountain where the big loop is – that is my property to the west of the Health Club. When you turn on the Preferred Alternative, that is my gas station on the corner and then next door is Bitterroot Motors. There are many safety issues but my main and only issue up here is a lack of planning by the government entities in this state. Williston, North Dakota, where I’m from, put a bypass around our little dinky town 45 years ago. We always pre-planned growth and acted accordingly. If you go to Minneapolis, every single thoroughfare has the giant breakers made out of concrete for their main roads to protect the neighborhoods from noise and so on. Several months ago I was in this very same room with probably some of the same planners and the State Transportation Board adopting their final plan for the road down to Lolo. That final plan did not include talking to any of the six businesses on the north side right past the Health Club where the accident sign is. Not one business had received a letter that their entrances were going to be closed. I personally walked and talked to all of them – and this was an adoption of a final plan. We don’t need to rehash Reserve Street. I lived in Frenchtown at the time and my husband worked at Bitterroot Motors and by the time they got done rehashing that, the two-lane was the cost of what the four-lane would have been originally proposed. So I’m just here to be in agreement with Dick Haines. Somewhere, somehow, sometime we have to realize we have to connect out to Highway 93 to the northern end of our city going up to Glacier and going out to Spokane. The sooner we plan that and pre-plan and do that, the better off everyone is going to be. To me this alternative is going to wipe out my parking spots that belong to the state anyway, that’s fine. It is going to create a lot of traffic but where is it going to go? It is going to go to Reserve Street. So we get to take a left and where is it going to go? It is going to go to the same place as when you were taking a left before – at least I believe. It is just going to go right down to where all those blocks are and right on down the road. We need some forethought, some long-term thinking. I’m so tired of a state that spends … if I try and regurgitate the millions we spent on Malfunction Junction, I would be sick – we could have had a Cadillac overpass. We need some long-term planning and something that is reasonable.

Response to Comment # 52

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters F and O.
Comment # 53: Margaret Churchwell

(Margaret Churchwell) 6720 Linda Vista Blvd. I have grandchildren that are going and have gone to the school here. To put a four-lane road there … when Wal-Mart started the main issue was the school and they kept after it and after it until they got the Wal-Mart there. What’s happened now is there is no planning in this city at all for roads. We have people coming around now to get away from Malfunction Junction and now they come up 39th Street. The people going to the Bitterroot because they don’t want to go through the stop light at Reserve, they are coming up through our neighborhood to go out onto Miller Creek so they can use the light there. Because we stopped them from going on 39th Street – we made a way so they can’t turn to the left there and can only turn right, so the only place they can go is up through the neighborhoods. If you see the long line of traffic on Briggs now to go up the Bitterroot, then what have we done? We’ve created this mess. You have to think about what you are doing. I go out Reserve to work and if I leave at 7:05 I can make it to work in 15 minutes, but if I leave later than that it takes me one half hour to get across this town and it isn’t that big. So you have to stop and think before you start building things. Malfunction Junction is a typical example of what happens in Missoula; they build something and it doesn’t work so people start taking alternate routes to get a round the city and then that causes more problems.

Response to Comment # 53

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, H, I, L, and O.
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<th>Comment # 54: Eileen Ort</th>
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<td>(Eileen Ort) 550 Big Flat Road. I would like to put a little influence on this. I do want to mention that I feel sorry for you from the standpoint of not having been notified. When the very first meeting came up about coming across Blue Mountain Road our area had no notification. We only heard of it by word of mouth and, yes, we were quite angry because there is a whole area, ten miles of open area from 93 heading west and we were very concerned so we were very active. We are still in the running in many ways in that area. One lady just spoke about people coming through her area on 39th Street, we have exactly the same thing coming off Reserve Street, coming off at 3rd coming across the single lane bridge, going on River Pines Road and then heading out to 93 because people don’t want to go through the lights. They are also heading out Blue Mountain Road and Big Flat Road, Mullan, so we are getting a tremendous traffic coming through Big Flat Road which is a very, very narrow road and very dangerous in the wintertime. We all have our pet anxiety about who is going to come through and put in bridges, who is not going to have bridges, and who is going to have access to the area. I feel we do need to get the City, the State, and the County to talk to all of us – get our roads built and then get the development. The development has been let to go wild. It is almost as if the County, the State and everybody are afraid of developers; just stand up to developers. Maybe there are state rules about it but still you can put in a moratorium until you get the infrastructure. We are all affected. I hate to see Miller Creek feeling that the people over on Big Flat Road don’t want you to have access out. Well we do, we want access out. The next place that is going to be hit by development wants access out and the only people who can give us any kind of a plan happens to be the State, the County, the City. Get them to work with us please.</td>
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(Ken Rolfe) 4825 Lower Miller Creek Road. Our neighbors and ourselves have been in this process for well onto 12 years. I recall a few years ago when the Target Range people were included in the discussions and we welcomed them with open arms and I would really like to welcome the members of the Missoula Country Club for their involvement. We need all the support we can get and we appreciate your support. I support the bridge.

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letter D.
Comment # 56: Robert Cole

(Robert Cole) 4805 Miller Creek Road. I was a little disappointed that the Target Range organization went along with Alternative Road just because I would hate one of them have to empty their whole area just on South Avenue or just on 3rd Street. It wouldn’t be fair to them and it isn’t fair to us. I would like them to say, maybe choose Alternative 2B - that doesn’t bring the bridge across to Blue Mountain. Yes it might connect to a bypass sometime but not for a long, long time. Like everybody has said the money and getting the state and everybody moving, it probably wouldn’t ever happen unfortunately. I really think we need to get together, everybody has to get together and talk to each other and figure out what is best for everybody in certain situations. Target Range, I hope you never go into the City. I’m not going to come up and tell you that you shouldn’t be going into the city so you can get sewers. Please don’t tell us that this plan is best for us just because you don’t want it. The bridge is what we need, what we want, and come talk to us before you make decisions for these people through your influence.

Response to Comment # 56

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letter D.
Comment # 57: Carl Thompson

(Carl Thompson) 3221 Helena Drive. This is going to be a little bit off the subject of the night but there have been a lot of comments about the lack of planning and so on in the community from a transportation point of view. I can tell you since I've been part of it for a long time, there are opportunities for all of us to participate in the transportation plans for the community. I do know that we have in the last two transportation plans we've tried to develop, we went in with the premise to try and develop and improve the arterial and collector systems throughout the community and also to look at new arterial systems that could go in and work with the community. What happened on those transportation plans is that very well organized, well spoken minority people came out and high-jacked the process and we ended up with a real diverse kind of a neighborhood traffic control transportation plan that never did address the big picture for the community. We are seeing a lesson of that today and we are going to see it in the future, but I would like to invite all of you with interest to look for the next transportation plan and participate in it. That is where things come together. It is not what happens today it is what is going to happen in ten years. But you have to be part of the planning process and speak up and not allow the plans to get diverted by little special interests that don’t see the whole community and the whole community needs. Your work is great but I really disagree with the Preferred Alternative.

Response to Comment # 57

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<td>(Don Perisini) 4800 Evergreen Road. We live north of the river and we felt from the beginning that Miller Creek Road had to be upgraded. I agree with you people that this is way more than what seems to be called for. The bridge across the river, I understand your point. Most of us north of the river wouldn't have any problem with Alternative 2B – that would be the bridge that crosses over pretty much the center of the population in Miller Creek right now. I believe that if there is ever going to be a study made and a plan to travel across this valley on Highway 93 to really relieve traffic, I believe Alternative 2B is probably in the right vicinity. That again is like putting the cart before the horse. In other words we should have a plan and then put the bridge in. I think that is what we've maintained all the time. Blue Mountain Road crossing is not the right one. Blue Mountain Road is the crossing they picked in 1994 without talking to anybody – a few people picked. I believe that as a taxpayer it has lots and lots of problems because eventually if you are going to make a bypass out of Blue Mountain Big Flat Road, there is just a tremendous amount of cost. So if a bridge goes in it should in and tie into something that would solve the transportation problems down the road and I think Alternative 2B is the right spot and there are a lot of people that I've talked to that believe the same thing.</td>
<td>Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, F, and O.</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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<td><strong>Comment # 59: James Bullock</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 59</strong></td>
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<td>(James Bullock) 2615 Cardinal Drive, Missoula, MT. I want to comment on Alternative 5A which is the Preferred Alternative. It looks to me that we are going to have an area that looks like a Christmas tree lit up with traffic lights. I don’t think that is the alternative we want right now other than the traffic lights and the new route around Highway 93 which obviously that section of road is going to have to be upgraded. I think this is a short-sighted solution to a problem that is long range. I really think we need another exit out of Upper and Lower Miller Creek to Highway 93. I don’t think that Lower Miller Creek Road and Highway 93 is going to be the solution. Secondary to that I know that Wal-Mart is going to put in a super store and the traffic is going to increase there. You know to a lot of people, and to the state highway department maybe it looks great, but we live in the neighborhood, traffic is getting congested, and I don’t think this is the solution. I’ll go on record with that. Thank you.</td>
<td>Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, and H.</td>
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**Comment # 60: Brad Dantic**

(Brad Dantic) 4019 Bellecrest Drive, Missoula, MT 59801. I am commenting in part because this year I am the President of the Missoula Country Club and this year, 2006, I realized that some alternatives were being considered for the Draft EIS that were going to have a dramatic negative effect on the Country Club.

We originally feel that we were not afforded the opportunity to participate in the EIS process, the NEPA process. We feel that way because, in part, of the original description of the study area as you go through all the public information. First you go the Federal Register. The Federal Register says that the study area begins near the intersection of Miller Creek Road and US 93 and there is a description of the study area. A description of the study area is also included in Newsletter No. 1 that was sent to area residents in March of 2003. The Missoula Country Club was not included in that mailing. The published notice of a hearing in March of 2003 and again while the notice was published in the Missoulian the boundaries that area described in the notice did not include Old Highway 93. So based on that notice we had no reason to comment because our area was not impacted by the NEPA process and the Environmental Impact Statement. Then at a public scoping meeting held on March 26, 2003, there was a question – question number 12 in the list of questions is located on page 3 of 6 and says, “How was the study area boundary established?” The answer given by the Federal Highway Administration is that the purpose and need of this project is to provide a second access to Highway 93 then they describe how the boundaries were established. The reasonable conclusion of that Q & A and the published notice is that the intent was always to identify a second access point into the Miller Creek area. Again the boundary area excluded Old Highway 93.

In May of 2003 the FHWA sent out a public information packet and the cover page of the information packet shows a visual depiction of the study area and Old Highway 93 is excluded from the project area. Therefore, we had no reason to comment or become concerned at that point about what was being proposed which was a second access point to the Miller Creek area – a bridge across the Bitterroot River.

Then at a public workshop held on May 23, 2003, question number 11, which is on 3 of 6, says, “What is the plan to improve capacity or alternative capacity of Brooks and Reserve Streets?” The Federal Highway Administration’s answer was, “modifications to Brooks and Reserve Streets including the intersection of those two highway segments are beyond the scope of this project.” So again, based on information provided by the FHWA, we had no reason to believe that we were going to be affected by this project because, in the Federal Highway Administration’s own words, it was beyond the scope of the project. Again on page 5 of 6 of that question, “what is the plan for directing all of the traffic coming off of this project onto Brooks and Reserve Streets?” Again, the FHWA said, “modifications to Brooks and Reserve Streets including the intersection of these two highway segments are beyond the scope of the project.” So again, based on those answers, there was no

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**Response to Comment # 60**

Responses to this comment can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, G, D, and E.

* 59: Golf course holes eight and nine and the eighth and ninth hole tee boxes or fairways would not be impacted with the Old US 93 improvements. The greens, holes, tee boxes, or fairways were never impacted. The vegetative hedge will be preserved where possible (see also Response Issues F and G).

* 60: Publication of the DEIS and public review period is the formal milestone in the NEPA process where project findings are provided to the public and the public is given the opportunity to review and provide comment on the project proposal (see also Response Issue B). The Miller Creek Road EIS process began in early 2003 and is anticipated to conclude in early 2008. Inclusion of Old US 93 with Alternative 5A was presented at the June 2004 public meeting, and inclusion of Old US 93 with all build alternatives was presented at the March 2006 public meeting and in the DEIS, published in September 2006. According to the public meeting sign-in sheets, the Missoula Country Club General Manager, Neil Michelson, attended the March 2006 public meeting. At this meeting there was no apparent controversy related to the Old US 93 proposed improvements. Comments were received from Neil Michelson at the March 23, 2006 meeting regarding possible impacts to the golf course hedge.

* 61: Several different methods were employed for distributing project information and meeting announcements. See Response Issue B under “Public Notification” for details.
Comment # 60 (continued)

reason at that point for the Missoula Country Club to become involved in the process; we have not been affected by the process, we did not get notice of the process.

* 60

The FHWA sent out a second public opinion survey which indicates that the purpose of the Miller Creek Road project is to provide a safe secondary access to the Miller Creek area and access to US 93. They conducted a survey and I direct your attention to page 3 of the Summary of Key Results and figure two shows the areas surveyed. When you look at area three, it is absolutely unequivocally clear that Old Highway 93 was not included in the public opinion survey. Then the published notice for Public Workshop No. 4, which was held November 13, 2003, the public notice shows the study area of the project and again in November of 2003 the study area did not include Old Highway 93.

* 60

Turning to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement – the Draft EIS on page 1-4, figure 1-3, suddenly includes Old Highway 93 in the project area. So one of the objections we have to the content of the Draft EIS is that Figure 1-3 is inconsistent with the public record and the information that had been provided to the public throughout the EIS project, specifically Old Highway 93 was not part of the study area. No surveys had been done on the landowners affected by Old Highway 93, the Missoula Country Club has not been contacted, we were not on mailing lists nor were the commercial businesses located adjacent to Old Highway 93.

* 60

In addition to the study area, a second general comment we have is that we disagree with the spending of the Congressional earmark for expansion of surface arterial streets because the Congressional earmark was never for that purpose. The Congressional earmark was to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement to identify a second access point, an alternative for a second access to the Miller Creek area. That was the basis upon which the funds were solicited from Congress and that is the basis upon which Congress appropriated the $5 million. So we believe that any use of the $5 million for projects that do not include or are not consistent with the Congressional earmark, which is to provide a second access point to the Miller Creek area, are outside the scope of the Congressional earmark and is an inappropriate use of federal funds. In that regard I would direct your attention to a couple of public documents that are included in the public record and are included on the website of the Miller Creek Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The first public document that demonstrates this is a Q & A at a Public Scoping Meeting held on March 26, 2003. Question No. 15 asks, "please explain how the Congressional earmark can be spent and on what." The answer provided by the FHWA is that the earmarked funds can be spent on the Environmental Impact Statement and the preliminary design for a second access for Lower Miller Creek Road to US 93. Therefore we believe that it is an inappropriate use of the Congressional earmark to spend the funds for projects that do not include and are not directly related to a second access point to Miller Creek. In the Preferred Alternative 5A that is currently included in the Draft EIS does not include a second access point to the Miller Creek area and therefore any use of funds would be inconsistent with the Congressional earmark.

Response to Comment # 60 (continued)

* 62: The appropriation of federal funds for transportation improvements requires that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process be followed. NEPA requires that a range of reasonable alternatives be developed and evaluated, and reasonable alternatives cannot be constrained based on the intent of a Congressional appropriation. Three bridge alternatives were fully evaluated in the EIS. (Also refer to Response Issue B, under “Purpose of Congressional Appropriation.”)
Comment # 60 (continued)

Another way to illustrate how Old Highway 93 expansion is inconsistent with the proposal is to simply look at the Q&A for Public Meeting No. 2 held on May 21, 2003, Question No. 3 on page 1 of 6. There was a question raised about the Gharrett connector and it was bad for several reasons, one of which the FHWA said, “after a technical review of the Gharrett alternative or the Gharrett connector, the project team has determined that this alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project or the conditions stipulated in the funding earmark, i.e., a second access into the Miller Creek area.” The importance of this is that it demonstrates that even if the purpose and need is changed as the FHWA has done in this case – in the middle of the process they changed the purpose and need – even if you change the purpose and need it demonstrates that the conditions stipulated in the funding earmark is to provide a second access into the Miller Creek area. That is what has been explained to the public and that is the basis upon which the public was receiving information and providing public comment. So again, any use of the federal funds in a manner that does not provide a second access point is inconsistent with the Congressional earmark.

Finally, in regards to the appropriate use the Congressional earmark, there was a public meeting held on February 5, 2004. At that public meeting, page five of the minutes of that meeting shows that Dale Paulson of the Federal Highway Administration spoke at that meeting and said, “the first thing that happens of course is that you have to have a reason to do the job. This job came out of the fiscal year 2003 Appropriations Act. This says something like Miller Creek Road Preliminary Design EIA, well it is really an EIS but that is how it was stated in the document, in conjunction with that the application for those funds included a bridge across the river.” So it is clear that the funds were solicited in the application to build or construct a bridge across the river and provide a second access point to the Miller Creek area. The funds were solicited from Congress for that purpose and Congress awarded and appropriated the funds for that purpose. Again, this demonstrates that what is presented as the Preferred Alternative in the Environmental Impact Statement is inconsistent with the Congressional earmark.

In addition to those two general comments regarding the conditions stipulated for the Congressional earmark and a description of the study area, we believe generally that the Missoula Country Club was excluded from the process. Throughout the entire process for two years input was sought from the residents that resided in the Miller Creek area and the residents who resided in the Blue Mountain/Target Range area, but no input was sought from the Missoula Country Club or the commercial businesses that lie adjacent to Old Highway 93. Therefore, we think that the Draft EIS is lacking in information and many of the statements that are included have no basis. There is no factual data or information upon which the FHWA has made the statements that are included in the Draft EIS process. For example, the Environmental Summary on page ES-1 says “the NEPA process is to provide the general public and agency decision makers with all the relative information related to the impacts of the transportation actions considered.” Well, the Old Highway 93 is a significant part of this Draft EIS and the Federal Highway Administration has absolutely failed to solicit any information from the Missoula Country Club regarding any opinions, surveys, data they

Response to Comment # 60 (continued)

*63: The Miller Creek Road EIS process began in early 2003 and is anticipated to conclude in 2008. The project purpose and need was modified in June 2004. The appropriation of federal funds for transportation improvements requires that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process be followed. NEPA requires that a range of reasonable alternatives be developed and evaluated, and reasonable alternatives cannot be constrained based on the intent of a Congressional appropriation. Three bridge alternatives were fully evaluated in the EIS. (Also refer to Response Issue B, under "Purpose of Congressional Appropriation."
Comment # 60 (continued)

may have on its Country Club, any impacts it may have on its golf course and its membership. At
ES-13 it says, “No public parks or recreation sites would be impacted with any of the build
alternatives.” That is a blatantly false statement. The Missoula Country Club is a recreational site
and it is being proposed in this Draft EIS that they are not only going to impact us, they are going to
take some of our property, they are going to impact the tee-box, they are going to take some of our
hedge, they are going to take some of our entryway, and they are saying no recreation sites would
be impacted. That is not a true statement.

Additionally at ES-13 of the Draft EIS it says, “privately-owned Missoula Country Club would loose
some of the vegetation hedge along Old Highway 93 due to road widening.” That does not even begin
to cover the impacts that this project will have on the Missoula Country Club. It could
dramatically affect the eighth and ninth holes essentially rendering them unusable for liability reasons
and could turn our club into a 16-hole course. If our club is rendered a 16-hole course, you might as
well condemn the entire golf course because there are no 16-hole courses around the country.

In addition to understanding the impacts, please note that the Missoula Country Club sits on the
smallest acreage – it is a golf course that lies on the smallest acreage of any course in the
northwestern United States for an 18-hole golf course. We cannot afford to lose any more acreage,
we are already dangerously close in the proximity and the layout of the holes and we cannot afford to
redesign and lay holes closer to each other. So to expand Old Highway 93 and force relocations of
our existing holes would not work, it would create unsafe golf conditions for the remainder of the
course.

At ES-15 it says, “Noise impacts are comparable to the No Action Alternative.” We want to point out
is that this Draft EIS is tremendously lacking in any evaluation of noise impacts, air quality impacts,
on the outdoor recreation activities of the Missoula Country Club.

Response to Comment # 60 (continued)

* 64: The FEIS text has been modified to read that no public parks or
public recreation sites would be impacted with any of the build
alternatives.

* 65: As discussed in Issue G, holes eight and nine and the eighth and
ninth hole tee boxes or fairways would not be impacted with Old US 93
improvements as originally proposed in the DEIS or with the revised
design in the FEIS. The greens, holes, tee boxes, or fairways were never
impacted. From the existing driveway entrance along the southwest
property line toward US 93, approximately 30 feet of right-of-way would
be acquired from the Country Club to accommodate the additional turning
lanes at the Old US 93 and US 93 intersection. The area impacted is the
landscaped area adjacent to the parking lot and entrance road. No impacts
would occur to the parking lot. The only impact that would occur to the
Country Club along the southern property line east of the entrance road in
the area of holes 8 and 9 fairway and rough is to portions of the vegetative
hedge or gravel maintenance area. In order to accommodate the wider Old
US 93 typical section, an area of right-of-way approximately 250 feet long
by five feet wide would be acquired as permanent right-of-way. No
impacts to the 8th and 9th holes, fairways, or trees along the fairways
would occur. See additional explanation under Issue F, which includes a
graphic depicting impacts to the Missoula Country Club associated with the
modified Old US 93 design. This information has been clarified in the FEIS.

* 66: Old US 93 is not currently deficient, however it is key to solving
future traffic problems in the area. A bullet was added to the section
referenced to clarify this.
On page 2-1, we believe where you discuss the definition of purpose and need statement, "the project purpose and need were identified in the early project scoping process based on public and agency input." This is not a true statement. The public information shows that the modified purpose and need were identified in step four of the Environmental Impact Statement process, which is what I think it is the alternative evaluation where you identify alternatives and evaluate and assess the alternatives – that is when you modified the purpose and need. And what it appears to the public to be is that you modified the purpose and need to meet a newly developed agenda which was to eliminate the second access point.

*67: Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations stipulate that the purpose and need statement for an EIS should not be so narrow as to limit the reasonable alternatives. Therefore, based on public and agency input, the original purpose and need statement was revisited and it was determined it contained text that narrowly limited the range of alternatives to construction of a bridge. Based on that, the purpose and need statement was modified in June 2004 by eliminating language that contained a predetermined solution. This resulted in a broader range of alternatives to be identified and fully assessed that met the project purpose and need identified during the NEPA process. Refer to Response Issue B under "Change of Purpose and Need" for more information.

*68: In the DEIS the left-turn movement from Old US 93 to US 93 was eliminated. In the FEIS, that movement could be maintained during non-peak hours; however, complete restriction of this left-turn movement may be warranted in the future, at the discretion of MDT who has jurisdiction of US 93.

*69: Section 3.1.1, Existing Land Use, in the DEIS presents a broad overview of land use in the area to provide the reader with the project context. Specific businesses and private land owners are not identified. The Missoula Country Club is identified on Figure 3-1, Existing City of Missoula and Missoula County Zoning Classifications and discussed in Sections 3.18 and 4.18 as a recreation facility.

*70: Although the Missoula Country Club golf course is associated with historically significant events associated with the development of recreation in Missoula, in its current condition, the course lacks historical integrity. Numerous alterations have been made to the facility since the historical period, and the course no longer appears as it did after the 1949 expansion.

*71: This passage now includes references to both the Missoula Country Club and the Larchmont Golf Course.

*72: The page and table referenced in this comment actually occur in the Noise section of the DEIS. Noise Measurement location for Old US 93 (Site 9, shown on Table 3-20 and Figure 3-16 in the EIS) is a commercial area (Activity Category C) across the street and to the east of the Missoula Country Club. The measurement was used to validate the Traffic Noise Measurement.

Another illustration of how the Missoula Country Club has not been considered is at page 3-22 where they discuss Old US 93 and it is described as a two-lane urban collector that serves multiple businesses on the north side of Brooks Street and provides access to the Fort Missoula property. What it doesn't say is that it lies immediately adjacent to the Missoula Country Club and will have impacts on the Missoula Country Club.
Comment # 60 (continued)

entire north side of Old Highway 93 is recreation activity so therefore it only takes one other parcel of land like a motel that lies on the south side to make it predominantly a Class B category. We do not believe that in considering the air quality, that the type of use around the Missoula Country Club has been considered. In addition, there is no discussion and there were no measurement points placed at the tee box to number nine. What the Draft EIS proposes is that we are going to put 20,000 cars per day down Old Highway 93 and that new location and that new traffic is going to lie immediately adjacent to a tee box where there will be, at any one time, over 400 golfers in an outdoor activity standing less than ten feet from the roadway. We think that is going to have one of the highest impacts of air quality on outdoor recreation in the Missoula valley.

Finally we don't think generally that they have considered the noise and the effects it is going to have on the Missoula Country Club. We don't believe the land use impacts are accurate. The Missoula Country Club is not a commercial operation; it is a not-for-profit private organization to provide recreational opportunities for its members and invited guests. We don't believe the Federal Highway Administration has done a good job of addressing the social impacts; there is no discussion of the impact to the Missoula Country Club. We do not believe the expansion of Old Highway 93 preserves the character of the neighborhood. We do not believe it has adequately addressed the right-of-way impacts on the Missoula Country Club because once that property is taken and it affects the holes on the golf course, it is going to turn it into a 16-hole golf course and those right-of-way impacts are not going to be a small sum of money. If you impact two holes of the Missoula Country Club, you've effectively condemned the entire golf course and we assess that impact at more than $50 million. We don't believe that the Federal Highway Administration has any data to support its conclusions that those are the impacts on the right-of-way acquisition. We don't believe it addresses the visual impacts and the long history of the hedge that has existed at the Missoula Country Club and many of the old trees that exist. We don't believe the Draft EIS adequately addresses the parks and recreation impacts on the Missoula Country Club.

* 72
In general it is apparent that the expansion of Old Highway 93 occurred at the eleventh hour of the process after the scoping and data collection had already occurred. There was no ability for the FHWA, at that point, to gather the data to assess the impacts it is going to have on the Missoula Country Club and the surrounding commercial businesses. For that reason the Draft EIS and the Preferred Alternative 5A should be rejected.

Response to Comment # 60 (continued)

Model (TNM). Although Noise Measurement Site 9 is an Activity Category “C,” the noise impact criteria used to evaluate impacts at the Country Club was a Category “B” “recreation area” level of 66 dBA. Noise levels at the Missoula Country Club for all project alternatives are predicted to be below the noise impact criteria for Category “B” resources. This was clarified in Section 4.8.2 of the FEIS. Refer to Response Issue G, under “Noise and Visual” for more information.

* 73: The Miller Creek Road EIS process began in early 2003. Inclusion of Old US 93 with Alternative 5A occurred in mid-2004. During the remainder of 2004 and 2005 updated traffic volumes were obtained and traffic modeling was performed indicating that traffic flow along primary roadways would be improved by including Old US 93 with all the build alternatives. Inclusion of Old US 93 with all the build alternatives was presented in March 2006 and in the DEIS published in September 2006. The Miller Creek Road EIS process is anticipated to be completed in early 2008. Impacts for all the build alternatives, as well as the No-Action Alternative, were fully assessed in the DEIS.
Comment # 61: Jon Wilkins

*(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)*

* 74: I am in favor of improving Miller Creek Road. I would like to see a 5-lane center turning lane. I would like to keep the bridge an option down the road.

Jon Wilkins
501 Fairview
Missoula, MT
406-543-7952
jonview@msn.com

Response to Comment # 61

* 74: All the build alternatives include a center turning lane on Miller Creek Road between US 93 and Briggs. However, a center turning lane is not proposed on Miller Creek Road between Briggs Street and Lower Miller Creek Road. Left turns into adjacent homes will need to be made from the interior through lane. The volume of left turn movements into the adjacent homes is too low to justify the cost and property impacts that would result from the added roadway width.

In addition, construction of the Preferred Alternative does not preclude construction of a bridge in the future.
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<td><strong>Comment # 62: John Hendrickson</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>75</em> I want Miller Creek Road to be improved especially the intersection at Brooks Street to 5 lanes. But I want the bridge option to remain a viable option at a later when monies become available. The bridge will be needed at a later time and it may be combined with the bypass option.&lt;br&gt;John Hendrickson&lt;br&gt;1365 Starwood Drive&lt;br&gt;Missoula, MT&lt;br&gt;406-728-1918</td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 62</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>75</em> For Alternative 5A, the Preferred Alternative, Miller Creek Road is proposed to be a 5-lane section at its intersection with Brooks Street. The roadway section at Brooks includes two-through lanes in each direction and a left turn left at the intersection. In addition, construction of the Preferred Alternative will not preclude construction of a bridge in the future.</td>
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## Comments

**Comment # 63: Terry Johnson**

*(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)*

A second access to this area will be a necessity in the future and so I hope that a bridge at any of the three locations be seriously considered. It will only be more expensive in the future.

If only Alternative 5A is considered, I don't understand the need to encourage people to use Old Hwy 93 and put another light at its juncture with Reserve Street. This is an added expense that could be put to a better use. And I emphasize that I am against another light on Reserve Street.

Terry Johnson  
4275 D J Drive  
Missoula, MT 59803  
406-251-9954

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## Responses

**Response to Comment # 63**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, and F.
Comments

Comment # 64: Ron Erickson

(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)

My background: (1) Commented on Miller Creek Plan; (2) Elected to state legislature, HD64, three times – that district included a precinct in Upper Miller Creek; (3) Member, Missoula Consolidated Planning Board 2004 to present; (4) Presently a candidate for HD93 which includes Precincts 43 and 11 in the impacted area.

My comments: there must be a second way in and out of Miller Creek home sites. Here’s why: (1) Promises made – the people who put together and passed the Miller Creek Plan said it ought to happen; (2) I have knocked on every door in Precincts 11 and 43 – their most important issue is access and egress; (3) there is a very specific traffic problem on Christian Drive – the 300 apartments whose residents stream out and into their development. The original planning counted on a second way out for them down Christian to the bridge. I do not claim to know the best site for a bridge, though the connection to Blue Mountain Road always seemed reasonable. But please think ahead 2025 isn’t far enough out. The bridge is needed now it will be needed more in 2025. By 2050 there may be more need, though frankly I have hope for rail linkage to Bitterroot, with a station at this bridge by then.

Ron Erickson
3250 Pattee Canyon
Missoula, MT 59801
406-549-4671
nancron@aol.com

Responses

Response to Comment # 64

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, and O.

* 76: Current and future population of the area was taken into consideration when developing alternatives and selecting the Preferred Alternative. Chapter 2.0 of the DEIS explains the screening and assessment of all alternatives based on the criteria listed in Section 2.3. Further, Section 2.7 of the DEIS provides the reasons that Alternative 5A was selected as the preferred alternative for best meeting the project purpose and need. In addition, the Preferred Alternative does not preclude a bridge being constructed in the future.
Comment # 65: Bernard Constantin

*Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility*

I support Preferred Alternative 5A. (1) It provides a drain and access to town to the traffic from Miller Creek area both north and south at a reasonable cost. (2) The other alternatives to the south do not seem to provide any significant advantage justifying their much higher costs. (In fact these bridges should be built further south to avoid breaking U.S. 93 traffic just before town). (3) Except for 4C the other alternatives will require much higher costs to go anywhere and provide real relief to traffic.

Bernard Constantin
610 Big Flat Road
Missoula, MT 59804
406-721-6333
berny@montana.com

Response to Comment # 65

* 77: Comment noted.*
Comment # 66: Mindy Mason

(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)

The (Preferred Alt.) is very unfriendly to bike commuters. It will be impossible to turn onto Post Siding Road from Old 93 coming from the west. It's hard to cross 3-4 lanes of traffic. A better thought is to make a bike path on the north side of Old 93 – not 2 bike lanes along old 93. The bike path could also connect to the Reserve Street path along the east side of the Larchmont golf course.

I think the bridge (any of the locations under several of the alternatives) location needs to be revisited. Another outlet for Miller Creek to 93 is sorely needed – all of the traffic should not be funneled to 93.

Mindy Mason
2515 Floral Court
Missoula, MT
406-251-5918

Response to Comment # 66

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F and D.
Comment # 67: Debra Odell

(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)

Whatever happened to the fact that Lloyd Twidt said the developers were going to pay for the bridge? This I heard Lloyd himself say at one of the first meetings a couple of years ago.
Debra Odell
3417 Eldora Lane
Missoula, Montana
406-251-5052
dccodell@oneweest.net

Response to Comment # 67

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter C.
## Comments

**Comment # 68: Ken Rolf**

*(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)*

I am sure that I am echoing the sentiments of most south Missoula residents when I say that, while the Miller Creek Y needs to be addressed, an alternative escape from Lower Miller Creek is still not considered as a major part of our solution. The smallest disaster in Lower Miller Creek would create a bottleneck such as the University of Montana after a Grizzly/Bobcat football game, has never seen! Build the bridge!

Ken Rolf  
4825 Lower Miller Creek Road  
Missoula, MT 59801  
406-240-7662

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## Responses

**Response to Comment # 68**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, E, F and H.

* 78: You are correct that a number of alternative configurations for the "Y" have been developed. None of the potential solutions reviewed during the alternatives development and analysis process were found to be as feasible as the intersection configuration shown in the EIS. The No-Action Alternative includes improvements at the "Y" intersection – Lower Miller Creek Road would be realigned at the north "Y" intersection to form a "T" intersection with a traffic signal. This is discussed in Section 2.6.1 of the DEIS and FEIS. This intersection reconfiguration is consistent with Alternative 5A - the Preferred Alternative.
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| **Comment # 69: Dan Conway**

*(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)*

By placing additional stop lights on Miller Creek Road at Briggs Street and at the Upper and Lower Miller Creek Y, drivers coming in from Upper Miller Creek and Linda Vista, Rodeo and other areas will turn at Gharrett to avoid the stop lights. Some are already doing this just to avoid the one light at 93. This will impact Gharrett Street which is not an ideal alternate route as I'm sure you realize. If another access to Lower Miller/Linda Vista and the developments west of Linda Vista cannot be constructed maybe the project should be scrapped altogether and left as is.

City bus routes up to Linda Vista and the surrounding areas would help reduce traffic.

Dan Conway
6880 Gharrett Street
Missoula, MT
406-251-5598
djconwawy@bresnan.net

| **Response to Comment # 69** |

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D and H.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Comment # 70: Blaise Hartman**<br><br>(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)<br><br>5A will be a complete failure – it will only create more gridlock to get out of Miller Creek and the new light at Old Miller Creek Road will create situations where the light at Brooks and Reserve will not clear. This will force more cars from 39th to Briggs to Miller Creek putting thousands more cars speeding past Cold Springs Schools. Maybe when a young child is killed in front of Cold Springs you will listen to the people who live here and have to deal with the mess you created. Of course, that will create another five years of engineering studies so everyone will be happy. Listen to the people who live here and have to deal with the final decision. We don’t need more gridlock along 39th Street and Broadway Diet. Go with 3B.  
Blaise Hartman  
6718 Kelsey Court  
Missoula, MT 59803  
406-251-2019 | **Response to Comment # 70**<br><br>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, H, and L. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 71: No name provided</strong> (Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)</td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 71</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;* 79: For all Build Alternatives, the proposed improvements to Miller Creek Road include a slightly modified access to Wal-Mart rather than a new access at Briggs. Closing the access from Miller Creek Road is not needed; however, it is recommended that left turn movements from this access be prohibited and only right-in and right-out turns be allowed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comment # 72: Glen Bumgardner

*(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)*

As I see the potential growth coming to fill the spaces that have already been seeing so many new homes being built – I wonder if the alternative plan is truly accurate in projecting growth in the Miller Creek area. Experts were very wrong in the forecast for Reserve St. – that it would be good enough to handle its traffic flow easily without problems and without over-capacity for 10 years. I have heard traffic managers/engineers saying the forecasts are hard to predict accurately. I see wording of adequate or acceptable for the least expensive and preferred plan and wonder if it’s really the “cheap plan.” Sooner or later we all know that cheap often costs more in the long run.

Glen Bumgardner
6205 St. Thomas Drive
Missoula, MT 59803
251-3764
bumgnt@bigsky.net

Response to Comment # 72

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters I and F.
Comment # 73: Larry Lambert

(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)

The preferred alternative, “5A,” does not address the original purpose which was to provide an alternative route to/from Hwy 93.
Alternate 5A will cause very serious life safety risks with children at Cold Springs School on Briggs St.
Alternate 5A will cause severe damage to the Missoula Country Club.
Alternate 2B seems to address all of the needs of the original purpose and has the least impact on the Blue Mountain area.
I support Alternative 2B.
Larry Lambert
4965 Jaiden Ln.
Missoula, MT 59803
406-251-9778
ilovebuffets@yahoo.com

Response to Comment # 73

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter A, B, D, G, and L.
Comment # 74: John Velk

(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)

The Missoula C.C. property & private business property “taken” by the Old 93 reconstruction will cost over $50 million dollars under the 4th Amendment. The Missoula C.C. can not move to nearby contiguous land and finding comparable land with mature trees will cost in excess of $45 million dollars. You need to factor this “cost” into your alternative and consider the lawsuits your flawed notice of this impact will spawn.

John Velk
PO Box 7791
Missoula, MT 59807
543-0909
Johnvelk@msn.com

Response to Comment # 74

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, and G.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 75: Bob Tutskey</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Retyped from handwritten comment sheet received at public hearing for improved legibility)&lt;br&gt;Opposed to “preferred alternative” because: 1. Does not address Miller Creek egress problems – only one exit from area in an emergency. 2. No EIS re impacts to Old Hwy 93 – such as noise, pollution and encroachment on Missoula Country Club land/golf holes. (3) this is a way to avoid confrontation with Blue Mtn. neighbors re a bridge over river at Blue Mtn. Rd.&lt;br&gt;Bob Tutskey&lt;br&gt;437 Plymouth&lt;br&gt;721-0668&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:bob@saltstudio.com">bob@saltstudio.com</a></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 75</strong>&lt;br&gt;Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, E, F, and G.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comment # 76: Penny Ritchie

TO: Craig Genuzinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena MT 59601

RE: Miller Road EIS

After spending nearly $3 million on studies, the FHA has come up with a proposal that not only
doesn’t solve the initial purpose for the project, that of providing a second access to US 93 from
Miller Road, but creates another unworkable “malfunction junction” in south Missoula.

The preferred alternative should be to do nothing until a project can be developed that works well
into Missoula’s future, one which will route US 93 through-traffic around or across Missoula on
a limited-access road instead of along the nightmare of Reserve Street. Bicycle access from the
Bitterroot Valley and the Miller Creek area should also be considered, as should mass transit
from the same area. Walmart may support this plan, but why do we need another Walmart
Superstore anyway??

Alternative 5 is nothing more than an expensive band-aid. The $13 million, which is sure to soar
as local business submit their claims, would be better-spent as part of a plan that looks to the
future. This money (yes, even if it costs $45 million) should be spent on a permanent fix. Build
a bridge, and build a by-pass, and fix Missoula’s traffic problems.

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Ritchie
PO Box 70
Florence MT 59833

cc: Max Baucus, Conrad Burns

Response to Comment # 76

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, C, D, H, and O.
Comment # 77: Bryan Hersman

From: Bryan Hersman [mailto:Hersbird@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 20, 2006 4:08 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Alternative 3B is best.

My name is Bryan Hersman, I live in the Lower Miller Creek area. I am a long time Missoula resident and an letter carrier for the post office. I am excited to see all the growth in the Missoula valley and especially in my neighborhood. I however think alternate 5A is not the best solution to current and especially future traffic problems. All the benefits in 5A are also included in the other proposals which include solutions to reduce the volume of traffic on Miller Creek Road and provide an alternate evacuation route for the area. I think the 3B is the best overall as it also eliminates a dangerous high speed signal light on Highway 93. Anything that adds a second access people will use is much better long term, but 2B would hurt flow on Highway 93 with the added light. 4C also looks like a good plan but lacks the added benefit of removing the light at Blue Mountain road that 3B accomplishes.

In common with all the proposals I feel the addition of a light at Highway 93 and Old Highway 93 is a bad idea. It will encourage more people to use the frontage road to bypass the already good Brooks and Reserve intersection, and cause backups on Reserve being so close to the existing light. That intersection already works better, moves more traffic quickly, then any other major intersection in town, so don't mess with a good thing.

The light on Briggs and Miller Creek is also a potential problem. It will encourage people to turn off Brooks at Reserve and use the side streets to get into the Miller Creek area. They already do that even with out the easy cut at Briggs. This puts them through two school zones, going faster then they should be trying to beat the rush, especially right past Cold Springs Elementary.
(406) 251-0458
Thank you for your considerations on this matter.
Bryan Hersman
3159 Lamoreux Ln.
Missoula, MT
59803

Response to Comment # 77

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, E, F, H, and L.
### Comments

**Comment # 78: Barbie & Don Creveling**

**From:** Barbie & Don Creveling [mailto:bwc@bigsky.net]

**Sent:** Thursday, September 21, 2006 7:44 AM

**To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.

**Subject:** Miller Creek Road EIS Comment

Mr. Genzlinger,

First off, thank you and your crew for all the hard work on this project. As with all projects like this only half the people will be pleased and the others will scream bloody murder.

I believe the last hearing I attended was part of the “Analysis of Alternatives” phase and at that time learned of the different options being considered. The chosen alternative should be as long term solution as can be made.

With a long term view in mind, alternative **3B Blue Mountain Road is and will absolutely be needed**. The larger problem is not Miller Creek Road it is HiWay 93 and its Bitterroot Traffic onto Reserve. The next improvement will need to be the 5A improvement of Lower Miller Creek.

By emphasizing only 5A you will only be delaying the inevitable building of a Bridget and Bypass at and on Blue Mountain Road. Fix it now instead of simply bouncing of the problem.

Don Creveling
4781 Scott Allen Drive

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 78**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, and F.

*80: Construction of Alternative 5A (the Preferred Alternative) does not preclude construction of a bridge in the future.*
Comment # 79: Thomas Fink

**From:** Thomas Fink [mailto:TFink@washcorp.com]
**Sent:** Thursday, September 21, 2006 8:13 AM
**To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
**Subject:** Miller Creek EIS

Not sure why option 3B is not the preferred alternative. Option 5A appears to be a short term fix for a long term problem. It looks like revising the purpose and need lowered project expectations enough that 5A became a cheaper and easier acceptable alternative.

---

Response to Comment # 79

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, and F.
Comment # 80: Susan Reneau

From: Susan Reneau [mailto:bluemountain@montana.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2006 9:09 AM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.; 'Bill Carey'
Cc: 'Susan Reneau'
Subject: I will be hunting during the Miller Creek meeting but submit comments now

Dear Carter Burgess and Montana Dept. of Transportation:

* 81: First of all, this meeting was scheduled in the middle of hunting season, so I won’t be joining you at the Oct. 17 meeting. I suspect many people will be gone for the same reason.

* 82: Secondly, I received four notices of the meeting so to conserve postage, could an e-mail be sent to me for future meetings or one mailing? The letters were sent to: "Jack Reneau," "Resident," "Susan Campbell-Reneau," and "William J. and Susan C. Reneau" at 5425 Skyway Drive, Missoula, MT 59804.

* 83: Instead of coated stock paper and color images on the newsletter, a simple 20 lb. copy paper with no color is fine with me. I'm the taxpayer, remember? I pay for that slick newsletter. Information is all anyone needs, not a pretty presentation.

Thirdly, I do not support this entire process of study because you do not have the money to do any of the work. I support discussions of how to pay for such work long before any plans. The plans are meaningless because they can’t be constructed anytime soon. The housing construction in Linda Vista and Maloney Ranch are the reasons why you need to consider a bridge across the Bitterroot River, as has been said many, many times to MDOT and other highly paid consultants since the early 1990s. The drawings are very pretty but impractical.

Response to Comment # 80

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters C, D, and O.

* 81: There are many ways for you to participate in the public review process, such as providing comments on the project Web site (via email) or in writing to the FHWA project manager. In addition, the public hearing transcript and displays are posted on the project Web site for your reference.

* 82: The project mailing list has been modified to only include Susan Campbell Reneau's name at 5425 Skyway Drive. You may continue to receive a duplicate mailing through the bulk mailing process done in addition to the project mailing list.

* 83: It was felt that the alternatives considered would be better understood if represented in color.
Comment # 80 (continued)

Lastly, when you ask the public to comment, include e-mails for everyone so we don't have to hunt for them. Why should we waste our time and postage to send you a letter via snail mail when e-mail is quick and free? For all the lists at the front of your newsletter about where to get the DEIS you don't mention a phone number or an e-mail. You expect a private citizen that isn't getting paid to do this review to hunt for a way to reach you. Print the phone numbers and e-mails of everyone involved in this project.

I support a toll road method of paying for the bridge so when people need to leave the Miller Creek area they are required to pay a toll for use of the bridge. The bridge will only be used by the people living in Miller Creek and not the other direction because we don't have a daily reason to travel to the Miller Creek area. I personally haven't visited the Miller Creek area since last year when a niece lived there and now she has moved back to Ohio because she couldn't find a job that paid the bills.

Blending into traffic on Hwy. 93 South is a deadly activity. Interchanges at major roads needs to happen but that's a cool $1 million just to study it, I am sure. We have Nothing should be considered unless it is in coordination with the improvements needed on Hwy. 93 South. Nothing should be considered unless housing construction stops while the infrastructure catches up with it. We don't have a reasonable and comfortable method of getting around.

I've said this since I sat on a citizens committee in 1994 and 1995 working on planning issues related to the newly proposed Maloney Ranch housing development. That was before Carter Burgess was hired for more than $300,000 to "study" the Miller Creek area. That was when the developer promised "major" contributions to the construction of road improvements and bridge. I don't think $1,800 per year from each new house and a lump sum of $250,000 by the developer as a "major" contribution to the road problems.

Response to Comment # 80 (continued)

* 84: See response no. * 81 above. Comments are not being received by phone in order to reduce errors in transcribing the message or misinterpretations.

* 85: Toll options were not pursued for this project as they are not likely to be sufficient to cover the project cost of construction up front. The process to sell bonds to meet the upfront costs would likely be inappropriate for this project.

* 86: MDT has been very involved with the project to screen and design interchange and intersections with US 93 so that safety is maximized and consistent with local and national standards.

* 87: You are correct in identifying the relationship between growth and infrastructure development. The City of Missoula and Missoula County are the local agencies that have the responsibility and control to approve land use plans and resulting development.
### Comments

#### Comment # 80 (continued)

* 88 Instead of hiring consultants to talk about the problem, why not hire Montana contractors to get the road work done or hire vans to transport people to work? How about requiring that to leave any neighborhood using Miller Creek or Hwy. 93 there would need to be 2 or more people in the car or truck? How about a tax incentives to Montana companies that come up with a good solution that is fully paid for instead of paying a consultant from Denver?  
Susan Campbell Reneau  
5425 Skyway Drive  
Missoula, MT 59804  
bluemountain@montana.com

### Responses

#### Response to Comment # 80 (continued)

* 88: Your additional suggestions have been noted and fully disclosed in this document for local agencies and companies to consider.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 81: Scott Black</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| From: Scott Black [mailto:scottblk@bigsky.net]  
Sent: Friday, September 22, 2006 12:28 PM  
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.  
Subject: Miller Creek Road EIS |
| To Whom It May Concern: |
| We need a second access, off to Highway 93 South, into the Miller Creek Area. It does not matter to me which location is utilized. More traffic signals and a single access into the Miller Creek Area will only create traffic grid lock. I doubt we could even get the city to send public transportation into our area without a second access. |
| Thanks for accepting my input, |
| Scott L. Black  
Accurate Appraisal Service  
4666 Scott Allen Drive  
Missoula, Montana 59803  
(406) 251-5008 Office  
(406) 251-9757 Fax  
(406) 240-1159 Cellular |
| **Response to Comment # 81** |
| Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, and H. |
Comment # 82: John Wagner

(Retyped from handwritten letter for improved legibility)

5240 Dorothy Ct.
Missoula, MT 59803
Sep. 25, 2006

Ms. Misty McCoy
Carter & Burgess
707 17th St.
Denver CO 80202

Subject: Miller Creek Road DEIS

I am a member of the Missoula Country Club and the above project has me concerned about the following:

1. ingress/egress to the clubhouse
2. impact to holes 8 & 9
3. construction easement onto MCC property during project and impact on golfing
4. noise pollution and visual interference to golfing once project is completed. Please reply.

Sincerely,
John Wagner
Member #9201

Response to Comment # 82

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, G and M.
Comment # 83: Maxine Searles
September 26, 2006

Ms. Misty McCoy
Carter & Burgess
707 17th Street
Denver, Co 80202

Dear Ms. McCoy:

In our September newsletter ....the Missoula Country Club..there was an article on the proposed changes of Old Hwy 93 and the impact on the 8th and 9th holes of the golf course.

It did not explain why this change was being made....traffic problems.

I would like to suggest that Old Hwy 93 heading south to the Bitterroot be made into a one-way road (two lanes heading south)...funneling traffic off of Reserve Street. Therefore, not having to impact the golf course or other businesses on the East side of Old Hwy 93. All traffic coming from the Bitterroot would still go up to Reserve and go either to SW Higgins, up Hwy 93, or North on Reserve ....as they do now. If you funnel traffic north on Old Hwy 93 you will have to put in lights on Reserve St....one block from existing lights.

As I said....I don’t know what all is involved but wanted to offer the suggestion. It would be very sad to destroy a golf course that has been there for so many years.

Maxine Searles

Response to Comment # 83

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F and G.
<table>
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<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 84: Vance S. and Nancy L. Ventresca</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 84</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 27, 2006</td>
<td>*  89: Your comment has been noted.*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1155 Big Flat Road  
Missoula MT 59804 | |
| Craig Genzlinger: | |
| This letter is in support of the Preferred Alternative 5A for the Miller Creek Road DEIS. This alternative provides the best action with the least social and environmental impact. In no way do we favor a bridge over the Bitterroot River. Thank you for your consideration. | |
| Sincerely, | |
| Vance S. Ventresca | *  89: Your comment has been noted.* |
| Nancy L. Ventresca | |

* 89: Your comment has been noted.
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<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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</table>
| **Comment # 85: Susan Eakins**  
*From:* Susan Eakins [mailto:lee-sue@msn.com]  
*Sent:* Thursday, September 28, 2006 7:09 PM  
*To:* craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.  
*Subject:* public comment: DEIS  

Dear Mr. Genzlinger,  
Our comment is that any road modifications that occur, please consider welfare of wildlife that cross the Miller Creek area. We would like to see in the plan, some animal-friendly underpasses and fencing, appropriate for the situation. Since more traffic will use this area, considerations of motorists/wildlife safety be factored into the equation.  
Thankyou. Mr. and Mrs. Lee Eakins, 5606 Hillview Way, Missoula, MT 59803  

---  

**Response to Comment # 85**  
Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter J.
## Comment # 86: David J. Marne

**From:** dpmarne [mailto:dpmarne@centric.net]  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 30, 2006 3:52 PM  
**To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.  
**Subject:** Miller Creek EIS

Dear Craig and Misty,

I believe the recommended alternative (5A) will NOT be effective through 2025. I also believe construction of the selected alternative will result in a huge bottleneck as no other Miller Creek exit will be available during construction. After seeing the proposed future construction of the Maloney Ranch area on the alternative flyer, I believe the Blue Mountain Road (Alternative 3B) appears to be the best option. Actually any of the bridge options appear acceptable as a second exit from the Miller Creek area is needed. I believe picking a "no bridge" option is short sighted. Now is the time to get the environmental approval for a new bridge, even if construction on the new bridge does not occur for a few years.

Sincerely,

David J. Marne  
4275 Scott Allen Drive  
Missoula, MT  59803  
406-251-3717

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| **Comment # 87: Cathy Schindler**  
*(Retyped from handwritten letter for improved legibility)*

This is my comment.

I don't know why you waste you're time and our taxpayer dollar sending these out & having these meetings.

*90*

The local government has already decided on what they want and (as usual) the public’s comments will go on deaf ears.

O

Why didn’t you start all this before the boom building started up Miller Creek and have the developers pay for the new roads? And problems it caused?

Cathy J Schindler  
513 N. Davis  
Missoula, MT 59801

**Response to Comment # 87**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters C and O.

*90:* Public involvement is an important component of the NEPA process, and public input has been considered during identification and evaluation of alternatives, as discussed in Chapter 5.0 of the DEIS and FEIS.
Comment # 88: Geraldean L. Fluke

5420 Hayes Creek Road
Missoula, MT 59804
October 1, 2006.

Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

Re: Miller Creek Road EIS

Dear Sir:

This is response to invitation to comment on the plans that you are continuing to ask public input.

My belief is that your plans do not address properly two major traffic impact problems; i.e., the Lower Miller housing development and the Bitterroot traffic.

The Government should find the funding to combine two of your plans. By building both Alternative 5A and Alternative 4C, would give egress from Miller Creek two optional routes and would allow melding the heavy Bitterroot traffic at two locations. It would also slow the Bitterroot traffic before they reach the present Blue Mountain traffic signal.

* 91: Table 4-8 of the EIS presents a summary of how Alternative 4C would operate compared to other build alternatives from a transportation standpoint.

* 92: Alternative 5A was selected as the Preferred Alternative. No improvements are proposed at Hayes Creek Road under Alternative 5A.

* 93: The railway continues operation and would not likely be amenable to selling the railroad right-of-way.

Very truly yours,

Geraldean Fluke, P.E., PhD

Response to Comment # 88

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters C, D, F, I and O.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment # 89: Michael Steinberg</th>
<th>Response to Comment # 89</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>From:</strong> Michael STEINBERG [<a href="mailto:steinmj55@msn.com">mailto:steinmj55@msn.com</a>]</td>
<td>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, C, and D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sent:</strong> Tuesday, October 03, 2006 8:16 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>To:</strong> Genzlinger, Craig</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> EIS comment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dear Craig,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>We need a bridge at Blue Mountain Road, period! Another band-aid solution we don't need. The &quot;preferred alternative&quot; (preferred by whom I would ask, certainly not me) is yet another short-sighted fix to a problem that will continue to grow. The only way to alleviate the current congestion and prepare for much more to come, is to provide another access route for the hundreds of homes yet to be built in the Maloney Ranch area. If this were up to a vote, and I wish it were, I would overwhelming support Alternative 3B. The majority of the expense for this project should be paid by those who would benefit most from it, ie the developers of Maloney Ranch.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincerely, Michael Steinberg</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6305 ST Thomas Dr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comment # 90: Celia C. Winkler

From: Celia C Winkler [mailto:celia.winkler@mso.umt.edu]
Sent: Thursday, October 05, 2006 11:29 AM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller EIS

I prefer the "preferred alternative," 5a, in that it does the least damage to the area. The best solution to the Hwy 93 mess is really to improve mass transit from the Bitterroot and the Miller Creek area. If we spend a lot of money on new bridges and overpasses, we are committed to the single driver approach to the issue. Therefore, the least intrusive solution would be the best.

In addition, adding a signal at Reserve and Old Hwy 93 would solve a LOT of problems, allowing people to bypass the new "malfunction junction" of Reserve and 93 without doing a lot destructive road building in the Blue Mtn and Target Range areas.

Alternative 3b is the absolute worst. Destructive and reinforces the notion that hwy 93 into Missoula is a freeway.

Celia Winkler
celia.winkler@umontana.edu
office: 406-243-5843
home: 406-549-6285

Response to Comment # 90

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F and N.

* 94: Your comment has been noted.
Comment # 91: Thomas A. Layne

**From:** THOMAS A LAYNE [mailto:talayne@msn.com]
**Sent:** Friday, October 06, 2006 10:16 AM
**To:** Genzlinger, Craig
**Subject:** Fw: Miller Creek OLD Highway 93 expansion Project

Mr. Craig Genzlinger,
Federal Highway Administration
Helena Mt.

Dear Mr. Genzlinger
I am resending my comments on the Miller Creek DEIS as I note that I did not include my address and phone number with the original.

Thank you,

Thomas A. Layne
414 Rainier Court
Missoula, Mt. 59803
406-728-3617

----- Original Message ----- 
**From:** THOMAS A LAYNE
**To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov
**Cc:**
**Sent:** Thursday, October 05, 2006 1:20 PM
**Subject:** Miller Creek OLD Highway 93 expansion Project

Mr. Craig Genzlinger,
Federal Highway Administration
Helena, Mt.
Comment # 91 (continued)

Mr. Genzlinger,

October 5th, 2006

Please accept the following as comments regarding the expansion of Old Highway 93 as part of the Miller Creek Road. I will be out Missoula and cannot attend the public hearing Oct 17th.

I received a reply from Misty McCoy to comments submitted to her in September. In her answer she assures me that all of the issues I raised would be addressed and resolved through meetings with Neil Michelson, Manager of the Missoula Country Club and country club representatives. This is reassuring but but does not go to the core of the questions with specific answers. In addition, in speaking with Neil and other representatives of the country club there seems to be a lack of real communication regarding this project.

I have read the entire DEIS, especially as it applies to Old Highway 93. The revision of Old Highway 93 is part of all of the options except do nothing, so there is need to address how this portion of the project will affect the Missoula Country Club.

In general, my reading of the draft treats the Country Club as a private entity and with very little study of the impacts on the Club. Specifically, the draft states that the project will "not impact the golfing areas of the club". In one section the draft states the project MAY have an impact on the entrance to the Country Club. In another section the draft says "there will be a direct impact on the entrance". The draft

Response to Comment # 91 (continued)

* 95: Impacts to the privately-owned Missoula Country Club and golf course were fully evaluated in the DEIS. As discussed in Issue G, holes eight and nine and the eighth and ninth hole tee boxes or fairways would not be impacted with Old US 93 improvements as originally proposed in the DEIS or with the revised design in the FEIS. The greens, holes, tee boxes, or fairways were never expected to be impacted. From the existing driveway entrance along the southwest property line toward US 93, approximately 30 feet of right-of-way would be acquired from the Country Club to accommodate the additional turning lanes at the Old US 93 and US 93 intersection. The area impacted is the landscaped area adjacent to the parking lot and entrance road. No impacts would occur to the parking lot. The only impact that would occur to the Country Club along the southern property line east of the entrance road in the area of holes 8 and 9 fairway and rough is to portions of the vegetative hedge or gravel maintenance area. In order to accommodate the wider Old US 93 typical section, an area of right-of-way approximately 250 feet long by five feet wide would be acquired as permanent right-of-way. No impacts to the 8th and 9th holes, fairways, or trees along the fairways would occur. See additional explanation under Issue F, which includes a graphic depicting impacts to the Missoula Country Club associated with the modified Old US 93 design. This information has been clarified in the FEIS.
Comment # 91 (continued)

states there is no need for sound mitigation. It states that the project will require acquisition of "a small amount of land from the Country Club."

In the section on safety, the draft mentions the potential for cars sideswiping one another but does not address the topic of entrance and egress to the club as cars try to cross the new highway.

In fairness to the members of the Country Club I respectfully ask the answers to the following concerns I have about this project.

1. The eighth tee box is only EIGHT FEET from the vegetative hedge which the draft states will be torn down. It is 12 feet from the boundary fence which is not even mentioned in the draft. The rough to the left of the ninth tee box and fairway are part of "the golfing areas" of the course. Construction of the road as outlined comes right to the Property Line. I cannot imagine that an easement will not be required for heavy equipment to enter the golf course during construction. How many feet onto the course will equipment come and for how long?

2. There are many mature trees immediately adjacent to the fence and property line. Will these be removed by construction? Will they die as a result of construction? Who will pay to replace these trees?

3. If the easement for construction requires closing or reconfiguration of two holes the club will in effect be a 16 hole course. This is useless. The club currently is used by the University of Montana Golf team for practice. The course is also used by the local high schools. The

Response to Comment # 91 (continued)
Comment # 91 (continued)

course is host to several charity events each year such as the high school fund raiser, Grizzly round-ball, and Camp-Make-A-Dream. The club also hosts state golf events on a rotational basis such as high school tournament played here tomorrow as well as sanctioned events such as the Men's State Amateur, the mid amateur and the senior state championship.

Who will compensate the charities and club for lost revenues during these events?

Along the same line, if members are deprived of the use of the golf course by losing two holes of play, handicaps, leagues etc. will not be valid at other golf courses. Does the department of transportation plan to pay the members dues while two holes are unplayable?

4. How much is "a little land" from the club? Acreage is not given in the draft. Where on the club is this "little land" needed for this project?

5. The country club is used for the events above in #3 but also for wedding receptions, anniversaries, graduations, and many other social events.

The club is often rented by the general public. Who will compensate the club for these lost revenues?

6. Entrance/exit. During construction, how will members, employees, and other users get into the club? We have already been told we cannot enter from the "New" highway 93 past the light at the junction of old highway 93 and Miller creek road as it is too close to the light. The current entrance is only about 400 feet from highway 93. This is the ONLY way to get into the club without driving on the golf course.

Response to Comment # 91 (continued)

Access to and from the Missoula Country Club will be maintained during construction. This is clarified in Section 4.19.2.4 of the FEIS. See Response Issue G, under "Missoula Country Club Access During Construction."
Comment # 91 (continued)

I believe the above stake holders in the club deserve to know how access will be maintained.

* 95 In addition, what will the permanent direct effects in the DEIS on the entrance be?

7. Noise abatement: The DEIS used sound monitors located across the on the sidewalk across the street from tee box 8 to come up with the number of decibels in the area. I suggest a much more accurate measure of sound would actually be on the tee box which is insulated from noise by the large hedge. If the measurements were lower than on the street side, noise mitigation for the club might well be necessary.

8. Safety: I will not comment on the potential impact of golf balls flying onto a crowded street. Suffice it to say it has happened, as have golf balls from Larchmont Golf Course landed on the Country club and vise versa.

* 99 I am concerned about the ability to safely enter and exit the country club. The current drive way is too close to 93 to warrant a stop light which would only hinder traffic. During high usage now it is common to wait just to enter the two lane old 93 with the flows it currently has. With up to more than 6 to 7 times the number of cars on old 93 it will be very dangerous to try to cross the traffic lanes. Turning right will mean reverse traffic for many who want to go north. How will traffic be handled when large event such as a tournament or wedding reception with 300 to 500 attendees is over and everyone exits at the same time? This is not mentioned in the DEIS.

Response to Comment # 91 (continued)

* 97: The noise measurement location for Old US 93 (Site 9, shown on Table 3-20 and Figure 3-16 in the EIS) is a commercial area (Activity Category C) across the street and to the east of the Missoula Country Club. The measurement was used to validate the Traffic Noise Model (TNM). Although Noise Measurement Site 9 is an Activity Category “C,” the noise impact criteria used to evaluate impacts at the Country Club was a Category “B” “recreation area” level of 66 dBA. Noise levels at the Missoula Country Club for all project alternatives are predicted to be below the noise impact criteria. Refer to Response Issue G, under “Noise and Visual” for more information.

* 98: Liability for errant golf balls will remain as it is currently.


* 100: A traffic management plan may be needed if large events like tournaments are expected to begin or end during peak hours. This would be true for all build alternatives as well as the No-Action Alternative.
Comment # 91 (continued)

* 101: In fact the whole issue of the entrance/exit and traffic flows as they impact the Country Club are not mentioned in the draft DEIS.

This project has the potential to adversely affect the economic status of the club, its users, and employees both for the short term and the long term based on construction, access, noise, safety and other issues. I think the members, employees, and other users have the right to have specific, detailed answers to these questions regarding all phases of the construction and long term impact of these project on the Missoula Country Club.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas A. Layne
414 Rainier Court
Missoula, Mt. 59803

406-728-3617

Response to Comment # 91 (continued)

* 102: Responses to all public comments received on the DEIS are contained in this Appendix.
Comment # 92: Tom & Arlene Breum

*(Retyped from handwritten letter for improved legibility)*

Dear Sir:

My wife and I have been residents of Upper Miller Creek Road for 33 plus years. During this time the home building expansion has been extremely high.

A. We are both against your preferred alternative 5A which we believe will result in a shorter version of Reserve Street which is now called the longest parking lot in Montana.

F. We would prefer Alternative 3B however with a better access to Linda Vista to the new bridge. The developers of the Maloney Ranch should be responsible for that access to the new bridge.

L. We also believe that the current Miller Creek Road at the junction of Upper & Lower Miller Creek Roads be widened to accommodate more cars access at that junction to the 93 intersection and light.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration.

Tom & Arlene Breum
5950 N. Meadowood
Missoula 59803
251-3541

Response to Comment # 92

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, and H.
### Comment # 93: Gerard P. Berens

**From:** gerardpberens [mailto:gerardpberens@bresnan.net]

**Sent:** Sunday, October 08, 2006 2:06 PM

**To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.

**Subject:** I agree with the Alternative 5A: Miller Creed Road at-Grade Intersection

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I agree with the Alternative 5A: Miller Creed Road at-Grade Intersection. The other alternatives will not improve the safety and existing and future traffic at the Miller Creek Road and HWY 93 junction. The dividing of traffic between Hwy 93 and Old Hwy 93 is the only alternative to reduce traffic at the overcrowded Hwy 93 / Reserve St. / Brooks intersection. It is the least costly alternative.

It is imperative that the $1,000,000 of developer mitigation funds designated for the improvement Miller Creek Road still be utilized. Federal funds should not be used to bail out developers whose projects and profits have directly caused these traffic problems. In truth, this is not a Federal problem as much as it is a local developer driven problem facilitated by the lack of impact funds and enforcement safety and health regulations that are being compromised by unattainable development.

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### Response to Comment # 93

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter C.

* 103: Your comment has been noted
Comment # 94: William H. Towle

Craig Genzlinger
FHWA
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

October 10, 2006

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

Re: Miller Creek Road Draft EIS

My concerns are with Blue Mountain Road and Old 93.

Blue Mountain Road: Any plan should recognize that this road, as well as Big Flat Road and the McClay single lane bridge crossing, should not be expected to take additional traffic. We have lived off Big Flat Road for the last ten years and have seen a marked increase in traffic since Blue Mountain Road was paved. The 35 mph speed limit is routinely ignored and more frequently we have experienced cars and trucks passing regardless of the double yellow line. Because of the nature of the road it is difficult to police these problems. It is not the type of road that should take through traffic and adopting any of the proposed plans should take that into account.

Old 93: Developing Old 93 seems to add very little benefit to the Miller Creek problem south of 93. Traffic moving south on Reserve can currently use Old 93 to access westbound 93 or Miller Creek. Traffic moving from Miller Creek to access Reserve southbound or Brooks will continue to use existing 93. Those wanting access to northbound 93 will have a very modest benefit while being subjected to the increased risk of navigating a somewhat blind curve that has cuts serving a gas station, a bank and a tavern/casino. Just beyond these are cuts serving restaurants and other businesses. Also, subjecting those using these various businesses to such an increased traffic risk is not good planning. This is especially true since one of the prime users would be logging trucks roaring around the curve. Existing route 93 is five lane, straight, and designed to handle such traffic. The slight gain to be achieved from developing Old 93 is just not worth it and it really solves little or nothing with respect to the traffic tangle on Miller Creek south of 93.

Response to Comment # 94

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, F, and J.

* 104: Alternative 3B-Blue Mountain Road Grade-Separated Intersection was not selected as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 5A-Miller Creek Road At-Grade Intersection was selected as the Preferred Alternative.

Comment # 95: Janet Donahue

From: Janet Donahue [mailto:janetdonahue@msn.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2006 11:31 AM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Country Club Impact

I am totally opposed to the impact this road construction will have on the Missoula Country Club. It appears that the project totally eliminates the privacy shrubs along the north side of the road project. This privacy shrub has been in place for many, many, many years and is a major part of the ambiance of the golf experience at the Country Club. It muffles traffic noise, traffic site, and every day work noise along the old highway. To eliminate it will negatively impact the Country Club. There must be some other alternative to re-route traffic along this corridor without impacting the Golf Course in such overwhelming fashion.

Thank you.

Ed and Janet Donahue

Response to Comment # 95

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter G.
### Comments

**Comment # 96: Dan Deutschman**

**From:** Dan Deutschman [mailto:deutschd@blackfoot.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 12, 2006 4:44 PM  
**To:** Genzlinger, Craig  
**Subject:** miller creek project

> If we were able to lend input to the project, the weigh station intersection is a great idea.  

This is a problem that my wife and I have discussed for years and have asked ourselves why they haven't put an intersection in that exact spot. It would allow for excellent traffic flow too and from Missoula and Lolo.

In our opinion, that is the perfect solution for miller creek.

Dan and Pam  
11411 Kona Ranch Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
deutschd@blackfoot.net

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 96**

*106:* Thank you for your suggestion. Section 2.4 of the EIS describes the corridor development and screening process.
Comment # 97: David Hickman

3003 Eldora Lane
Missoula, MT 59803

10/13/06

Craig Genzlinger, P. E.
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena, Mt. 59601
Re: Miller Creek Road Project

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

In reviewing your current proposals I am finding some major concerns. I have found that it appears no environmental impact statement was ever pursued which included the revamping of old Highway 93 as proposed in the preferred alternate 5A. The reconstruction of 93 appears to have nothing to do with the intended objective of relieving traffic on Miller Creek. A major revamping of the Miller Creek Y to 93 and the subsequent light changes would more than adequately serve the intended objective until a more realistic route north and south for 93 can be found. Also, a more extensive change for the light at Miller Creek and 93 should be reviewed. I have attached an idea for your review. As well, the routing of traffic east on Briggs is a very problematic idea where the school is involved. In summary, I would recommend a full scale EIS be done which includes the old 93 highway. Thank you for your consideration.

David Hickman

Response to Comment # 97

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, H, and L.

* 107: Thank you for submitting your idea for the Miller Creek/US 93 intersection. Upon review of your proposal, it was found that the design included with Alternative 5A would more effectively handle forecasted traffic at that intersection. The use of the approach lanes is the biggest difference between your submitted intersection design concept and Alternative 5A. Alternative 5A utilizes every approach lane to its fullest potential while serving the critical movements during both the AM and PM peak periods.
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**Response to Comment # 97 (continued)**

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**Briggs To Y as Proposed in SA**

Light

Briggs
**Comment # 98: Greg D. Anderson**

GREG ANDERSON  
4390 NICOLE COURT  
MISSOULA, MT 59803  
406-251-6333

October 15, 2006

Craig Genzlinger, PE  
Federal Highway Administration  
565 Shepard Way  
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

My wife and I have grave safety concerns for our Linda Vista neighborhood due to the lack of a second access road into Miller Creek.

We would like to urge the Federal Highway Administration to reconsider and install a bridge over the Bitterroot River at Hayes Creek. This plan solves several present and future problems as well as improving the safety of access to Hayes Creek.

Funnelling all commuters through one egress at Miller Creek and HWY 93 is being very short-sighted. The cost of a bridge is greater I know, but the cost is not going to be any less in seven years when we will be forced to put in a bridge. In fact, it will be substantially more.

The road improvements to Miller Creek Road are needed, but do not negate the need for a bridge over the Bitterroot River at Hayes Creek.

Sincerely,

Greg D. Anderson  
4390 Nicole Court  
Missoula, MT 59803  
406-251-6333

**Response to Comment # 98**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, H, and J.
### Comment # 99: Kathleen Snodgrass

From: Kathleen Snodgrass [mailto:kippie_snodgrass@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, October 16, 2006 10:12 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek comment

I'm glad the project to address the inadequate Miller Creek access is proceeding. I read the Executive Summary and parts of the full impact statement.

I don't think the statement adequately considers the impact that the preferred alternative would have on south Reserve Street. Vehicles traveling southbound on Reserve already stack up PAST the intersection of Reserve and Old 93 due to the stoplight at Brooks & Reserve. Given the propensity of people in Missoula to keep creeping forward thru intersections as long as the light is green regardless of how jammed up it is in front of them, I suspect that the Old 93 and Reserve intersection will be a snarled nightmare from the moment it comes on line. It will have a very bad outcome for those poor souls who live down the Bitterroot but work in Missoula. If shoppers begin avoiding the area, it could also have an adverse impact on businesses in the area. If that alternative is adopted and implemented, I suspect it won't be long until another project is required to address the problems it creates. At the very least, if the preferred alternative is implemented, PLEASE use synchronized traffic lights that favor traffic OUT of Missoula in the afternoon and INTO Missoula in the morning. There are currently no traffic lights in Missoula that synchronize to provide smooth flow of predominant traffic, but if the preferred alternative is implemented, it's really going to be crucial there.

Although the alternatives that include a new bridge over the Bitterroot would be more expensive initially and would add traffic to Hwy 93 where the speed limit is high (that could probably be changed, by the way), I suspect that they would provide a better solution over the long run. The bridge options would also address the frightening thought of all the people in Miller Creek trying to evacuate the valley due to threatening wildfire or other calamity using only one outlet - the Miller Creek Road.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Kathie Snodgrass
kippie_snodgrass@hotmail.com
2702 O'Shaughnessy Street
Missoula, MT 59808
406-541-8639

### Response to Comment # 99

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, E, F, J and K.
Comment # 100: Brian Walter

From: FBWalter@aol.com (mailto:FBWalter@aol.com)
Sent: Monday, October 16, 2006 10:55 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Comments on Miller Creek Road DEIS

Attached are my comments on the DEIS related to proposed widening of Old US 93 having adverse impact on the Missoula Country Club.

Brian Walter
1380 Starwood Dr.
Missoula
406-542-0597

Response to Comment # 100

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, G, I, O. See attachment on following pages.
**Comment # 100 (continued)**

F. BRIAN WALTER  
1380 STARWOOD DRIVE  
MISSOULA, MT 59805  
406-542-0597  

Craig Genzlinger, PE  
Federal Highway Administration  
585 Shepard Way, Helena, MT 59601  

VIA Email: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov  
misty.mceow@f-b.com  

**OLD U.S. 93 WIDENING AT MISSOULA COUNTRY CLUB**  
Comments on Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement  

**Points of Concern:**

- The EIS fails to recognize that the Missoula Country Club is one of the oldest and finest golf courses in the State of Montana, hosting many state and regional amateur and professional tournaments every year. Golf requires a quiet setting and cannot tolerate heavy background or sudden noise inherent with major traffic arteries. Widening Old US 93 to the degree proposed with very little distance between tees and fairways, while at the same time removing the tall mature hedge buffering visual and sound distractions from the players is totally unacceptable and will ruin a course of this standard.

- Considering the above, the existing hedge and entrance should be left in place. To accomplish this it appears as a minimum, either one of the two northbound lanes or the bicycle lanes must be deleted from the design. Although bicycle lanes are good if space permits, the EIS states that very little bicycle traffic would be expected on Miller Creek and bicycles are rare on Reserve Street. There is no reason to expect heavier bicycle use on Old US 93.

- The 2004 Transportation Plan Update and the EIS both recognize that portions of Reserve Street are already over capacity with the remainder at near capacity. Trying to cram additional traffic onto this arterial and the intersections in this vicinity is directionally incorrect and a waste of transportation funds. The only long term solution is to find a way to divert heavy trucks, and cars having a destination to the Bitterroot, to the north towards the Flathead, and to the west away from the current congestion. I understand three separate studies are underway which should be resolved before committing to widening Old US 93. These studies are: US 93 Corridor Lolo to Reserve; Reserve Street Corridor; and a west bypass feasibility study. The west by-pass has been debated for a number of years and resisted politically. However, many people can see that the increased traffic cannot over the long term be squeezed through the city hub. Installing a river bridge and an intersection to the south at the optimum point to extend into a west bypass would appear to be the better option to relieve traffic from Miller Creek. If not, then what is the long term solution?

- Prior review process and public input did not include Alternative 5A, which was added only recently. This appears to be the first and last opportunity for public input. Widening of Old US 93 was not a recommended improvement in the most recent 2004 Transportation Plan Update. Therefore, it does not appear to be an approved option by City/Country government.

- The lines on Sheet Number 3 showing the road widths at 1”=100’ scale (approximately 50’) do not correspond with the road widths indicated on the Typical Roadway Section (69’). Which is correct? If the latter, on which side of the street will the additional 19’ be located?

* **108:** The typical sections shown in the EIS indicate the proposed roadway widths. However, at intersections additional turning lanes are proposed that will increase widths. Widening along Old US 93 would occur on the south side of the existing road away from the golf courses, except, at the intersection of Old US 93 and US 93 where widening would occur on both sides of Old US 93. Widening along Miller Creek Road would occur on the east side of the road as indicated in Figure 2-18 of the DEIS.

It is unclear what sheet you are referring to. However, in the August 2006 Alternatives Memorandum, Sheet Number 3 for Alternative 5A indicates a pavement width of around 50 feet. This exhibit is in error and an addendum to the memorandum will be issued to FHWA. However, the impacts assessed in the DEIS are correct and were based on a 69 foot typical section. The Limited Improvement exhibits in the Memorandum are the similar to those that should have been shown for Alternative 5A and are based on the correct typical section width.

Regardless, the typical section along Old US 93 is being revised to minimize impacts to adjacent property based on comments received on the DEIS.

Lastly, property lines have not been shown on Sheet 3 in the Alternative Memorandum.
Table 5-1 of the environmental impact statement indicates an existing AADT of 3,700 on Old US 93. Figure 5-5 indicates post-improvement traffic AADT on this section of Old U.S. 93 of 17,600, which calculates out to a 475% increase in post-improvement traffic. Are we reading this information correctly? I am very concerned, if in fact this is the proposal, that increasing traffic almost five-fold on this section of roadway will make entering and exiting the golf club infeasible and dangerous. What are your plans to ensure the golf club that this will be a safe and manageable entrance and exit? Keep in mind that the parking lot is frequently filled to capacity with over 200 cars and that there is no place for exiting vehicles to queue up waiting for an opportunity to enter heavy traffic. If the entrance were to be set back, there would be no space with sufficient visibility for waiting to access the road.

Table 8 of the Technical Noise and Air Quality Analysis Report indicates a projected 3 db increase at MCR R3 near the 18th green and we assume there will be additional traffic related noise along the whole rout of Old U.S. 93. (It is unclear exactly how close the new road curb will encroach.) How was this assessment formulated? Did it consider that the existing noise buffer—the hedge, gate and fencing—will be removed and need to be replaced? What is proposed to replace the existing noise buffer and entry gate system? Who will design it and how will it be paid for? The current noise of intermittent traffic is occasionally distracting but with the heavy continual traffic load proposed for the new design, there will be a steady drone across the entire course. The EIS fails to recognize the importance of the noise situation to this golf course. Remember also that a replacement hedge would take several years to mature—an unacceptable duration to tolerate un-buffered sound and visual distraction.

The EIS indicates “a little” land will need to be taken from the Missoula Country Club. Absent a proposed layout and understanding of what “a little” means, it is not possible to comment on this until this information is provided. Please provide a clear scope of proposed land takings as they relate to an actual design for comments and mark out the locations on the ground.

Summary: There are many broad brush impact statements that have not been vetted out in real design detail. I am very concerned that what is presented as “minimal” in the EIS will in fact be very significant to the Missoula Country Club. I am not comfortable with my understanding of the project based on the limited information provided (see all questions above). Hence, it is my expectation that you provide proposed acceptable resolutions to the issues identified above for consideration by the Missoula Country Club, or that you will concur with my opening observations and search for an alternative that does not involve such an extensive use of Old US 93 and offers a long term solution for US 93 traffic.

Yours truly.

Brian Walter, P.E. (Retired), Fellow and Life Member ASCE
Comment # 101: George A. Stern

Mr. Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed plans for the Miller Creek Road Project, as well as the current draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for being inaccurate, improperly performed, and improperly noticed.

I am a resident of Missoula, Montana and a member of the Missoula Country Club (MCC). I am concerned that the proposals, in their current form, will cause irreparable damage to the MCC and this has not been considered in the DEIS.

Specifically, I am only concerned about the part of each proposal that deals with the expansion of old Highway 93, the road that extends northward from the junction of Brooks and Miller Creek Road and ends at Reserve St. near the southeast corner of Langhorn Golf Course. This currently is an uncared for lane road with no traffic signals except at its origin with Bowda (current Highway 93). The entrance to MCC is on this road, and the road parallels the east boundary of the MCC along the 8th and 9th holes. The expansion of this road, included in all of the proposals except the “do nothing” alternative, is to widen this road to four traffic lanes, two bike lanes, a sidewalk on one side and curbs on both sides.

The Miller Creek project has been under study for a number of years. The original goal of the project was to identify a second alternative access route into and out of the Miller Creek area. That was a laudable goal. There are a number of large residential areas around Missoula, in canyons, with only one exit and entry route. This represents obvious safety issues in the event of a fire or other emergency, as well as access of emergency vehicles during high traffic times. The original proposal was to build a bridge across the Bitterroot River that would connect to Highway 93 near Blue Mountain Road. That proposal was met with considerable opposition by residents of the Blue Mountain Road area. That plan was then shelved in favor of the new “preferred alternative”. The original plan was, and still is, the best alternative, despite the public opposition. That plan did not include any mention of changes to old Highway 93, nor are those changes necessary to achieve the desired objective.

Subsequent to the opposition to the original plan, the objectives of the project were changed to “improve access to the Miller Creek area”. In my opinion, this was an inappropriate change of objectives. For either objective, however, expansion of old Highway 93 does not help accomplish the objective.

Response to Comment # 101

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, E, F, G and I.
Comment # 101 (continued)

Despite the fact that this project has been under study for quite some time, the expansion of old Highway 93 was never mentioned as part of the project until March, 2006. For some reason, it is now included in all of the proposed alternatives except the “do nothing” alternative. The period of study of the project, and the opportunities for public commentary, preceded the inclusion of the old Highway 93 expansion. For that reason, I believe that the public hearings were held prematurely and improperly noticed, since, at the time these hearings were held, nobody who would be affected by the old Highway 93 expansion had any reason to think that they were being influenced by the project and had any reason to comment.

Because of the late inclusion of the old Highway 93 expansion into the proposal, it was not studied as part of the preparation of the DEIS. For that reason, the DEIS is flawed and inadequate. There is nothing in the DEIS that deals with the effects of the proposed expansion of old Highway 93. Therefore, if the proposals are not changed to eliminate the old Highway 93 expansion, the DEIS needs to be rewritten after an appropriate period of additional study.

The expansion of old Highway 93 will obviously involve taking property from one or both sides of the current road to accomplish the current project. Currently the west side of the road borders the MCC and part of Larchmont golf course, while the east side borders on the back side of a number of businesses, most or all of which have driveways exiting onto old Highway 93. While the scope of the project has been defined, the borders of the project have not (i.e. it has not been determined how much property will be taken from each side of the road, nor the possibility of construction easements needed to temporarily use property to complete the project). Because of that, it is impossible for the EIS to state what the impact on the various properties might be. Until the project is more explicitly defined, it will be impossible to prepare an appropriate and accurate EIS.

Whatever plan is adopted, and whatever construction lines are drawn, this will have an extremely negative effect on the MCC. At the least, there will be a great deal of noise, car exhaust and smog from the construction and increased traffic flow. Even if the current MCC property line is not invaded, the road will be within 12-15 feet of the eighth tee. If MCC property is taken, it will seriously affect the entrance to the club, as well as the existing eighth and ninth holes. You can't play golf on a sixteen hole course! If two holes are lost, it might require the redesign and reconstruction of the whole golf course, and I don't believe there could be adequate mitigation for that. In addition, any minor changes will increase the likelihood of golf balls being hit into the road, placing an increased load of traffic at risk.

The effects on the club entrance will also be severe, as access and departure from the club will be limited. This could have serious effects in the event of emergency. The Missoula county attorney recently had a heart attack at the club. Fortunately, he is OK, but another 10 minutes to get an emergency vehicle in and out of the club could have cost him his
Comment # 101 (continued)

life. As the proposed plan is currently drawn up, to exit the club, one would have to make a left turn onto a busy 4 lane road, without the aid of a traffic light, or turn right and to then go into Miller Creek and take a circuitous route to get back to Brooks to go into town (the potential left turn from old Highway 93 onto Brooks will be blocked). This might be improved access into Miller Creek, but it will be worse access to anywhere else.

The question is: why does anything have to be done to old Highway 93 at all? It neither provides an alternative route into Miller Creek, the original goal of the project, nor improves access to Miller Creek. Therefore, it is not essential to achieving the goals of the project. Secondly, it only minimally improves traffic flow by providing a diversion from the Brooks-Reserve intersection. That intersection is only about eight years old, both roads are six lanes wide at the intersection, so it can handle all of the traffic needed, and nobody would save more than an eighth of a mile using this diversion. Lastly, there are a significant number of businesses on Brooks and Reserve that would be bypassed by using the reconstructed old Highway 93. These businesses are located where they are in order to have the visibility of a large traffic volume driving by. These businesses will be severely harmed by the proposed expansion of old Highway 93. On the other hand, old Highway 93 is populated by two golf courses and the back side of a number of businesses who do not use that road as their primary public access point. Therefore, nobody will benefit from this road expansion, but a large number of businesses will be harmed. Why are we proposing to spend millions of tax dollars on this?

I am one of nearly a thousand members at the MCC (over 500 memberships with most being married couples). We all strenuously object to this project and the effect it will have on the club. I therefore request that you seriously reconsider the old Highway 93 expansion, as it is not a necessary component of any of the proposed alternatives, and threatens to seriously impact a large number of citizens and businesses without those effects having been adequately studied or submitted for public comment.

Sincerely,

George A. Stern, MD

Response to Comment # 101 (continued)
Comment # 102: Cynthia H. Stern

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed plans for the Miller Creek Road Project, as well as the current draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for being inaccurate, improperly performed, and improperly noticed.

I am a resident of Missoula, Montana and a member of the Missoula Country Club (MCC). I am concerned that the proposals, in their current form, will cause irreparable damage to the MCC, and this has not been considered in the DEIS.

Specifically, I am only concerned about the part of each proposal that deals with the expansion of "old Highway 97", the road that extends northward from the junction of Brooks and Miller Creek Road and ends at Reserve St. near the southeast corner of Enchanted Golf Course. This currently is an uncurbed two lane road with no traffic signals except at its origin with Brooks (current Highway 93). The entrance to MCC is on this road, and the road parallels the east boundary of the MCC along the 8th and 9th holes. The expansion of this road included in all of the proposals except the "do nothing" alternative, is to widen this road to four traffic lanes, two bike lanes, a sidewalk on one side and curbs on both sides.

The Miller Creek project has been under study for a number of years. The original goal of the project was to identify a second alternative access route into and out of the Miller Creek area. That was a laudable goal. There are a number of large residential areas around Missoula in canyons, with only one exit and entry route. This represents obvious safety issues in the event of a fire or other emergency, as well as access of emergency vehicles during high traffic times. The original proposal was to build a bridge across the Bitterroot River that would connect to Highway 93 near Blue Mountain Road. That proposal was met with considerable opposition by residents of the Blue Mountain Road area. That plan was then shelved in favor of the new "preferred alternative". The original plan was, and still is, the best alternative, despite the public opposition. That plan did not include any mention of changes to old Highway 97, nor are those changes necessary to achieve the desired objective.

Subsequent to the opposition to the original plan, the objectives of the project were changed to "improve access to the Miller Creek area". In my opinion, this was an inappropriate change of objectives. For either objective, however, expansion of old Highway 97 does not help accomplish the objective.

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B,D, E, F, G and I.
Comment # 102 (continued)

Despite the fact that this project has been under study for quite some time, the expansion of old Highway 93 was never mentioned as part of the project until March, 2006. For some reason, it is now included in all of the proposed alternatives except the “do nothing” alternative. The period of study of the project, and the opportunities for public commentary, preceded the inclusion of the old Highway 93 expansion. For that reason, I believe that the public hearings were held prematurely and improperly noticed, since, at the time these hearings were held, nobody who would be affected by the old Highway 93 expansion had any reason to think that they were being influenced by the project and had any reason to comment.

Because of the late inclusion of the old Highway 93 expansion into the proposal, it was not studied as part of the preparation of the DEIS. For that reason, the DEIS is flawed and inadequate. There is nothing in the DEIS that deals in any way with the effects of the proposed expansion of old Highway 93. Therefore, if the proposals are not changed to eliminate the old Highway 93 expansion, the DEIS needs to be rewritten after an appropriate period of additional study.

The expansion of old Highway 93 will obviously involve taking property from one or both sides of the current road to accomplish the current project. Currently the west side of the road borders the MCC and part of Larchmont golf course, while the east side borders on the back side of a number of businesses, most or all of which have driveways exiting onto old Highway 93. While the scope of the project has been defined, the borders of the project have not (i.e., it has not been determined how much property will be taken from each side of the road, nor the possibility of construction easements needed to temporarily use property to complete the project). Because of that, it is impossible for the EIS to state what the impact on the various properties might be. Until the project is more explicitly defined, it will be impossible to prepare an appropriate and accurate EIS.

Whatever plan is adopted, and whatever construction lines are drawn, this will have an extremely negative effect on the MCC. At the least, there will be a great deal of noise, car exhaust and smog from the construction and increased traffic flow. Even if the current MCC property line is not invaded, the road will be within 12-15 feet of the eighth tee. If MCC property is taken, it will seriously affect the entrance to the club, as well as the existing eighth and ninth holes. You can’t play golf on a sixteen hole golf course! If two holes are lost, it might require the redesign and re-construction of the whole golf course, and I don’t believe there could be adequate mitigation for that. In addition, any minor changes will increase the likelihood of golf balls being hit into the road, placing an increased load of traffic at risk.

The effects on the club entrance will also be severe, as access and departure from the club will be limited. This could have serious effects in the event of emergency. The Missoula county attorney recently had a heart attack at the club. Fortunately, he is OK, but another 10 minutes to get an emergency vehicle in and out of the club could have cost him his E = Reference number for summary response issue
Appendix E: Comments and Responses
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<th>Comment # 102 (continued)</th>
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As the proposed plan is currently drawn up, to exit the club, one would have to make a left turn onto a busy 4 lane road, without the aid of a traffic light, or turn right and to then go into Miller Creek and take a circuitous route to get back to Brooks to go into town (the potential left turn from old Highway 93 onto Brooks will be blocked). This might be improved access into Miller Creek, but it will be worse access to anywhere else.

The question is: why does anything have to be done to old Highway 93 at all? It neither provides an alternative route into Miller Creek, the original goal of the project, nor improves access to Miller Creek. Therefore, it is not essential to achieving the goals of the project. Secondly, it only minimally improves traffic flow by providing a diversion from the Brooks-Reserve intersection. That intersection is only about eight years old, both roads are six lanes wide at the intersection, so it can handle all of the traffic needed, and nobody would save more than an eighth of a mile using this diversion. Lastly, there are a significant number of businesses on Brooks and Reserve that would be bypassed by using the reconstructed old Highway 93. These businesses are located where they are in order to have the visibility of a large traffic volume driving by. These businesses will be severely harmed by the proposed expansion of old Highway 93. On the other hand, old Highway 93 is populated by two golf courses and the back side of a number of businesses who do not use that road as their primary public access point. Therefore, nobody will benefit from this road expansion, but a large number of businesses will be harmed. Why are we proposing to spend millions of tax dollars on this?

I am one of nearly a thousand members at the MCC (over 500 memberships with most being married couples). We all strenuously object to this project and the effect it will have on the club. I therefore request that you seriously reconsider the old Highway 93 expansion, as it is not a necessary component of any of the proposed alternatives, and threatens to seriously impact a large number of citizens and businesses without those effects having been adequately studied or submitted for public comment.

Sincerely,

Cynthia H. Stern

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<tr>
<th>Response to Comment # 102 (continued)</th>
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...
Comment # 103: Mike Walker

From: Mike Walker [mailto:mike.walker@walkerlogisticsinc.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2006 10:57 AM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller EIS Objections...

Mr. Genzlinger,

I am writing in regard to my objections to the current Miller EIS plans submitted for the following reasons:

1) In the original statement, a secondary access to the development in the Miller Creek area (Linda Vista, Maloney Ranch et al...) was the purpose and mission of the study...I see somewhere in 04 you modified that statement? Did anybody know this? Highway 93 improvements were never even in the scope of the original concept? I feel the EIS is defunct for purposes of not including old highway 93 impacts in the study...

2) I feel making major changes on old highway 93 and the corner of Reserve and Brooks deserves impact study and is very premature at this point given current studies under way on Brooks, Reserve and a potential “By-Pass”...plus the Miller EIS does not really even address these areas? This proposal appears as an after thought thus rendering the EIS incomplete or illegal...

3) The current alternative chosen will put heavy traffic flowing by Cold Springs School where both my children currently attend. Currently the traffic flow by this school is manageable, but barley. Making the proposed changes will add HEAVY traffic by the school and this IS NOT SAFE or a prudent idea to take what is currently safe and jeopardizes that? Missoula currently already has several schools in High Traffic zones, why would we create another? The school also relies heavily on parking along Briggs for school functions that would either be non existent causing further COSTS for the school to construct additional parking or again jeopardize the safety of families

Response to Comment # 103

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, H, I, L, and O.
Comment # 103 (continued)

4) The current alternative chosen does very little to relieve traffic out of the developments off of Miller Creek and further backs traffic up Miller creek road through a series of proposed stop lights…The stop light proposed at the base of the Y at upper & lower Miller Creek road is at the base of a very long and steep hill…a stop light will have serious safety issues on a snow morning causing many cars to have to come to a complete stop on a very steep hill? Has this been contemplated in the study? The hill is already very dangerous on a cold wet morning and taken lives already? 

5) The current proposals seem to benefit only 1 party in Missoula…WAL-MART and that I take even more exception to…Wal-Mart gets their super store after the proposed changes are made as the changes seem only to make the corner suitable for the super center which in itself will take your projections to 2025 traffic volumes there over night? Does the current EIS include a wal-mart super center? If not, perhaps that also makes it premature and defunct!

6) The EIS and proposed developments are premature! The pending wal-mart super center and also the Bitterroot resort are major factors to consider when planning such changes…Bitterroot Resort in its full concept is the largest ski area in North America! 12 times larger than Snowbowl and will accommodate up to 20,000 vacationers a day…a by pass to the airport will eventually come into plans…shouldn’t all this be contemplated in concert? Decisions now will lead to failure and huge wastes of available funding! Lets do things right!

Response to Comment # 103 (continued)

* 109: The project has considered reasonably foreseeable projects that are included on local plans and have funding in place. Coordination with Wal-Mart has occurred.
Comment # 103 (continued)

7) The development needs a secondary access! This is the reason the whole project started! Let’s start over again and get back on the plan! Choose the NO BUILD alternative, let the pending projects develop and start a new study with the proper scope and notifications in 2007-2008! There seems enough funding left to redirect the EIS and nail it this next time around! The obvious thing to do is push a new interchange across the river to Blue Mountain road or just North of there…this relieves 50% of the traffic off Miller Creek as ½ the development will have easier routes through the new access and also starts the By pass to the airport which the city so desperately needs regardless of the above mentioned pending resorts and super stores to simply manage day to day growth!

My hope is that the project as proposed will not happen and that you will take the proposed changes to Miller Creek and Old Highway 93 OFF of all the other alternatives…this is an after thought that in my opinion renders your current study defunct and illegal as it currently exists!

Thank you for reading my comments!

Sincerely,

Mike Walker

Mike Walker
www.walkerlogisticsinc.com

Walker Logistics Inc.
Agents For
Advantage Transportation, Inc

508 E. Toole Avenue
Missoula, MT 59802
877-844-8390
Fax: 406-542-8391

Response to Comment # 103 (continued)

A = Reference number for summary response issue
Comment # 104: Bob Tutskey

From: bob.tutskey [mailto:bob@saltstudio.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2006 5:28 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek Road Project Public Comment

Please accept my comments and opposition to the proposed "preferred alternative" for the Miller Creek Road Project EIS. To that point I am opposed to the proposal for the following reasons:

1. The initial challenge was to find a way to allow a second point of entry or egress for the Miller Creek/Linda Vista/Maloney ranch areas. The current proposal does nothing to address this need. In an emergency situation requiring evacuation of the area there is no alternative exit route. One stalled car on Miller Creek Road or a train crossing the intersection will create chaos.

2. The impacts both environmental and social on old Highway 93 and the adjacent businesses and the golf course have not been addressed. A 16 or 17 hole golf course won't make it.

3. This alternative is just a knee-jerk reaction to the concerns of the Blue Mountain home owners to a connecting bridge coming out of Miller Creek that accesses Blue Mountain Road. A longer term view and solution that combines a bridge and a Highway 93 bypass that follows Blue Mountain Road makes more sense. The current Old Highway 93 alternative may avoid some short-term conflicts with the Blue Mountain/Big Flat neighbors, but they should know you'll be back pursuing that plan in 5 years anyway because the current alternative doesn't solve the bigger issues of Miller Creek egress or a truck/travel through bypass for Missoula.

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Response to Comment # 104

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, E, F, G, H, and I.

A = Reference number for summary response issue

Appendix E: Comments and Responses
Comment # 104 (continued)

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Bob Tutskey  
saltStudio, Inc.  
259 W. Front St.  
Missoula, MT 59802  
406-721-0705

fax 406-721-0523  
cell 406-546-9399

www.saltstudio.com
Comment # 105: Michael & Patricia Gray

From: Michael & Patricia Gray [mailto:west1@montana.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2006 7:04 AM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov
Cc: McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek EIS comments

Several comments about Table 2-4 on Page 2-33;

* 110 The images being used for Figures 2-13 through 2-15 (pages 2-24, 2-25, 2-27, and 2-28) appear to be years out of date. Land use has not changed that much in the other images in this section; however, there has been quite a bit of development in the areas around Blue Mountain Road and, to a lesser degree, near Hayes Creek Road.

* 110 Specifically, the Blue Mountain Road area now has a large established flooring/home furnishing building where the proposed southbound offramp is shown. Also, the Superior Hardwood property to the south of the existing Blue Mountain stoplight has had several large buildings added where the proposed roadway is shown. The Hayes Creek area has added several businesses in the path of the proposed roadway, including the new multi-million dollar Humane Society shelter, a new veterinary services building, and an additional large building to the Honda dealership.

* 111 These improvements do not seem to be reflected in the Total Right-of-Way costs in Table 2-4, which appear to be greatly undervalued in today’s marketplace. These values would probably not even cover the cost of moving the existing businesses to new locations, much less to acquire the land for the improvements.

The second comment is to point out that, according to the footnote on the table, improvements to Old Highway 93 and the Brooks/Reserve Streets intersection are factored in to the bridge alternatives, but apparently not in Alternative 5A, the Miller Creek Road improvement alternative. The specifics of Alternative 5A need to be addressed.

Michael Gray
Box 727
Missoula, MT 59806

Response to Comment # 105

* 110: The most current aerial photography available at the initiation of this project in 2003 was used. We acknowledge that development has continued to occur, and that development has been taken it into account when estimating costs and impacts. A footnote has been added to referenced figures stating that development has occurred in the area since the aerial photo was taken.

* 111: Table 2-4 of the EIS has been revised to add a footnote clarifying that improvements to Old Highway 93 and to the Brooks/Reserve Streets intersection are included for Alternative 5A.
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<th>Comments</th>
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<td><strong>Comment # 106: John McAfee</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 106</strong></td>
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| From: John McAfee [mailto:jmcafee@paragonpackaging.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2006 10:33 AM  
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov  
Cc: McCoy, Misty S.  
Subject: Miller Creek Rd Expansion | Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, and O. |

Craig,
I attended the meeting for public comment on 10/17 and while I did not speak I wanted to make a record of my views of this project in writing.
As you know in 2003 the purpose of the EIS was to find a suitable second access point to the Miller Creek area. Obviously the proposed expansion of Old Hwy 93 has nothing to do with accomplishing this purpose. As a result of the intended purpose not being addressed the impacts of expanding Old Hwy 93 and adjacent properties have not been studied. If the goal is to find another ingress and egress point for Miller Creek area I believe the FHA should pay attention to that goal and work towards a long range plan to divert traffic via a corridor that connects 93 to 90 bypassing Missoula.
John McAfee  
2783 Larch Camp Rd  
Missoula, MT 59803 |
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<th>Comments</th>
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<td><strong>Comment # 107: Diane Delaney</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 107</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>From: Diane Delaney [<a href="mailto:DelaneyD@ho.missoula.mt.us">mailto:DelaneyD@ho.missoula.mt.us</a>]</td>
<td>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, H, I, and L.</td>
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<td>Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2006 10:44 AM</td>
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<td>To: <a href="mailto:craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov">craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov</a>; McCoy, Misty S.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject: Miller Creek problem</td>
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<td>Diverting a large amount of traffic to and from Miller Creek on a daily basis in front of an elementary school is unacceptable. As this valley continues to grow, a bridge over the Bitterroot is the only long term solution. These band-aid solutions to traffic problems which are a result of subdivision approval with no regard for traffic flow are no longer working. I live 4 blocks from Cold Spring School and the traffic on Briggs Street already is at a dangerous level for school children. There has to be a better solution. Thank you for your hard work and consideration.</td>
<td></td>
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Comment # 108: Kathee Raup

From: Kathee Raup [mailto:kraup@4-bs.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2006 9:40 AM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek EIS

Craig,

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the comment session on the Miller Creek EIS the other night but I would like to make a few comments. I have to agree with the vast majority that the preferred plan doesn’t seem like a long term solution to the problem. In reality it doesn’t seem like a very feasible short term solution either. It strikes me as the same situation we got ourselves into on Reserve Street. After all the planning, years and money put into that expansion it is already stressed with current traffic levels that we didn’t anticipate for many years down the road. My fear is the preferred scenario for Miller Creek road would have the same result. It already backs up for blocks in the mornings with current traffic levels. Widening the road and adding stoplights isn’t going to alleviate that problem when you have significant traffic that will come with the proposed development. I envision total chaos and a lot of accidents on the horizon. There is a lot of wildlife that gets hit on that road and traffic travels too fast as it is. A wider road and increased traffic is only going to aggravate that problem. Not only that, I see the potential for a significant decrease to the value of the homes on that route. Living on a busy street is usually not a preference for most people. They fear for the safety of their children and pets and have to deal with increased traffic noise as well. I, too, am concerned about the safety issues this proposal is neglecting to consider. I worry about the kids at Cold Springs having to walk to school in that area with the increased traffic and increased risk to their safety. Also, I worry about natural disaster situations. We live at the top of Miller Creek road and two years in a row now we have had grass fires relatively close to our home. One was in Lolo but we had a birds eye view and a strong wind could have spark fires all over the area. The second was set by fireworks and burned right up to our neighbors fenceline. Had this

Response to Comment # 108

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, E, F, H, I, J, and L.

* 112: Please refer to Table 4-5 of the FEIS for information about traffic and percent change from the year 2025 No-Action Alternative. Impacts to housing values for Alternative 5A, the preferred alternative, are expected to be similar to the No-Action Alternative. For Alternative 5A, the most significant increase in traffic is expected to occur on Old US 93 where there are no residences. For all other affected road segments, 2025 traffic volumes for the preferred alternative do not increase significantly over those projected for the No-Action Alternative. Traffic is expected to increase on all road segments due to projected growth in the area and not as a result of the project. All build alternatives would help reduce congestion by improving traffic flow, but, for each build alternative, the various road segments are impacted differently.
Comment # 108 (continued)

fire gotten out of the control of the rural fire department and people had to evacuate, it would have been a disaster. Miller Creek Road is already stressed with current traffic levels, if you add more houses and more people trying to escape in a disaster situation, I foresee the potential for loss of life or serious accidents occurring in the process. I definitely see the need for an alternative route in and out of the area. I realize that the proposed bridge costs more, but I foresee the need for it in the near future regardless of what happens with Miller Creek Road. The cost of housing in Missoula is driving people to the suburbs so the Lolo area is only going to increase in size and eventually will merge with Missoula. Why not be proactive rather than reactive and plan for the inevitable now rather than incurring the cost twice? My thoughts are that the river property is the most valuable and the developers do not want to have to give up river front property to accommodate a bridge. I understand that, but that is a greedy vision and not the best for the community or the upcoming development. If I lived in that area, I wouldn't want to have to take the back roads into town every day and basically that is what the Miller Creek route is. Why not put the money and efforts into the bridge, expanding Highway 93 and doing some research on the traffic light timing to accommodate a more logical route?

I appreciate your time in considering my comments on the issue. I hope that through all the comment process, you take the thoughts and concerns of the residents in that area into consideration. Thank you.

Kathee Raup

Response to Comment # 108 (continued)
**Comment # 109: Julio K. Morales**

**From:** Julio K. Morales [mailto:jmorales@jmoraleslaw.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 18, 2006 11:19 AM  
**To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.  
**Cc:** Julio K. Morales  
**Subject:** EIS on US 93 & Miller Creek

As a resident of Mullen Road very near Reserve Street I have witnessed the several changes made to that intersection over the last ten years, and have been appalled with each change, knowing that within two years each change would prove unmanageable. The last change made the widest possible use of every bit of real estate and traffic signal, yet the bottleneck and serious accidents continue unabated. Only alternate routes serving the side road, Mullan Road in this case, could provide improvement. Thus I always advocate providing a separate, well improved connection from Mullan Road West directly with US 10. No doubt that the several changes made at Reserve and Mullan could have paid for a new improved route between Mullan and US 10.

No doubt the same poor vision is clouding the solution for US 93 and Miller Creek. The only proper solution there is to provide an improved alternate route to the side road, Miller Creek in that case; if this requires a new bridge, then let us save the money that several changes in the present plan would waste, and spend that money in the only proper solution: an adequate alternate route, bridge and all.

Put it to a vote if necessary.

Julio K. Morales  
Attorney At Law  
(406) 728-6005  
jmorales@jmoraleslaw.com

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**Response to Comment # 109**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, and H.
Comment # 110: Jennifer Muzzana

From: Bryan & Jen [mailto:bryanjen@bresnan.net]
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2006 11:29 AM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek

It’s generally accepted in Missoula, not just to the residents of Miller Creek, that a bridge is/was going to be built out of Miller Creek. It’s needed. This area is growing extremely fast and it’s going to keep growing. As a resident on the back side of the hill, it concerns me how we could evacuate the entire Miller Creek area in the event of a fire with one way out. Continuing to bottleneck traffic though Miller Creek Road next to Walmart is not a plan. 5A cannot solve the problem with traffic on Briggs or Miller Creek Road that a bridge would solve. Frankly, Miller Creek Road from the Y to 93 and Old 93 could be left as they are with a bridge alternative.

The final plan should look far into the future. 4C appears to make the most sense. It’s far enough away from Miller Creek to keep traffic flowing smoothly onto 93 without the dreaded stoplights. 3B is nice too. Blue Mountain Road has so many traffic accidents at the 93 light, it could use a plan like 3B. 2B looks like a short-term alternative with another way to back up traffic in the future.

No matter what is done, someone is going be unhappy about a temporary change. A bird might need to build a new nest down river and a business may need to find a new location. You cannot please everyone, yet everyone always adapts. **5A does not get the job done.** Plan for an alternative that would be in the interest of most people, not just for today, not just because it’s cheap, but for the future as well. Build us a bridge.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Muzzana
7591 Tarkio Way
Missoula, MT 59803
251-1113

Response to Comment # 110

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, E, F, and H.

Jennifer Muzzana
7591 Tarkio Way
Missoula, MT 59803
251-1113
## Comment # 111: Donald Gifford Gaumer

Donald Gifford Gaumer  
108 Ironwood Place  
Missoula, Montana  

October 18, 2006  

Craig Genzlinger, P.E.  
Federal Highway Administration  
585 Shepard Way,  
Helena, MT 59601  

Dear Mr. Genzlinger,  

In response to the Miller Creek Road (Missoula) Environmental Impact Statement outlining alternative 5A as the preferred alternative, I would like to make the following points so as to become a part of the public record.  

1. The charter of the EIS was to find a second entry and exit for traffic flow in Miller Creek. Without reason or notification this has been altered to become a same point of entry and departure road improvement scheme. The Charter did not ask for this it was specific to the review of a second access point.  

2. The current “Preferred Alternative” does not detail the physical impacts to the area surrounding the improvements to Old US 93. The impact on abutting property is not defined much less reviewed for impact.  

3. The improvements to Old US 93 were not considered in the original EIS since this was outside of the original study area. In addition, the affected parties in this new area were not notified of the process nor were they contacted to comment on the plan.  

4. The contemplated changes to Old US 93 between Reserve Street and US 93 will adversely affect safety along the route. Missoula Country Club has approximately 500 members accounting for about 1000 adult users of the facilities. The preferred alternative will significantly enhance the risk of accident in exiting the club grounds. In addition the businesses along the route will face the same issue. Bitterroot Motors has traffic flow at or in excess of that accessing Missoula Country Club.  

5. The economic impact of the preferred alternative may be significantly understated. Without detailed plans it is impossible to say with certainty, however, one can assume that land belonging to the Missoula Country Club will need to be acquired to complete the project. It would not take a great need to affect the club in a serious fashion. All or part of two golf holes would be needed for the project. Since the club has no additional land in which to relocate, it would be irreparably harmed. Facing this I feel the club would choose to fight this  

---  

## Response to Comment # 111

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, and G.  

* 113: The EIS fully analyzes all aspects of the Preferred Alternative by resource. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the existing conditions of the study area and the expected impacts. Chapter 2 describes the nature of the project and extent of impacts. The Executive Summary recaps the estimated effects for each alternative by resource.
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<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 111 (continued)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 111 (continued)</strong></td>
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> process to the greatest extent possible with the likely outcome being significant additional cost simply brought on by the delay.

I ask that the process be redirected to the original charter of finding a preferred second route out of Miller Creek. The Old Highway component of this plan is a very poor planning effort that is outside of the request for an EIS. Please go back to the original charter of this EIS and come back with a project that makes sense and has lasting value to the community rather than this band aid, pork barrel make work effort.

Sincerely,

Donald G. Gaumer
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Comment # 112: Bradley D. Dantic</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>From:</strong> Brad Dantic [<a href="mailto:bdantic@alpsnet.com">mailto:bdantic@alpsnet.com</a>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sent:</strong> Wednesday, October 18, 2006 2:22 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>To:</strong> <a href="mailto:craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov">craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov</a>; McCoy, Misty S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cc:</strong> Martin S. King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> Information Re Congressional Earmark</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

You and I spoke at the October 17 Public Hearing in Missoula regarding the Miller Creek DEIS. You indicated that you have 2 documents addressing the Congressional appropriation for this project. Would you please forward to me a copy of each document. You can send me the two documents electronically if you have that capability.

In addition, I would like the FHA to mail me a hardcopy of the full Draft Environmental Impact Statement. You can mail the information to me at the address set forth below.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

BRADLEY D. DANTIC, ESQ.
GENERAL COUNSEL
ALPS CORPORATION
P.O. Box 9169
MISSOULA, MT  59807-9169
PHONE: (406) 728-3113
FAX: (406) 728-7416
EMAIL: bdantic@alpsnet.com

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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Response to Comment # 112</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>FHWA mailed the requested documents to Mr. Dantic upon receipt of his request.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comment # 113: Patricia Corrigan Ekness

From: Patricia Corrigan Ekness [mailto:patricia.corrigan@fedex.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2006 8:09 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: miller creek road expansion

Dear Misty and Craig,
Below are my comments I'd like to have included as part of the public record regarding the Miller Creek Rd Expansion. I have sent this to Sen Max Baucus under a separate cover.
Thanks Pattie

Dear Max,

I am writing to you to make sure you are aware of the evolving situation here in Missoula. And I have cc'd Mr Genzlinger from the Federal Highway Administration because I would also like my concerns to be added as part of the public record regarding the issue.

I recently attended a Public Hearing regarding the DEIS for the Miller Creek Development Access held at the Quality Inn on Hwy 93 in Missoula.

I respectfully acknowledge the preparation that was involved in this presentation. However, it would appear that the recommendations fall far short of what is necessary and what was promised for the successful coordination of traffic flow for such a rapidly growing sub-division.

The Federal Hwy Engineers presented their 'Preferred Alternative' (5A) which is cheap but does not include a second access point for the development. The secondary access point was the original task. Their recommendation continues to force the exploding amount of traffic down the one and only entrance/exit. As the testimony pointed out at the hearing, this plan does not take into account the effect on local businesses, schools and neighborhoods. The plan overlooks the ripple effect it will have on traffic.

Response to Comment # 113

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, C, D, F, G, H, and I.
### Comments

#### Comment # 113 (continued)

I believe that the Engineers need to go back to work and make the tough decision to do the job correctly the first time and not take the easier, cheaper way out. The only way to address this situation responsibly is to include a bridge that will funnel some of the traffic farther down 93 relieving the stress placed on the current Miller Creek Rd.

All of their options evidently includes a new traffic signal just one block from the current light at 93 and Reserve Street. This is ridiculous. Funneling traffic down Old 93 to this light is simply absurd and unnecessary. Upgrading this frontage road to a heavy traffic thoroughway running parallel with the current traffic on 93 is idiotic. This plan is putting the businesses along that road in peril and will put an unnecessary burden on the Missoula Country Club. The plan to upgrade Old 93 to a heavily accessed road would include widening the road eliminating two entire holes from the course. This would in effect close down the club. Condemning the Missoula Country Club in an effort to solve the traffic issues with a sub-division is irresponsible.

Improvements to the community are not improvements if they are not done with respect for the existing, established, productive properties.

I also heard something interesting during the public comment period. Was there really a plan that called for the DEVELOPERS to build a bridge for a second access? And what a NOVEL idea to place the burden of access on the developers who are going to get rich off of the development. If there is a way to move in that direction, I support it 100%. This is a way for City, County, State and Federal agencies to work together to solve the problem. When granting approval for subdivisions or expansion, the developer should be held responsible for the improvements necessary for safety.

### Responses

#### Response to Comment # 113 (continued)

- **D**
- **F**
- **F**

- **C**
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<tr>
<td>Comment # 113 (continued)</td>
<td>Response to Comment # 113 (continued)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Max, I respectfully request that you use your influence to get these guys back on task. I appreciate your time and attention to the Miller Creek Subdivision Traffic Issue. Pattie Corrigan Ekness 532 Ford St Missoula, MT 406-360-7895</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comment # 114: Joan Sisson

From: DAVID SISSON [mailto:jndsisson@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2006 3:19 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller Creek bridge

Hello - I'm fairly new to this area (Hamilton), so I don't know where Miller Creek is. However, the old "Silver Bridge" across the Bitterroot River north of Hamilton has been "up for sale" and is to be taken down. Could it be moved to the Miller Creek area?

- Joan Sisson, Hamilton, 363-5749

Response to Comment # 114

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter D.

**114:** The DEIS has identified Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative does not include a new crossing of the Bitterroot River or require a bridge.
Response to Comment # 115

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, H, I, J, and O.

* 115: We apologize for your inconvenience, although we did not receive any other comments about the website and email link not being usable. Upon receipt of your comment the website was tested and was found to function properly. Thank you for your perseverance and sending your comments.
I lived in Linda Vista area at 3235 Paul Lane for 23 years. I recently sold the home but still feel attached to the area. I share the views of most of the public commentators from last night's informational meeting. Any of the bridge alternatives across the Bitterroot and into Mulowney Ranch are a must. Like it or not, expense or not, Missoula is going to continue to grow exponentially. The bridge would become part of a very necessary North South bypass route to I-90. The Federal Highway commission should take the lead in providing the linkages between I-90 and Highway 93 South since our County Government has not addressed this issue in any meaningful way since the opening of Reserve Street improvements. We should be planning growth corridors at least 50 years into the future!

In addition, the Miller Creek Wye needs to be greatly improved. I'd also recommend leaving the light at Blue Mountain in all cases. Traffic needs to be slowed down well before Miller Creek. The growth in the Ravalli county area will see another huge increase as soon as the last 10 mile stretch of South Highway 93 improvements and widening into Hamilton is completed. I've seen too many quick fixes. We need a comprehensive traffic and transportation plan. Thank You.

Thomas E. Butorac
First Interstate Bank
Vice President
Commercial Real Estate
Location: 101 East Front Street
Missoula, Montana 59802
Mail: Box 4667
Missoula, Montana 59806-4667
Phone 406-523-4237
Fax 406-523-4317
e-mail: tbutorac@fib.com
Comment # 116: Jeannette Williams

Thank you for reviewing the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and for providing your comments. The DEIS is also available for review on the project Web site at www.milleres.com. Please mail your comment to the address on the other side by November 6, 2006, to be a part of the official public record. You can also provide comments through the project Web site.

**COMMENT:**
This study did NOT address the one issue Miller Creek residents have asked for:

- A 2nd exit!

Backway traffic further up Upper Miller Creek is a safety issue as cars will be forced to stop on a hill which already is the site of accidents:

- A 2nd exit - Bridge or otherwise is needed:

**Name:** Jeannette Williams
**Address:** 10025 Owl Summit
**Phone:** (406) 273-3333
**Date:** 10-18-06

P.S. This study is a monumental waste of time, money, and it simply does not address the issue. @ least a 2nd exit!!

Response to Comment # 116

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, and H.
<table>
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<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 117: Susan Morgan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 117</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
| From: SUSAN MORGAN [mailto:confluence@rocketmail.com]  
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2006 12:32 PM  
To: McCoy, Misty S.  
Subject: miller creek eis input | Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, and K. |
| HI,  
I'd like to give formal input into the miller creek IES.  
My preference is for alternatives including the bridge at the north end or at Blue Mountain Rd. (alternative 2B and 3B).  
The impacts of having 2 lights (alt 2B) vs. none (3B) should be considered and perhaps a lower speed limit is needed for this stretch of highway if another light is put in, for safety in winter especially. |  |
| Sincerely,  
Susan Morgan  
3200 Ravenwood Lane  
Missoula, MT. 59803 |  |
Comment # 118: Roy Curet

From: R.C. [mailto:rocu@rocketmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2006 1:47 PM
To: McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Comment on Miller Creek DEIS

Hello,

Here's my input on the Miller Creek DEIS.

I prefer alternative 2B. I think this alternative has the best compromise of access and traffic volumes. I also think that another traffic light on 93, as in this alternative, would keep speeds down a bit and improve safety.

3B is my next choice.

Thank you,

Roy Curet
3200 Ravenwood Lane
Missoula, MT. 59803

Response to Comment # 118

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, and K.
Comment # 119: Donna Franklin

From: Monty Franklin  [mailto:bboyw@mtwi.net]
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2006 8:38 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek Road

I was not able to attend the public meeting this week so I would like
to make comments of record here.

Ever since the fires of 2003 when we were trapped on Horseback Ridge
Road with the fires less than a mile away, I have worried about the folks
up in Miller Creek. In our case, we would have had 3 ways out except
that McClays Bridge was closed for repairs, and authorities had Blue Mountain
Road closed at US 93, which left Kona Ranch Road as the only way out for
hundreds of us on the west side of the river. Why would you spend one
dime of taxpayers money and still leave all those Miller Creek residents in
danger?

I understand very well how Engineers think, but in this case they need to
Cowboy Up! and trust the common people who posses the common sense that
they do not.

Donna Franklin
9705 Horseback Ridge Road
Missoula MT  59804
Comment # 120: Gene Peterson

From: Peterson, Gene [mailto:GenePeterson@clearchannel.com]  
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2006 5:04 PM  
To: Genzlinger, Craig  
Subject: Miller Creek Road Project  
The following are my comments after attending the public hearing on Tuesday, October 17, 2006, at the Quality Inn, 3803 Brooks Street, Missoula, Montana, between 7pm and 9pm:

I. During the two hours it appeared that between 30 and 40 people spoke. Not a single person favored Alternative 5A, the preferred alternative. All were strongly opposed to the negative impact this preferred alternative would have on Cold Springs School and the Missoula Country Club.

2. It became apparent that the Project Purpose was arbitrarily changed from the clearly stated original mission-to recommend a second road into and out of Miller Creek- to improving access between US 93 and the Miller Creek area.

I don’t think anyone would dispute either of the above. Which leads me to the assessment that this was the most embarrassing public display of incompetence by City, County, State, or Federal agencies that I have seen in forty years of attending and covering this type of hearing. It is obvious the process was severely flawed; total lack of notification of parties involved, a complete change in project purpose, no communication, no public input or discussion, no environmental impact studies; lack of details. The only thing I can recommend is that all contributing parties go back to square one; start over, and this time follows the project purpose and planning guidelines. I further recommend that it would be appropriate for those primarily responsible for this three million dollar waste of taxpayer dollars submit their resignation/s.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Gene Peterson  
VP & Market Manager  
Clear Channel Radio  
Missoula, Montana  
Direct line: (406) 523-9805  
Fax: (406) 542-2329

Response to Comment # 120

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, C, G, and L.
Response to Comment # 121

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, and I.
### Comments

**Comment # 121 (continued)**

steady flow of traffic until you reach Lolo. Traffic is steady and continuous for over five miles.

Please consider my comments when making your decisions. In addition, my wife, son and daughter are registered voters and residents and they concur with my opinion if you are keeping count. Thank you in advance for your concern to this dilemma.

Sincerely,

Larry Jacobs  
Lenora Jacobs  
Shane Jacobs  
Sara Jacobs  

Larry Jacobs  
PO Box 1030  
Lolo, MT  59847

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 121 (continued)**


Comment # 122: Denice Prideaux

October 19, 2006

Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena, Montana 59601

RE: Miller Creek Project, Missoula, Montana

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

I have lived in Hayes Creek, off Highway 93, for 23 years. In that time we have seen traffic on Highway 93 year-by-year get totally out of control. I feel like our family, including our 2 teenage drivers are risking our lives every morning that we try to merge into morning traffic going into Missoula to work and school. The speed limit is 65. Most traffic is traveling in excess of 75 miles per hour as well as driving in the passing lane when not passing. Our neighborhood has been informed by the highway patrol we will get a ticket if we try to merge using the middle turn lane. I would like to see representatives from this project come to our turn-off between 7:00-8:00 weekday mornings and attempt to merge into traffic that is going over 75 miles per hour.

Regarding the comments I read in today’s Missoulian that the majority of people living in Miller Creek want a bridge to help their traffic flow in and out of their neighborhoods I would ask that you:

1. Consider our access and how it will affect our safety if the proposed bridge does not directly connect our neighborhood to the Miller Creek bridge. This access they are requesting to Highway 93 would make the highway even busier and therefore harder for us to turn into town. And, as you know, with people continuing to populate the Bitterroot, traffic is already increasing each year.

2. The Federal Highway Administration should NOT wait to lower the speed limit on Highway 93 but rather do it immediately. The present speed limit of 65 is TOO FAST (I think the numerous accidents attest to that) and it has not been enforced. I know of several smaller suburban areas around the state that have lower speed limits with less traffic.

I would agree with looking for a long-term solution instead of a bandaid. Miller Creek should be widened; stop lights should be added at each intersection you suggested. However, lets also look at the years ahead. Growth is going to continue down the Bitterroot and money has to be spent to make these roads and access safer for us all. So, finally, thank you for considering my comments, and PLEASE do not forget the smaller developments need a voice for safety too. Please remember Hayes Creek in your final plans.

Sincerely,

Denice Prideaux
7150 Devonshire Lane
Missoula, MT 59804

Response to Comment # 122

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, G, H, K, and O.
Response to Comment # 123

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter H.

Comment # 123: Norman & Doris Balko

We are not in favor of Alternative 5 for the Miller Creek Road. We live at 4775 Lower Miller Creek and the way they plan to draw water will do a great deal of damage to our home. 1. You will cut down 10 trees that are facing the road plus many bushes. 2. You will dig up the water well that provides water to our home and barn. 3. You will damage the sprinkler system that is underground. 4. The noise pollution will be intensified and the carbon monoxide from the cars will be brought closer to our home. 5. Our property resale value will be greatly diminished because of the close road proximity to the house. 6. By relocating the home, what does that mean to the property and barn in the back?

Please review your plans again. There must be something better than this that you can offer.

Name: Norman & Doris Balko
Address: 4775 Lower Miller Creek - Missoula, MT 59802
Phone: (406) 251-2135  e-mail: 
Date: 10/29/06
Comment # 124: Harve Brown

(Retyped from handwritten letter below) “The original request for funds was to provide a two way access to the Miller Creek-Linda Vista subdivision. What you are proposing is a bandaid for the project. It does not take care of the purpose or need for the future. This does not take care of the problems with the Miller Creek and Highway 93 intersection. Also Wal-Mart did not provide a right of way across the property for the new alignment, as the City did not take care of this oversite. There is a right of way available for one location of a new access and bridge, that a bridge occupied in the past for the public use. I think you need to look at the overall plan for the future. This does not cut it.”

Craig Longsjo
2305 Longsjo Dr
Globe, AZ 85501

Response to Comment # 124

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, H, I and J.
## Comment # 125: Warren Dexter

**Name:** Warren Dexter  
**Address:** 6560 Shiloh Lake Blvd. 58347  
**Phone:** (410) 373-3006  
**Date:** Oct 20, 2006

**Comment**

1. We feel that all developers, who contributed to the increase in residents in the Miller Creek Area, should be required to contribute a percentage of the cost of handling the increase in road traffic to address the area.

2. Since the County owns an easement on the west side of Miller Creek Road, for the purpose of expansion, why do you insist on taxing such a large slice of property, arbitrarily, from owners (Forty Baptist Church, Robert Beach, and others) on the east side of this road?

3. The changes to existing traffic lights and placement of new ones would lead us to believe that these changes were made from an office desk, without any actual on-site observation of 24-hour traffic patterns. There has to be a better plan, and we believe a bridge is better, any way you look at it.

---

### Response to Comment # 125

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters C, F, G, and I.

*116:* Adjustments to the roadway alignment can be made during development of the final design to maximize use of any existing County right-of-way. However, roadway shifts to the right (east) will be necessary to prevent the acquisition of eight residences.
## Comments

### Comment # 126 Charles L. Walter, PE

Missoula, Montana  
Oct. 22, 2006

Dear Sir,

Following are my comments on the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I attended the open house on Oct. 17, 2006 and have reviewed numerous documents relating to this statement.

1. The purpose of the Miller Creek Road EIS project as I understand it is to provide a second safe access from the Miller Creek area to US 93 and also to improve the access and safety of the present access. Obviously the project fails in the first objective as no second access is planned. It would require a bridge across the Bitterroot River.

Also after considering the benefit and effect of the proposed road widening and reconfiguration, installing 3 new traffic signals and loading up old Highway 93 it appears to me it is shoving more traffic and congestion into a very small area which in the long run would be very inadequate and perhaps even be detrimental.

I feel you should look more than 10 years or so ahead and work on a plan and project that we all know will be needed, i.e., a bridge over the Bitterroot to Miller Creek area and a bypass around Missoula to the West somewhere in the area of the Blue Mountain road. This would allow a good share of the traffic from both Miller Creek and the Bitterroot to be directed away from the congested area.

If the traffic volume continues to increase at the present rate this will without question be necessary [politics or not] and sooner than we think.

The proposal to widen and increase traffic on old US 93 was not included in the original alternatives. This widening would have a very unacceptable effect on the Missoula Country Club.

I have been a member of the Country Club for 34 years and have served on the board of directors and was chairman of the greens committee for 3 years in the mid 1980’s. Prior to and during these 3 years the noise from the traffic on old US93 and from the businesses across it was noticeably increasing. Also lack of privacy necessary on a golf course was increasing. Passing cars would honk and yell comments, etc.

It was at this time we planted a camo hedge completely around our property as a noise and privacy barrier. In approximately 10 years the hedge had grown sufficiently to serve this purpose and with each additional year it gets thicker and a better noise and privacy barrier.

In this regard your impact statement on noise impacts for alternative 5a, the preferred alternative, lists impacts on 19 residences and one church. Noise impact on the Missoula Country Club is not listed.

The Missoula Country Club golf course has long been considered as one of the best in Montana and as a result it is the desired site of many of the State and regional tournaments as well as local fund raisers etc. Golf is a game where even small noise distractions are not acceptable.

Craig Genzlinger, P.E.  
Federal Highway Administration  
585 Shepard Way  
Helena, MT 59601

## Responses

### Response to Comment # 126

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, G, I, and O.
It is difficult to comment on the impact on the Country Club as the DEIS is very incomplete and vague on what is planned in the widening. It does not include how much land would be needed, whether the hedge would have to be removed, how many if any of the 80 year old trees would need to be removed, the effect on the entry to the Club if any, etc. The DEIS is very inadequate.

In summary I would say the project as planned is a band aid measure at best and the impacts on the Missoula Country Club are totally unacceptable.

Yours truly,

Charles L. Walter, P.E. retired
4010 Heritage Way
Missoula, MT 59802
Phone 406 549 5389
October 22, 2006
<table>
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<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 127: Steve Romero</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 127</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
| **From:** stephen romero [mailto:romerovector1@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 23, 2006 9:39 AM  
**To:** Genzlinger, Craig  
**Cc:** CountyPublicWorks@co.missoula.mt.us; SKing@ci.missoula.mt.us  
**Subject:** Miller Creek EIS | **FHWA email response on 10/23/06:**  
**From:** Genzlinger, Craig [mailto:Craig.Genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 23, 2006 2:16 PM  
**To:** stephen romero  
**Cc:** McCoy, Misty S.  
**Subject:** RE: Miller Creek EIS |

Mr. Genzlinger,

I was out of town for a business meeting on the 17th. Is all the info regarding the alternatives surrounding traffic on Miller Creek road contained on the following website?

http://www.millereis.com/

How were projected traffic volumes calculated? It appears the EIS alternatives extensively consider impacts to Highway 93 traffic volumes. I did not note any consideration of impacts on Upper and Lower Miller Creek due to projected increases in traffic volumes for each alternative. Was consideration given to such impacts in your analysis?

Any consideration given to impacts on alternate routes on which traffic may divert to as a result of congestion on Upper and Lower Miller Creek?

I regularly conduct risk analysis studies as a part of my work. Given the marked increase in traffic volumes in and around Cold Springs Elementary it would appear a risk analysis to estimate loss of life exceedance probabilities would be warranted when comparing the various alternatives. Due you plan any such analysis?

I will review the information on the website. I will likely have additional comments. Please send any analysis or other pertinent information regarding the study methodology to this email.

Respectfully yours,

Steve Romero, P.E.

---

**FEIS response:**

Responses to this comment letter, in addition to the email response above, can be found under Summary Response issue letters I and L.

*117: Traffic forecast methodology and analysis results are discussed in Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the DEIS and FEIS.*
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 128: Dorothy H. Patent</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>From: <a href="mailto:Doropatent@aol.com">Doropatent@aol.com</a> [<a href="mailto:Doropatent@aol.com">mailto:Doropatent@aol.com</a>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sent: Monday, October 23, 2006 9:27 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To: <a href="mailto:donald.galligan@hdrinc.com">donald.galligan@hdrinc.com</a>; Ludlow, Sheila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject: Hiway 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear MDOT people,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just found out that only one person from our neighborhood, Steve McCool, attended the recent hearing on the alternatives for dealing with Miller Creek traffic. I'm sure most of the neighborhood, like me and my husband, were planning on attending the meetin in Lolo, which had been scheduled for tonight. We were very disappointed that it was postponed, as we are leaving town next Monday so won't be able to have personal input into this issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were both relieved to see that the preferred alternative was now to improve the existing roads in the Miller Creek area rather than to put in an expensive, ecologically disruptive bridge that would also create major changes in existing neighborhoods. When people move into an area, they are accepting the conditions there; the problems in the Miller Creek area have been there for many years, and people who move in there should do so with their eyes open. I don't believe it is the responsibility of all tax payers to rescue them from their situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can't imagine why a bridge that leads to Hayes Creek Road is even an alternative. This is a small neighborhood, with no other way out, and no reason for anyone to come up Hayes Creek Road unless he/she lives here or is visiting. There is nowhere to put an access road on either side of the highway without major ecological and human disruption and a huge amount of earth-moving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The alternative for a Blue Mountain Road bridge as was presented in the earlier version of the study showed eliminating the traffic light there, which would make getting onto the highway almost impossible from Hayes Creek and several other streets between Missoula and Lolo as well. That light is the only thing that makes it possible to turn left and go to Missoula during the afternoon and evening from here.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 128</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter D.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 118: Your comments have been noted. Alternative 5A was selected as the Preferred Alternative.
Comment # 128 (continued)

If the powers that be decide that a bridge must be built, it could be done at Blue Mountain Road, but leaving the traffic light intact, and using a simple intersection that would also be a lot less expensive and disruptive than the complicated one that was envisioned in the earlier plan; I haven't seen if there is a new version, as I was expecting to go to the meeting tonight.

The now preferred alternative of improving Miller Creek roads is what makes sense, financially, ecologically, and in terms of the impact of people who live in this area, not just those of us in Hayes Creek. Miller Creek residents who moved there in the last 20 years knew about limited access. The problem has been discussed in the media for at least that long. When we in Hayes Creek needed a paved road, we paid for it with an SID; we didn't ask other taxpayers to bear that burden, as it didn't benefit them.

Any of the bridge alternatives I've seen would result in destroying the property and/or livelihoods of residents who would have no benefit from the bridge. The bridge would heavily impact the already stressed wildlife of the Bitterroot River area, as well as being very expensive.

Sincerely, Dorothy H. Patent, 5445 Skyway Drive, Missoula 59804  406-251-3820

Response to Comment # 128 (continued)
**Comment # 129: Don Peressini**

Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena, Mt 59601

Re: Miller Creek environmental impact statement

October 23, 2006

Dear Craig,

The most recent “Preferred Alternative” Alternative 5A does not meet with satisfaction among those folks most directly affected by the newly suggested improvements. This was quite evident after listening to the arguments posed at the October 17th, 2006 meeting. Although it would be difficult to argue that improvements to this principal traffic corridor are long past due, and in fact should have been accomplished years ago and in concert with the Linda Vista developments. If the neighborhoods and businesses are negatively impacted by this Miller Cr. Road up-grade, to the extent indicated at the meeting, and also if in the future a second access will be required to accommodate the Maloney Ranch developments, Alternative 2B (North Lower Miller Creek Grade-Separated Intersection) has many significant advantages over the other alternatives.

Advantages of Alternative 2B over others are as follows:

- a. This access serves the purpose and need of the Miller Creek area exclusively and does not impact neighborhoods, businesses and environments to the north.
- b. It is better situated than other alternatives to serve the public traveling from the Lower Miller Creek area to the city of Missoula.
- c. It offers the least interference with residences and commercial properties.
- d. Considering the cost of right of way acquisition on the other alternatives it would undoubtedly be far less expensive.
- e. This Alternative 2B could essentially be constructed without disrupting businesses and the traveling public. And for this reason construction should proceed much more efficiently and at lower costs.
- f. The impacts of constructing the North Miller Creek Grade Separation Interchange (Alternative 2B) seem to be very well defined and in contrast with other alternatives that potentially may result in lengthy legal disputes and undefined indirect impacts on commercial activities, residential home-owners, recreational facilities, and natural environments.
- g. Agricultural land disturbed under option 2B north of the Bitterroot River is low producing grasslands and south of the river agricultural land appears to be part of the Maloney Ranch and its beneficiaries. Where as the agricultural lands and ranches bisected by the Alternate 3B and south of the river are independent of the Maloney Ranch subdivisions and highly productive and do not benefit from these new developments.
- h. Alternative 2B does not call for the signal at Blue Mountain to be removed and therefore does not further endanger the traffic entering Hwy. 93 at the Hayes Creek access.

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**Response to Comment # 129**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, G, H, and J.

* 119: As shown in Table 2-4 of the FEIS, the Alternative 2B is cost estimate is $44 million, and Alternative 5A cost estimate is $13.5 million.
Economic impacts with Alternative 2B will be minimal, whereas, we believe the economic impacts to the businesses, the church, and nearby residences are much more significant than stated in the “summary of impacts” under 3B.

Construction, air and noise impacts will be minimal while building 2B and will be severe under 3B, due to the close proximity to businesses and transportation routes.

In summary we respectfully want to encourage all those involved in the DEIS process to consider the many advantages the Alternative 2B has over the other Alternatives, if an additional river crossing is required.

Respectfully,

Don Peressini
4800 Evergreen Rd.
Missoula, MT 59804
Comment # 130: Delmer and Virginia Vietz

From: Virginia Vietz [mailto:dvvietz@bigsky.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2006 1:56 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Cr. Road EIS

Comment:

Although the preferred alternative 5A seems to be the logical choice for all the reasons listed on the environmental impact statement, it appears some prefer to spend $30 million more the project.

If another river crossing is necessary, I believe that Alternative 2B is the better choice as it offers the least interference with residences and commercial properties and the traveling public.

We ask that all of those involved in the DEIS process to consider the advantages of Alternative 2B if an additional river crossing is necessary.

Regards,
Delmer and Virginia Vietz
4680 N. Wornath RD.
Missoula, MT 59804
406-251-3865  dvvietz@bigsky.net

Response to Comment # 130

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter D.

* 120: Your comments have been noted.
Comment # 131: Collette Johnson

Thank you for reviewing the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and for providing your comments. The DEIS is also available for review on the project Web site at www.milleres.com. Please mail your comment to the address on the other side by November 6, 2006, to be a part of the official public record. You can also provide comments through the project Web site.

Dear Mr. Genzlinger,

I am commenting on the above project (Miller Creek Road Draft). I want to state that I think alternative plan 5A is totally unacceptable. It does not address an additional access to Miller Creek, which was the original purpose of this study. Why old Highway 93 figured into any of this is beyond me. There will be so much congestion around Highway 93, Reserve and Old Highway 93, to say nothing about idling cars and pollution. We have enough of that with other poorly designed roads and intersections around Missoula. Your plan just doesn’t do anything for the safety of Miller Creek residents. I know it is the cheapest plan, but many times cheapest is the best.

I know there is a safety concern about Old Highway 93 and the Country Club with access in and out of the Club and golf balls sailing onto the roadway. Sounds like a legitimate concern to me.

Alternate 2B appears to be the logical plan, especially to plan for future roadways across the valley. There has to be some coordination with your office, city of Missoula, county of Missoula and the State.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Collette Johnson

Name: Collette Johnson
Address: 5101 Elk Hills Ct.
Phone: 406-251-2247
Date: 10/24/06

www.milleres.com

Response to Comment # 131

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, F, G, and H.
Comment # 132: Vicky Edon

(Retyped from handwritten letter for improved legibility)

The 5A alternative looks good. However, there’s a lot of concern regarding a second way out of Linda Vista for police & fire.

If you have to have a bridge, 2B seems to be the best choice. It impacts fewer people, no mitigation would be required and the plan could be accelerated. It also provides a good central location with the development.

Vicky Edon
5055 Evergreen Rd, Missoula
251-4288
Villard55@yahoo.com

Response to Comment # 132

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters E and D.
Comment # 133: Beth Swan

Thank you for reviewing the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and for providing your comments. The DEIS is also available for review on the project Web site at www.millereis.com. Please mail your comment to the address on the other side by November 6, 2006, to be a part of the official public record. You can also provide comments through the project Web site.

COMMENT:

I am opposed to the SA alternative. It does not provide an alternate route in and out of the Miller Creek, Melody Ranch development. SA causes traffic concerns at the school on Briggs. The traffic load will be heavy since all traffic will be coming out of the area via one route. I believe the impact on the residents along Miller Creek near Wal-Mart will be adversely impacted by the amount of land needed for the expansion of Miller Creek, as well as the volume of traffic and noise passing by their homes. SA does not solve the problems facing the area. We should not choose the least expensive option. We should fix the problem no matter the cost. Don’t widen Old Hwy 93. Direct traffic there. Alternative B & C10 seem like better options.

Name: Beth Swan
Address: 6217 Longview Dr, Missoula MT 59803
Phone: 406-281-7988 e-mail: 
Date: 10-24-06

www.millereis.com
### Comments

**Comment # 134: Kevin Gardner**  
**GARDNER’S AUCTION**

4810 Highway 93 South  
P.O. Box 3941  
Missoula, Montana 59806  
(406) 251-2221

October 24, 2006

Craig Genzinger, P.E.  
Federal Highway Administration  
585 Shepard Way  
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Mr. Genzinger,

This letter is in regards to the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement and the impact it will have on my five existing businesses. If the Alternative 3B: Blue Mountain Road Grade-Separated Intersection is to be used, it will make my highway frontage property no longer highway accessible. This is a huge concern of mine due to the fact that it will make getting to my location (4810 Hwy 93 S. Missoula, MT) very difficult. The easy access to my businesses is a key factor with my customers.

Using Alternative 3B will devalue my property by making it no longer highway frontage. If this is used, then how will I be compensated for the decrease in my property value? Another concern of mine is the potential loss of business income due to the loss of immediate highway access.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. If you wish to further discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at 406-251-2221.

Sincerely,

Kevin Gardner

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### Responses

**Response to Comment # 134**

*121:* Alternative 5A, Miller Creek Road At-Grade Intersection, has been identified as the Preferred Alternative, which would not affect your business property access to US 93.

Regarding Alternative 3B, please see Figures 2-13 and 2-14 of the EIS for roadway changes associated with Alternative 3B. Your property would receive a new access to US 93 across the MRL railroad tracks under Alternative 3B. (See also Comment # 247.)
**Comment # 135: Joseph W. Gorsh, PE**

From: Joe & Barbara Gorsh [mailto:gorshjb@msn.com]

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2006 5:30 PM

To: craig.genzlinger@fhaw.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.

Subject: Missoula, Miller Creek EIS

Craig Genzlinger, P.E.

Upon reviewing the Draft EIS at the Missoula library I was very disappointed in the preferred choice because it completely missed the original objective. That being ANOTHER EXIT OUT OF MILLER CREEK and the SELECTION OF A BRIDGE LOCATION. Since this was not accomplished, I also believe some of the expended funds should be reimbursed to the County of Missoula.

Before this Environmental paper project proceeds any farther, I would suggest the bridge location for Miller Creek also consider a tie into the extension of the Bitterroot East Side highway that is now being looked into as development proceeds North from the Florence East Side highway, East of the Bitterroot River.

Joseph W. Gorsh, P.E.
4511 Hillview Way
Missoula MT 59803
Ph. 406-251-6686

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**Response to Comment # 135**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, and O.
Comment # 136: John Dilley

Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena Mt. 59601

RE: Miller Creek Development in Missoula County

Sir,

The traffic problems in Miller Creek are the result of virtually non-existent planning in Missoula County. Dealing with the traffic problems now is “swinging after the pitch”; you are “closing the barn door after the horse got out”. Infrastructure after the fact is a reward for poor to non-existent planning.

In recent years, everytime a subdivision has been proposed in the Missoula valley, the issue of traffic congestion has come up. Rather than addressing the congestion as part of the subdivision process, the congestion issue is ignored and the subdivision is routinely approved with the tacit understanding that the congestion will be addressed “later” with a raid on the Federal Treasury in the form of an urgent demand for a grant in sufficient amount to pay for the entire infrastructure needed to mitigate the traffic caused by the subdivision. Meanwhile, with respect to Miller Creek, the developer, who lives in Indiana and who has petitioned for a bridge across the Bitterroot River to make his development more attractive, is laughing all the way to the bank! A bridge across the river rewards the developer, who will pay virtually nothing for it. It also rewards the Missoula County government for its failure to plan. Planning is supposed to mean “install infrastructure (road widening or a bridge or both) first”, before the subdivision is built, paid for by the developer and/or the local taxpayer rate base.

The residents of the area who complain about the traffic and demand an expensive bridge, are not going to pay anything for the bridge. They have tolerated non-existent or poor planning and now they want a “free” bridge.

South of Miller Creek, a very large subdivision has been rejected by the Ravalli County Commission because of a number of valid reasons, including insurmountable traffic problems.

In summary, if the Federal Government builds a bridge across the river or widens the road and adds other proposed improvements, that government is not part of the solution to poor planning; it is part of the problem, because it rewards failure.

Sincerely,

John Dilley
Box 7752
Missoula
Montana 59807
Comment # 137: Carol M. Key

September 22, 2006 – November 6, 2006

COMMENT SHEET

Thank you for reviewing the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and for providing your comments. The DEIS is also available for review on the project Web site at www.millereis.com. Please mail your comment to the address on the other side by November 6, 2006, to be a part of the official public record. You can also provide comments through the project Web site.

COMMENT:

I am strongly opposed to the direction the current proposal for the Miller Creek access is taking for the following reasons:

1.) It does not meet the intended Purpose and Need of a second access to Miller Creek. The original Purpose and Need seems to have been arbitrarily changed. The need for a second access for this heavily populated area has not changed.

2.) Significant changes are planned to Old Hwy 93 which have nothing to do with improving access to Miller Creek. These changes are going to have extreme negative impact on the businesses, golf courses, and safety along the highway.

3.) The DEIS does not adequately address the impact along Old Hwy 93 and the affected entities were not properly notified. Because of this cost estimates have to be seriously questioned.

4.) Any change to two holes of the Missoula Country Club has the possibility of destroying the business entirely. Besides being a vital part of the recreational and economic climate of Missoula this course holds historical significance.

5.) The stop light planned for Old Hwy 93 and Reserve Street is too close to the existing intersection of 93 and Reserve to avoid traffic jams. I know your traffic engineers tell you the lights can be timed to work. Those of us who drive these streets designed by traffic engineers know better.

The Miller Creek area is too highly populated and growing too fast to be served by only one access. This was recognized when the funding was made available for this study. Changing the Purpose and Need and pawning the redesign of Old Hwy 93 off on the Miller Creek area is not right, if not outright underhanded. Please see to it that the focus is redirected to the original Purpose and Need.

Carol M. Key

Name: Carol M. Key
Address: 4400 Nicole Ct, Missoula, MT 59803
Phone: 406-251-4954
Email: cmkey @msn.com
Date: 10-25-06

www.millereis.com

Response to Comment # 137

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, G, H, J, and L.
Comment # 138: Mike and Pam Shapiro

Michael D. and Pamela Shapiro
2120 S. Reserve St., PMB 118
Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 829-1744

October 25, 2006

Mr. Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

Re: Miller Creek DEIS

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

First, we would like to express our wholehearted support for the “preferred option” presented at the meeting on Oct. 17. We believe this to be the best solution, and sincerely hope that the objections voiced – almost entirely by a single interested group (members of the Missoula Country Club) – will not dissuade the decision-makers from choosing this alternative.

However – if it is ultimately concluded that the “preferred option” should not be selected, we strongly support Alternative 2B as the best second-choice. We believe this alternative is greatly superior to any of the others, because it addresses the access concerns of the residents of the Miller Creek area with the least possible adverse impact on businesses and residents of other areas that might otherwise be affected in a most negative way.

Thank you for your consideration, and for all your hard work on this difficult problem.

Very truly yours,

Mike and Pam Shapiro

Response to Comment # 138

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A and D.

* 122: Your comments have been noted.
Comment # 139: Miles Whipple

From: Miles Whipple [mailto:miles@bluemountainespresso.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2006 8:48 PM
To: Galligan, Donald
Cc: kmilligan@bluemountainespresso.com; Jen@ashleyfurnituremt.com; bluemountain@montana.com
Subject: miller creek DEIS

Donald,

Are you the correct person to voice our concerns to, re: Alternative 4c aka South Lower Miller Creek Interchange?

If not please let me know and please forward this to the right person,
Thank you in advance for your help.

A I believe that this DEIS was started in 2003 and probably missed the impact on our new home at 5959 Hayes Creek Rd. We have built a $750,000 home on 3.5 acres with a Bitterroot River view that will become an interchange view if Alt. 4c comes to fruition. We will also see property values decrease due to the increased noise levels from an above grade overpass. There is also a new Multi-Million dollar home almost completed on the Lower Miller Creek side of the Bitterroot River directly across from us owned by Mr. and Mrs. Hagen that was also probably not considered in the DEIS as they have not yet completed construction.

My personal reading and analysis of the Summary of impacts and mitigation chart would point to the North Lower Miller Creek Alt. 2B being the best Alternative when looking at all factors Cost, Impact to Businesses, impact to Residences (even with out ours and the Hagen’s not considered), impact to United States Waters (The Bitterroot River) and to Resident Fauna.

Alt. 2B would also leave the Blue Mountain Rd Traffic light in place maintaining traffic breaks in the South bound traffic for cross traffic safety for miles South of Missoula.

Response to Comment # 139

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, and J.
Comment # 139 (continued)

* 123

The idea of ride sharing from Hayes Creek is not really a viable benefit to a community of Lawyers, Doctors and University Professors who wouldn’t be ride sharing 5 miles to Missoula. Further an up scale area of homes does not benefit from easier freeway access other to give a greater visibility and easier access to the criminal element of society.

Thank you for your efforts in having our voice heard.

Sincerely,

Miles Whipple
Blue Mountain Espresso Svcs Inc

Response to Comment # 139 (continued)

* 123: We acknowledge that ride sharing is not an option for everyone.
Comment # 140: Lana Hamilton

From: Lana Hamilton [mailto:lana@bigsky.net]
Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2006 12:20 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Comments on proposed alternatives for access to miller creek residential area.

Dear Mr. Genzlinger,

I am a long time resident of the Miller Creek residential area. I moved here in 1977 and have been told all along that money has been set aside by various developers and the county to build a second access to the area from highway 93 across the river (a Bridge). I simply can’t believe some outfit that has never even lived here; Carter & Burgess, nor taken a survey of all the existing residents, can make recommendations about a solution to the traffic on upper and lower Miller creek roads. This is another colossal waste of money!!

Alternative 5A is a joke! This will do nothing for the Miller Creek residents; it only makes sure that it will be a long time before we ever get any help with this problem. I understand that pedestrians and bicyclists need access along miller creek; but the solution for that is a pedestrian and bicycle pathway. Why would anyone in this day and age try to mix people and bicycles with trucks and cars? One of the stated objectives is the least impact to traffic volumes on Highway 93. Good God; leaving all of the traffic to continue to pour out of the existing connection by Wall-Mart and knowing there will be a doubling of the number of residents in the next few years (trying to use it) is a tremendous impact. Why not make it illegal for Miller Creek residents to drive on Highway 93!! Safety has not been the big issue at the North “Y”; traffic backup is an issue and it is bad during rush hour, but adding a signal might help for one hour of the morning and then delay everyone the rest of the day. Adding two signals to miller creek in less than a mile of roadway will do nothing to reduce the amount of traffic on this road. Only a bridge will relieve the traffic on this road!

Additionally I find the estimates about improvements handling traffic problems until 2025 ranks up there with pigs

Response to Comment # 140

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, C, D, F, H, I, and J.
Comment # 140 (continued)

flying. The last comment that 5A has the least social, economic and environmental impacts of the project alternatives is amazingly all too true; if you don’t do anything to fix the problem you guaranty no impact.

I support either Alternative 4C or 3B without any changes to the north Miller Creek and Highway 93 intersection. After one of these bridges has been completed as promised, and traffic flows stabilize with infill of the Maloney Ranch project then; this North access arterial should be reevaluated for needed upgrades.

Respectfully, Lana Hamilton

Ravenwood Hills, Upper Miller Creek

Response to Comment # 140 (continued)
<table>
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<th>Comments</th>
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| **Comment # 141: Paul F. Nyquist**

2141 McDonald Ave  
Missoula MT 59801

October 27, 2006

Craig Genzlinger, PE  
Federal Highway Administration  
Montana Division Office  
585 Shepard Way  
Helena MT 59601

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

Because I couldn’t attend the 10/17/06 meeting at The Quality Inn, I went early to talk with your representative.

Regarding ingress and egress from the Missoula Country Club, he had no good answers and stated it was premature to stake out the areas affecting the existing Country Club property. He also did not have answers regarding who would pay for sound walls to protect play, length of disruption or ingress by heavy equipment during play and future landscaping requirements.

The addition of several golf courses in the Missoula area has made membership retention difficult at times. Changes definitely could affect this causing near and long term budgeting problems.

The Country Club is more than just a “private course”. We host non profit tournaments for Camp Make a Dream and University of Montana. In addition, we offer University of Montana and high school golfers play time. This could change if playability of the course changes materially.

You, therefore, should more adequately approach the problems indicated above and those of the Country Club Board and others along the “old 93” corridor.

Sincerely,

Paul F Nyquist |

| Response to Comment # 141 |

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F and G.
October 27, 2006

Craig Gnzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Commission
Montana Division Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Mr. Gnzlinger,

My wife and I are members of the Missoula Country Club. We are opposed to the Draft EIS Alternative 5A, regarding Miller Creek/Old Highway 93 South.

This proposed project does not appear to solve any existing traffic problem. Instead, it seems to do nothing constructive at all and appears to be a wild waste of taxpayer money. It would destroy part of our beautiful golf course, one that is prized for its age and woodland quality. It would further engulf precious open, green space which the city and county of Missoula are desperate to maintain. It would contribute to traffic growth and speed and the concrete platform that is engulfing all of us. The noise of high volume traffic would come even closer to this precious quiet, open space.

Traffic volume would increase dramatically on Old Highway 93 as would the danger for cars/pedestrians entering and leaving the Missoula Country Club.

This project will do more harm than good and should be forever dropped.

Thank you for your attention,

Paul and Beth Loehnens

Cc: Senator Burns
    Senator Baucus
    Candidate for Senate Tester
    Representative Rehberg
    Mayor Engen
    Missoula County Commissioners

Response to Comment # 142

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, G, H, and I.
Comment # 143: Ron Perrin

October 27, 2006

Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena MT. 59601

Dear Mr. Genzlinger;

I write to express my strong opposition to the proposed improvements to Old Highway
93 that are part of the draft EIS for the Miller Creek Road Project in Missoula. As several of
those who attended the recent public hearing at the Quality Inn noted:

- the proposed “improvements” provide only temporary relief to the traffic flow problem in
  Miller Creek
- the proposal does not fit with the original goal of the EIS, namely, to establish a second
  access point from the Miller Creek area.
- since the proposal covers land outside the original area of the EIS there is little consideration
given to the environmental impact of the project.

As a long time member of the Missoula Country Club I am particularly concerned about
the deleterious effects this project would have for our facility. The matter of ingress and egress
into the club would be severely compromised. (Just two weeks ago the Missoula County
Attorney suffered a heart attack on the course. Because emergency vehicles were able to
respond in less that six minutes his life was saved.)

The project would cause irreparable and permanent damage to the golf course by
destroying a large section of the number 8 and 9 fairways. Moreover traffic would either be
passing or idling within a few feet of where the number 8 tee is now located.

You should know that although ours is a private club we are quite involved in the larger
community. For example, our facility is available to the local high school golf teams for
practice sessions and tournaments. In addition, each spring we host a fund raising event that
contributes significantly to those same programs.

Response to Comment # 143

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, F, G, and H.

* 124: Impacts associated with Old US 93 and adjacent intersections were fully evaluated and are addressed under each resource in Chapter 4 of the EIS.
Comment # 143 (continued)

For these reasons, and the many more you were made aware of at the public hearing, I urge you and your agency to initiate an alternative course that will provide a long term solution to the Miller Creek traffic problem with minimal negative environmental impact.

Respectfully yours,

Ron Perrin
302 Pattee Canyon Drive
Missoula, MT 59803

cc: Brad Dantie
Neil Michelson
### Comment # 144: Gary Sorensen

From: gary [mailto:gas@in-tch.com]
Sent: Saturday, October 28, 2006 9:55 AM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: DEIS for Miller Creek

As a member of the Missoula Country Club and consistent user of Reserve and Old 93 exit, I am against spending millions of dollars to upgrade Old Highway 93. How does all this work, on the other side Miller Creek Road, give relief to the traffic coming out of this creek at the Reserve and Old Highway 93 light?

The improvements projected for Old Highway 93 do not fit within the parameters of the original objective or purpose of the appropriation.

Old Highway 93 is outside of the specified study area for the DEIS.

The DEIS fails to adequately identify the numerous impacts on the golf course, for example: the 8th Tee Box. Also what about the properties on the other side of the road. Your cost data is erroneous.

This proposal brings to mind the state’s upgrade of West Broadway, which has created all kinds of problems to store owners along the route and those using the street.

Gary Sorensen
3023 Martinwood Rd.
Missoula, Montana 59802

### Response to Comment # 144

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, G, and H.
Comment # 145: Doug Hadnot

From: Doug & Sue Hadnot [mailto:dshadnot@hotmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2006 8:31 AM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Opposed to Alternative 5A

Dear Mr. Genzlinger, Attached are my comments in opposition to the "preferred alternative" for the Miller Cr / Hwy 93 project.

October 29, 2006

Attention: Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT  59601

OPPOSED TO: DRAFT EIS ALTERNATIVE 5A

Dear Mr. Ginzlinger,

I write in opposition to alternative 5A as a solution for the access and traffic issues in the Miller Creek Area. I live in Lolo, and travel through this area on a daily basis. The intersection of Miller Creek Road and Highway 93, while very busy, works just fine as it is. We don’t want another Malfunction Junction.

The new development in the Miller Creek area has certainly increased the traffic, and will continue to do so for many years to come. I expect that the adjacent land to the south will be developed as well, and it is unreasonable to think that all of that traffic should flow through the “choke point” at Miller Creek / Hwy. 93. In my opinion, the best solution is a new bridge across the

Response to Comment # 145

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, E, F, H, and I.
### Comments

**Comment # 145 (continued)**

- Bitterroot River to tie in with Blue Mountain Road, or a new intersection created to allow for a future “Missoula bypass” to the airport/Frenchtown area.

- The most critical need in this newly developing area is for a **second access point**. An accident on Lower Miller Creek Road would severely impact access to the area for emergency vehicles, not to mention creating a horrible traffic jam that most certainly would include Highway 93. We simply need to allow for collateral circulation, and alternative routes into and out of this area.

- Finally, I was astounded that this alternative (5A) came out as the “preferred alternative”. I have followed this issue for the past several years, and do not recall it ever being discussed. It is my understanding that it is outside of the specified study area for the DEIS, and is not included in the EIS. We the public, and I as an individual, have been deprived of our rights to participate in the planning process from the beginning. Alternative 5A is the worst choice, and will create yet another dysfunctional traffic mess in Missoula.

Sincerely,

Doug Hadnot  
PO Box 278  
Lolo, Montana  59847

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### Responses

**Response to Comment # 145 (continued)**

A = Reference number for summary response issue

Appendix E: Comments and Responses  
E-206
Comment # 146: Ulysses and Jane Doss

From: U.S & J.D. Doss [mailto:lindstrand@montana.com]
Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2006 7:06 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: DEIS

As a member of the Missoula Country Club for over 30 years and a resident of South Hills for even a longer period of time, my wife and I write this letter to protest the proposed DEIS for Miller Creek Old Highway 93 South.

The following reasons support my viewpoint:

1. The improvements to Old Highway 93 do not fit within the parameters of the original objective which was to provide a second access point into and out of Miller Creek area.
2. Since Old Highway 93 is outside the specified study area for the DEIS, the EIS does not address any of the impacts it is required to address for the Old Highway 93 improvements. The property owners in the area were not given the opportunity to participate in the first three years.
3. Projections for traffic volumes for Old Highway 93 show over a 130% increase by the date of completion of this project. Nothing has been proposed to mitigate the impact of the traffic on our access onto Old Highway 93.
4. The DEIS fails to adequately identify the numerous impacts on the golf course i.e. the 8th tee box, the 9th fairway, and not to mention the properties and business on the southside of the highway.
5. There are no alternatives offered to the proposed improvements to Old Highway 93 other than the "No action" alternative in violation of NEPA.
6. In addition, the traffic past Cold Spring school will be totally unacceptable to children and families involved in that school.

Sincerely,
Ulysses and Jane Doss
6450 Gharrett Ave.
Missoula, MT 59803

Response to Comment # 146

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, G, I, and L.
Comment # 147: John D. Schindler

Thank you for reviewing the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and for providing your comments. The DEIS is also available for review on the project Web site at www.milleres.com. Please mail your comment to the address on the other side by November 6, 2006, to be a part of the official public record. You can also provide comments through the project Web site.

**COMMENT:**
I think Plan 5A is the best Plan of all. All the Bridge Plans are too expensive for what little extra they may provide. All Plans are designed to Run more traffic past Missouri Country Club, when they put the Club in it was on US 93 if they didn't want traffic past it they should not have been put on US 93 in the first place. We already have a second access in out of Miller Creek in case of emergency. Garrett St. connectsUpper Miller Creek Road to 39 East + 55th St. which connects to 23rd Ave South + Hill View Way, again Plan 5A does the Job.

Name: John D. Schindler
Address: 5816 Deborah Ct, Missouri MT 59701
Phone: (406) 251-5006 e-mail:
Date: 10-29-06

*125: Your comments have been noted.

Response to Comment # 147

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters E, F, and G.
Comment # 148: Terry Key

Comments on the DEIS
September 22, 2006 – November 6, 2006

Thank you for reviewing the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and for providing your comments. The DEIS is also available for review on the project Web site at www.milleres.com. Please mail your comment to the address on the other side by November 6, 2006, to be a part of the official public record. You can also provide comments through the project Web site.

COMMENT:

I am strongly opposed to the preferred alternative to the Miller Creek access for the following reasons:

1. It does not meet the intended Purpose and Need of a second access to Miller Creek. The original Purpose and Need seems to have been arbitrarily changed. The need for a second access for this heavily populated area has not changed.

2. Significant changes are planned to Old Hwy 93 which have nothing to do with improving access to Miller Creek. These changes are going to have extreme negative impact on the businesses, golf courses, and safety along the highway.

3. The DEIS does not adequately address the impact along Old Hwy 93 and the affected entities were not properly notified. Because of this cost estimates have to be seriously questioned.

4. Any damage to two holes of the Missoula Country Club has the possibility of destroying the business entirely. Besides being a vital part of the recreational and economic community of Missoula this course holds historical significance.

5. Traffic along Briggs will be dramatically increased in front of an elementary school that already has to deal with safety issues on the street.

The Miller Creek area is too highly populated and growing too fast to be served by only one access. This was recognized when the funding was made available for this study. Changing the Purpose and Need and adding the redesign of Old Hwy 93 is wrong. If the redesign of Old Hwy 93 is dropped the cost of a second access becomes much more reasonable. Please adjust your proposals considering this.

Name: Terry Key
Address: 4440 Nickel Ct
Phone: 406-251-4974 e-mail: terrkey4974@msn.com
Date: 10/29/06

Response to Comment # 148

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, G, J, and L.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 149: Minie Smith</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 149</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| From: M Smith [mailto:dsoup@montana.com]  
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2006 11:53 AM  
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov  
Cc: McCoy, Misty S.  
Subject: Miller Creek EIS  
I was most upset to learn that the Preferred alternative was to solve the Miller Creek problem with a new traffic light and a reconstructed rr crossing. These are cosmetic solutions to a very complex problem.  
As a resident of the Miller Creek Road I am well aware of its current heavy traffic. There are already approved over 200 additional new houses to say nothing of other new construction which have not yet been built. How has all this additional traffic been accounted for? Some other way out of Miller Creek with a new bridge is the only sensible alternative. It is hard to believe that the information you have collected led you to the conclusion that the preferred alternative is the appropriate solution. It is only slightly better than the current situation. A new bridge with access from Lower Miller Creek seems a much better way of dividing the increasing traffic load from Miller Creek.  
Minie Smith | Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, H, and I. |
Comment # 150: Alice Layne

Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

October 30, 2006
Dear Mr. Genzlinger;

I am writing to register my opposition to the DEIS for Miller Creek/Old Highway 93 South. The statement does not address the problem of a second access to Miller Creek. It merely increases traffic on existing roads, especially Old Highway 93. As such it will further congest Miller Creek Road. It will make access to the Missoula Country Club very difficult forcing cars to cross lanes of traffic to exit the club to go north or forcing cars to go around Wall Mart to get to main highway 93 north. The statement states in different places that there will be no impact on the golfing areas of the Missoula Country Club and that “A little bit of land will be necessarily acquired from the Club”. Yet the boundary of the road is at the Club property line. No one has said how the road can be built without impact on the club property and no one has said how much land or where the land from the club will come from. Without a clear understanding of these issues, as well as many others raised at the public hearing held in Missoula on October the 17th it is impossible to understand the impacts of the “preferred alternative, 5A”. The Federal Highway Department should not adopt this plan but should go back and reexamine a second access to Miller Creek that does not involve Old Highway 93.

Thank you,

Alice Layne
414 Rainier Court
Missoula, MT 59803

Response to Comment # 150

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, G, H, and I.
Comment # 151: Louis Hayes

From: Hayes, Louis D. [mailto:louis.hayes@mso.umt.edu]
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2006 2:08 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: To: Graig Genzlinger

From: Louis Hayes, 8400 Vann Dr. Lolo

Re: Proposed improvements on Old Highway 93

Among the many reasons why the proposal to widen OH 93 is a bad idea are two I would like to emphasize. Widening the roadway and installing a traffic light at the intersection of OH 93 and Reserve will necessarily increase traffic along OH 93 both to and from Lolo. This also applies to traffic to-from Miller Creek Rd along Reserve. In both directions, drivers will seek to reduce the number of signals they encounter from three to two. Rather than improving traffic flow, this will exacerbate the bottleneck. The second reason follows from the first. Vastly increased traffic will impact businesses along 93 in terms of ingress-egress. There is no left turn out of some of these businesses now so leaving will necessitate entering a heavy traffic flow. Left turns now permitted will end increasing the traffic on OH 93 even more. It will be an even greater problem getting into and out of the Missoula Country Club. This says nothing, of course, about the devastating impact the widening would have on the golf course itself. This approach in addressing one problem creates several more.

Response to Comment # 151

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, G, H, and I.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment # 152: Ronald Kullick</th>
<th>Response to Comment # 152</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From: RONALD KULLICK [<a href="mailto:rhkullick@msn.com">mailto:rhkullick@msn.com</a>]</td>
<td>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, G, H, I, and M.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2006 9:42 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>To: Genzlinger, Craig</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cc: <a href="mailto:nmichelson@missoulacountryclub.com">nmichelson@missoulacountryclub.com</a>; <a href="mailto:mayor@ci.missoula.mt.us">mayor@ci.missoula.mt.us</a>; <a href="mailto:denny.rehberg@mail.house.gov">denny.rehberg@mail.house.gov</a>; <a href="mailto:info@testerforsenate.com">info@testerforsenate.com</a>; <a href="mailto:info@missoulacountryclub.com">info@missoulacountryclub.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)/Miller Creek/Old Hwy 93 South</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear Mr. Genzlinger:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am writing as a member of the Missoula Country Club (MCC) and interested citizen and would appreciate your consideration of the following remarks in opposition to the proposed inclusion of Old Hwy 93 as a second access to the Miller Creek area.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. It does not appear the proposed alterations fit within the parameters of the original objective or purpose of the original appropriation to provide a second access point into and out of the Miller Creek Area. It clearly is not a second access point.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Old Hwy 93 is outside the specified study area for the DEIS, and therefore, the EIS does not address any of the impacts it is required to address for the Old Hwy 93 alterations. Further, the failure to include this area in the study area, but then to include it in the proposed changes, deprived affected property owners of the right to participate in the study process for the first three years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The proposed alterations to Old Hwy 93 will restrict left-hand turns onto Hwy 93. Unless one is traveling to Lolo or the Miller Creek area, a driver will have to make a left-hand turn onto Old Hwy 93, proceed to Reserve Street where there will be a new traffic signal and turn either right or left. Entering and leaving the MCC parking lot during peak traffic would become extremely difficult and hazardous and would require crossing an additional traffic lane and left turn lane turning left out of the facility.</td>
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**Comment # 152 (continued)**

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<tr>
<th>4.</th>
<th>Nothing has been proposed to mitigate the impact of a projected 130% increase in traffic volume on Old Hwy 93. The addition of a traffic signal at the corner of Reserve and Old Hwy 93 will make Old Hwy 93 a popular short cut. It is also conceivable the addition of said traffic signal could create a substantial traffic back-up resulting in severely restricting ingress and egress from businesses on Old Hwy 93, including the MCC. Such congestion could result in an increase in auto accidents and potential injuries to MCC patrons and service providers.</th>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Very importantly, I am concerned about the impacts upon the beautiful, historical MCC grounds, particularly that portion where holes 8 and 9 are located. The DEIS fails to consider adequately such numerous impacts, including visual and environmental, including noise and air pollution. Those areas the DEIS does address are not specific and thus, the analysis relative to cost is substantially in error.</td>
</tr>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>There are no alternatives offered to the proposed improvements to Old Hwy 93 other than &quot;No Action&quot;. This is believed to be in violation with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended. Changes to the &quot;purpose and need&quot; of the proposed project as set forth in the DEIS do not appear to be in compliance with NEPA.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Proposed modifications to Old Hwy 93 fail to meet the &quot;purpose and need&quot; either as originally articulated, or as amended.</td>
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For the foregoing reasons, it is submitted Old Hwy 93 is not a viable second access to Miller Creek and that modifications as proposed do not comport with "purpose and need" and in fact, would result in harmful and dangerous traffic congestion while not fulfilling the intended purpose.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter of great concern and importance to me, the MCC and other individuals and businesses that would be negatively affected by the proposed project.

Information copies also sent to: Senator Conrad Burns, Senator Max Baucus, Missoula County Commissioners

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**Response to Comment # 152 (continued)**

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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 153: Carl Thompson</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 153</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From:</strong> Carl Thompson [<a href="mailto:ctmissoula@yahoo.com">mailto:ctmissoula@yahoo.com</a>]</td>
<td>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, F, H, and I.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sent:</strong> Tuesday, October 31, 2006 6:35 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>To:</strong> Genzlinger, Craig</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> Miller Creek EIS Prefered Alternative</td>
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I am writing to express my objection to the preferred alternative in the Miller Creek EIS. I object to the 11th hour change in the purpose and need of the project which changed from finding a second access to the Miller Creek area to finding a "safe and efficient" access to the area. I strongly object to the flaws in the process that switched the focus of the study and failed to properly notify a huge number of affected citizens and business owners. The whole premise of the development in the area was based on the construction of a bridge to access Highway 93. The volume of traffic generated by the development overwhelms the capacity of the existing road system, even with the proposed improvements in the preferred alternative. The volume of traffic to be expected is in excess of many of the arterials in Missoula with the proposed lane configuration. These arterials are already choked and the congestion does not allow for "safe and efficient" passage of traffic. Russell St. between the river and 3rd St. is an example. The proposed alternative does very little to enhance the safety of the Miller Creek residents in their daily travels and will only increase congestion and decrease the quality of life for the residents on the area, particularly those in the proximity of the proposed "improvements". In fact, standard design manuals describe the volume of traffic on the proposed configuration as over capacity. The development of a second access will allow for a dispersion of the traffic and minimize the traffic impacts on the neighborhood. All local governments, all local agencies (including emergency services and...
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<th>Comments</th>
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<td>Comment # 153 (continued)</td>
<td>Response to Comment # 153</td>
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public works), and an overwhelming majority of residents are on record supporting the development of a second access to the Miller Creek area. Pursuing the preferred alternative as described in the EIS will be a tremendous dis-service to the Miller Creek residents and the community of Missoula. I encourage you to rethink the poorly conceived preferred alternative and return to the original purpose and need of the project, as funded, to develop a second access to the Miller Creek area. I invite you to contact me to discuss my issues with you. I further hope that the responsible decision is made to abandon the preferred alternative and develop an alternative that serves the whole community for the long term future, rather than a poorly conceived stop gap plan. I can point out many more problems with the proposed alternative from a design and operational point of view. The proper and responsible action is to develop the second access and to not spend money building a road system that all know will not work.

Carl Thompson  
3221 Helena Dr.  
Missoula, Mt. 59803
Comment # 154: Steven Hall
October 31, 2006

Mr. Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

RE: Missoula, Miller Creek/Old Highway 93 South Proposal

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

I am writing with regard to the above DEIS for Miller Creek/Old Highway 93 South proposal now being considered.

I am NOT in favor of this preferred alternative. I lived in the Upper Miller Creek area for 20 years but have recently moved to a central part of town. I traveled these roads since my family moved to Missoula in 1958. I have first-hand experience with the traffic on Miller Creek Road and this part of town since this is where I was raised. For that, I think I speak with some experience as to the growth in traffic along this roadway and at this intersection.

Money not being an issue, there is no doubt Missoula NEEDS a north/south by-pass, a limited access road, that would carry traffic through the Missoula valley to connect to the interstate highway system at our north valley boundary. You talk to anyone on the street (layman) and you will find that sentiment. Reserve Street is a joke because of the traffic volumes and the development that has occurred all along that road. To complicate it, you have Mullan Road intersecting North Reserve Street, right after a bridge which eliminates the potential to change that intersection. Much of Missoula’s population growth and new housing is planned for the NW part of town. The traffic problems on Reserve Street will only get worse.

You are faced with tremendous growth in the Linda Vista area and the Maloney Ranch plus several other large tracts that are simply awaiting for sewer service and/or the road fix. To take the SW part of town and expect you can improve this roadway by expanding the Miller Creek/Brooks Street intersection is both short-sighted and flawed. The traffic entering/exiting Missoula on Brooks Street/US Highway 93 will increase and continue to increase with the population expansion of Ravalli County. Compound that traffic growth with the Linda Vista area and you have a one-point congestion that will only get worse regardless of how you propose improvements to the single intersection. This proposal is a temporary fix only.

Building a bridge across the Bitterroot River, at Blue Mountain Road and then completing a north/south route through the western edge of the Missoula valley is the only true fix for these traffic problems. This author does not promote anything less than a straight north/south route through the valley; not one that follows the toe of Blue Mountain and/or goes through the Big Flat. I mean a straight shot to the north

Response to Comment # 154

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, G, H, I, and O.
Comment # 154 (continued)

although I recognize there would need to be a curve from Blue Mountain Road that takes the road across the flats to the NE and on the east side of McCauley Butte and then north on Tower Street (using an existing road) and north to cross the river and on to the connectors planned from Mullan Road north to Old Highway 10 West (West Broadway). I realize that is extremely ambitious and costly. Better to bite the bullet now than to wrestle with this problem in another 10 years when the cost of expansion will be faced with new home development, more congestion and higher costs (labor and materials).

I have used some comments against the current proposal that were provided by our membership in the Missoula Country Club. Please do not think these are my primary responses. I simply believe the proposal cannot ever truly work because of the sheer geo-physical considerations of the Missoula Valley and its road system, the originations of traffic volumes and those critical points of merging (e.g. Miller Creek Road & Brooks Street and Brooks Street/Reserve Street).

I am in favor of working out a plan to correct the Linda Vista roadway system and how it connects with Miller Creek and Brooks Street but cannot believe this proposal is any sort of real fix to the problem. Unfortunately, I could go on at length about why I believe the north/south route needs to be addressed now and why it is the only practical solution to this growing problem. For your sake, I will end simply with again citing my vote against this proposal. It cannot work for a long-term solution. It only corrects one strategic intersection and it only adds all that traffic to already congested arterials (Brooks & Reserve).

Sincerely

Steven A. Hall, MAI, CCIM
1001 SW Higgins Avenue, Suite 201
Missoula, MT 59803
## Comments

**Comment # 155: Melody Jeffries Peters**

- **From:** Melody Jeffries [mailto:mjeffries@montana.com]
- **Sent:** Tuesday, October 31, 2006 4:16 PM
- **To:** Genzlinger, Craig
- **Subject:** road improvements DEIS Miller Creek

Craig,

Briefly, I am opposed to Alternative 5A. My concern is that it's shortsighted and putting a band-aid on a bleeding artery. Development will continue in the Linda Vista area, with an even greater traffic count anticipated. The road at Biggs is extremely congested at peak travel times. It's beyond reason to hope that widening the road or adding a signal will suffice for traffic flow and safety at that area.

I don't have the proposal numbers in front of me as I write this, but I have looked at the alternatives. I'd like to say that I lack the confidence that safe travel can be achieved without the addition of a bridge structure.

Melody Jeffries Peters, RDR, CRR
Jeffries Court Reporting, Inc.
1015 Mount Avenue, Suite C
Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 721-1143
mjeffries@montana.com

## Responses

**Response to Comment # 155**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, H, I, and L.
Comment # 156: Stewart and Mysta Ward

From: Mysta Ward [mailto:hosso@montana.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2006 4:03 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller Creek Access Study

Dear Senator Burns,
With all due respect we would like to offer our opinion on the proposed work on the Miller Creek Project in Missoula. We are members of the Missoula Country Club and have been for twenty-two years. We are writing to object to the proposal of this project. The impact on the Missoula Country Club, which was established as part of our community in the year 1916, would be devastating. As you may or may not know, no discussion is noted in the EIS as to how MCC membership would be accommodated with ingress/egress during any construction period and that is just one of the problems with this proposal. The EIS has also not considered the impact of the encroachment onto the MCC golf course.

There are other ways in which to solve the Miller Creek traffic problem, such as the addition of a bridge across the Bitterroot River to gain access to Highway 93.

This solution, was in fact, the original objective of the appropriation to study this problem. We are hoping that the FHA will give more thought and consideration to this matter. Your support of MCC would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Stewart and Mysta Ward
116 Bannack Place
Missoula, MT 59803

Response to Comment # 156

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, G, and M.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment # 157: Stewart and Mysta Ward</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From: Mysta Ward [<a href="mailto:hosso@montana.com">mailto:hosso@montana.com</a>]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2006 3:44 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To: Genzlinger, Craig</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject: Miller Creek access study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dear Mr. Genzlinger,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With all due respect we would like to offer our opinion on the proposed work on the Miller Creek Project. We are members of the Missoula Country Club and have been for twenty-two years. We are writing to object to the proposal of this project. The impact on the Missoula Country Club, which was established as part of our community in the year 1916, would be devastating. As you know, no discussion is noted in the EIS as to how MCC membership would be accommodated with ingress/egress during any construction period. Nor has it considered the impact of the encroachment onto the MCC golf course. There are other ways in which to solve the Miller Creek traffic problem, such as the addition of a bridge across the Bitterroot River to gain access to Highway 93. This solution was, in fact, the original objective of the appropriation to study this problem. We are hoping that the FHA will give more thought and consideration to this matter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Most Sincerely,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart and Mysta Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116 Bannack Place</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missoula, MT 59803</td>
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<th>Responses</th>
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<td>Response to Comment # 157</td>
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<td>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, G, and M.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 158: Bill Squires</strong></td>
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</table>
| October 31, 2006  
Craig Genzlinger, PE  
Federal Highway Administration  
Montana Division Office 585 Shepard Way  
Helena, MT 59601 | Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, H, I, and L. |

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

    We are writing to you to express our concerns with the adoption of preferred alternative 5A for the proposed Miller Creek/Old Highway 93 project. Specifically, as residents of the Miller Creek area of Missoula, we are very concerned that the preferred alternative actually worsens an already very dangerous situation, and exacerbates the traffic congestion on Miller Creek, and Upper Miller Creek Road.

    This study was initially undertaken for the express objective of providing a second access point in and out of the Miller Creek area. However, somewhere along the way this original intent has been forgotten. Rather, it was somehow replaced with the purpose statement of providing safe and improved between US 93 and the Miller Creek area. The preferred alternative continues to provide only Miller Creek as the point of ingress and egress from
Comment # 158 (continued)

**Upper Miller Creek, Lower Miller Creek, Linda Vista, and Maloney Ranch.** As such, the preferred alternative fails to address even the pithy revised statement of purpose. Interestingly, there is virtually no discussion in the DEIS supporting this change in purpose.

*126*

Occupancy in these areas continues to grow, with new construction in all areas. This is recognized in section n1.3.1 of the DEIS. However, the preferred alternative fails to address alternate routing out of most of this area. The DEIS itself recognizes that Gharret Street is not an alternative capable of relieving any significant traffic growth on Upper Miller Creek. Section 1.3.2 of the DEIS states that development in the area will exceed the capacity of Miller Creek Road to handle the traffic, yet the preferred alternative does absolutely nothing to address the congestion on Upper Miller Creek and Lower Miller Creek. The traffic still bottlenecks at the ‘Y’. The single lane traffic on Upper Miller Creek and Lower Miller Creek are no longer capable of safely handling the daily traffic. Placement of a traffic control signal at the Upper Miller Creek/Lower Miller Creek ‘Y’ and Briggs will only cause a greater holdup of traffic, particularly on Upper Miller Creek. Currently morning traffic can easily be stalled past St. Thomas Drive to the south on Upper Miller Creek. Stopping this traffic flow at both the ‘Y’ and Briggs will worsen this problem.

Additionally the preferred alternative calls for bike lanes on Miller Creek from Highway 93 to the ‘Y’. What happens to the bike traffic at that point – it just disappears? There are no provisions for safe pedestrian and bike traffic on either Upper Miller Creek or Lower Miller Creek. Instead of the Bridge to Nowhere, we will have the Bike Lane to Nowhere.

Response to Comment # 158 (continued)

*126:* Text documenting the change in purpose and need for the project was added to Sections ES.2 and 1.1.1.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Comment # 158 (continued)</th>
<th>Response to Comment # 158 (continued)</th>
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<td>Finally, it is not clear if the left turn lanes at the US 93 / Miller Creek intersection will have turn arrows. This is essential. The lack of traffic control for those turn lanes currently causes a great deal of hazard.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>The only feasible alternatives to provide a second point of ingress and egress to the Miller Creek area are those that provide for a second crossing of the Bitterroot River at some point south/west of the Miller Creek/Highway 93 intersection (alternatives 2B, 3B, and 4C). There does not appear to be any justification in the DEIS for the summary dismissal of such options. We urge you to honor the original intent of this project, as well as the 'updated' purpose, and continue to seek alternative points of access to the Miller Creek area without worsening the current traffic congestion and pedestrian hazard situations we have on Upper Miller Creek Road.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thank you for your time in reviewing and considering these comments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cordially,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sherry &amp; Bill Squires</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2940 St. Thomas Dr.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Missoula, MT 59803</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel: 406-251-1265</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:bsquires@blackfoot.com">bsquires@blackfoot.com</a></td>
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</table>
Comment # 159: John E. Bohyer
From: John E. Bohyer [mailto:bohyer@montana.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2006 2:02 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller Creek Bridge Project

Mr. Genzlinger:

I reside in the Maloney Ranch subdivision in Missoula, Montana. My neighborhood is severely impacted by the current traffic situation along Lower Miller Creek Road. In addition, I am a member of the Missoula Country Club.

I have recently become aware of the new “preferred alternative” for Highway 93. While this project was originally designated or known as the “Miller Creek Bridge Project,” I understand that now the preferred alternative now does not involve construction of a new bridge at all, but rather a reconfiguration of Highway 93 at Miller Creek Road. I oppose the FHA’s current proposal for a number of reasons.

First, the Miller Creek area at the south edge of Missoula is one of the fastest growing areas in the city. I don’t know the current population but it is substantial from the base of Miller Creek all the way to its upper reaches. And as matters currently sit, there is but one exit out of the Lower Miller Creek Road area. But the population continues to grow. It is not unusual during weekday mornings to have to wait at the intersection of Lower and Upper Miller Creek Roads for up to 20 minutes before being able to merge into traffic (and this is even before you can get on to Highway 93).

The need for another bridge across the Bitterroot River in this area has long been known and it has become a true necessity with the explosive growth of the numerous subdivisions in the Miller Creek area. Reconfiguration of Highway 93 at or near the Miller Creek turnoff will do little, in my view, to ease the congestion that all folks in the Miller Creek region experience every week day. Unless and until the FHA and the State figure out how to more expeditiously stream traffic from Lower and Upper Miller Creek Roads onto Highway 93, we all are going to experience Montana’s version of “gridlock.”

Response to Comment # 159

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, E, F, G, H, and I.
Second, the proposal to reconfigure Highway 93 at Miller Creek, and to run the Highway along “old” Highway 93 adjacent to the Missoula Country Club, would create even more havoc, especially in the summer. The Missoula Country Club has been located at its current place since the 1930s and its layout is among the best in Montana. Adoption of the FHA’s new “preferred alternative” does not consider the loss of a portion of this tremendous piece of long time open space. Moreover, I understand that the new preferred alternative would not include a “left turn” lane from the reconstructed Highway 93 at Miller Creek back onto Highway 93 North. If so, how do folks departing the Missoula Country Club get back into town? With the traffic increase in this area going from 2500 vehicles per day to a projected 30,000 per day, the country club in many ways will be effectively destroyed. I do not know if you play golf, but with the current “preferred alternative” the reconfigured highway will remove substantial parts of holes 8 and 9 at the club. That is a loss that could not be restored, reconfigured or replaced by the club.

Third, the City of Missoula is nearly done with its construction of a new fire station in the Lower Miller Creek area not ¼ mile from my house. That construction has occurred at a cost of several million dollars. How in the world are the fire trucks and/or ambulances from this area supposed to get onto Miller Creek Road, let alone Highway 93, in any sort of timely fashion with the current configuration or with the preferred alternative configuration? Part of the rationale for this new fire station was to allow for quicker response time to accidents occurring in the Miller Creek area and along Highway 93 along the outskirts of the city. That rationale is frustrated without the bridge construction.

As a resident of the Lower Miller Creek area and a member of the Missoula Country Club, I must say that I am extremely disappointed in the FHA’s process in coming up with this new preferred alternative, and its apparent “bury the head in the sand” approach. The bridge needs to be constructed if residents are going to have any long term relief both for traffic congestion and for safety purposes in the event of an emergency in the Miller...
Comment # 159 (continued)

Creek area. It seems to me that the new “preferred alternative” speaks highly of political and administrative expedience, but very poorly of thoughtful analysis. I ask that the FHA reject the new preferred alternative and that it go back to the drawing board and put in the bridge as this was and should remain the intent of the project.

Regards,

John E. Bohyer
5033 Jaiden Lane, Missoula, 59803

Response to Comment # 159 (continued)
Comment # 160: Julaine “Jude” Monson

>>> <markjude@bresnan.net> 10/31/2006 9:36 PM >>>
My husband Mark Cumming and I have lived in Linda Vista for over 20 years.
*127 We would prefer Alternatives 2B, 3B, 4C and could live with Alternative 5 A if the property owners on Lower/Upper Miller Y agree:

However there are two other points that we feel strongly about:

1. In addition to improvements listed above, we need another access To Lolo and the Bitterroot. The most effective way is a bridge as suggested in Alternative 4C. It’s too late for Blue Mountain due to all the building that has gone on, unless Missoula has a plan and budget for a by pass to the airport in the next 6 years.
*128 2. No roundabouts - None - not in town much less the county.

Since this plan could offer up to 3 traffic signal lights in this area, I am appreciative of the importance you place on our safety. We feel safer using traffic signals than roundabouts. I have heard the increase in traffic signal cost that has been reported at the Broadway meetings for the last two years. I imagine that cost will be much higher in 6 years when this plan is put into action.

Julaine “Jude” Monson
markjude@bresnan.net

Response to Comment # 160

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter O.

*127: Please refer to EIS Section 2.6.25 and 4.5.6 for impacts associated with Alternative 4C. Table ES-1 also summarizes how Alternative 4C was evaluated compared to the other alternatives.

*128: No roundabouts are proposed under Alternative 5A (Preferred Alternative).
## Comments

**Comment # 161: Barbara Milligan**

October 31, 2006
5959 Hayes Creek Road
Missoula, MT 59804

Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way,
Helena, MT, 59601

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

I am writing this letter to express my opposition to alternative 4C, South Lower Miller Creek Interchange of the DEIS on Miller Creek Road.

* 129 I own a property, which does not seem to be included in your study, yet it would be directly affected by this alternative if it comes to fruition. It would greatly diminish our personal safety, finances, and health. Personal safety would become an issue, because criminals would have easier & faster ingress & egress to our property. Financially, we have sunk all of our savings into building a home that we could sell for our retirement. We currently have a lovely view of the Missoula valley and the Bitterroot River. That view would change to a ‘not so lovely view of a highway interchange.’ The air & noise pollution would increase significantly to an intolerable amount for us and any future buyer. This alternative would render our property unbearable for us to live in and pretty much worthless for resale.

Of further consideration and in response to your impact studies:

* 130 **Land Use Impact.** Alternative 4C should clearly state the impact of fellow Missoula residents, who not only have to give up their homes, but to those would personally sustain a financial and physical loss because of the change in land use.

**Social & Environment Justice Impact.** Our home was constructed in 2005. I do not believe my home is included in those “12 residential relocations” even though the interchange would be nearly in our front door!!

**Transportation Impacts.** Providing access between Miller Creek and Hayes Creek is of NO value to Hayes Creek residents and questionable value to Miller Creek as neither bedroom community has any services to offer to the other. Therefore it is a **negative impact** not a positive!

In addition, Hayes Creek residents who wish to ride share, do so within our own community as it is more convenient way to share.

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<th>References</th>
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<td>A = Reference number for summary response issue</td>
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## Responses

### Response to Comment # 161

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter A.

* **129:** Your comments have been noted.

* **130:** Thank you for your input. The impacts you mention, in addition to other environmental resource impacts, make Alternative 4C undesirable for the Preferred Alternative (see Response Issue A).
Comment # 161 (continued)

Negative impact not listed: this alternative creates additional & needless traffic into the Hayes Creek neighborhood. The narrow streets (which are not in the best of shape) are greatly used in this neighborhood by residents to walk and bike. Additional traffic would be a hazard.

Air Quality & Noise Impact. My home is not included in the numbers that are listed in your study. Nor are the other newly constructed home across the highway from us. There would be a huge derogation in air quality and a greater increase in noise pollution.

Construction Impact. Dust and noise alone from the construction would be intolerable. To say nothing about the crime that construction sites seem to attract.

In summary, Alternative 4C would have a long-lasting and negative impact on our community. Personally, alternative 4C would have a tremendously negative impact both financially & physically; financially, because of the depreciation of our current property value and future value that we hoped to accrue. Our physical and mental health would be compromised by the air and noise pollution.

A far better solution would be Alternative 2 B. 2B is less costly, residents and businesses are less impacted, there is less impact to the river and land, and wildlife is less impacted. With this alternative, the traffic light at Blue Mountain will remain and so will the breaks in traffic flow that allows for the ingress and egress into and from Hayes Creek and other residents who live off highway 93. This also keeps Blue Mountain Road from being over used by traffic trying to skirt around the reserve street/Hwy 93 Intersection.

Sincerely,

Barbara Milligan
1-406-251-6600
Comment # 162: B.K. Milligan

From: K Milligan [mailto:kmilligan@bluemountainespresso.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 01, 2006 7:20 AM
To: Ludlow, Sheila
Cc: 'Kay'
Subject: Miller Creek Road DEIS

Dear Ms. Ludlow:

I am writing to express my opposition to alternative 4C, South Lower Miller Creek Interchange of the DEIS on Miller Creek Road.

I own a property, which does not seem to be included in your study, yet it would be directly affected by this alternative if it comes to fruition. It would greatly diminish our personal safety, finances, and health. Personal safety would become an issue, because criminals would have easier & faster ingress & egress to our property. Financially, we have sunk all of our savings into building a home that we could sell for our retirement. We currently have a lovely view of the Missoula valley and the Bitterroot River. That view would change to a 'not so lovely view of a highway interchange.' The air & noise pollution would increase significantly to an intolerable amount for us and any future buyer. This alternative would render our property unbearable for us to live in and pretty much worthless for resale.

Of further consideration and in response to your impact studies:

**Land Use Impact.** Alternative 4C should clearly state the impact of fellow Missoula residents, who not only have to give up their homes, but to those who personally sustain a financial and physical loss because of the change in land use.

Response to Comment # 162

This comment letter is a duplicate of Comment # 161. Please refer to that comment number for a response.
<table>
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<th>Comments</th>
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<td><strong>Comment # 162 (continued)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 162 (continued)</strong></td>
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**Social & Environment Justice Impact.** Our home was constructed in 2005. I do not believe my home is included in those “12 residential relocations” even though the interchange would be nearly in our front door!!

**Transportation Impacts.** Providing access between Miller Creek and Hayes Creek is of **NO** value to Hayes Creek residents and questionable value to Miller Creek as neither bedroom community has any services to offer to the other. Therefore it is **a negative impact** not a positive!

In addition, Hayes Creek residents who wish to ride share, do so within our own community as it is more convenient way to share.

Negative impact not listed: this alternative creates additional & needless traffic into the Hayes Creek neighborhood. The narrow streets (which are not in the best of shape) are greatly used in this neighborhood by residents to walk and bike. Additional traffic would be a hazard.

**Air Quality & Noise Impact.** My home is not included in the numbers that are listed in your study. Nor are the other newly constructed home across the highway from us. There would be a **huge derogation** in air quality and a **greater increase** in noise pollution.

**Construction Impact.** Dust and noise alone from the construction would be intolerable. To say nothing about the crime that construction sites seem to attract.
**Comment # 162 (continued)**

In summary, Alternative 4C would have a long-lasting and negative impact on our community. Personally, alternative 4C would have a tremendously negative impact both financially & physically; financially, because of the depreciation of our current property value and future value that we hoped to accrue. Our physical and mental health would be compromised by the air and noise pollution.

A far better solution would be Alternative 2 B. 2B is less costly, residents and businesses are less impacted, there is less impact to the river and land, and wildlife is less impacted. With this alternative, the traffic light at Blue Mountain will remain and so will the breaks in traffic flow that allows for the ingress and egress into and from Hayes Creek and other residents who live off highway 93. This also keeps Blue Mountain Road from being over used by traffic trying to skirt around the reserve street/Hwy 93 Intersection.

Sincerely,
B. K. Milligan
5959 Hayes Creek Road
1-406-251-6600

**Response to Comment # 162 (continued)**
Comment # 163: Karen Walden

From: Karen Walden [mailto:karen@bitterrootmotors.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 01, 2006 8:36 AM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Cc: baucus@mail.senate.gov; burns@mail.senate.gov; infor@testerforsenate.com; denny.rehberg@mail.house.gov; mayor@ci.missoula.mt.us; info@missoulacountryclub.com
Subject: Old Highway 93

I am at a loss as to how Old Highway 93 will alleviate problems of access and egress for the Miller Creek area. I work at Bitterroot Motors and I belong to the Missoula Country club. When I leave work, my only workable route is to go out the back onto Old Highway 93 and take a left onto Brooks at the lights. Taking a right and going to Reserve is not an option. I would have to cross three lanes of traffic to get into the left turn lane and onto Brooks. Leaving from the front of Bitterroot Motors is next to impossible. The traffic heading south is non-stop and traveling fast. The area from 4B's to the Clocktower convenience store is already an island that gets very difficult to get off at times. Increasing traffic on Old Highway 93 would really isolate the area. As a country club member I would anticipate that getting out (by taking a left turn against traffic) would become the same nightmare that trying to take a left across Brooks is now.

And, again, how does all this help Miller Creek? If there were a natural disaster in that area, Old Highway 93 would not be a big help. If access to Miller Creek Road were blocked what would be the alternative route?

My understanding is that the DEIS was to study an alternative route into and out of Miller Creek. This obviously does not address that problem.

Karen Walden, SPHR
Human Resources Manager
Bitterroot Motors, Inc

Response to Comment # 163

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, E, F, G, and H.
## Comment # 164: Roger Austin

**From:** Austin, Roger [mailto:RAustin@pbsj.com]

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 01, 2006 10:06 AM

**To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.

**Subject:** Miller Creek area access

Craig:

1. I agree with the alt 5B (preferred alternative). It makes no sense to build another bridge across the Bitterroot River for drivers to turn to the north to again cross the same river. If a majority of the cars were going south it would.

2. An arterial collector route paralleling the river on the east and entering the city for drivers to disperse onto highway 93, Reserve Street, 39th Street etc. makes more sense than dumping them across a new bridge to highway 93 at a new intersection. The parallel route could be extended to the south as development occurs.

Roger A. Austin
406-721-3632

## Response to Comment # 164: Roger Austin

* 131: Your comments have been noted.

* 132: This suggestion has inherent problems requiring a crossing of the railroad grade and Miller Creek Road with a new access to US 93, and associated environmental resource impacts. Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 of the DEIS and FEIS present the grade and geometry limitations that influenced the development of the corridors and alternatives carried forward in the EIS.
Comment # 165: Carolyn Gibbons

From: First Night Missoula [mailto:fnmissoula@montana.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 01, 2006 10:51 AM
To: McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Against 5A alternative

To Whom it May Concern,

I have lived at 5970 Jolinda Court for the past 11 years and am against the 5A alternative recommended by the EIS study.

First of all, there is very little congestion on Miller Creek, unless you are traveling at certain times of the day, i.e. 7:00 to 8:00 AM or 5:00 to 6:00 PM. During all other times of the day, there is little or no traffic to deal with. I leave for work at 8:10 and there is NO traffic. If 3 lights were installed at the proposed intersections, the wait times would negatively impact the entire road 24 hours of the day.

Secondly, Alternative 5A does nothing to fix the access problem in case of emergency, i.e. a second route out of the Miller Creek area. This is the real concern for this area.

Thirdly, the light at Briggs would be very detrimental for our school children. By making this an alternate route for Brooks, more traffic would be created on this relatively sparsely traveled road.

Please consider the real needs of the citizens of this area of town.

Thank you,
Carolyn Gibbons

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Response to Comment # 165

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, E, F, H, I, and L.
Response to Comment # 166

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, G, and H.
Comment # 167: Mike McCourt
November 1, 2006
Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

On October 17, 2006 I attended and testified at the public hearing regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the Miller Creek Road Project. I am a citizen of Missoula, belong to the Missoula Country Club, and serve on the club’s Board of Directors. I wish to go on record in opposition to the DEIS and in particular to the preferred plan 5A involving the massive overhaul of Old Highway 93.

Let me begin by saying, the original objective and funding for this project was to find a second access point into and out of Miller Creek. Recommending plan 5A, in the DEIS, does not meet the original purpose or the financial appropriation Congress approved for this project.

Since Old Highway 93 is outside the specified study area, the DEIS does not consider any impacts it is required to address for any Old Highway 93 improvements. Further, the failure to include this area in the study area but then to include it in the improvements deprived the property owners in the area the right to participate in the study process for the first three years.

More specifically, under alternative 5A, turning left at the Missoula Country Club (MCC) either entering or exiting will be nearly impossible. Public safety or emergency situations at the golf course have not been addressed in the DEIS. The DEIS fails to identify the numerous impacts on the golf course (i.e. the 8th tee box, etc.), or the properties located on the south side of Old Highway 93.

By the date of completion, traffic volumes will increase by 130% on Old Highway 93 if the project is realized! Nothing in the DEIS is proposed to mitigate the impact of traffic involving the golf courses or businesses. In particular, for example, the draft EIS does not explain how MCC members would be accommodated with ingress/egress during a construction period or after. What about air and noise pollution?

May I respectfully suggest that you go back and consider the alternatives that provide a bridge as a second access point out of the Miller Creek. This was the suggestion voiced by a resounding majority of those who testified at the public hearing. Your preferred option 5A fails to meet the “purpose and need” as originally intended. Doing nothing or plowing ahead with option 5A is illogical and just plain ludicrous given that other alternatives are identified needing further study and input from the public. The “quick fix” or “band aid approach” offered under 5A solves nothing and, if implemented, will only reinforce the belief that the Federal Highway Administration does not listen or care about local concerns.

Sincerely,

Mike McCourt
305 High Park Way
Missoula, MT 59803

Response to Comment # 167

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, F, G, I, and M.

A = Reference number for summary response issue
Appendix E: Comments and Responses
Comment # 168: Gregory Utter
Gregory Utter, MD
1705 Valley Wind Lane
Missoula, Montana 59804

November 1, 2006

Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

RE: Draft EIS Alternative 5A

Mr. Genzlinger:

I write this letter to express my opposition in the strongest of terms to the adoption of the above plan as a long term solution for management of Miller Creek/Old Highway 93 South traffic flow.

The multiple reasons for growing opposition to this plan have been well publicized, and vary, depending on whether one is a Miller Creek Resident, a commuter to Missoula from the Bitterroot Valley, a business owner in the Old 93 corridor, a Missoula Country Club member, or merely a citizen concerned with wise use of taxpayers’ money. Common to all of those concerned, however, is the late inclusion of the Old Highway 93 in the “improvement” plan, which deprived property owners in the area to be fully involved in the process; the failure to consider or address the markedly increased traffic on Old 93; the seeming failure to address the negative impact of this increased traffic on local business and property owners; and, most importantly, failure to address the widely held perception that this is simply a “band-aid” approach, designed to avoid the expenditures involved in a true long term solution, which is a second access point to the Miller Creek area via a bridge over the Bitterroot. To continue to force the projected increases in future traffic through the Miller Creek Road/Highway 93/Old Highway 93 intersection is short sighted, and merely delays the definitive solution which, irrespective of current costs, will only be more costly in the future.

I urge you to reconsider the planned implementation of Draft EIS Alternative 5A.

Respectfully,

Gregory Utter

Response to Comment # 168

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, G, and H.
Comment # 169: Kerry Kammer

From: Candoo1373@aol.com [mailto:Candoo1373@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 02, 2006 8:50 AM
To: Genzlinger, Craig; info@missoulacountryclub.com
Subject: Hwy 93

Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

I was deeply disappointed to see the proposed plan for Highway 93 and Old Highway 93 in Missoula.

As a former Michigan legislator, I am sympathetic to the plight of state employees -- that being the difficulty of securing a plan that satisfies everyone.

But in this particular case--judging by the public comment at the most recent hearing--the plan appears to satisfy almost no one -- and the dissatisfaction is significant.

Instead of resolving the minor traffic problems that exist currently, this plan appears to create numerous difficulties for local citizens in the area. Traveling to some locations will be nearly impossible instead of easier. And the impacts on many of the small businesses on Highway 93 and Old Highway 93 will be tragic.

Response to Comment # 169

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, F, G, H, and I.
Comment # 169 (continued)

I also believe the impact to Missoula Country Club will be extremely damaging.

Add to this the flawed process where the impacts to Old Highway 93 appear to be almost an afterthought, and one wonders whether the citizenry might be better served to have this project plan start over from scratch.

This plan will create more problems than it resolves.

I know not one single soul who supports this project.

I respectfully request that you reject this plan for the reconfiguration of Highway 93 and Old Highway 93.

Yours very sincerely,

Kerry Kammer
40 Rock Creek Rd
Clinton, MT  59825
406-825-4500

Response to Comment # 169 (continued)
**Comment # 170: Daniel DeGrandpre**

From: Daniel DeGrandpre [mailto:ddegrandpre@mcps.k12.mt.us]  
Sent: Thursday, November 02, 2006 12:55 PM  
To: Genzlinger, Craig  
Subject: miller creek

Please look to the future in your decision and build a bridge, (2B), across the Bitterroot enabling people on the west side of Miller Creek another way out. The shortcomings of North Reserve should serve as a reminder that our county is going to grow faster than projections.

Dan DeGrandpre  
Scott Allen Dr

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<th>Comment # 170: Daniel DeGrandpre</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>From:</strong> Daniel DeGrandpre [<a href="mailto:ddegrandpre@mcps.k12.mt.us">mailto:ddegrandpre@mcps.k12.mt.us</a>]</td>
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<td><strong>To:</strong> Genzlinger, Craig</td>
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<tr>
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Dan DeGrandpre  
Scott Allen Dr

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Comment # 171: Cyd Grovenstein

From: Cyd Grovenstein [mailto:cyd@customlog.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 02, 2006 2:21 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Cc: mayor@ci.missoula.mt.us; denny.rehberg@mail.house.gov
Subject: Oppose the current DEIS preferred alternative 5A

I am writing in opposition to the proposed alternative 5A for the Miller Creek area. The improvements to Old Hwy 93 do not fit within the parameters of the original objective to provide a second access point into and out of the Miller Creek area.

Adding more traffic to Miller creek and Old Hwy 93 does not solve the problem. Another access will be required at some point in time as the population increases above Miller Creek. We should solve the problem correctly now and not add additional traffic problems for both the Missoula Country Club access (on old Hwy 93) and Briggs street (entering Miller Creek behind the Wal-Mart). The DEIS has not adequately identified the numerous impacts on the golf course or our residential Briggs street already congested with traffic.

Cyd Grovenstein
2525 Briggs St.
Missoula, MT

Response to Comment # 171

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, F, G, H, I, and L.
## Comments

**Comment # 172: Diane Pontrelli**

**From:** DAVID DIANE PONTRELLI [mailto:DAVIDIANP@MSN.COM]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 02, 2006 8:07 PM  
**To:** Genzlinger, Craig  
**Subject:**

You are putting a Band-Aid on the problem by selecting 5A. That is only a short term action that will not solve the problem for the future of Miller Creek residents. We need another way to access Hwy 93 for our safety. What difference will it make if the traffic is to enter onto Hwy 93 one mile south of where it does now!!! There is no other way to go!  
In the future, developers should shoulder some of the financial burden for road improvements.  
Ask Lloyd Twite for some assistance. He’s still building.

*Diane Pontrelli, 14 year resident of Linda Vista  
3195 Cathy Court  
Missoula MT*

## Responses

**Response to Comment # 172**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters C, D, F, H, and I.
Comment # 173: Bruce Adams

(Retyped from handwritten letter for improved legibility)

November 2, 2006

Dear Craig Genzlinger

The purpose of this letter is to provide my perspective on the Miller Creek Road Project in Missoula MT.

I am a resident who will be affected by the reconstruction of Miller Creek Road & Hwy 93.

I am opposed to the preferred alternative (5A).

The primary reason is with the growing population primarily the Malony Ranch development. 5A does not provide a second way out of Miller Creek.

Please do not create another Malfuction Junction.

A 2nd route out of the Miller Creek area needs to be more seriously considered!

Sincerely

Bruce Adams
900 Lost Mine Loop
Missoula MT 59803

Response to Comment # 173

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, F, and I.
<table>
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<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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| **Comment # 174: James Reardon**<br>*(Retyped from handwritten letter for improved legibility)*<br>

I support the preferred alternative 5A.<br>
I feel it provide immediate improvements for most people using the Miller Creek Rd. It also coordinates well with city and county improvements and the possible Wal Mart expansion.<br>

James Reardon<br>6165 Lower Miller Crk Rd.<br>406-251-2356 |

<table>
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<th><strong>Response to Comment # 174</strong></th>
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* 133: Your comments have been noted. |
Comment # 175: Kathy Johnson

*(Retyped from handwritten letter for improved legibility)*

* 134 I live in the lower Miller Creek area. The preferred alternative is the best choice. Thank you!

* 135 It is noteworthy that Bald Eagles are using the Blue Mountain area again this winter; as they do every year. They perch in the trees at the site of the Blue Mt Road alternative 3B. They fish from there.

Kathy Johnson
6165 Showdown Lane
Missoula 59803
kj@montana.com

Response to Comment # 175

* 134: Your comments have been noted.

* 135: Bald eagle impacts are discussed in Section 4.14.2 of the DEIS and FEIS.
Comment # 176: Helen Orendain

From: heleno [mailto:orenlaw@blackfoot.net]
Sent: Thursday, November 02, 2006 10:25 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek DEIS comments

Nov 2, 2006

* 136: We favor alternative 5A. There is no question Miller Creek Road needs significant improvements. However, we question widening Old Hwy 93. How do you weigh the cost and burden to the commercial and recreational area versus the benefit?. How about two traffic signals one block apart? Wouldn't NEPA sec 4 f apply with respect to the Country Club requiring special scrutiny?

If a build alternative is selected, the only one which makes sense is 2B. It is time our community thinks long term and considers the need to transport motorists across town. A non-commercial corridor linked at North Lower Creek could route drivers to Hwy 90 and the airport. Motorists driving from Ravalli could avoid the Reserve Street backup. We call the plan the Peressini Plan. The other alternatives seem like the Alaskan bridge to nowhere. Space and flat land are needed if we are going to have a western by-pass.

We have said a great deal about 3B which defies logic as a choice. There again NEPA sec 4f would apply given the recreation area. Your traffic projections appear too small. We are already experiencing a major increase in traffic.

Clearly, this project is a true quagmire mainly because our local officials have failed to plan but instead choose expedience and political gain. Your patience is to be commended. Thank you, Helen Orendain, Blue Mountain/Big Flat Homeowners

Response to Comment # 176

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, G, I, and O.

* 136: Your comments have been noted.
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| **Comment # 177: Marc Olson**<br><br><strong>From:</strong> Olson, Marc D. [mailto:MOLSON@SMURFIT.COM]<br><strong>Sent:</strong> Friday, November 03, 2006 6:35 AM<br><strong>To:</strong> Genzlinger, Craig<br><strong>Subject:</strong> FW: Miller Creek DEIS<br><br>Craig,<br><br>I'm a Missoula resident writing to you to express my sincere concern about the Miller Creek/Old Highway 93 South DEIS.<br><br>I simply do not understand how a plan to improve Miller Creek access that involves major changes to the Old Highway between 93 and Reserve does not include detailed study of potential impacts to that corridor and the area along it. Nor do I understand that within a process that has involved public input for several years, how those located along that corridor weren't notified about that process until relatively recently.<br><br>The potential impact to those along the corridor are obvious, and I won't go in to the specifics here, as many have already done at the meeting Oct. 17th. I believe that is your job to coordinate a study and include suggested remedies to those impacts. As are the impacts this will have on the already excessive traffic on Reserve Street. With Missoula growth as it is and is projected to be, the longer term must be viewed, as in alternatives that include a South Missoula bypass.<br><br>I appreciate how difficult this process has been, but it appears an 'easy way out' was sought for those originally expressing concern without regard for others. Additional work must be done viewing the long term, or Missoula will be facing almost impossible traffic issues forever.<br><br>Thank you,<br><br>Marc Olson  
Smurfit Stone Container | **Response to Comment # 177**<br><br>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, G, and O. |
### Comments

**Comment # 178: Fred A. Olson**

**From:** FRED A OLSON [mailto:FOLSON5@MSN.COM]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 03, 2006 8:54 AM  
**To:** Genzlinger, Craig  
**Cc:** info@missoulacountryclub.com  
**Subject:** Re: 5A alternative

> ----- Original Message -----  
> **From:** FRED A OLSON  
> **To:** Craig.Genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov  
> **Cc:** info@missoulacountryclub.com  
> **Sent:** Friday, November 03, 2006 8:34 AM  
> **Subject:** 5A alternative

I am a member of the Missoula Country Club, and a 46 year resident of Missoula. I agree completely with objections to the 5A plan for Old HWY 93 by the club members and others. I have some questions as follows: 1. Who or what swayed the planners of this project to 5A? 2. Do you think the planners have the legal right to make this switch under the original intent as outlined in the DEIS? 3. Do you honestly believe that 5A serves the original purpose...that is...to allow the residents of the Miller Creek another access road to the area? 4. Would you publish the reasoning behind this action beyond financial? How would the short stretch of Old HWY mitigate both the access question and the large increase in traffic? Please publish your answers if possible. Respectfully

Dr. Fred A. Olson

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 178**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, F, G and H.

* 137: The reasons why Alternative 5A was selected as the Preferred Alternative are provided in Section 2.7 of the DEIS and FEIS.
Comment # 179: Tim Geiszler

From: Tim Geiszler [mailto:geiszler@lawmissoula.com]
Sent: Friday, November 03, 2006 3:28 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Cc: info@missoulacountryclub.com
Subject: Miller Creek Road EIS re Old Hwy 93, Missoula County

Mr. Genzlinger,

I write in opposition to Alternative 5A proposed for the intersection of Miller Creek and Old Hwy 93, in Missoula County. Please consider these comments and file the same in the record of this matter.

Alternative 5A fails to address one primary goal of the study, namely; to provide a second access in and out of the Miller Creek area. Alternative 5A is merely a short-term "band-aid" to the larger problem of the growing Miller Creek area. Without a second access, all residential traffic, fire and emergency personnel and law enforcement are funneled into the single existing intersection. Your department needs address the safety of people and property, not just traffic congestion. Many believe the answer to the larger problem is to install a bypass from the Wye [I-90 and Hwy 93 North] around the southwest end of Missoula, and tying into Hwy 93 South at Blue Mountain Road [which is a logical location for the second access point to Miller Creek]. I urge to plan for the long term, rather than this year alone.

The impacts to the Missoula Country Club from Alternative 5A, far out weigh the benefit to traffic flow. The proposed encroachment onto the golf course and the entrance to the Club, do more than re-route golfers or mini vans of children. The encroachments dramatically alter for the worse, the quietude and serenity of the Club, which has for decades maintained a tranquil retreat for adults and children from the stresses of daily life. My complaint is not a "not in my backyard" approach. I ask you to travel to the Club and stand on the Eighth fairway to observe the environment fostered over years, and which will be destroyed by the encroachment of Alternative 5A.

Response to Comment # 179

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, E, F, G, H, and O.
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 179 (continued)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 179 (continued)</strong></td>
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Please analyze these comments. I respectfully submit that DOT has a duty to provide a better, less intrusive answer to Miller Creek's need for another access to Hwy 93.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tim Geiszler

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If you are not the intended recipient, you may not disclose, copy, distribute, or take action in reliance on this transmission.

Timothy D. Geiszler, Attorney at Law
Geiszler & Froines, PLLC
Terrace West Suite K
619 Southwest Higgins Ave
Missoula, Montana 59803
fax: 406.541.4943
phone: 406.541.4940
Comment # 180: Eleanor Turunen

Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601
November 3, 2006

Dear Mr. Genzlinger,

I am writing to express my opposition to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Miller Creek / US 93 South project. Although my opposition is based on numerous factors there are two simple reasons that I believe in strongly enough to say that the project should not go forward.

1) I am a grandmother and resident of a senior residence that is close to the old US 93 portion of the highway that you would like to dramatically increase traffic and congestion on. I travel from my senior residence, as do my friends and family, to the Missoula Country Club for lunch, dinner, and special events very frequently and this makes up for a large portion of our social activities. As Old US 93 is configured now this is a very safe and slow route for all of us to drive to the club. I am afraid that should you built this proposed highway project and reroute such a significant number of cars onto this road we would end up with another traffic problem like the area around Reserve and Mullan Road now. It is impossible for many of us at our senior residence to travel on North Reserve anymore and it would just be a shame if we were to have the same thing happen along Old 93 South by our club and the restaurants out there.

2) In looking through the documents and maps for the DEIS, I see no indication that a bridge across the river is going to constructed to service all of the homes being built in Miller Creek. It has been my understanding that this whole project idea was to have a study to see if the bridge and another access point for Miller Creek was needed and feasible. If this is not the case then I suggest that you should have stopped right there and not moved forward with studying any other neighborhoods or fixing problems that don’t exist. I respectfully request that if a bridge isn’t needed or isn’t feasible that you only make minor safety changes to the Miller Creek road and do nothing more. This would guarantee that you won’t harm the health and safety of people’s lives with more traffic in previously undisturbed areas, you won’t harm people’s businesses and you won’t have to take people’s land for no reason.

Thank you for allowing me to comment and for the taking time to reconsider your opinions and thank you for your service to our state and community.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Turunen
2815 Old Fort Road #327
Missoula, MT 59804

Response to Comment # 180

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, G, and I.
### Comments

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Craig Genzlinger, PE  
Federal Highway Administration  
Montana Division Office  
585 Shepard Way  
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

After reviewing the information that has been made available for viewing and after attending the October 17th Public Hearing, I want to voice my opposition to the Preferred Alternative for the Miller Creek Road Project.

This Preferred Plan does not fit the original goal of providing a second access out of and into the Miller Creek area. As the area grows, this plan will put additional traffic at the Miller Creek/Highway 93 light, on Old US 93, on Briggs Street where Cold Springs School is located, and on lower Garrett Street where my house is located.

The initial information I received on this plan came from the Missoula Country Club, where I am a member. The access to the club will be greatly restricted and quite unsafe. Additional impacts to the golf course on holes 8 and 9 have not been addressed. Safety for traffic getting in and out of other businesses along Old Highway 93 has not been addressed.

The environmental impact statement supplied at the meeting states the project purpose as follows: “The purpose of the Miller Creek Road project is to provide for safe and improved access between US 93 and the Miller Creek area.”

The Preferred Plan has a signal being installed at the Y intersection of Upper Miller Creek and Lower Miller Creek, which will create hazardous conditions on Upper Miller Creek on slippery winter roads. How is that safer?

The proposed light at Briggs Street will encourage more drivers to take Briggs Street to Garrett Street, thereby sending a much larger number of cars past the Cold Spring School where the road is already congested with parents and buses dropping off and picking up children. How is that safer?

The Preferred Plan will close the Miller Creek Road access to Wal Mart, which will cause or encourage them to find an alternate access. If a new access is opened on Briggs Street, it will further congest the traffic by Cold Springs School. How is that safer?

---

### Responses

Response to Comment # 181

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, F, G, H, and L.
Craig Genzlinger, PE
November 3, 2006
Page 2

The Preferred Plan does not allow traffic flowing south on Old Highway 93 to turn left on Highway 93. This means that the majority of golfers, employees, delivery trucks and people attending the many functions held at the Missoula Country Club will have to go straight through the US 93/Miller Creek light, up Miller Creek Road to Briggs Street, turn left on Briggs Street and travel past the Cold Springs School over to Gharrett Street. I live on the corner of Gharrett and Willow Wood Court. It is already difficult to get onto Gharrett Street during peak travel time for people going to and from work. This plan will add many additional cars to that busy road. How is that safer?

Additionally, we were never advised or informed on how the Miller Creek Road Project, that was to provide and second access point out of the Miller Creek area, would impact us. If the Preferred Plan is selected, it will have a great impact on my neighborhood.

In conclusion, the now Preferred Plan does not address the goal that was established when the funds were appropriated for the project. That goal was to find a second access point to the Miller Creek area. This Preferred Plan is a band-aid. We have seen band-aid approaches to the majority of the traffic problems in Missoula. This project needs to address its original goal with Missoula’s future growth as part of the plan. The longer the original goal is put off, the more costly it becomes. In the mean time, you will be spending millions of our tax dollars on band-aids that are making our streets more hazardous to drive, not safer.

Very truly yours,

Susan K. O’Neil
2605 Willow Wood Ct
Missoula, MT  59803
**Comment # 182: Robert W. Stage**

November 3, 2006

Craig Genzlinger, PE  
Federal Highway Administration  
Montana Division Office  
585 Shepard Way  
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

I am a long time member of the Missoula Country Club. I attended the Public Hearing on October 17th in Missoula to get information on the Preferred Plan for the Miller Creek Road Project. In reading the information provided by the FHA in the DEIS and listening to the testimony of others who attended the meeting, I left the meeting knowing I totally oppose the Preferred Plan for the Miller Creek Road Project. Here are my reasons.

1. The original intent and goals of the original plan have not been met.
2. The DEIS does not address the impact to Old US 93, primarily to the many business and substantially increased traffic flow.
3. The DEIS does not address the hazardous ingress and egress traffic problems for the numbers of golfers, employees, delivery trucks, and attendees of the many functions that are held at the Missoula Country Club.
4. The DEIS does not address the property that could be taken that would affect the 8th and 9th holes of the Missoula Country Club.
5. The DEIS does not address the additional risk and liability to the golfers, the Missoula Country Club, and the drivers on Old US 93 with no buffer for errant shots.
6. The DEIS does not address emergency response times that would be affected by the traffic congestion that would be blocking the entrance to the Missoula Country Club. As a 31 year veteran of the Missoula Fire Department, I am well aware of what Missoula’s congested traffic and poor traffic design can do to emergency response time. A second entrance to the Miller Creek area as originally proposed would provide a second option for emergency vehicles.
7. The DEIS says its purpose is to provide a safe and improved access between US 93 and the Miller Creek area. The Preferred Plan will increase the traffic flow on Lower Miller Creek Road. It will increase the traffic on Briggs Street where the Cold Springs School is located. It will increase the traffic on Gharrett Street. It will increase the traffic on Old US Highway 93. The impacts to each of these streets with increased traffic were not adequately studied and can’t possibly be viewed as being safer.
8. I don’t believe the projected costs for this plan are even in the ballpark due to the lack of adequate study of the true environmental impacts to this area.

---

**Response to Comment # 182**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, E, F, G, H, and L.

*138: Planning level cost estimates were developed for the alternatives for the purpose of comparison. All cost estimates were developed the same way and environmental impacts were considered and compared. The Preferred Alternative 5A has the least impact to the human and natural environment as well as the best traffic performance.
Comment # 182 (continued)

Craig Genzlinger, PE
November 3, 2006
Page 2

* 139

The literature states that the Preferred Plan would be added to any of the other proposals. This sounds like a scare tactic. If the Preferred Plan is not selected, the costs by your projections will be from $55.5 million to $58.4 million. The Preferred Plan is a $13 million band-aid to a much bigger problem and it is a poor solution at best. A separate access out of the Miller Creek area needs to be found. It was part of the agreement to get the approval of new housing developments in that area. Every year that plan is delayed, the costlier it will become. The Federal Highway Department needs to look at what it was originally charged to accomplish and go forward with finding an alternate point of access out of the Miller Creek area.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Stage
2605 Willow Wood Court
Missoula, MT 59803

Response to Comment # 182 (continued)

* 139: If you are referring to the Preferred Alternative 5A, it is proposed as a stand-alone alternative in the DEIS and FEIS, not to be added to other alternatives considered.
Comment # 183: Lenny Stevens

November 4, 2006

Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT  59601
Craig@Genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov

I am writing in opposition to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Miller Creek/Old Highway 93 South. First of all these improvements to Old Highway 93 do not fit within the parameters of the original objective or the purpose of providing a second access point into and out of the Miller Creek Area.

Secondly, the improvements to Old Highway 93 will restrict left-hand turns onto Highway 93. Unless you are traveling to Lolo or the Miller Creek area, you will have to take a left-hand turn onto Old Highway 93, travel to Reserve Street where there will be a new light, and turn either right or left. Entering and leaving the parking lot would become impossible during certain peak traffic hours like around eight in the morning, around 3:30 when school dismisses, and around 5:00. Most of Linda Vista kids are bussed and drove to CS Porter Middle School so traffic around these times would be completely chaotic.

The projections for the traffic volumes on Old Highway 93 show over a 130% increase by the date of completion of this project. If there is an addition of a new traffic light at the

Response to Comment # 183

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, G, and I.
corner of Reserve and Old Highway 93 then this will be a very popular cut-off either going to Lolo or coming from Lolo. This additional traffic will be dangerous to the many families who drop off their children at the club for many reasons such as: swimming lessons, golf lessons, or family sponsored events.

I am very concerned at the numerous impacts on the golf course. With these improvements to Old Highway 93 South how will this affect the golf course. I have been a member of the Missoula Country Club over 20 years and am concerned about what this improvement means to the golf course.

Finally, what are the alternatives offered to the proposed improvements to Old Highway 93 other than the “No Action” alternative. I feel the proposed modifications to Old Highway 93 fail to meet the “purpose and need” which is to provide a second access point into and out of the Miller Creek Area. I am concerned that the improvements to the Old Highway 93 are merely a band aid to a problem that should have been fixed by the developer of Miller Creek are referred to as Twite Ville.

Thank you,

Lenny Stevens
901 Ben Hogan Drive
Missoula, MT 59803
(406) 829-8010
stevensgert@msn.com
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<td>November 4, 2006</td>
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| Craig Genzlinger, PE  
  Federal Highway Administration  
  Montana Division Office  
  585 Shepard Way  
  Helena, MT  59601  
  Craig@Genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov | |
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Comment # 184 (continued)

corner of Reserve and Old Highway 93 then this will be a very popular cut-off either going to Lolo or coming from Lolo. This additional traffic will be dangerous to the many families who drop off their children at the club for many reasons such as: swimming lessons, golf lessons, or family sponsored events.

I am very concerned at the numerous impacts on the golf course. With these improvements to Old Highway 93 South how will this affect the golf course. I have been a member of the Missoula Country Club over 10 years and am concerned about what this improvement means to the golf course.

Finally, what are the alternatives offered to the proposed improvements to Old Highway 93 other than the “No Action” alternative. I feel the proposed modifications to Old Highway 93 fail to meet the “purpose and need” which is to provide a second access point into and out of the Miller Creek Area. I am concerned that the improvements to the Old Highway 93 are merely a band aid to a problem that should have been fixed by the developer of Miller Creek are referred to as Twite Ville.

Thank you,

Christina Stevens
901 Ben Hogan Drive
Missoula, MT  59803
(406) 829-8010
stevensgert@msn.com
Comment # 185: Gert Stevens

November 4, 2006

Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601
Craig@Genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov

I am writing in opposition to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Miller Creek/Old Highway 93 South. First of all these improvements to Old Highway 93 do not fit within the parameters of the original objective or the purpose of providing a second access point into and out of the Miller Creek Area.

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Response to Comment # 185

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, G, and I.
Comment # 185 (continued)

corner of Reserve and Old Highway 93 then this will be a very popular cut-off either going to Lolo or coming from Lolo. This additional traffic will be dangerous to the many families who drop off their children at the club for many reasons such as: swimming lessons, golf lessons, or family sponsored events.

I am very concerned at the numerous impacts on the golf course. With these improvements to Old Highway 93 South how will this affect the golf course. I have been a member of the Missoula Country Club over 20 years and am concerned about what this improvement means to the golf course.

Finally, what are the alternatives offered to the proposed improvements to Old Highway 93 other than the “No Action” alternative. I feel the proposed modifications to Old Highway 93 fail to meet the “purpose and need” which is to provide a second access point into and out of the Miller Creek Area. I am concerned that the improvements to the Old Highway 93 are merely a band aid to a problem that should have been fixed by the developer of Miller Creek are referred to as Twite Ville.

Thank you,

Gert Stevens
901 Ben Hogan Drive
Missoula, MT 59803
(406) 829-8010
stevensgert@msn.com

Response to Comment # 185 (continued)
Comment # 186: Marlene and Gil Koch

Marlene & Gil Koch
2616 Raymond Ave.
Missoula, Mt. 59802
November 5, 2006

Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, Mt. 59601

Dear Mr. Genzlinger,

It was with a sense of dismay that we recently learned of the Highway Administration's possible plans to alter two of the fairways at the Missoula Country Club to widen the 93 By-pass.

As long time members of the Missoula Country Club, we, and over half of the members, are now retired or newly retired and have long anticipated spending our golden years on the links. Any change such as you have suggested, would destroy our remaining years of leisure on this historical golf course which we feel we have earned after forty or more years of working at various enterprises in order to achieve this goal.

In addition, this golf course has been an asset to the community for many many years. It is the site of various University of Montana fund raisers, (the Miller Barber tournament for one), as well as the Round ball basketball tournament. There have been several state amateur tournaments held on this course as well as local high school golf tournaments. Practice by the local high schools and the University of Montana golf teams are held here regularly. Every year, the Missoula Country Club hosts charitable events such as Camp-Make-a-Dream.

Response to Comment # 186

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F and G.
Comment # 186 (continued)

With no other land available for expansion, if our course is altered because of this project, we would no longer be an asset to the community. So, it is not only the 400 members and their families who would lose their enjoyment of the golf course, it would also be the community of Missoula, the residents of Montana and those numbers reach into the thousands.

We sincerely hope that you will reconsider your plans and eliminate this area from your proposed DEIS.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Marlene and Gil Koch

cc:
Senator Burns, Senator Baucus, Representative Rehberg, Mayor Engen Missoula County Commissioners, Candidate for U.S. Senate, Tester
Comment # 187  Lynn Tennefoss

From: TENNEFOSS, Lynn [mailto:ltennefoss@audubon.org]
Sent: Sunday, November 05, 2006 10:03 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Comments on Miller Creek Road Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Genzlinger and Ms. McCoy,

* 140 I would like to strongly support the Preferred Alternative, 5A, for the Miller Creek Road At-Grad Intersection. As stated in the DEIS, this alternative will have the least social, economic and environmental impacts of the build alternatives, while adequately accommodating current and projected transportation needs meeting the objective of providing safe and improved access between Highway 93 and the Miller Creek Area.

As a canoeist, birder, and general conservationist, I strongly object to the proposals to construct new bridges across the Bitterroot River. Each additional bridge impacts the flow particularly at high water, destroys native vegetation, limits the potential for increased restoration, and adds to the noise and non-natural experience along one of the crown jewels of our region.

As a resident of O’Brien Creek Road, I have personally experienced significantly increased traffic loads along Blue Mountain, Big Flat and River Pines Roads, as increased growth in the Bitterroot has heightened congestion of Highway 93 and created desire for alternative routes to the north. In this case, Alternatives 3B and 4C in particular have tremendous potential to add significant negative impacts of increased traffic along those roads, and though recognized as impacts in the DEIS (albeit at seemingly unrealistically low predictions, considering the amount of increase experienced in the last 15 years), no additional improvements are included to compensate for or alleviate this increased pressure. In particular, drivers speed, endangering themselves, wildlife and other travelers. They also put increased pressure on the one lane Maclay Bridge. In addition, noise and visual impacts will increase for users at Maclay Flat and Blue Mountain Recreation Areas, providing an increasingly negative experience, especially at the former where the road is quite obvious from the trails. As residents, we have no desire to see

Response to Comment # 187

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter I.

* 140: Your comments have been noted.
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<td><strong>Comment # 187 (continued)</strong></td>
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roads in our area widened, nor larger alternative bridges build across the Bitterroot River in our area. The cumulative impacts of these designs are not addressed or relieved in the three alternatives 2B, 3B or 4C, but are avoided completely in the preferred alternative 5A.

Finally, as a taxpayer, I appreciate the choice of the least expensive option.

Please let me know if I can provide any additional information to support these comments. I would appreciate receiving continued information on the progress of the DEIS and future actions. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Lynn Tennefoss
8850 O’Brien Creek Road
Missoula, MT 59804
Comment # 188: Rodger P. and Hanya Salkeld

As residents and homeowners of the area impacted by the traffic on Miller Creek Road, we ask that you consider a plan that will provide an alternative route out of the Lower and Upper Miller Creek areas such as plan 3B or 4C. The Alternative 5A plan is a plan that just meets our current needs and fails to address the near, future, and proposed growth of the area and emergency needs. The future development of the Maloney Ranch, Upper Miller Creek, and the Rodeo areas will at least triple the number of cars in the area. This will increase the current congestion at the Miller Creek and Highway 93 intersection. Additionally, an elementary and middle school will be impacted by the traffic on Miller Creek if there is no other access or egress to the area. We need to plan for the future now.

Please consider a plan that will provide an alternative route to and from the Miller Creek area, such as plan 3B or 4C. There is only one road to and from the Miller Creek area. With the possibility of fires (and earthquakes), having at least one additional access/egress could save lives if these emergencies occur by allowing an alternate escape route. Both of these plans would necessitate building a bridge over the Bitterroot River and, yes, be more expensive. However, the additional costs are justified by the need for additional access and egress to the area for safety and emergencies and for traffic reduction on Miller Creek Road. The burden of additional costs should at least be partially carried by the developers of the area. Both 3B and 4D would allow easier access to Highway 93 without an additional stop signal and would reduce the congestion at the Miller Creek and Highway 93 intersection.

Thank you for your consideration. We ask you to seriously consider these options keeping in mind future developments and safety. We can be contacted at the above address or by telephone at 251-7088.

Sincerely,

Rodger P. Salkeld
Hanya Salkeld

Response to Comment # 188

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and L.
### Comment # 189: Donald N. Gillespie

DONALD N. GILLESPIE, M.D.
Allergy, Asthma, and Clinical Immunology

690 W. Spruce
Spruce Street Physicians/Sproule
Missoula, Montana 59802
406/728-6472

November 5, 2006

Craig Genzlienger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
385 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

Dear FHA-- Montana Division:

I am writing to express my opposition to the current DEIS and the preferred alternative 5A. Originally the proposed scope of the project was for better access for Miller Creek/Old Highway 93 South and consideration for a second bridge across the Bitterroot River. The improvements in Old Highway 93 really do not fit within the parameters of the original plan. In addition, since Old Highway 93 is outside the study area for the DEIS, the EIS does not address any of the impacts that are required for Old Highway 93 improvements. It will seriously disrupt the traffic flow around the Larchmont Golf Course, the Missoula Country Club, and the Commercial Businesses whose back lots face Old Highway 93. In particular it will severely disrupt the 8th and 9th holes of the Missoula Country Club. This is one of the oldest and most established Country Clubs in the state having the first grass green in the western part of the state. It has long been considered and an asset to the community of Missoula. It is possible that the changes envisioned for Old Highway 93 could disrupt the club to such an extent that its membership would drop and it would have to close.

I strongly oppose the plan improvements on Old Highway 93 and the poorly planned environmental impact statement that has not given the public adequate commentary on such a project.

Sincerely,

Donald N. Gillespie, M.D.
DNG/mm

cc Missoula Country Club

### Response to Comment # 189

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, and G.
Comment # 190 Kevin Miltko

(Retyped from handwritten letter for improved legibility)

11/5/06

Re: DEIS Miller Creek/Old Hwy 93 S

Mr. Genzlinger,

I am writing to inform you of my opposition to the DEIS preferred alternative 5A. Please reconsider the inclusion of Old Hwy 93 in this plan. Your DEIS does not solve the problems it was intended to solve and it creates more problems. Thank you for your consideration.

Kevin Miltko
444 Benton
Missoula, MT 59801

Response to Comment # 190

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, and G.
### Comment # 191: Jerry and Margaret Gall

Craig Genzlinger, PE  
Federal Highway Administration  
Montana Division Office  
585 Shepard Way  
Helena Montana 59601  
November 5, 2006

We are writing this letter expressing our opposition to the current DEIS, the preferred alternative 5A, and any other plans changing Old Highway 93.

The plans do not meet the objective which was to provide a second access point into and out of the Miller Creek Area.

The planned improvements to Old Highway 93 would be a “traffic nightmare”. This is a band-aid solution which will not solve the existing problem.

There are numerous impacts on The Missoula Country Club golf course and the properties and businesses along this route making the cost substantial with very little benefit.

This plan fails to meet the purpose and need as it was originally intended.

Sincerely,

Jerry L Gall  
Bob Overlook Way  
Missoula, MT 59803

Margaret R Gall  
Bob Overlook Way  
Missoula, MT 59803

cc:  
Senator Burns  
Senator Baucus  
Representative Rehberg  
Mayor Engen  
Missoula County Commissioners

### Response to Comment # 191

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, and G.
Comment # 192: Bob Massey

*(Retyped from handwritten letter for improved legibility)*

Please consider alternative 2-B for the following reasons:

1. Best direct outlet for Linda Vista and Maloney Ranch residents to access Hwy 93.

2. Less cost for property removed than at Blue Mt. #3-B.

3. Future benefit for west Missoula Bypass route from Hwy 10/I90 to Hwy 93.

4. Less congestion of traffic at Blue Mt Rd.

The Miller Creek site improvement is a must however the use of old Hwy 93 around 93 and Reserve is not needed. There is no problem with traffic @ Hwy 93 and Reserve – I drive that route at 8:45 A every day as well as 5:00 to 5:45 pm –

Thank you for considering these comments.

Bob Massey
4585 Tiberius Dr.
Missoula 59804
406-240-5810
RMASSEY@MARWESTPROP.COM

Response to Comment # 192

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, G, and O.
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<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 193: Jack E. Wenger</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Jack E. Wenger</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>P.O. Box 577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missoula, MT 59806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(406) 327-8460</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAX: (406) 327-8479</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 6, 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craig Genzlinger, PE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Highway Administration</td>
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<td>Montana Division Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>585 Shepard Way</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helena, MT 59601</td>
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<tr>
<td>RE: Draft EIS Alternative 5A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dear Mr. Genzlinger,</td>
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<td>On October 17, 2006, I attended a meeting at the Quality Inn in Missoula, MT, concerning Draft EIS Alternative 5A. It is my understanding that this draft if approved would turn the existing Old Highway 93 between Reserve ST. and Highway 93 into a 4 lane highway. To make it perfectly clear, I am opposed to anything that would change the scenario as it now exists with Old Highway 93. I am a member and Past President of the Missoula Country Club and definitely have an interest in this situation. My reasons for opposing this or any other alternative are as follows:</td>
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<td><strong>Response to Comment # 193</strong></td>
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<td>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, G, H, and L.</td>
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**Comment # 193 (continued)**

1. The original purpose of the EIS was to find an alternative access to Miller Cr. There is no scenario with Old Highway 93 that addresses that purpose. In fact it would increase the traffic flow into the intersection from another direction.

2. Missoula Country Club was never included in the Environmental Impact Study. Therefore, any alternative which affects the Missoula Country Club would require a new Environmental Impact Study.

3. The proposed change in Old Highway 93 would basically eliminate easy access to and from the Missoula Country Club.

4. The removal of parts of the eight and ninth holes at the Missoula Country Club would require a complete redesign of the golf course and acquisition of additional land. There is no land available for a change or expansion of the existing facility. Even if there were additional land, the redesign would cost several million dollars.

5. Without redesign and land acquisition the Missoula Country Club would cease to exist. We currently have a tremendous amount of wildlife that live on the property, including deer, several types of water fowl, fox, squirrels, birds and many other creatures that depend on the environment we provide with a golf course. The members take great care in cohabitating with the wildlife that exists. I have seen mother ducks with their ducklings walking down the fairway on number eight hole on more than one occasion.

**Response to Comment # 193 (continued)**

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Comment # 193 (continued)

6. The Missoula Country Club is a family oriented club. We sponsor many childrens’ programs for golf and swimming. We sponsor many statewide golf tournaments for juniors. We are the number one fund raiser for the High School golf teams in Missoula. These changes would eliminate or severely hamper these activities because of poor and unsafe access for children.

7. The Missoula Country Club is fortunate enough to still have the first grass green ever built in the State of Montana in 1939. Loss of available ground could destroy that.

8. The commercial businesses on the opposite side of Old Highway 93 would be severely impacted by the increased traffic flow. Currently safe access is available to most of the business, and at least one of the businesses has a large amount of employee parking that would be eliminated by this change.

9. Cole Springs Elementary School behind Wal-Mart would now become an unsafe haven for the many children that attend it. Access for parents and students would become impossible.

It is my understanding that you and your staff have wasted $3,000,000.00 of our tax money to develop a plan that not only misses its intended goal, but creates a worse problem than we have now. The alternatives that you are suggesting are in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. These changes to the “purpose and need” to the original Environmental Impact Study are not in compliance...
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with NEPA, and therefore not valid. Any vote other than "No Action" involving Old Highway 93 will result in a long and complicated battle, which you have no hope of winning. Your only accomplishment will be to waste more of the tax payers’ money.

I urge you to go back to the original purpose and find an alternative access to Miller Creek. This is the only action that makes any sense.

This letter will be forwarded to our Congressman and Senators. The Missoula Country Club is fortunate to have many registered voters and many political contributors.

Sincerely,

Jack E. Wenger  
Past President  
Missoula Country Club
Comment # 194: Steve Wojcik

From: Steve Wojcik [mailto:swrep6955@sherwin.com]
Sent: Monday, November 06, 2006 8:50 AM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Cc: info@missoulacountryclub.com
Subject: DEIS Miller Creek/Old Highway 93 South

Mr Genzlinger,

I am sending you this e mail regarding the potential changes to the Old Highway 93 South area outside the Missoula Country Club. I have been a member of the Missoula Country Club since 1998. Obviously I enjoy playing golf and would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to express my opposition to changing the configuration of the golf course in order to widen this small section of Old 93.

My main concern however is the large increase in traffic flow that this proposed "improvement" will create. I have a three year old daughter and another child on the way. One of our favorite things about Missoula Country Club is the newly improved swimming pool. My wife, daughter, and I enjoy spending time at the pool during the summer. I am concerned for the safety of my family being able to safely turn in and out of the golf course with all of the traffic that will be created.

Lastly, I still do not understand how this proposal will alleviate the traffic flow out of lower Miller Creek. It seems to me that another access point across the river would make more sense than creating another bottleneck where Old 93 and Reserve Street meet.

Thank you for your time and I hope that this particular DEIS will be reconsidered.

Steve Wojcik
406-544-2717

Response to Comment # 194

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, G, and H.
### Comment # 195: Pete Joy

**From:** PETE JOY [mailto:pdjoy526@msn.com]
**Sent:** Monday, November 06, 2006 9:19 AM
**To:** Genzlinger, Craig
**Subject:** Miller Creek EIS Comments

To whom it may concern,
As I have studied the alternatives presented, what comes to mind is "first things first". Let me explain. While I am not telling you anything you don't already know, today at approximately 0750 am I was leaving Missoula and traveling south on Highway 93. The traffic stopped at the Highway 93 and Miller Creek Road intersection extended half to three quarters of a mile south on 93. I can appreciate the concerns voiced over widening/modifying Miller Creek and Old 93, but the traffic pinch point and critical traffic flow path is at the Highway 93/Miller Creek Intersection. Proceeding with the other proposed alternatives will not relieve this problem. First things first. As all most all traffic traveling to Missoula from the Bitterroot and Miller Creek converge at this intersection, it must be dealt with first. Proceeding with any of the other alternatives at the expense of the proposed alternative will not address the current traffic problems and possibly may actually make the current traffic problems worse. Safety and traffic conditions will not improve without first resolving the traffic pinch point at the Miller Creek Intersection. Other alternatives need to be looked at in the future to improve the safety and flow of traffic, but remember; first things first.

Without first addressing the traffic pinch point, as recommended in the proposed alternative, the public safety and accompanying traffic flow will not improve.

A new bypass is what is needed to reroute traffic off of Reserve Street and 93, but until that time comes; First Things First.

Thanks

Peter Joy
Missoula, MT

### Response to Comment # 195

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, H, I, and O.
## Comments

**Comment # 196: Lorraine Houppert**

From: LORRAINE HOUPPERT [mailto:lhoup@msn.com]
Sent: Monday, November 06, 2006 10:26 AM
To: McCoy, Misty S.
Cc: LHoup@msn.com
Subject: Wrong Miller Creek selection!!!

I cannot believe anyone would select the horrible alternative for an "improvement" to Miller Creek Rd that you are pushing!!!!! Has anyone on this commitee EVER driven Upper Miller Creek in the winter???? I have lived up here for 28 years and driven some of the worst conditions imaginable. You can not possibly consider a light ... to get out of the valley!!! This selection would be a disaster and sooner or later we will require a second way out. This would impact too many people who have property along the road and ruin the country entry to our valley. I have written you before with a suggestion for coming UP Miller Creek Rd. Make Meadowwood Lane an EXITonly- stop allowing turns off of Miller Creek Rd. This is a hazard in winter, icy conditions. Without momentum going up this section, one can lose traction and actually slide backward DOWN the hill. These people can access their homes from Kerr Dr, or put a left turn center lane in this difficult uphill climb. For you to consider two lights on this short section is unbelievable!!!! I'm sure if this was a question of ruining the entryway to Rattlesnake Cr, or Grant Cr, or Pattee Canyon, this would never be under consideration as any kind of alternative!!!! No one up here argaes with your selection. You have the ability presently to use some of the land in Lower Miller Cr for right of way to build a bridge to give us what we need NOW, the SECOND way out. If you do not gain access to this land right away, we all know it will have houses built on it and will become impossible to acquire. What the heck are you people thinking?????????? This eis was the biggest waste of money that I have seen since Malfunction Junction fiasco!!!! We are being held hostage by a few vocal people in other areas of Missoula who fear we are all going to come and drive by their houses to access Reserve St. Just give us a bridge, Alternative 2B looks good and build it so it doesn't impact Blue Mt, Big Flat people. We NEED this second exit route. There was once a gas leak in Upper Miller Cr and we had now way to get out. We were told to hike into

## Responses

**Response to Comment # 196**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, E, F, and H.

* **141:** A traffic signal is included as part of the Miller Creek Road improvements at the intersection of Upper and Lower Miller Creek Road to allow AM traffic exiting the Miller Creek area via Lower Miller Creek Road to enter onto Miller Creek Road. Without the traffic signal, long delays would occur and the risk of accidents would increase. Under the Build Alternatives, northbound traffic approaching this intersection would not need to stop. There would be a dedicated lane north of the signal to receive this traffic. Traffic turning left from Lower Miller Creek Road would also have a dedicated northbound lane.

* **142:** Missoula County maintains Upper Miller Creek Road. Although a copy of the FEIS will be provided to the County, it is suggested that you contact them directly with your concern. The intersection of Meadowwood Lane and Upper Miller Creek Road is outside of the proposed improvement area and has not been identified as a high accident area. While improvements at Meadowwood Lane could improve traffic operations during icy conditions, they would not improve overall traffic conditions and therefore are not included in the proposed Build Alternatives.
## Comment # 196 (continued)

The mountains behind our houses!!!! This is NOT acceptable!!! Let's face it, EIS don't mean a thing. If they did, Miller Cr would not have a Bonneville Powerline coming down it!!!! This route was not the best route, Rattlesnake, Grant Cr was, but we all know if those people don't want it, it won't happen! How much did it cost to come up with this boneheaded idea? Does Missoula have "SUCKER" written all over it??? We seem to spend a lot of money on nothing. No one can get a light where it is needed on Broadway but Miller Cr can get 3 in less than a mile. You have got to be kidding!! Lorraine Houppert

## Response to Comment # 196 (continued)

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### Comments

**Comment # 197: James D. Basolo**

**James D Basolo**  
6055 Gharrett St  
Missoula, MT 59803  
406-251-2225

November 6, 2006

Mr. Craig Genzlinger, PE  
Federal Highway Administration  
Montana Division Office  
585 Shepard Way  
Helena, MT 59601

Re: Miller Creek EIS

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

By this letter I wish to express my comments/concerns regarding the above. It is my understanding that the original issue to be addressed was a second access route for the Miller Creek residents, and thus the commission of the DEIS. It is my further understanding that the DEIS has now progressed to the point where a second access route is no longer being considered but rather modifications to the traffic patterns on Highway 93/Brooks Street, Miller Creek Rd and Old Highway 93 South that may or may not improve the traffic situation that now exists at that intersection.

If you are no longer considering a second access route for Miller Creek, it would only seem proper to officially terminate the original study and if it is deemed necessary to study the possible solutions to the traffic problems on Highway 93/Brooks Street and Miller Creek Rd, then a new DEIS should be commissioned and the parameters and objectives clearly set forth so all those affected would have proper notice and a chance to participate in all public forums.

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 197**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, and G.
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As a nearby resident of the affected area and a member of the Missoula Country Club, I would like to voice my opposition to the current DEIS alternative 5A or any alternative that does not consider a second access to Miller Creek and that reroutes traffic on Old Highway 93, Briggs and Gharrett streets. It does not address nor fit within the original parameters of a second access for the Miller Creek area and a redesign of Old Highway 93 is outside the specified study area for the original Miller Creek EIS. It appears that no consideration has been given to the significant negative impact on the property owners in that affected areas. Therefore the whole process is flawed and should be abandoned.

Very truly yours,

James D. Basolo
### Comments

**Comment # 198: Alice Thompson**

**From:** Carl Thompson [mailto:ctmissoula@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 06, 2006 6:22 AM  
**To:** Genzlinger, Craig  
**Subject:** Miller Creek EIS

I am writing to express my dis-satisfaction with the preferred alternative in the Miller Creek EIS. The original purpose and need of the project was changed from developing another access to the Miller Creek area to developing a safe and efficient road system into the Miller Creek area. The second access is necessary for the area and the community. The proposed plan cannot safely and efficiently handle the traffic from the area and will not even satisfy the new purpose and need of the project. With the new purpose and need objective, I feel that the impacts on the quality of life of the Miller Creek area are ignored and that should be part of any environmental assessment of a project. I also feel that the money given by Congress is not being spent for the goal it was designated, to develop a second access. I am encouraging the FHA to abandon the poorly conceived road plan and return to the responsible plan of developing a second access to the Miller Creek area.

Alice Thompson  
3221 Helena Dr.  
Missoula, Mt. 59803

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 198**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, and H.

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**A = Reference number for summary response issue**

Appendix E: Comments and Responses
### Comments

**Comment # 199: Dennis Gergen**

**From:** Dennis Gergen [mailto:samoadc@gmail.com]
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 08, 2006 8:38 PM
**To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
**Subject:** Miller Creek traffic

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-- I imagine you realize the increase in traffic volume is really increasing in this area and on US93 from the south coming into Missoula. I am concerned that it will get so bad that pretty soon we will be getting more and more accidents as people start taking chances in their attempt to negotiate the traffic congestion. Please use traffic counters to verify what I say as revisions may be necessary even before this project is finished. Especially so if they build a couple more thousand homes in this area.

Dennis Gergen

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### Responses

**Response to Comment # 199**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, H, and I.

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* 143: Traffic forecasts were developed through a multiple step process that took into account several elements including future growth and development of the area.
Comment # 200: John Brown

From: John Brown [mailto:jlbrownmd@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 09, 2006 3:12 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller Creek

Dear Mr. Craig,

I am sorry that you are not holding another public meeting. I am appalled that you are not considering the regional traffic involving the whole area served by Rt. 93 from the entire Bitterroot Valley to Missoula. If you do not consider the 2 other proposals now being investigated we will never have a satisfactory solution to the problems of the region. You have already spent a great deal of money on a poorly prepared program and as I see it your will be wasting more of the taxpayer money on a doomed solution.

John L. Brown MD
3816 Trails End Rd.
Msla, 59803
251 9771

---

Response to Comment # 200

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, D, I, and O.
### Comments

**Comment # 201: Walter Billings**

From: walter f billings [mailto:walterndebby@bresnan.net]
Sent: Thursday, November 09, 2006 8:25 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller Creek Road environmental impact

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

We have lived on Linda Vista Blvd. near the NW Electric substation for almost 6 years now. We love the neighborhood except for one important item or problem or headache. Naturally, you already know what this is. It is the traffic from the apartment complex that the original developer felt he needed to build. God knows why this was done by this man. Of course, the developer of the apartment complex does not live on Linda Vista or Christian Drive. No, he built these apartments and then split to God knows where. He will not have to deal with the traffic. This guy ruined the upper portion of Linda Vista and Christian Drive. Many people up here despise him for this.

I lived in Northern Virginia and worked for the local electric utility in that part of the country during the building boom of the 1990s. Missoula is now making the same mistakes that the counties in that area made during that period. Let the builder do as he pleases and then worry about the traffic and the type of roads needed, after the fact. But once the developer does his thing and gets his money, he does not give a hoot what happens to the roads or the people left back in the development that he built.

The result of this type of planning was massive congestion and terrible traffic. Missoula is doing just this thing now.

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 201**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, H, I, and O.
Comment # 201 (continued)

And now I hear that the parties involved want to take the easy way out by putting up a traffic light and widening a small part of Miller Creek road. This is just what they tried in Northern Virginia at first, and it never worked for long there. You need to bite the bullet and build another entirely new outlet from Linda Vista area, a new road from here down to route 93 is the only long term solution.

The easy way out is not a solution but like a bandaid on a gunshot wound. It will help for a short period of time only.

Sincerely,

Walter F. Billings
6940 Linda Vista Blvd.
Missoula, Mt 59803
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<td><strong>Response to Comment # 202</strong></td>
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<td><strong>From:</strong> sally hickman [<a href="mailto:sally@montana.com">mailto:sally@montana.com</a>]</td>
<td>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, and H.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Sent:</strong> Thursday, November 09, 2006 4:24 PM</td>
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<td><strong>To:</strong> Genzlinger, Craig</td>
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<td><strong>Subject:</strong> miller creek eis</td>
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<td>Dear Mr. Genzlinger:</td>
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<td>I think the Miller Creek Plan needs to refocus on ACCESS FOR MILLER CREEK. The plans for Old Highway 93, new traffic light system at Reserve and Brooks, etc., are detracting from the original idea which was to improve access for Miller Creek with a second bridge over the river to Highway 93, or an interchange at the junction of Upper Miller Creek and Lower Miller Creek. I ask that a plan for Miller Creek access be returned to its original position of first priority, followed by the other projects when funding is available.</td>
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<td>Thank you,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sally Hickman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3003 Eldora Lane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missoula, MT</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Comment # 203: Gregory Salisbury

From: Salisbury, Gregory [mailto:GSalisbury@communitymed.org]
Sent: Friday, November 10, 2006 7:47 AM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller creek DEIS

Hello,

My name is Greg Salisbury and I live at 1526 Roy Ct in the Lower Miller Creek area. I wanted to comment on the proposed road changes for that area. First, my two kids attend Cold Springs Elementary School and I have concerns about increased traffic going by there. Kids in that area often walk to school and I worry about their safety. As for the proposition to use the old highway behind the clock tower gas station, I think this is a good idea. I know there are implications to the country club but I also believe they will be able to adjust their golf course and adapt to the situation. In the event that a bridge does go in over the Bitterroot River near the Blue Mountain Road, I want to strongly encourage you to consider adding a third lane for incoming traffic into Missoula on hwy 93. I live right above where the bridge would go and I would never use it to get to work in the morning because it is already such a bottle neck from Lolo to reserve. I would still wait in line at the lower/upper miller creek junction and go the same way I go now. I would like to see the future bridge's ramp (near Blue Mountain Rd) from the Maloney Ranch subdivision onto 93 northbound to Missoula create the third lane so that we don't add to the bottle neck. Otherwise there will be cars at a standstill on the on-ramp waiting to even get onto the highway.

Thank you for your time

Gregory J. Salisbury, M.S.P.T, Physical Therapy Coach
E-mail: gsalisbury@communitymed.org
Phone: (406) 327-4428
Pager: (406) 329-6279

Response to Comment # 203

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, G, J, and L.
### Comments

**Comment # 204: Don Lorenzen**

**From:** Don Lorenzen [mailto:don.lorenzen.be5s@statefarm.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 10, 2006 1:38 PM  
**To:** Genzlinger, Craig  
**Subject:** Miller Creek DEIS

Craig,

*144* I got the card on ANOTHER comment period. Why is this continued to be drawn out? When will a decision be made and date for construction set to begin?

---

**Don Lorenzen**  
**Missoula, MT**

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 204**

* 144: The card you received was an extension of the existing comment period. We are receiving a large volume of comments and had some requests for more time. It is not unusual for FHWA to extend a comment period when requests for more time are received.

As to when a decision will be made, it is anticipated to be sometime in 2008. After all the comments are received, we need to consider and answer all of them before we can proceed. Thank you for your interest in the project and we will be working with the community and local governments to make a decision in the near future.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 205: Jim Hogan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 205</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From:</strong> jim hogan [<a href="mailto:hogie@bigsky.net">mailto:hogie@bigsky.net</a>] <strong>Sent:</strong> Friday, November 10, 2006 7:54 AM <strong>To:</strong> <a href="mailto:craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov">craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov</a>; McCoy, Misty S. <strong>Subject:</strong> comments on Miller Creek DEIS</td>
<td>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, and H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live in Linda Vista and experience the traffic problems getting in and out of the area. I think the preferred alternative is only a short term fix, but a good one. However, another way out of the whole Miller Creek area will be needed in the future, especially when the Maloney Ranch area is built out.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I think alt. 2-B ought to be pursued now. It is a good alternative and will be more affordable now than at some future date. Let's do it right - look at Reserve St. It didn't take long for it to get jammed up!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIM HOGAN (406) 251-8524</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Comment # 206: Chris Hindoien

From: Chris Hindoien [mailto:chrish@bresnan.net]
Sent: Saturday, November 11, 2006 5:13 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek

I can understand the need to do something, but regardless of what is done, you are still funneling the same number of cars through the Miller Creek/Brooks stoplight.

The only difference will be in how they go through the light, instead of south to north, you will have more going, east to west.

There really isn't a true answer to this problem. Without a better way of relieving traffic that wants to bypass Missoula or the majority of Missoula with an alternative route.

I would think that the best thing to do right now, is to save the money from this supposed fix, and work on a viable By-pass for the travelers that don't want to pass through town.

Thank you

Chris

Chris Hindoien
4661 Nicole Court
Missoula, MT 59803
Chrish@bresnan.net

Response to Comment # 206

Your comments have been noted. Response to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter O.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 207: John Wagner</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5240 Dorothy Ct.</td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 207</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Missoula MT 59803</td>
<td>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 11, 2006</td>
<td>Response issue letters A, B, D, F, and H.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craig Genzlinger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Highway Admin.</td>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> Miller Creek Road DEIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>585 Shepard Way</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helena MT 59601</td>
<td>Dear Mr. Genzlinger:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I am not in favor of Alternative #5.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Miller Creek area needs another outlet</td>
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<td>over the Bitterroot River. Go back to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the beginning. Thank you.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Sincerely,</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>John Wagner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Member # 9201 of Missoula Country Club</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comment # 208: Steve Seninger

From: Seninger, Steve (Dr) [mailto:Steve.Seninger@business.umt.edu]  
Sent: Saturday, November 11, 2006 10:21 AM  
To: Genzlinger, Craig  
Subject: FW: Miller Creek Road DEIS

Dear Federal Highway Administration: I am strongly opposed to alternative 3B Blue Mountain Road for the Miller Creek Road project. Projected traffic flow data for the year 2025 along Blue Mountain Road to intersection of O’Brien Creek Road and Big Flat Road are absurdly low numbers—there is already significantly increased traffic volume and driving at excessive speeds with the paving of the Blue Mountain Road section between Maclay Flats and Blue Mountain Trailhead. Alternative 3B would increase traffic problems in the Target Range area and around MaClay Bridge and Maclay Flats.

Alternative 4C would make more sense as it would also reduce a various dangerous residential exit/entry from the current Highway 93.

Sincerely,

Steve Seninger  
9975 O’Brien Creek Road  
Missoula, MT  59804  
406-721-1422

Response to Comment # 208

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A and J.
Comment # 209: Kerry Miller

From: Kerry Miller [mailto:ksmlr@juno.com]
Sent: Sunday, November 12, 2006 9:00 AM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek Road Comments

Dear Craig:

I live on Rodeo Road in Missoula and would like to comment on the DEIS for Miller Creek Road.

I am in favor of the Proposed Alternative 5A because most of the traffic issues lie from the “Y” to the traffic signal. Living where I do, many days I use Gharrett Road to enter/exit the Miller Creek area. Another point I’d like to make is that the Mountain Line bus service excludes the entire Miller Creek area. If a bus route would include the Linda Vista neighborhoods, traffic might easily be decreased.

Let’s try to alleviate the traffic issues in the Lower Miller Creek area before looking at building a bridge over the Bitterroot River.

Thanks for considering my comments.

Kerry Miller
3546 Rodeo Rd.
Missoula, MT 59803

Response to Comment # 209

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, H, and N.

* 145: Your comments have been noted.
Comment # 210: George Leighton

From: George & Nora [mailto:norandgeo@montana.com]
Sent: Sunday, November 12, 2006 4:09 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: miller creek deis

Craig:

I see that the preferred alternative is the cheapest of all but no action. I hope that it wasn't chosen because of this fact.

For the long run the preferred will be lacking. I believe it is a short term solution that is 10 years or so. The reason is that growth in this area continues and eventually will cause need for more access. Costs for the other alternatives (bridge over Bitterroot River to Hwy 93) will undoubtedly increase exponentially in ten years and after. Is it wise to put this off? Just for short term cost savings.

I have participated in most of the past meetings that have been held in building the EIS and always mentioned that there is a solution that's a bit outside the box. This is to work with the city of Missoula bus service into this area to get people to and from Missoula area in an efficient manner so that people would opt to use it. This would certainly lower the rush hour crash that now occurs and will get much worse as the area grows. I believe the costs projected for any of the alternatives far outweigh the cost of solid reliable bus service.

Taking this point farther could be to use the present rail system in conjunction with the bus service to make it an even more efficient access solution

I lived and worked in an era in another small western city where bus service was successful. I know that it worked from personal experience. Why couldn't we at least start the ball rolling for mass transit by adding the thought to whatever alternative is selected?

Thanks for your work of preparing the study and EIS.
Sincerely
George Leighton
3209 Paul Lane
Missoula, Mt 59803

Response to Comment # 210

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, H, and N.
Comment # 211: Bill Riggert

Subject: OLD HYW 93
Date: Monday, November 13, 2006 7:52:03 PM
To: CRAIG.GENZLINGER, 2FHWA.COM.GOV

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

My history with Hyw. 93 goes back to the time there was a Highway 93 Association. Seeing its value I contributed to the cause numerous times and years. The goal was to improve the Hyw 93 route in the interest of the communities and business on the route from Canada to Mexico. Not much ever came of this route good effort. Too bad, it could have opened a tremendous amount of the various states to development. I do not understand why we need to spend time and money whipping this dog.

Before Reserve Street Bridge was built I attended a public meeting and asked the State Highway Director if they were going to build a four lane bridge. The ans.--No I then asked have you purchased right of way for a four lane bridge. The ans.--No From what I see today looks like they should have listened to more local voices.

Sadly the Reserve Street Thruway became just that, a city street, cluttered with traffic signals and access / egress problems.

My opinion -- planning has to be frugal but it does not have to be future thoughtless. Some bright guy should have said we need to have frontage roads along this route. This to prevent it from being the nightmare that Reserve is a good portion of the day. What a colossal waste of a terrific route.

I see a river crossing from Miller Creek area as mostly for local and convenience traffic. In 50 years and every hillside Missoula thru Miller Creek will be covered with housing. Design a way to get around this problem without creating a lot more traffic signals to further snarl Reserve traffic.

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Response to Comment # 211

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, and O.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 211 (continued)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 211 (continued)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>PEOPLE—STATE COUNTY CITY AND FED SHOULD BE HARD AT WORK DESIGNING A MISSOULA BY-PASS ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE MISSOULA AREA. IT SHOULD START AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE VALLEY AND RUN NORTHWARD TO THE AIRPORT INTERCHANGE ON THE EAST EDGE OF THE AIRPORT TO I-90. THINK LIMITED ACCESS WITH ABOUT FIVE INTERCHANGES AND FRONTAGE ROADS WHERE NECESSARY.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MANY PEOPLE COME THRU TOWN WITH NO BUSINESS EXCEPT TO TRAVEL ON TO OTHER PLACES VIA I-90 AND north 93. THIS TRAFFIC WILL INCREASE AS IT APPEARS OUR URBAN AREAS WILL EXIST SOLIDLY FROM MISSOULA TO HAMILTON AND BEYOND. EVERY CITY I KNOW OF IS IN THE THROWS OF CREATING BELT AND BY-PASS ROUTES. NOW IS ALREADY LATE FOR THIS PLANNING.</td>
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<td>NOT EASY BUT YOU FOLKS ARE USED TO THAT. ALL AND ALL I SAY FORGET MAKING A MAJOR PROJECT OUT OF OLD 93!</td>
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<td>SINC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BILL RIGGERT</td>
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Comment # 212: Richard & LeeAnne Huffman

From: huffmanrj@sofast.net
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2006 10:56 AM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Cc: jcurtiss@co.missoula.mt.us; bcarey@co.missoula.mt.us;
    bevans@co.missoula.mt.us; mayor@ci.missoula.mt.us;
citizensadvocate@mt.gov; schweitzer@montana.com;
    Jim_Messina@baucus.senate.gov
Subject: Miller Creek Road EIS
Importance: High

Dear Mr. Genzlinger,

Having attended all but the last EIS meeting, we are compelled to state for the record how disappointed we are with your conclusion and proposal for the DEIS. After spending $3 million of our federal dollars, all you came up with was to widen the road? What this area needs, and what has been stated by our emergency services folks, is a second access, a second way in and out of the Linda Vista / Miller Creek areas, which requires a bridge being built over the Bitterroot River. Our understanding is that this is why you were hired to study this in the first place. We are very much against your conclusions/proposal, think you wasted our time and taxpayer dollars, and did NOT listen to area residents whatsoever. We strongly encourage consideration of alternative 4C. A bridge at the south end of Linda Vista / West of Upper Miller Creek developments is the best long-term solution, as this is where all the current and future growth is occurring in this area. Thank you.

Richard & LeeAnne Huffman
10110 Oral Zumwalt Way
Missoula, MT 59803

Phone: (406) 273-4600
eMail: HuffmanRJ@SoFast.net

Response to Comment # 212

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, E, F, and H.
### Comments

**Comment # 213: Bob Nordberg**

**From:** Bob Nordberg [mailto: turah@montana.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2006 4:15 PM

**To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.

**Subject:** Miller Creek Road DEIS

We feel that the only feasible and cost effective solution would be to widen the Miller Creek Road at the junction of upper and lower and install two traffic lights. We feel that a bridge over the Bitterroot River would be a huge expense and would not be widely used.

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 213**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter A and H.
**Comment # 214: Denis P. Thane**

From: DENIS THANE [mailto:dptmsla@msn.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2006 4:54 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject:

I don’t mind your preferred alternative, but it would really be great if it provided a free right turn lane from Miller Creek Road onto Highway 93. This could be accomplished by replacing the boulevard in front of WalMart on highway 93 with a new lane that would extend as far as 39th St.

This would relieve a lot of the morning congestion on Miller Creek Rd south of 93

Denis P. Thane
6006 St. Francis Ct
Missoula, MT  59803

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**Response to Comment # 214**

* **146:** Thank you for submitting your idea for “a free right-turn” lane from Miller Creek Road onto US 93. Upon review of your proposal it was found that the design included with Alternative 5A would effectively handle forecasted traffic traveling between the Miller Creek area and the intersection of US 93/Brooks and Reserve Street without the addition of a new northbound lane that would require relocation of the paved multi-use path located between the US 93 alignment and the railroad tracks. The geometric modification would need to allocate space for the multi-use trail as well as the designated receiving lane and will likely result in encroachment upon railroad right of way. It was also determined that this modification would provide minimum benefits due to the limited capacity of the upstream intersection of US 93/Brooks and Reserve Street.
Comment # 215: Chris Cole

From: "Sam Cole" <cdsbcole@msn.com>
To: craig.genzler@fhwa.dot.gov
Subject: Miller Creek
Date: Tue, 14 Nov 2006 15:49:30 +0000

Mr. Genzlinger:

I have been a resident at 2707 Valley View for almost 24 years. Miller Creek is just across Bob Beach's field a stone's throw away. Obviously I've seen first hand the growth and accompanying traffic. I think spending money on anything other than a bridge connecting Miller Creek to Hwy 93 is a waste, and does not solve the problem. Missoula continually approves development without committing to the necessary infrastructure to handle traffic. North Reserve is a perfect example. In an effort to save money in reconstructing Reserve, we now have a situation that's going to cost even more to fix. Miller Creek needs another access, not spreading the existing traffic, nevermind the future, through the surrounding neighborhoods. With two schools at the bottom of the hill, traffic is already bad on Briggs at Cold Springs, and traffic jams now at 39th/Reserve/@Meadow Hill at 8 in the morning. I see people cutting through WalMart parking lot to get to 39th.

*147: I'm horrified at one of the suggestions, to cut through the Beach property, which is one of the nicest islands of private open space in town, and send traffic through our neighborhood over to Gharrett. This is a quiet street where children play in the street all the time. Joggers and walkers use it night and day. An arterial would destroy everything.

The "preferred alternative" may look good to someone on paper, but it will not solve the problem, and there must be a way to get funding for a bridge instead of wasting millions on a short-sighted bad mistake.

Sincerely,
Chris Cole
2707 Valley View Dr.
Missoula 59803

Response to Comment # 215

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters C, D, F, H, and L.

* 147: Figure 2-2 in the DEIS included an alignment corridor referred to as the Gharrett Street Connector that cut through the Beach property. This corridor was not advanced for study as a build alternative. The reasons for not advancing this corridor are listed in Table 2-1 of the DEIS and FEIS.
Comment # 216: Thomas and Jennifer Fink

From: Thomas Fink [mailto:TFink@washcorp.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2006 10:42 AM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Cc: Jennifer Fink
Subject: Miller Creek EIS

Either option 2B or 3B should be the preferred alternative. The current preferred alternative (5A) is not an “acceptable solution,” but merely a short-term fix for a long-term problem. In addition, option 5A would create a safety issue around Cold Springs Elementary School, encroach upon the Missoula Country Club with noise and air pollution, and funnel traffic to Wal-Mart. A decision should be made to build a bridge to avoid revisiting this issue again in the near future.

Thomas and Jennifer Fink
5209 Dutton Court
Missoula, MT 59803
(406) 370-8561

Response to Comment # 216

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, G, H, and L.
## Comments

**Comment # 217: Chris Cole**

From: Sam Cole [mailto:cdsbcole@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2006 8:44 AM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller Creek

Mr. Genzlinger:
I have been a resident at 2707 Valley View for almost 24 years. Miller Creek is just across Bob Beach's field a stone's throw away. Obviously I've seen first hand the growth and accompanying traffic.
I think spending money on anything other than a bridge connecting Miller Creek to Hwy 93 is a waste, and does not solve the problem. Missoula continually approves development without committing to the necessary infrastructure to handle traffic. North Reserve is a perfect example.
In an effort to save money and hold back doing everything needed in reconstructing Reserve, we now have a situation that's going to cost even more to fix. Miller Creek needs another access, not spreading the existing, never mind future, traffic through the surrounding neighborhoods. With two schools at the bottom of the hill, traffic is already bad on Briggs at Cold Springs, and traffic jams now at 39th/Reserve/@Meadow Hill at 8 in the morning. I see people cut through Wal Mart parking lot to get to 39th every day.

* 148: I'm horrified at one of the suggestions, to cut through the Beach property, which is one of the nicest islands of private open space in town, and send traffic through our neighborhood over to Gharrett. This is a quiet street where children play in the street all the time. Joggers and walkers use this area night and day. Putting an arterial through here will destroy everything.
There must be a way to secure funding for a bridge. Anything less is short-sighted, deleterious, and a failure to address the growth that has already happened, as well as the future growth on the south and west edges of Missoula that we all know is coming.

Thank you for your attention-
Chris Cole
2707 Valley View Dr.
Missoula 59803

## Responses

**Response to Comment # 217**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters C, D, F, H, I, and L.

* 148: Figure 2-2 in the DEIS included an alignment corridor referred to as the Gharrett Street Connector that cut through the Beach property. This corridor was not advanced for study as a build alternative. The reasons for not advancing this corridor are listed in Table 2-1 of the DEIS (and Table 2-1 of this FEIS).
**Comment # 218: Dennis Barthel**

*(Retyped from handwritten letter for improved legibility)*

Having reviewed the recent alternatives for the “Miller Creek Environmental Impact Statement,” it is clear that the preferred Alternative 2B is the best approach, particularly since it does not impact the Miller Creek area to the north, and could be constructed less expensively and could be accomplished without impacting Hwy 93.

**Response to Comment # 218**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, G, and H.

---

*149: Alternative 5A has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. As shown in Table 2-4 of the FEIS, the cost estimate for Alternative 5A is $13.5 million, and $44.0 million for Alternative 2B.*
Comment # 219: Jim and Lari Ann Taylor

From: Lari & Jim Taylor [mailto:lari@onewest.net]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2006 8:08 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller Creek Road DEIS

Dear Mr. Genzlinger,

We are writing to express our objection to the current first choice for resolution of the Miller Creek/Southwest Missoula egress problem. We agree fully that the Miller Creek road needs widening and improvement. Traffic lights at the proposed locations would also be welcome. However, we remain convinced that the only viable long-term solution to the problem is to provide an additional route out of the Miller Creek/Linda Vista/ Muloney Ranch area. In the event of an emergency, an improved Miller Creek road would not be sufficient to handle a timely evacuation of the area. It is obvious that an additional bridge will be necessary sometime in the near future. It makes little sense to us to spend time and resources redesigning old highway 93 when the resources could be better used to work toward a new bridge.

In conclusion, we encourage you to consider one of the alternatives that includes a new bridge. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jim and Lari Ann Taylor
3295 Cathy Court
Missoula, MT  59803

Response to Comment # 219

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, E, F, and H.
Comment # 220: Dar Palen

From: Dar Palen [mailto:djpalen@centric.net]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2006 4:13 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller Creek Road Improvements

I cannot believe the DOT could expend over $3,000,000.00 dollars and come up with such an inadequate and irresponsible conclusion to improve the present traffic conditions on Miller Creek Road. I was personally assessed over $1,800.00 for road improvements to this area in May of 2000 on top of all the other transportation taxes I already pay and now find out it is being squandered on a study that a blind deaf moron would be able to figure out will not work or improve traffic conditions for any length of time. A bridge for egress is what needs to be addressed, not trying to appease a vocal minority opposed to it. God help us all to keep this project from becoming any more of a financial disaster that it has become. Sincerely, Dar Palen, 3489 Trails End Road

Response to Comment # 220

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters C, D, F, and H.
Comment # 221: William Thompson

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to voice my objection to the government’s preferred alternative pertaining to the Miller Creek road system. The preferred alternative would do little to improve overall traffic flow in the area. The addition of bike lanes, pedestrian paths, and/or widening of the road, fails to get to the issue’s core problem. The growth of the area simply mandates that another access point to the area be built.

The fact that there is currently not enough funding to support a second access via a bridge should not force the community settle for the currently proposed alternative. It makes no sense to spend a considerable amount of time and money on a plan that would show little to no improvement on the general traffic flow of the area.

Furthermore I object to the manner in which the FHWA tried to force the preferred alternative on the residents of Miller Creek. This money was earmarked to study and build a second access to the area, not simply improve the existing road system. It is difficult to see why the FHWA has pursued this inadequate proposal so strongly over the virtual unanimous objection of homeowners, police, and the fire department. All these groups agree that the second access is the only real answer.

In conclusion, I would ask the FHWA and proponents of the preferred alternative to step back and reconsider all factors involved in this decision. There is no doubt that something has to be done in dealing with the Miller Creek traffic; but to commit to a plan that has no chance of real success is a waste of time and money. Efforts should me made to implement a second access.

Sincerely,
William Thompson
3221 Helena Drive
Missoula, MT 59803
mavthrill@yahoo.com

Response to Comment # 221

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, C, D, E, F, and H.
Comment # 222: Denise Hamersley and Jim Harkins

From: James Harkins  [mailto:jharkins@montana.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2006 11:11 AM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Objection to 5A alternative

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our view on this situation.

As 18 year residents on a property bordering Miller Creek Rd. off Ancabide Lane, we have, over the past at least five years, been subjected to an ever increasing problem of traffic noise and air pollution. The noise has become so obtrusive within our home we are now having to take expensive measures to extend our living area and install new more sound barrier efficient windows on the West and North side. As traffic speed and types of vehicles increase - even though the speed limit is still at 35MPH - and logging trucks begin their over the speed limit trips at 6am and continue throughout the day, spending anytime at all in a very beautiful and ancient ponderosa pine back yard has become VERY difficult. Obviously any construction on Upper Miller Creek Rd would encroach even more closely to our home and we would also lose more of an essential barrier of trees.

We are loathe to envision the noise and air pollution increasing but frankly to maintain our sanity we would have to relocate. My husband was raised here and returned 30 years ago to a professional career in education and we were proud to reside in a community that was sensitive to the environment and the residents. We now feel Missoula is losing its way in this area and if we forgo the value of the peace and aesthetics once experienced here we - the residents - will have failed to honour the exceptional environment in which we live/lived.

To address the issue of "IMPACT", the impact for us would we huge and I imagine the impact on countless others would be equally so. We do not casually support sacrificing agricultural land and strongly support open space but given the County has already allowed such a massive new development - with no end in sight - in the Upper Miller Creek area, vast tracks of viable land have already been destroyed.

Response to Comment # 222

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters C, D, K, and H.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 222 (continued)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 222 (continued)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 150 We also believe the negative impact on bird, wildlife and trees would be significant if the Upper Miller Creek ravine is encroached upon.</td>
<td>* 150: The environmental resource impacts in this area have been assessed and efforts to minimize impacts will continue during final design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were under the assumption that the county had approved the extensive development of upper Miller Creek with the condition, the developer provide and fund, access to Highway 93 via a bridge across the Bitterroot river which would offset a traffic congestion issue. I am curious what happened to that plan. We don’t relish the idea of yet another bridge over a river and the consequent environmental impacts but if it is such an issue to be pondered now why was it not considered when the development was approved? We realized this is a huge and complex problem but submit this in the hope that our position in this matter is taken into consideration. Sincerely, Denise Hamersley and Jim Harkins. Missoula residents.</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 223: Colleen, Mark, Cassidy and Cale Alber</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **From:** Bearruncreek@aol.com [mailto:Bearruncreek@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 16, 2006 9:03 AM  
**To:** Genzlinger, Craig  
**Subject:** miller creek eis |
| Hello  
My husband and I have been long time residences of upper Miller Creek. We have seen quite a few changes the past 10 years with construction of new homes and continued increases in traffic. We run, bike, and horseback ride all parts of Miller Creek alone and/or with our young children. We would LOVE LOVE LOVE to see a walking/bike path in place from Trails End to Walmart. It is extremely dangerous to even be walking the last two miles of the main Miller Creek road, yet we would love to safely get into town on our bikes with our children.  
Thanks for hearing our comments.  
Colleen, Mark, Cassidy and Cale Alber |

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<th>Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 223</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter H.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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A = Reference number for summary response issue

Appendix E: Comments and Responses
Comment # 224: Lauralee Bell

From: L BELL <mailto:lauraleemt@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2006 1:16 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller Creek Road

It is my opinion that a bridge needs to be built over the Bitterroot River to solve the traffic problem in the Lower and Upper Miller creek Road areas. To do otherwise is simply a band-aid solution. Building the bridge now will be expensive, but not as expensive as in the future. Maloney Ranch alone is going to continue to grow resulting in more traffic, and more safety and traffic issues. A bridge just makes sense.

Lauralee Bell
6005 Brusett
Msia.MT. 50903

Response to Comment # 224

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, H, and I.
Comment # 225: Stephen G. and Margaret R. Johnson

585 Shepard Way
Mesa AZ 85201

Dear Sir:

It seems to me that the proposed (5%) for Miller Creek Road really provides no improvement for Miller Creek residents but is more beneficial for Ballard traffic. In our opinion Miller Creek needs a second access. In case of an emergency, motorists would be further getting out of Miller Creek and this will only get worse with the addition of the traffic from the recentlycompleted Ranch Road division. They must route the traffic across the river to 53 instead of back to Miller Creek.

We also believe that this access should be addressed before subdivisions are approved.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephen G. Johnson
Margaret R. Johnson

A = Reference number for summary response issue

Appendix E: Comments and Responses
Comment # 226: Liz Lombardi

**From:** Liz Lombardi [mailto:lizzyb@cfccmt.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 17, 2006 5:51 PM  
**To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.  
**Subject:** Milleries

Thank you for all your hard work on this proposal. It is very informative (if, however, somewhat confusing, to a novice like me.)

After reviewing the different alternatives, I would like to put my thoughts on the table.

My two main concerns match up with the problems listed:

1. Safe walking/biking from Linda Vista to US 93 via Lower Miller Creek Rd and Miller Creek Road; and
2. Traffic and emergency routes for this same area.

I would love my children to be able to safely walk or ride their bikes to Cold Springs School as well as our family take a bike ride out of the Linda Vista/Miller Ck area. It would also be nice for folks to be able to walk or ride their bikes to Walmart to use public transportation. The Miller Creek Alternative seems to adequately address this issue as well as the No Action Alternative apparently.

What these two alternatives do not address is a second entrance/exit into the subdivision which is necessary for the traffic and emergency routes to be addressed. The other alternatives (Blue Mountain and North Miller Creek) would adequately address these issues.

I would be opposed to an alternative that did not address both of the concerns I listed above.

Sincerely,

Liz Lombardi

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Response to Comment # 226

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, E, F, H, and L.
### Comment # 227: Joel Henry

**From:** Joel Henry [mailto:henryj@montana.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 19, 2006 9:42 PM  
**To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.  
**Subject:** Miller Creek EIS Comments

Craig and Misty,  
We would like to submit the following comments:

The most important issue to us is an additional exit from the Miller Creek area. Maintaining Miller Creek Road as the only exit is not acceptable, no matter how many improvements would be made.

We favor a bridge from the area out to 93, and prefer option 3B. Options 2B and 4B are also acceptable.

We would draw your attention back to the purpose of the DEIS effort: ...to provide for safe and improved access between US 93 and the Miller Creek area. We do not see improvement to Old US 93 as an issue that should be considered.

We need additional exits from a growing area, the area we live, and hope that decisions on what to do will focus on this important point.

Thank you.

Joel and Kelley Henry  
4421 Nicole Court  
Missoula MT  59803  
251-0305

### Response to Comment # 227

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, F, and H.
## Comment # 228: Mary Jo Rehbein

From: Mary Jo Rehbein [mailto:mjrehbein@riversidecontracting.com]
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2006 10:00 AM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: comment

Mr. Genzlinger:

I haven't followed the Miller Creek proposals very closely but I live up Cochise (3 miles south of Miller Creek and Hwy 93 intersection) and I bring my child to daycare in Linda Vista every morning so I am familiar with the traffic flow problems. It is my opinion that we need to diffuse some of the traffic coming from the Bitterroot prior to hitting the Miller/Hwy 93 intersection, and get an alternate route out of Linda Vista. In reviewing the maps it appears there is some open land just west of Linda Vista Golf Course that could be used to cut across to Hwy 93 with an overpass and clover leaf structure at Hwy 93. This road would continue on north through the field and just east of Yuhas Road and come out on South Ave between JTL property and Fort Missoula. South Avenue would need rework from that point to Reserve to handle added traffic. Of course my idea is not cheap as it includes 2 bridges and an overpass that has to clear a railroad track as well as a four lane road...but the results would have a longer lasting gain overall.

I understand there is an option to widen the road by the Country Club. I don't belong to the Country Club so I don't really care what happens to their golf course, but putting traffic on this road would only add to the problems once traffic reached Reserve Street because it is too close to the Hwy 93 intersection. This option does not solve anything and is not a good idea.

Whatever the resolution is, it needs to be a long range fix and not a temporary fix as this problem will only get worse and the process for solving it takes too long.

Thanks for your time.

Mary Jo Jackson

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<thead>
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<th>A</th>
<th>Reference number for summary response issue</th>
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<tr>
<td>Appendix E: Comments and Responses</td>
<td>E-316</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Comments

**Comment # 229: Jean Logan**

From: Jean [mailto:acuclinic@montana.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2006 8:06 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller Creek Road

Dear Craig:

Regarding Miller Creek Road improvements:

I think that both Alternative 5A and 2B need to be implemented. I think that 5A makes some very good, very needed changes. However, to not provide another entrance/exit out of the Miller Creek area when development has been allowed to the extent that it has - and it's not done yet, is an endangerment to the public.

It takes only one emergency to close Miller Creek Road. If that emergency has occurred due to poor road conditions, then Garrison is not a better option.

Please include a bridge at Blue Mountain as part of the Miller Creek improvements.

Thank you.

Jean Logan
3124 Evans Ridge Rd.
Missoula, MT 59803
251-1313

## Responses

**Response to Comment # 229**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, E, and F.
Comment # 230: Mark Comfort

From: Comfort, Mark S  
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2006 9:47 AM  
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.  
Subject: Miller Creek Area Traffic Plan

Thanks for all the work you have done on this study. I have lived in the Miller Creek area for 14 years now and have seen a dramatic change in the traffic over this period of time associated with the rapid growth of housing in the area.

I feel that a combination of the options 2B and 5A would be the best of both worlds. I am afraid that the option of 5A alone is only a band-aid approach to a problem that continues to grow and without a second option for leaving the area, a bridge across the river, is short sighted at best, especially with the proposed subdivisions planned for this area in the future. The 2B option for the bridge also reduces the impacts to the existing property owners of businesses and homes.

Mark Comfort  
3401 Lloyd Court  
Missoula, Mt 59803

Response to Comment # 230

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, and F.
### Comments

**Comment # 231: Paul and Alexandria Davenport**

From: Paul Davenport [mailto:pbdavenport@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2006 10:06 AM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Cc: denny.rehberg@mail.house.gov; nmichelson@missoulacountryclub.com
Subject: FHA's Draft Environment Impact Statement

Mr. Genzlinger,

We are against the proposal that is written in FHA's Draft Environment Impact Statement. We are against the proposal to redirect traffic through Missoula Country Club property.

We are Missoula residents and Missoula Country Club members. The seclusion of the club is one of the main reasons we are members. Not only will this band-aid proposal affect the safety of families, but we also think that it will have a negative impact on the future of Missoula. This does not only affect Miller Creek, it affects the value of Missoula. We think that more studies need to be looked into so that a better plan can be made for the long term advantage of Missoula.

Sincerely,
Paul and Alexandria Davenport

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 231**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, G, and O.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 232: Nancy Wilson</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>From:</strong> Wilson, Nancy [<a href="mailto:nancy.wilson@mso.umt.edu">mailto:nancy.wilson@mso.umt.edu</a>]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sent:</strong> Wednesday, November 22, 2006 11:00 AM</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>To:</strong> <a href="mailto:craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov">craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov</a>; McCoy, Misty S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> Miller Creek public comment</td>
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</table>

* 151 I would like to support the preferred alternative – alternative 5A – for the Miller Creek area as it seems to have the least environmental impact to the river and to the neighborhood.

  Nancy Wilson, Director  
  Associated Students of The University of Montana  
  Office of Transportation  
  University Center, Suite 114  
  Missoula, MT 59812  
  406 243 4599  
  Fax 406 243 5430  

* 151 Your comment has been noted.
Comment # 233: Edward and Sharon Linjala

November 25, 2006
Ms Misty McCoy

Re: Miller Creek Road Draft
Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Ms McCoy,

We are residents of the Blue Mountain area of Missoula Montana, and were adamantly opposed to the early proposal to construct a bridge out of the Linda Vista/Miller Creek areas at Blue Mountain Road. Your new proposal to widen the Miller Creek access and direct traffic down Old Highway 93 is equally preposterous.

We attended the October 17th public meeting where the draft EIS was reviewed and interested persons were given an opportunity to express their concerns. The following issues concern us:

1) The draft alternative, whereby Old Highway 93 is considered as an alternative solution to the Miller Creek traffic problem, wasn't part of the original EIS study, and, the impacts resulting from the reconstruction of Old Highway 93 were not addressed during the EIS process.

2) This draft alternative doesn't provide for a second route out of the Miller Creek area—what we understood to be the goal of this entire study.

3) The widening of Old Highway 93 will no doubt destroy the eighth and ninth fairways at the Missoula Country Club, one of the oldest and most pristine golf courses in the State of Montana. This would destroy the Club as we all know it today, because moving these two holes is not an option for the Club—there is no additional real estate available for expansion in any direction. The DEIS does not address any of these concerns.

Response to Comment # 233

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, F, G, H, and L.
### Comments

**Comment # 233 (continued)**

4) This draft alternative doesn’t give the slightest amount of relief to the already congested intersection at Miller Creek and Highway 93.

5) The proposed traffic pattern for those heading east out of the Missoula Country Club or any of the businesses located on the south side of Old Highway 93 would be cumbersome, causing traffic to drive south across Highway 93 on Miller Creek Road, east on Briggs Street in front of Cold Springs School and then back to the north on Gharrett Street in order to return to Highway 93 and continue to the east. Having this increase in traffic in front of Cold Springs School would create a hazard.

The **Alternative 2B** bridge has been proposed to provide a second exit out of Miller Creek AND eventually tie into a north-south bypass around Missoula. It would provide a second exit out of Miller Creek, could eventually tie into a north/south bypass around Missoula, moving the northbound traffic from the Bitterroot Valley efficiently to I-90 and would relieve the congestion at the Miller Creek/Highway 93 intersection. We strongly support this option.

We hope that you will consider the significance of this situation and take corrective action to ensure that this study is focused on issues crucial to the entire area.

Sincerely,

Edward T. Linjala  
Sharon L. Linjala  
4900 Buckhouse Lane  
Missoula MT 59804  
(406) 251-2571

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### Responses

**Response to Comment # 233 (continued)**
### Comments

**Comment # 234: Paul Befumo and Laura Lee**

- **From:** Paul Befumo [mailto:mdp@montana.com]  
  On Behalf Of ljnlee@excite.com  
- **Sent:** Saturday, November 25, 2006 2:52 PM  
- **To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.  
- **Subject:** miller creek deis

I live at 3333 Eldora Ln. I am in favor of alternative 2b because I feel we need another access point over the river. Of the proposals involving bridging the Bitterroot, I like 2b the best because of the placement of the bridge (closer to town). In addition to providing us "another way out" in case of emergency, the second access point will take pressure off of lower Miller cr road between the Y and Linda Vista Blvd, maintaining a country feel to that lane. I hate the idea of Miller Cr rd becoming a 4 lane+ between the Y and the hiway.

Laura Lee

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 234**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, E, F, and H.
## Comments

**Comment # 235: W. Robert Knapp, Jr.**

W. Robert Knapp, Jr.
4290 Wild Fox
Missoula, Montana 59802-8604

Mr. Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepherd Way
Helena, Montana, 59601

November 25, 2006

Dear Mr. Genzlinger,

I am writing to express several concerns regarding the Miller Creek access project, in particular the selection of a "preferred alternative" to not provide a second access to the Miller Creek area, instead widening Miller Creek Road and Old Highway 93 between Highway 93 and Reserve Street.

1. The very first page of the EIS Executive Summary states:

   "ES.1 Purpose and Need
   "Originally the purpose and need focused on providing a second access to the Miller Creek area."

Several million dollars were provided to you and your team for the purpose of developing "a second access to Miller Creek". Is it agency practice to completely change the purpose and need of a project once its funding has been received? Did those who recognized the need for a second access to the Miller Creek and those who supported and authorized its funding agree to this fundamental change in purpose and need? Based on comments heard at the public hearing on October 17, 2006, it is my impression that they did not.

2. A February 25, 2003 memorandum from Mr. Dale Paulson, [4910-22], defines the boundaries of the study area:

   "The study area begins near the intersection of Miller Creek Road and US 93 to the north and extends southward approximately four miles along US 93. The east-west boundaries are approximately .25 miles west of US 93 and approximately 2.5 miles east of US 93."

Because those most effected by the widening of Old Highway 93 were not included in either the study area or discussions that took place over three years involving development of a second access to the Miller Creek area, our support for a bridge over the Bitterroot River was not heard. Lacking such input, it is understandable you could come to the incorrect conclusion that few favored a new bridge over the Bitterroot River.

3. The Missoula Country Club has approximately 1/2 mile of frontage along Old Highway 93, including its only entrance. The impacts of construction and the end result of having a major four lane thoroughfare just a hedge away from play were completely ignored by the EIS, but they are not insignificant. Missoula Country Club has squeezed 18 holes, driving range, practice facility, clubhouse, cart barn, pool and deck area and maintenance facility into just 93 acres, about half the norm. We literally have no place to go when our #8 and #9 holes become too narrow for play, and you must know, there are no 16-hole golf courses. Take away just two holes and you take away the entire Missoula Country Club – a very, very expensive impact, yet completely overlooked in your EIS.

## Responses

### Response to Comment # 235

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, F, G, and L.
Comment # 235 (continued)

If play is possible on these two holes, it will pose the extreme risk of an errant golf shot striking a passing pedestrian or fast moving motor vehicle just a few paces away.

4. Absent from your EIS is any discussion regarding access to our club. We have close to 595 playing plus 140 social members (almost all couples), and a 50 member staff, and it is not unusual to entertain up to 250 guests for a summer wedding. How can this many vehicles plus delivery trucks, some tractor trailers, safely enter and leave our club through our sole entranceway onto Old Highway 93? Most vehicles leaving Missoula Country Club are headed north. Under your “preferred alternative”, they will have to either attempt to turn left across two lanes of southbound traffic and then try to safely merge into two lanes of northbound traffic or they can turn right upon leaving, cross Highway 93, further increasing traffic on the only road into the Miller Creek area, and then use residential side streets and pass an elementary school before getting back to Highway 93 northbound. Either alternative increases the risk of serious accident to an unacceptable level.

As a member of Missoula Country Club, I strongly oppose your “preferred alternative” to make Old Highway 93 a four-lane highway for the reasons stated above. Further, as a taxpayer, I believe you acted improperly when you changed the purpose and need after funding was received. Please do what the project was funded to do, develop a plan to provide a second access to the Miller Creek area.

Very truly yours,

W. Robert Knapp, Jr.
Missoula Country Club Board of Directors, Green Committee Chairman

Response to Comment # 235 (continued)
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment # 236: Vince &amp; Elizabeth Marciano</strong></td>
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<td><em>(Retyped from handwritten letter for improved legibility)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>152 We are in agreement with the choice of Alternative 5A as the preferred alternative. Due to the fact that Miller Crk/Linda Vista will be getting a new fire station, emergency response time should no longer be a prime consideration when selecting an alternative. Therefore, 5A seems to be the most cost effective solution with the least amount of impact.</td>
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<td>Vince &amp; Elizabeth Marciano</td>
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<th>Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Response to Comment # 236</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>152 Your comments have been noted.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Comment # 237: Jason Emery

From: Jason M Emery [mailto:jasonmemery@bresnan.net]
Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2006 8:52 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek EIS

I am a resident in Upper Miller Creek road on Christian Drive. I have reviewed all of your plans for addressing the traffic issues we face. I believe the preferred alternative will not work. I drive that road everyday and believe that adding the light at Lower Miller Creek road and Briggs will simply cause traffic jams. There are simply too many cars on that road to space lights so close together. In my experience as a driver there is no way to adequately time lights to such a degree that you are not going to cause backups. This plan also does not address other congestion issues we face on Christian drive. The only way to truly address the problems in the long term without having to go back in 5 years to do it again is to provide another means of exit from the Miller Creek area. My personal vote would be plan 2b or 3b which in my opinion provides a long term strategy for traffic issues.

Thank you,

Jason Emery
4799 Christian Drive
251-3863

Response to Comment # 237

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, and H.
Comment # 238: Keith and Marie Swinger

Keith and Marie Swinger
6055 Bitterroot Road
Missoula, Montana  59804

Craig Genzlinger
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shephard Way
Helena, MT 59601

November 27, 2006

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

We are amazed and dumbfounded at the amount of public meetings held both on the Miller Creek Road as well as Highway 93 between Florence and Missoula to discuss the DEIS by the Federal Highway Administration. The various studies and proposals have cost millions of dollars in attempting to appease the wealthy whom have moved to Montana and expect the infrastructure provided for their benefit – which has definitely "impacted the environment".

* 153: The road up Miller Creek IS NOT A FEDERAL HIGHWAY, and the available funds should not be spent to improve the road in accommodating the influx of people building extravagant homes in that area. These owners were aware of the road conditions prior to purchasing their property, and if they desire this road to be improved they should be assessed the cost, just as people are in the city when the road is paved or sidewalks and curbs installed. Likewise, any easement from a previous landowner should be secured prior to obtaining the contractor bids so each property owner can be assessed the proper amount!

* 154: This process has proven unconstitutional in other states, and people cannot be forced to give up a portion of their property to benefit new owners. If there was no provision in the Miller Creek subdivisions to provide a secondary exit, it can not be expected of either the state or Federal Highway Commission to accommodate these new arrivals.

Meanwhile, Highway 93 is indeed a Federal Highway that reaches from Old Mexico to Canada and we have mentioned several times the need for a by-pass through Missoula by means of the Blue Mountain Road from the south. That project makes sense because not all people using that highway intend to stop in Missoula. That farm land is quickly being subdivided, so will cost more to acquire the right of way which will be required. That long range plan should be budgeted for at this time rather than the projects now under consideration.

Of course we do not intend to attend any further meetings, but will fight any proposal that changes our entrance onto Highway 93 which has existed long before the present four-lane highway was constructed!

Very Sincerely,
Keith & Marie
The Swingers

Response to Comment # 238

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters F, H, and O.

* 153: Funding for analyses of alternatives and preparation of the EIS was made available through a congressional appropriation. The source of funding for project development, right-of-way, and construction has not been identified. See ES.7 of the DEIS and FEIS for further discussion.

* 154: Please refer to Section 4.5.9 of the DEIS and FEIS regarding land acquisition process and regulations.
### Comment # 239: Paul Befumo

**From:** Paul Befumo [mailto:mdp@montana.com]

**Sent:** Monday, November 27, 2006 4:07 PM

**To:** craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.

**Subject:** Miller Creek draft EIS

I'm concerned about there being only one point of access & egress to the entire Miller Creek valley. If the Briggs – Y junction is not passable, the entire valley is cut off from emergency access by land. An alternate point of access from highway 93 seems to be the only way to address this issue. Widening the existing road between I-93 and the Y does not address the single-point-of-access issue. From a public safety point of view, an alternative access between the Miller Creek drainage and I-93 is necessary.

Paul Befumo, JD
(406) 251-5073

### Response to Comment # 239

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, E, F, and H.
Comment # 240: Willis Cotant

November 28, 2006

Craig Genzlinger
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Craig,

I am writing to you about the proposals for the Miller Creek Road DEIS. I think the Alternative 4-C South Lower Miller Creek Interchange would be the best way to go. It is my understanding that the Alternative 5-A would take two holes from the golf course and ruin it.

I think that if you were to go with Alternative 5-A, in less than 5 years you would have to find another route and that would be to put in a bridge in the area of 4-C. With 4-C you may relieve about a third to a fourth of the traffic that is using the area of 5-A now.

With 5-A, Wal-Mart may close the west entrance and may open an entrance on Briggs Street and that would put a lot of pressure on the school children coming and going to Cold Springs School.

My main concern is with 5-A Alternative, it will really put a heavy traffic load on the Lower Miller Creek area. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Willis Cotant
4377 Nicole Court
Missoula, MT 59803

Response to Comment # 240

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, G, H, and L.
Comment # 241: Kathy Turner

November 28, 2006

Kathy Turner
5208 LaRee Ct.
Missoula, MT 59803

Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

RE: DEIS For Miller Creek

Dear Craig,

I have been a member of the Missoula Country Club in Missoula, MT for 5 years. I have attended the informational meetings in the past month at our Club and Grant Creek Inn. I have also received a packet of information on the proposed changes to Highway 93.

I do not support the improvements to Old Highway 93. This change was not in the original objective or purpose of the original appropriation. If the stretch of highway were changed to relieve the traffic and congestion coming out of Miller Creek, it would only be a short-term solution. It makes more sense to provide an alternative that will solve the many problems that will arise in the future.

If Old highway 93 is expanded as indicated in the report, the amount of traffic that drives by the 8th & 9th fairways will increase drastically. I can only see this causing problems with safety, ease of making a turn out of the parking lot, noise, not to mention the physical impact that it will have on the golf course.

I believe that the solution to the congestion in the Miller Creek area is to build a bridge farther out of 93 near Blue Mountain Road. This will relieve congestion in town.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to public comment. I realize that much time and effort has been spent trying to figure out a workable solution. Good luck in that decision.

Sincerely,

Kathy Turner
5208 LaRee Ct.
Missoula, MT 59803

Response to Comment # 241

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, and G.
Comment # 242: Marguerite Lehman

17650 Hwy 10 East
Clinton, MI 59825

MILLER CREEK

We have a daughter and her family live up Miller Creek. They need another exit out of the area in case of an emergency occurs. A road and a bridge across to 93 would be worth it. A new light too slow traffic. How about Hayes creek and would help the people up in that area too.

I don't know about Blue Mt. road that has a light there now.

Please think about as more people move into the area.

Response to Comment # 242

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, E, F, and H.
Comment # 243: Marguerite Lehman

Hayes Creek Rd. & Hwy 93 is a hazard with an accident waiting to happen trying to cross on to 93.

We have family living in the area. Grand kids drive out there friends too. School Bus too. I am sure other families have people coming in too. It could be someone coming down Hwy.93 that could get hurt. They don't all drive 65.

Let's put up a light and save a life or serious injury. Life is precious.

Marguerite Lehman

Response to Comment # 243

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A and J.
### Comments

**Comment # 244: Lola Goss**  
**From:** Goss, Lola [mailto:LGoss@saintpatrick.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 29, 2006 10:22 AM  
**To:** Genzlinger, Craig  
**Subject:** Miller creek rd

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

I just paid my property taxes for my home which is located in Upper Linda Vista and is one of the highest property taxed areas in the Missoula area. This reminded me to comment on the plans for the Miller Creek Rd. expansion. When we had our home built in Linda Vista area, I questioned the traffic situation with the large number of homes being built and the apartment buildings that would soon be built on Uncle Robert Ave. I was told that a bridge would be built and a lot of the traffic would be diverted or directed to the new road (bridge). The plans have changed to widening Miller Cr. Rd.

I'm a bit confused about why this has become such a difficult "decision" to make. It seems obvious that we need a bridge (another access into and out of Linda Vista and Miller Creek). Also confusing, it is my understanding that when any construction is done (i.e. Walmart, apartment complexes and new residential areas), the city requires that the contractor pay for road accesses and improvements in the vicinity of the construction. With all due respect to the Twite family (developers of the Linda Vista area), why did the City not require the developers/builders to pay for the road access and improvement into the Linda Vista area BEFORE building the upper Linda Vista area or the apartment complexes?

Widening lower Miller Creek rd is "nice", but will be quite expensive in the long run. We need an additional way to get out of the area in case of emergencies (i.e forest fire). The expansion seems to be a band-aid approach that reminds me of Malfunction junction, Reserve Street and Broadway. There will continue to be traffic congestion - just a a little further down the same road. We could spend a lot of money with the band-aid approach now and then spend even more to build the bridge anyway? What will it take to learn from the past mistakes?

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### Responses

**Response to Comment # 244**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, C, D, E, F, H, and I.
## Comments

**Comment # 244 (continued)**

By the way, I'm not sure if you have actually sat in the traffic at 7:00 -8:00 am. I've seen the rubber airtube sensors lined across Linda Vista road which I imagine count the number of cars that pass over them. However, I doubt one could really get the true sense of what the traffic congestion is really like from those. If [those who make this decision for us] haven't tried driving to work or school in the morning from that area, maybe it would be a good idea for them to experience that for a week or so. If they have sat in the traffic, then they probably realize that they are at the end of about a three block line of vehicles wondering whether or not they're going to be late for work or school. Just to be clear, I'm in favor of a bridge (a third access or exit) and against the "attempted fix" of the expansion of Miller Creek Rd. Thank you for your time,

Lola Goss

## Responses

**Response to Comment # 244 (continued)**

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**A** = Reference number for summary response issue

Appendix E: Comments and Responses
Comment # 245: David Hickman
3003 Eldora Lane
Missoula, MT 59803

11/30/06

Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601
Re: Miller Creek Road Project

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

The current plans for the Miller Creek access seems to have lost its way and is not focusing totally on Miller Creek access as was budgeted for. I, also, have found that it appears no environmental impact statement was ever pursued which included the revamping of old Highway 93 as proposed in the preferred alternate SA. The reconstruction of 93 appears to have nothing to do with the intended objective of relieving traffic on Miller Creek. A major revamping of the Miller Creek Y to 93 and the subsequent light changes would more than adequately serve the intended objective until a more realistic route north and south for 93 can be found. Also, a more extensive change for the light at Miller Creek and 93 should be reviewed. I have attached an idea for your review. As well, the routing of traffic east on Briggs is a very problematic idea where the school is involved. In summary, I would recommend a full scale EIS be done which includes the old 93 highway. Thank you for your consideration.

David Hickman

Response to Comment # 245

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, F, H, and L.

* 155: Thank you for submitting your idea for the Miller Creek/US 93 intersection. Upon review of your proposal, it was found that the design included with Alternative 5A would more effectively handle forecasted traffic at that intersection. The use of the approach lanes is the biggest difference between your submitted intersection design concept and Alternative 5A. Alternative 5A utilizes every approach lane to its fullest potential while serving the critical movements during both the AM and PM peak periods.
Comment # 245 (continued)

Response to Comment # 245 (continued)
Comment # 246: John & Shannon Jacobs

Mr. Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
Project Leader, Miller Creek Road EIS
December 3, 2006

As residents of the Target Range Community, we would like to take this opportunity to voice our concern for the Miller Creek Community and agree that there should be a plan to alleviate the traffic congestion that exists in that area by supporting the Preferred Alternative – 5A. We support this alternative for several reasons:

- It is the most effective alternative for improving any future traffic volumes
- The negative impacts are lessened by Alternative – 5A with respect to
  1. Conversion of residential and commercial land use to transportation
  2. Farmland or agricultural uses
  3. Fewest overall right-of-way and access requirements
  4. No impacts on the Bitterroot River
  5. No dredge/fill materials in “Water of the United States”
  6. No effects on riparian or grassland wildlife habitat
  7. Least fill within the floodplain
  8. No impacts on bull trout
  9. Shortest construction period and least effect on US 93 traffic operations
- At several million dollars less than the next cheapest, Alternative 5B, $13 million vs. $42.5 million, it is clearly the most cost effective.
- The Preferred Alternative – 5A also lessens the negative impacts to other communities adjoining the Miller Creek Community.
  1. Alternative 5B would add a whole new dimension to Target Range School by increasing traffic around the school which imposes more danger to children and adding more expenses for traffic personnel to assist children.
  2. Alternative 3B will also impose increased traffic accidents in an already established residential community. As it is, on Sunday November 26, 2006, we had a vehicle roll over into the front yard of a home located at South Ave and Woodlawn.

We understand that there are so many pros and cons to consider each Alternative, however, we felt it important to our community to voice our preference and support for Alternative – 5A as the Preferred Alternative to assist the community of Miller Creek. Thank you so very much for taking the time to review our support. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for efforts in meeting with the community and posting the information on the Internet to keep the public informed.

Sincerely,

John & Shannon Jacobs

Response to Comment # 246

* 156: Your comments have been noted.
**Comment # 247: Kevin Gardner**

**From:** Gardner's Auction [mailto:gardners@montana.com]
**Sent:** Monday, December 04, 2006 10:25 AM
**To:** Genzlinger, Craig
**Subject:** Miller Creek Road
**Importance:** High

Dear Mr. Genzlinger,

This letter is in regards to the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement and the impact it will have on my five existing businesses. If the Alternative 3B: Blue Mountain Road Grade-Separated Intersection is to be used, it will make my highway frontage property no longer highway accessible. This is a huge concern of mine due to the fact that it will make getting to my location (4810 Hwy 93 S. Missoula, MT) very difficult. The easy access to my businesses is a key factor with my customers.

Using Alternative 3B, will devalue my property by making it no longer highway frontage. If this is used, then how will I be compensated for the decrease in my property value? Another concern of mine is the potential loss of business income due to the loss of immediate highway access.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. If you wish to further discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at 406-251-2221.

Sincerely,

Kevin Gardner

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**Response to Comment # 247**

*157: Alternative 5A, Miller Creek Road At-Grade Intersection, has been identified as the Preferred Alternative, which would not affect your business property access to US 93.

Regarding Alternative 3B, please see Figures 2-13 and 2-14 of the EIS for roadway changes associated with Alternative 3B. Your property would receive a new access to US 93 across the MRL railroad tracks under Alternative 3B. (See also Comment # 134.)
Comment # 248: Kent D. Barbian
From: Barbian, Kent (NIH/NIAID) [E] [mailto:KBarbian@niaid.nih.gov]
Sent: Monday, December 04, 2006 12:59 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Cc: Barbian, Kent (NIH/NIAID) [E]
Subject: Miller Creek Road DEIS - Comment

I live at 5039 Geraldine Court, Missoula, MT 59803.

Comment: The current DEIS and its preferred alternative does not meet the purpose (need) and scope of why this project was begun in the first place. That is, to provide a second access/escape route to the residents in the Miller Creek area. Therefore, I am against the current DEIS and its preferred alternative.

I am for alternative 4C - the Heyes creek interchange - for providing a secondary access route to this area as well as fixing a dangerous intersection as it currently stands. Additionally, alternative 4C will direct traffic onto Hyw93 at a point that can easily merge with existing traffic patterns coming in from the Bitterroot and will not affect the residents to the north of Hwy93 (Target Range Area). If a secondary access route is placed any closer to Missoula than here, you will be bringing in additional traffic where traffic coming in from the Bitterroot is currently backed up - waiting to get through the Miller Creek/Hwy93 intersection, thus creating more problems.

Sincerely,

Kent D. Barbian

Kent D. Barbian, Biologist
Genomics Unit
RML Research Technologies Section (RTS)
Rocky Mountain Laboratories, NIAID/NIH
903 South 4th Street
Hamilton, Montana 59840
406-363-9488
kbarbian@niaid.nih.gov

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment # 249: Harold Ort</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From: Harold Ort [<a href="mailto:halort@montana.com">mailto:halort@montana.com</a>]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sent: Tuesday, December 05, 2006 4:52 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To: Genzlinger, Craig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject: Comments on the Miller Creek Road DEIS - Alternative 3B</td>
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When considering an alternative that results in diverting HWY 93 traffic onto Blue Mountain Rd., don't forget that this narrow two-lane road is very windy with more than one 90degree curve with narrow to non-existent shoulders, and puts the traffic either across a narrow one-lane bridge through a residential neighborhood and past an elementary school and a high school, along a busy 2-lane residential road, to an already congested Reserve St. intersection, or further along Big Flat Rd., another narrow very curvy 2-lane road with narrow or no shoulders. I hope you've driven these routes, especially in our winter conditions, so you can make an informed decision whether this road would be safe with the increased traffic, which includes more and more large trucks.

<table>
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<th>Response to Comment # 249</th>
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<tr>
<td>Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter A.</td>
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</table>
## Comments

**Comment # 250: Linda & Larry Manchester**

*From:* Linda Manchester [mailto:lindasu72@msn.com]  
*Sent:* Tuesday, December 05, 2006 3:01 PM  
*To:* Genzlinger, Craig  
*Subject:* Miller Creek Road, Missoula, MT

My husband and I live on Christian Drive in the Linda Vista subdivision of Missoula, Montana. We have been very concerned with the traffic flow on Miller Creek Roads and worry that, in the event of an emergency of epic proportions, there could very possibly be no way out of the area for many of the subdivision residents.

Rather than widen the original "country" roads (Upper and Lower Miller Creek roads) and still have congestion, my husband and I feel it would save money and better serve the future needs of Missoula if the Federal Highway Administration would implement the plan which calls for building a new route from Miller Creek Subdivision to Hwy. 93 South over the Bitterroot River.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Linda & Larry Manchester  
4791 Christian Dr.  
Missoula, MT 59803

## Responses

**Response to Comment # 250**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, E, F, and H.
Comment # 251: Allen L. Kessler

From: Pete Swinson [mailto:pswinson@kennebectelephone.com]

Sent: Tuesday, December 05, 2006 5:55 AM

To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.

Subject: Mill Creek Road EIS

My name is Allen L. Kessler, I reside at 2755 Ancabide Ln. Missoula MT 59803. I am writing to voice my concerns and object to the “preferred” alternative (5A) of the Miller Road Project.

I have attended the greater share of the meetings held on this project. At the outset I believe the purpose of project was to study a second access to the Miller Creek Area. Somewhere along the way the initial mission statement purpose was changed to study a safe access. There-in lies my first concern and objection, the change in the statement.

This alternative also concerns me in that it focuses ever increasing traffic loads from a fast growing Miller Creek Area to one location, the intersection of Hwy 93 S and Miller Creek Rd. It then moves that traffic onto another proposed intersection with S Reserve St. This design would necessitate “land taking” and several businesses would bear extreme hardships. I find both objectionable.

The “preferred alternative” also takes into consideration only the section of road from the “Y” to Hwy 93 S. The impact of increased traffic loads on both the Upper Miller Creek Rd and Lower Miller Creek Rd are much more far reaching than that final section. It is foolish and shortsighted to presume that only the residents in the “design area” will be affected by this plan.

The issue of emergency vehicle access to the entire Miller Creek Area is also a concern. Much of the affected area in urban/forest interface. Should a fire ever start in the lower section emergency vehicles would be severely challenged to access the upper section. An extended road blockage of either section could be critical. 5A addresses none of this.

As a tax paying citizen I can appreciate fiscal responsibility, however the return on the dollar invested must also be taken into consideration. While Alternative 5A is the least expensive it offers very little in the way of true dividends. I did not consider it a good idea then and I do not now. It appears that Alternative 5A addresses budget first with the safety, concerns and needs of the affected citizens assigned lower priorities.

Respectfully,

Response to Comment # 251

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, E, F, G, and H.

* 158: It is not assumed that the only residents in the “design area” will be the only population affected by the project. The Preferred Alternative includes improvements to Old US 93 and will accommodate and enhance mobility and safety for multiple transportation modes.
Comment # 252: Janet Rice

From: janetrice@windermere.com [mailto:janetrice@windermere.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 05, 2006 1:02 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek EIS

Regarding the Miller Creek improvements: I have lived in the Upper Miller Creek area since 1977 and have seen a lot of growth over the last 29 years. With the number of people living in this area now, the idea of not having two ways out of the area has caused me some concern. If there was a major fire or gas line eruption there is no way you could evacuate that number of people from Miller Creek by just widening the road. There is a major gas line through the area. When the Maloney Ranch subdivision was approved money was put aside for the bridge and people buying in that area were told there would be a bridge in the future. I don’t think you can safely design improvements in this area without considering a bridge. The only logical location for a bridge is at the confluence with Blue Mountain Road where there is already a light. Thanks for your consideration in this matter.

Janet Rice
4350 Trails End Road
Missoula, Mt. 59803

Response to Comment # 252

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, C, D, and E.
Comment # 253: Gil Rice

From: Janet Rice [mailto:janetrice@windermere.com] On Behalf Of Janet Rice
Sent: Tuesday, December 05, 2006 1:05 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek

To Whom It May Concern: The idea of not constructing a bridge out of the Lower Miller Creek area completely shows a lack of concern for the areas residents. You have a forest area, gas line and major powerline through the area. Not having two ways to evacuate that many people is reckless.

Thank-you

Gil Rice
4350 Trails End Road
Missoula, Mt 59803

Response to Comment # 253

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, E, F, and H.
Comment # 254: Sherri Kenyon & Craig Krueger

From: Craig and Sherri [mailto:craigsherri@crazis.myrf.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 06, 2006 6:56 AM
To: craig.genzligger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek EIS

Mr. Genzlinger and Ms. McCoy,

We do not want a bridge at Blue Mountain Rd. (alternative 3B). We feel the cost, impacts to the character of the neighborhood and recreation area, and the long term transportation implications that cannot be taken into account for this EIS are why we do not support that alternative. We do support the preferred alternative (5A) “Miller Creek Road At-Grade Intersection”. It is the cheapest and closest to Missoula where traffic is headed and addresses needed improvements in current roads, Miller Creek Rd. especially. We also appreciate the use of old US 93 in all the alternatives. It addresses the bottleneck at 93 and Reserve and from our cursory review does not seem to impact the golf course to the extent many folks were worried it would (losing a hole).

Thank you for your hard work and public involvement efforts.

Sincerely,

Sherri Kenyon and Craig Krueger
4775 Evergreen
Missoula, MT 59804
406-251-4818

Response to Comment # 254

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, F, and G.
Comment # 255: Chris Johnson

From: Chris Johnson [mailto:CJohnson@montanalawyer.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 06, 2006 7:30 PM
To: craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov; McCoy, Misty S.
Subject: Miller Creek Road Draft EIS

Good day,

I have had the chance to review most of the draft EIS for the Miller Creek Road project and have the following input.

First, I live with my family in the "upper" Miller Creek area, on Southpointe. I note that the current situation of Miller Creek Road is an absolute disgrace, and it is astonishing that so much growth and development was allowed in the area, all via the crappy access that is Miller Creek Road. It is a lot of traffic on a poor road.

I am also astonished that the scope of the project has changed as it has, e.g. it has changed from an evaluation of which location should be used to provide additional access, to its current scope. A neat bit of re-tasking if I may say so. In the original proposal, virtually all proposals included improvements to Miller Creek Road. Now doing only that has become the preferred alternative!

Adding additional lanes to the portion of Miller Creek Road that runs from the highway to the "Y" isn't going to do squat. Adding lanes to the North Reserve corridor wouldn't do squat for that mess either. Fact is, when there is only one route and lots of traffic you're going to get traffic congestion, regardless of the number of lanes. And I think the 'Preferred Alternative' is yet another patch or bandage for a problem that is only going to get worse.

Response to Comment # 255

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, E, F, and H.
More significantly, with ONLY ONE ROUTE to the Upper Miller Creek area, the whole area remains at significant risk should some accident or disaster occur. It is not a stretch of the imagination to envision an icy Miller Creek road, a significant accident closing the road, and a house fire, explosion, heart attack, etc. further up the road and emergency vehicles significantly delayed due to lack of access. Frankly, I can't imagine whoever is supposed to do disaster planning can sleep at night thinking about this area. (I note Gharrett provides some alternative access, but very poor access.) I don't know how likely any large fire or other disaster event might be, but I cringe at the thought of getting my family off that hill if there were some major disaster. I'd suggest to you that at some point this scenario will occur -- an event closing Miller Creek Road and a need for emergency assistance -- and that the city and county will get their wheels sued off.

I know there has been a lot of bitching about the alternatives, by people that live off Blue Mountain Road and don't want additional traffic at 'their' intersection, by people that live in the Bitterroot who don't want additional intersections that delay their commute, etc. But I cannot give credence to complaints that arise from growth when it is simply a reality. Complaints that do have merit are over the lack of planning. And I believe it is incredibly short-sighted to not create additional access into the area. And it seems to me that ALTERNATIVE 3B is far and away the most sensible alternative. I also strongly advise that the impacts should not drive this project. Doing nothing would have the least impact on the criteria cited, and of course would be the worst result. Bandaging Miller Creek Road is not much better, and in the big scheme of things a poor substitute to providing alternate access to the area. I hope somebody actually reads these things.

Chris Johnson
cjohnson@montanalawyer.com
Comment # 256: Karen A. Wagner

From: ALAN WAGNER [mailto:akwags@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 06, 2006 7:35 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Missoula, MT.-Miller Creek exit Bridge

December 6, 2006
Craig,
I live at 4880 Lower Miller Creek Road, which is exactly 1/2 mile from the Y which separates Upper and Lower Miller Creek Road. I have lived here since 1994. The traffic has gone from very very little to a main Thoroughfare. Around 7- 7:30 in the morning I can not get out of my driveway the traffic is backed up West of here. At that same time, the traffic on the main Miller Creek Road is backed up to the top of the hill past Garrett Street.

The growth from Upper Linda Vista, and now the Maloney Ranch development, to the West is growing at an alarming rate. The problem will not be solved by just widening the Miller Creek road to the junction at HWY 93. A Bridge funneling off traffic from above, is the only true solution. The bare land south and west of me will accommodate much more than a thousand new homes which have no way to the city except through the Y junction 1/2 mile away. You know that a stop light is not the answer as we have a horrible backup of traffic both on Upper and Lower Miller Creek Roads at this very time- Dec. 2006.

To put a Bridge in to meet the existing Blue Mountain Road is the best way to alleviate present and future traffic. At the present there are always numerous cars turning to either go up to, or back from the Bitterroot Valley.

Looking to the future, Missoula also needs another Missoula by-pass road to the West of Reserve Street. That will logically cut through the Big Flat area and funnel thru to the existing Blue Mountain Road, with Missoula's first interchange. The present traffic flow warrants it and future traffic flow necessitates it.

Response to Comment # 256

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, H, and O.
Comment # 256 (continued)

A Bridge, South of Blue Mtn Rd. will not funnel off enough traffic, and a Bridge, North of Blue Mtn Rd, is to close to an existing intersection to expect enough traffic to divert, and to alleviate the problem.

Sincerely, Karen A. Wagner
4880 Lower Miller Creek Road
Missoula, MT  59803

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Comment # 257: Fred J. Stewart

December 6, 2006

Mr. Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
Project Leader, Miller Creek Road EIS
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

As a result of all the comments made at the most recent meeting in Missoula for this project, I want to make sure that you identify mitigation measures to resolve concerns expressed by members and staff of the two golf courses on old US 93. I think it would have been helpful if you would have anticipated their concerns and could have had at least a partial reply ready for them.

*159* I am strongly in favor of Preferred Alternative – 5A as presented in the DEIS, plus mitigation for the golf course concerns mentioned above. Alternative 5A is clearly the most effective of all alternatives at improving expected future traffic volumes in terms of operations and volumes of traffic at US 93/Miller Creek Road intersection, and this is where the critical need for improvement exists.

Your DEIS shows that 5A is also the LEAST NEGATIVE of all alternatives in terms of:
1) conversion of residential and commercial land use to transportation use
2) farmland or agricultural uses
3) fewest overall right-of-way and access requirements
4) no impacts on the Bitterroot River!
5) no dredge/fill materials in “Waters of the United States”
6) no effects on riparian or grassland wildlife habitat
7) least fill within the floodplain
8) no impacts on bull trout
9) shortest construction period and least effect on US 93 traffic operations

Because Alternative 5A is so much better than any of the alternatives, I feel that it is very important to design and clearly show how the golf course impacts can be minimized so 5A can move forward and actually have a plan to deal with the traffic congestion from cars trying to get out of Miller Creek.

Preliminary cost assumptions show this alternative, at $13.0 million, is less than one third the cost of the next cheapest alternative, 3B, at $42.5 million. If local government had the money to deal with the problem or build a bridge, they would have just done it and you wouldn’t be involved in this study. As it is, the money doesn’t exist and the EIS is needed if there is to be any chance of getting federal funding. Unfortunately FHA is now stuck in the middle between citizens who are tired of sitting in traffic, and the developers and local government officials who are responsible for the problem to begin with. Just like some residents of Miller Creek who want to export the impacts of solving the traffic congestion across the road.

*159*: Your comments have been noted.

Response to Comment # 257

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters C, F, and G.
Comment # 257 (continued)

impacts to other areas and residents of Missoula, developers and local government officials want to export the problem to FHA. Don’t let them get away with either form of export. Stick to your Preferred Alternative! It is the only build alternative that addresses improving traffic flows for Miller Creek residents without exporting negative impacts to other communities adjoining Miller Creek.

In summary, Alternative 5A clearly is best at meeting the purpose and need identified for this project and I strongly support this alternative as the Preferred Alternative. I look forward to the FEIS, additional mitigation where needed for 5A, and construction to improve the traffic situation which is getting worse with every new house completed in Miller Creek.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Fred J. Stewart
4675 South Ave. West
Missoula, MT 59804

Response to Comment # 257 (continued)

* 160: The forecasted 4% increase in ADT under Alternative 3B compared to the No-Action is reasonable (see section 3.4.1.1 and Table 3-8). A travel time comparison study conducted during a congested weekday AM period in 2004 revealed that a route using Blue Mountain Road and South Avenue that also accounted for reduced travel time associated with a new South Avenue bridge for travel between the intersections of US 93/Blue Mountain Road and Reserve Street/South Avenue is substantially longer and requires slower travel speeds compared to the primary route on US 93.

* 161: The forecasts for all alternatives evaluated were based on a future (year 2020) transportation system that consists of programmed projects and other reasonably foreseeable actions. The baseline transportation network used for the evaluation of all alternatives included projects identified in the adopted Missoula Urban Transportation Plan such as the planned South Avenue Bridge. While no current funding may be available to complete that project, the year 2020 forecasts incorporated this project based on availability of funding and advancement of the project to construction by the year 2020.

Disagreement with Assumptions in your Analysis

1. The level of ADT Volume/Percent Change from No-Action Alternative shown in Table 4-5 for the “Proposed” South Ave. Bridge is not credible for Alternative 3B. A South Ave. bridge WOULD cut down commuting time and drivers coming out of Miller Creek would be more likely to stay on Blue Mountain road to get into town rather than join in the traffic jam on US 93. The percentage change assumed is too low and negative impacts also too low.

2. The assumption made in the traffic demand analysis that projects identified in the 2004 Missoula Urban Transportation Plan Update as recommended plan projects would be in place is not reasonable for either the South Avenue bridge or a Miller Creek Road bridge across the Bitterroot (Page 4-154). There is no money reasonably available in the Missoula County budget for such high cost items. Including such items in your transportation analysis will lead to misleading results and make Alternative 3B appear more viable than it really is! These assumptions need to be changed for a more accurate evaluation and comparison of Alternative 3B.
**Comment # 258: Linda & Richard McCool**

From: RICHARD MCCOOL [mailto:rlmccool@bresnan.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 06, 2006 4:46 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller Creek Road DEIS

I FEEL THAT THIS NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED IN TWO PARTS:

**I. THE BRIDGE**
- By not looking ahead we are dooming ourselves to pay three times or more for a bridge in the future.
- The need for the bridge exists now.
- There will only be an increase of traffic in this area. If the bridge is built now you will not have to seize houses to clear the way for it. Our choices for a location may become limited.

**II. MILLER CREEK ROAD**
- The plans for this are too big and too expensive.
- There is no need to widen or change the road except to accommodate a bike lane.
- Close the Walmart entrance onto Miller Creek. It adds to the congestion and slow down, and there are two other entrances.
- Put a signal at Briggs
- Put a signal at the junction of upper and lower Miller Creek
- Put a signal at the Old 93 and Reserve
- But there is no need to change or widen the road.
- Widen the road where Miller Creek meets Brooks to accommodate 3 lanes.

**Response to Comment # 258**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters D, F, and H.
### Comments

**Comment # 258 (continued)**

1 LEFT-HAND TURN LANE, 1 STRAIGHT AHEAD, AND 1 RIGHT-TURN LANE. IF MILLER CREEK WAS WIDENED FROM BRIGGS TO BROOKS, IT WOULD LET CARS GET INTO THE CORRECT LANES WITHOUT BACKING TRAFFIC UP TO THE Y. I SOMETIMES HAVE TO WAIT 2 SIGNALS WHEN TURNING LEFT IN THE MORNING. BY ELIMINATING THE WALMART ENTRANCE THIS WOULD MAKE THE WIDENING EASIER. THERE WOULD BE NO RECONFIGURING OF THE ROAD OR THE NEED TO MOVE ANY HOUSES. THIS WOULD ALSO BE A LESS EXPENSIVE FIX THAN WHAT YOU ARE PROPOSING.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
LINDA MCCOOL

### Responses

**Response to Comment # 258 (continued)**
Comment # 259: Michael Kennedy

From: Michael Kennedy [mailto:makennedy1942@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 06, 2006 11:59 AM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: miller creek eis

Examination of all the documents, the alternatives and public input has been frustrating. One of the underlying assumptions is that the Miller Creek area will be fully built out to about 3000 living units. Policies of the County Commission have allowed development of the area without adequate consideration of the impacts and it appears that those policies will continue. The so called bridge fund development fee was supposed to address access problems but examination of the alternatives and their attendant costs demonstrates the total inadequacy of that effort. In spite of that failure the Commissioner continue to approve subdivisions in the area making the access problems even worse.

If further development halted today then the do nothing alternative should be seriously considered. Even though there is congestion at peak hours, the existing system obviously serves the needs of the residents. Examination of real estate values demonstrates that access has not affected the market.

* 162: Your comment has been noted.

Of the alternatives presented, the recommended alternative (5-A) addresses the criteria the best. The single glaring failure is the lack of consideration for future public transit. That is a mistake and has the effect of marrying residents to the automobile whether they they want it or not. Owing to the serious problems of air pollution resulting from cars, I believe that the EIS is totally inadequate in addressing that public health issue.

* 163: Air quality impacts were fully assessed in the DEIS. Please refer to Section 4.7 of the DEIS and FEIS.
Comment # 259 (continued)

Alternatives 2-B and 3-B do not address the impacts they would likely have on Blue Mountain Road and surrounding areas. Since the road was paved, traffic has increased dramatically with substantial impacts to areas adjacent to the roadway for its entire length. Blue Mountain Road and River Pines Road are already over capacity but no consideration was given to impacts on either.

Although the costs of those alternatives are high, they are entirely too low considering the impact potential.

Alternative 4-C may provide safer access to the Hayes Creek area but the impacts are inadequately discussed and the cost estimates are too low.

Michael Kennedy

Response to Comment # 259 (continued)

* 164: Thank you for your input. Effects to Blue Mountain Road are discussed in Sections 4.1.5 (Land Use Indirect Effects), Section 4.3.5 (Social Indirect Effects), Section 4.4.1 (Traffic Flow and Roadway Volumes), Table 4-5, Section 4.4.2 (Intersection Operations), 4.4.3.1 (Safety, Blue Mountain Road), Section 4.8, Table 4-23 (Noise), Section 4.18.3 (Parks Indirect Effects).
Comment # 260: Philip L. Barney

From: philip barney [mailto:barneyps@bresnan.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 06, 2006 12:49 PM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller creek Road

Dear Mr Genzlinger,

I wish to express my objection to the proposed rerouting and changes to Old Highway 93 as the first option for solving the Miller Creek traffic problem. It is ridiculous to consider this as it does not meet the purpose of the study, which was to choose the best location for a new bridge across the Bitterroot River. It also will do very little to solve the problem of increased traffic on Miller Creek road. You need to go back to your drawing boards and come up with a better option.

Philip L. Barney, 6303 Hillview way, Missoula, MT 59803

Response to Comment # 260

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, F, and H.
## Comments

**Comment # 261: Kelly M. Wills**

**From:** Kelly M. Wills [mailto:kmwills@GARLINGTON.COM]

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 06, 2006 10:49 AM

**To:** Genzlinger, Craig

**Cc:** Brad Dantic; Neil Michelson; mayor@ci.missoula.mt.us; bevans@co.missoula.mt.us

**Subject:** Miller Creek EIS

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

I and my family are members of the Missoula Country Club. I am aware of the Miller Creek Bridge Project that is being administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). I have review information concerning the project and the draft EIS issued by FHWA. I believe the draft EIS violates the dictates of the Public Lands Highway Discretionary Program project application which was to:

**Proposed Work:** Transportation improvements to the Miller Creek area will include a new bridge to be constructed across the Bitterroot River to access Highway 93 . . . A new road will also be constructed to the bridge from Lower Miller Creek road.

**Project Purpose & Benefits** . . . The need is for two accesses out of the Miller Creek area. The new bridge will make that possible. This will improve the health and safety of the public. In an emergency the two ways out will add to the safety and welfare of the public.

The draft EIS further appears to violate the Purpose and Need statement as expressed in the FHWA’s NEPA study:

The primary purpose of the Miller Creek Road project is to provide a safe, multi-modal secondary access to US 93 from Lower Miller Creek Road. This access will be compatible with local and regional plans, provide for bicycle/pedestrian connectivity, provide additional truck and vehicular access, and support transit and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) activities.

## Responses

**Response to Comment # 261**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters B, D, E, F, G, H, I and N.
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The needs for the project include:

- Consider development and planned growth within the Miller Creek area.
- Dispersion of traffic and provisions for efficient and safe movement to, from and within the study area and US 93.
- Provisions for access that can accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, and transit.
- Provision of alternate access for emergency service providers.

With the draft EIS, the FHWA has unilaterally chosen to abandon the spirit, purpose and intent of the Project. According to Preferred Alternative 5A as articulated in the pending draft EIS, the Project *does not* include a new bridge or even provide a second access to the Miller Creek area from U.S. Highway 93. Instead, the FHWA has spent nearly $3 Million (and counting) to simply recommend a band-aid solution to an increasingly congested and problematic traffic area affecting our community. The FHWA recommends, among other things, the widening of Miller Creek Road, the expansion of Old Highway 93 and resulting condemnation of a portion of Missoula Country Club and other business properties, and re-designed traffic control devices on various Missoula surface streets – a far cry from the Project’s original purposes, needs and goals.

Further, the FHWA began the EIS process in 2003 and clearly identified Old Highway 93 as lying *outside* the boundaries and scope of the Project study area. Our Club and other businesses impacted by the draft EIS had no fair notice or expectation that our properties would be impacted by the Project. Moreover, throughout the EIS process, the FHWA did not seek input from our Club regarding any expansion of Old Highway 93. In fact, the FHWA did not present its expansion alternative until 2006 – nearly 3 years into the EIS process. As a result, the FHWA failed to adequately consider the impacts on our Club and identify reasonable alternatives to mitigate those impacts.
Comment # 261 (continued)

We believe belief the draft EIS is deficient in many aspects and the FHWA's Preferred Alternative 5A is a major and unexpected deviation from the original purpose of the Project and fails to conform to the stated purpose behind the appropriation or the underlying application. We believe the FHWA is moving ahead with this Project in total disregard of the appropriations process. We further believe that this Project, if completed pursuant to Preferred Alternative 5A, will make it difficult if not impossible for our Club to continue to operate as a golf course after more than 90 years of service, benefit and enjoyment to our community and the State of Montana.

I have also expressed these concerns to our United States Senators and Congressman. We hope that your office will take our concerns to heart and issue a revised draft EIS that is consistent with the stated purpose and guidelines for the sturdy.

Thank you.

Kelly M. Wills

199 W. Pine * P.O. Box 7909
Missoula, MT  59807-7909
Main Line: 406/523-2500
Fax: 406/523-2595

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Comment # 262: Kurtis N. Mayne

From: Kurtis Mayne [mailto:kurtism@orimt.org]  
Sent: Wednesday, December 06, 2006 7:26 AM  
To: Genzlinger, Craig  
Subject: Miller Creek Road Draft

I am a resident in the South Hills of Missoula and would like to comment on my non support of the Miller Creek Road Project. I am very concerned regarding the impact on the environment of this project, not just for the immediate area, but the irresponsible explosion of development of the entire Miller Creek area. (To an even greater extent than it has to this date.) I enjoy the outdoors, our rivers, the opportunity to see elk in Miller Creek among all the other wildlife. I see many other people doing the same and I hope they have made their opinion in opposition to this project known also.

Kurtis N. Mayne  
Assistant Director of Services - Community Employment  
Opportunity Resources Inc.

Response to Comment # 262

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, D, F, and H.
Comment # 263: Marilyn Gogas

Dear Mr. Craig Gonzelinger:

* 165: Your comments have been noted.

I am very impressed that you and your study group are leaning toward Preferred Alternative 5-B for the Miller Creek Road DEIS.

It obviously is much less expensive an alternative which considering the growth of this area is a necessary need. Money should be spent on many other infrastructure problems in the Missoula County. Also less destruction and confusion takes place when an existing route is re-done - not only to the environment, but also to established areas around this route.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Gogas
Comment # 264: Martin King

WORDEN THANE P.C.
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

December 6, 2006

Via Facsimile, Email and First Class Mail Postage Prepaid

Craig Genzlinger, P.E.
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601
craig.genzlinger@fhwa.dot.gov
misty.mccoy@cfa.com

Re: Miller Creek Bridge Project
Comment on behalf of the Missoula Country Club
Project No.: DTFH70-00-D-00016
Our Client: Missoula County Club
Our File: No.: 11655-001

Dear Mr. Genzlinger and Ladies and Gentlemen:

This office serves as counsel to the Missoula County Club ("MCC" or "Club") relative to the proposed Miller Creek Bridge Project ("project") referenced above. In that capacity we have been asked to communicate our client's objection to the project and to the proposed Draft Environmental Statement (DEIS) in their present form. As explained below, the DEIS should be rejected because the preferred alternative and the proposed use of Old 93 are entirely outside the scope of the project as it was originally appropriated; the DEIS and the preferred alternative fail to satisfy, or even address, the original project purpose and benefits; inclusion of Old Highway 93 as part of the project is outside the physical boundary and study area of the project and consequently the Club and other businesses have not received adequate notice and the opportunity for public involvement in assessment of the environmental impact; the project and the DEIS conflict with local land use plans; the DEIS fails to identify the numerous and substantial impacts to the Club and other businesses and property including potential destruction.

Response to Comment # 264

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letters A, B, D, E, F, G, H, and I.

* 166: The appropriation of federal funds for transportation improvements requires that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process be followed. NEPA requires that a range of reasonable alternatives be developed and evaluated, and reasonable alternatives cannot be constrained based on the language of the request for a Congressional appropriation. Three bridge alternatives were fully evaluated in the EIS. (Also refer to Response Issue B of Summary Memo, under “Purpose of Congressional Earmark.”)

While it can be helpful to consider a funding application as background information on the request that led to a Congressional appropriation, it should be noted that the funding application is not itself law. The appropriation passed by Congress is for “Miller Creek Road preliminary design and EIA, Montana.”

The congressional appropriation does not specify that the funds may be used only on a project that includes a bridge into the Miller Creek area. However, even if it did, guidance from the Council on Environmental Quality specifically provides that “[a]lternatives that are outside the scope of what Congress has approved or funded must still be evaluated in the EIS if they are reasonable.” (See Question 2b of the “Forty Most Asked Questions.”)

* 167: NEPA regulations and guidance require that the EIS examine all reasonable alternatives to the proposal (see 40 CFR Part 1500 and Council on Environmental Quality Guidance “Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ’s National Environmental Policy Act,” particularly Questions 1 and 2). Reasonable alternatives are those that are practical and feasible from the technical and economic standpoint, rather than simply desirable from the standpoint of the applicant. Courts have cautioned federal agencies not to put forward a purpose and need statement that is so narrow it defines competing reasonable alternatives out of consideration. Therefore, after scoping and initial alternative development and based on public and agency input, the original purpose and need statement was revisited and it was determined it contained text that narrowly limited the range of alternatives to construction of a bridge. Based on that, the purpose and need statement was modified in June 2004 by eliminating language that contained a predetermined solution. This resulted in a broader range of alternatives being identified and fully assessed that met the project purpose and need.
Response to Comment # 264 (continued)

* 168: In 2004 and 2005 updated local and regional traffic volumes were obtained and traffic modeling was performed indicating that traffic flow along all study area roadways would be improved, thereby improving access for the Miller Creek area, by including Old US 93 with all the build alternatives. According to public meeting sign-in sheets, the Missoula Country Club General Manager, Neil Michelson, attended the March 2006 public meeting. At this meeting there was no apparent controversy related to the Old US 93 proposed improvements. Comments were received from Neil Michelson at the March 23, 2006 meeting regarding possible impacts to the golf course hedge.

Publication of the DEIS and public review period is the formal milestone in the NEPA process where project findings are provided to the public for review and to provide comment on the project proposal. Presentation of the DEIS to the public is designed to provide the public notice and opportunity to comment in detail on the project. Your letter demonstrates that you have availed yourself of this opportunity, as did many other members of the public.

* 169: Three of the five alternatives evaluated in the EIS include a bridge across the Bitterroot River to access US 93. The Preferred Alternative does not conflict with local land use plans that show a new bridge across the Bitterroot River. Although Alternative 5A does not include a bridge, it does not preclude construction of a bridge in the future (see also Response Issue B under “Local Land Use Plan Conformity.”

* 170: As discussed in Response Issue G, holes eight and nine and the eighth and ninth hole tee boxes or fairways would not be impacted with Old US 93 improvements. The greens, holes, tee boxes, or fairways were never proposed to be impacted, nor would they be impacted with Alternative 5A. From the existing driveway entrance along the southwest property line toward US 93, approximately 30 feet of right-of-way would be acquired from the Country Club to accommodate the additional turning lanes at the Old US 93 and US 93 intersection. The area impacted is the landscaped area adjacent to the parking lot and entrance road. No impacts would occur to the parking lot. The only impact that would occur to the Country Club along the southern property line east of the entrance road in the area of holes 8 and 9 fairway and rough is to portions of the vegetative hedge or gravel maintenance area. In order to accommodate the wider Old US 93 typical section, an area of right-of-way approximately 250 feet long by five feet wide would be acquired as permanent right-of-way. No impacts to the 8th and 9th holes, fairways, or trees along the fairways would occur. See additional explanation under Response Issue F, which includes a graphic depicting impacts to the Missoula Country Club associated with the modified Old US 93 design. This information has been clarified in the FEIS.

**See Mr. King’s email at end of his comment clarifying that he meant to refer to the 9th fairway, and not the 18th fairway.

Reference number for summary response issue

Appendix E: Comments and Responses
Comment # 264 (continued)

Craig Genzinger
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will also be constructed to the bridge from lower Miller Creek Road.

The "Project purpose and benefits" as set forth in the PLH, provides that:

"the need is for two accesses out of the Miller Creek area. The New bridge will make it possible. This will improve the health and safety of the public. In an emergency the two ways out will add to the safety and welfare of the public."

(See, Appendix 1 attached.)

* 166 The Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register on or about March 3, 2003, likewise reflects that the project contemplated a new bridge for the purpose of a second access to Miller Creek. (Appendix 2.) Indeed, the Notice provides in relevant part, "A second entrance into the Miller Creek area is needed for safety and to relieve congestion." Also significant is that the study area as defined in the Notice does not encompass Old Highway 93, or very little of it, and certainly does not contemplate the substantial changes to Old Highway 93 as proposed in the latest version of the DEIS.

* 166 By law, the project and therefore the DEIS must conform to the purpose and intent of the appropriation. See, Environmental Defense Fund v. EPA, 167 F.3d 641 (D.C. Cir. 1999).

Moreover, the DEIS must address the terms of the proposal, which in this case started entirely as a second access into the Miller Creek residential area. See, 40 CFR §1508.23. The preferred alternative as set forth in the DEIS, including the widening of Miller Creek Road, the expansion of Old Highway 93 and the resulting condemnation and destruction of a portion of MCC and other properties, along with various redesigned traffic control mechanisms on Missoula surface streets, does not conform to the original appropriation or the purpose as stated in the PLH or the Notice of Intent. For that reason alone, the DEIS in its present form should be denied approval and whatever remaining funds are unused should be retained to develop a project that truly meets the goal of the appropriation, which is to provide a second access to the Miller Creek residential area.

OLD HIGHWAY 93 AND THE CLUB ARE OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PROJECT AND PROJECT STUDY AREA

* 175 From the beginning of this project and continuing throughout almost the entire EIS process, the Club, Old Highway 93 and other significant properties, roads and intersections (including north

Legal authority is not limited to citations.

Appendix E: Comments and Responses

Response to Comment # 264 (continued)

* 171: Due to the constrained nature of the Miller Creek area, there are a limited number of options available to improve traffic operations in the area. No other reasonable alternatives to the Old US 93 improvements were identified. An alternative evaluated to avoid improvements to Old US 93 was to widen US 93, which was found to fail operationally because widening US 93 would not accommodate an acceptable level of traffic volume. Refer to Response Issue B, under "Reasonable Alternatives for Old US 93." This information was added to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS.

* 172: Scoping requirements under NEPA defined in 40 CFR 1501.7 have been fully adhered to during this process. The public and agency scoping conducted for this project is also in compliance with 23 CFR 771.111, as detailed in Section 5.3 of the EIS. Please refer to Response Issue B for more information.

* 173: The Preferred Alternative (Alternative 5A) meets the project purpose and need of providing safe and improved access between US 93 and the Miller Creek area as stated in the DEIS (please refer to Response Issue B, under "The Preferred Alternative Related to the Purpose and Need" for more information.

* 174: Numerous public and agency comments were received that supported Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative (see Response Issue A).

* 175: The Miller Creek Road EIS process began in early 2003. Inclusion of Old US 93 with Alternative 5A occurred in mid-2004 and was presented at the June 2004 public meeting. During the remainder of 2004 and 2005 updated traffic volumes were obtained and traffic modeling was performed indicating that traffic flow along all study area roadways would be improved by including Old US 93 with all the build alternatives. Inclusion of Old US 93 with all the build alternatives was presented in March 2006 and in the DEIS published in September 2006. The Miller Creek Road EIS process is anticipated to be completed in early 2008. Impacts for all the build alternatives, as well as the No-Action Alternative, were fully assessed in the DEIS.
Comments

Comment # 264 (continued)
Craig Genzlinger
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Page 4

of Miller Creek and 93, the intersections of Old Highway 93 and Reserve and Reserve and Brooks, have not been included within the project boundary. The Notice of Intent provides that the "study area begins near the intersection of Miller Creek and US 93 to the north and extends southward approximately 4 miles along US 93. The east-west boundaries are approximately .25 miles west of US 93 and approximately 2.5 miles east of US 93." The Notice makes no mention of Old Highway 93, Reserve Street, Post-Siding Road, Brooks street or any other streets that will be affected by the project regardless of the alternative approved. The Notice of Intent has never been amended.

It was not until 2006, some three years into the EIS process, that the Federal Highway Administration apparently unilaterally amended the boundaries and scope of the project study area to include substantial changes to Old Highway 93 among other streets and to change the project to one from a second access to Miller Creek to modifications to various surface streets. Like many other landowners the Club had no reasonable notice or expectation that its property and business would be impacted by this project. Consequently, input was not sought from the Club regarding any expansion of Old Highway 93 until well into 2006, nearly three years into the EIS process.

Notice and public involvement must be provided to affected parties in compliance with federal regulations. 40 CFR §1506.6. The form and content of the notice must be in “sufficient detail to foster informed decision making...” Friends of Yosemite Valley v. Norton, 348 F.3d 789, 800 (9th Cir.2003). For almost 3 years the scoping, notice and public involvement of this matter contemplated and portrayed a project that envisioned a second access into Miller Creek and which by its very definition excluded The Club, Old Highway 93, Reserve, Brooks and other properties and roads. The last minute inclusion of the Club and other properties within the DEIS is outside the scope of the appropriation, the project and the study area. Because this project was presented as not including, but expressly excluding my clients property and numerous other properties and roads, my clients and many others have not been afforded reasonable notice and opportunity to become publically involved in this project. Considering the scope creep of this project and the last minute unilateral change in the project and the study area, the project, and the DEIS as submitted, should not be approved.

THE DEIS CONFLICTS WITH OTHER LAND USE PLANS

In 1997 the city and county of Missoula adopted the Miller Creek Comprehensive Plan Amendment, in contemplation of the review of several proposals for development in the valley. The plan addressed the need for additional accesses for the Miller Creek area throughout the planning process. The neighborhood input into the plan called for maintaining the residential nature of the roads within the planning area. The plan articulated the need for additional access

Responses

Response to Comment # 264 (continued)

* 176: The US 93/Miller Creek Road/Old US 93 intersection has been in the study area from project inception. As traffic operations analysis proceeded, it became clear that Old US 93 was a key to the traffic solution. Refer to Response Issue B for more information.

* 177: The Notice of Intent alerted the public and agencies about the project and that an EIS was being initiated, and included an initial purpose of the project. It is not unusual for a project’s purpose to be refined and modified as a result of the NEPA process, when the project is studied in greater detail and public input is gathered. Such changes that occur during a project do not require a NOI to be reissued and published in the Federal Register. Refer to Response Issue B for more information.

* 178: Throughout the course of this project, a high level of public involvement was conducted in accordance with 40 CFR 1506.6 in the form of newsletters, postcards, newspaper advertisements, press releases, project website, project hotline, posters public meetings, and publication of the DEIS.
Comment # 264 (continued)

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into the Miller Creek area to move traffic more efficiently and to provide emergency access in the event of a disaster. Other alternatives are inadequate. A cut off from Upper Miller Creek Road to Garrett Street is narrow and windy and not appropriate for commuter traffic. An unimproved Forest Service Road over Holloman Saddle has been the site of wildland fires in the recent fire seasons. It provides access from the Plan Area to Clinton, Montana, off of I-90, over a long and poorly maintained dirt road. The issue of a second access was so significant that the Board of County Commissioners instituted a "transportation mitigation fund" requiring contribution by all developments in the Miller Creek Area as condition of approval of subdivisions. Its purpose was to fund a bridge and other improvements that would improve access into and out of Miller Creek. During the planning process, neighbors were asked to draw six "Citizen Concepts" maps to guide future development. Every map but one depicted a bridge across the Bitterroot River, primarily in the Blue Mountain area. Developments were later approved in compliance with this planning, relying in part on the funding of this DEIS to provide for a bridge across the Bitterroot River.

The Transportation sub-chapter notes that nearly all of the traffic accessing the Miller Creek planning area uses Miller Creek Road. The plan recommended a bridge location near Blue Mountain as the least expensive in terms of resource mitigation and socio-economic impacts.

This DEIS preferred alternative ignores the years of planning that resulted in the Miller Creek Comprehensive Plan Amendment and subsequent planning to provide for the safety of the residents of this area. The DEIS does not recommend an alternative that reflects local planning documents.

**THE DEIS FAILS TO IDENTIFY IMPACTS TO THE CLUB AND OTHERS**

Considering the relative last minute change to the purpose of the project and the corresponding study area it is not surprising that the DEIS fails to identify numerous impacts to numerous properties, including the Club, or to offer mitigation for those impacts.

As part of a proposed action an environmental impact statement must be prepared to identify environmental and social consequences. NEPA requires that an EIS contain "a reasonably complete discussion of possible mitigation measures." *Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council*, 490 U.S. 332, 352, 109 S.Ct. 1835, 104 L.Ed.2d 351 (1989). The mitigation must "be discussed in sufficient detail to ensure that environmental consequences have been fairly evaluated." *City of Carmel-By-The-Sea v. U.S. Dept. of Transp.,* 123 F.3d at 1142, 1154 (9th Cir., 1997). In other words, an EIS must include "[m]eans to mitigate adverse environmental impacts." 40 C.F.R. § 1502.16(h).

The following is a list of adverse environmental, social and economic consequences not

Response to Comment # 264 (continued)

* **179:** During the initial development plans for two major subdivisions in the Miller Creek area, the County's comprehensive plan identified the need for a secondary access into the Miller Creek area. A bridge was proposed at the Blue Mountain Road vicinity. The County began "saving" for the match money necessary to construct a bridge by assessing each new lot $1800 to be paid into this fund. It was never intended that it pay in whole for a new bridge. The federal earmark process was the primary funding vehicle hoped to pay for a second access or new bridge. The County had plans to three lane Miller Creek Road. When the Miller Creek Road EIS process began to identify a non-bridge alternative, the County staff decided to use the escrowed money for the County's local Miller Creek Road improvements.

* **180:** As discussed under Response Issue B, local land use plans were considered during development of the alternatives. Consistent with the 1997 Miller Creek Area Comprehensive Plan identified need, Alternative 5A would improve access to and from the Miller Creek area, as discussed in Section 1.3.2 of the EIS. During the NEPA process, revised traffic volumes altered the alternatives into combinations, which included improvements to Old US 93 and adjacent signals to improve traffic flow. Based on current and forecasted traffic volumes for the study area, the bridge alternatives were found to not meet the purpose and intent as well as Alternative 5A. This finding was unexpected, and it then became clear to the project team, SEE Team, and ID Team (which included the US EPA, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and US Army Corps of Engineers) that the transportation needs could be met with fewer impacts by selecting Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative. In addition, NEPA and permitting regulations require that the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative be selected. Alternative 5A has fewer environmental impacts than the three bridge alternatives.
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<td>Craig Genzlinger</td>
<td>* 181: As discussed in Issue G, holes eight and nine and the eighth and ninth hole tee boxes or fairways would not be impacted with Old US 93 improvements as originally proposed in the DEIS or with the revised design in the FEIS. The greens, holes, tee boxes, or fairways were never proposed to be impacted, nor are they now. From the existing driveway entrance along the southwest property line toward US 93, approximately 30 feet of right-of-way would be acquired from the Country Club to accommodate the additional turning lanes at the Old US 93 and US 93 intersection. The area impacted is the landscaped area adjacent to the parking lot and entrance road. No impacts would occur to the parking lot. The only impact that would occur to the Country Club along the southern property line east of the entrance road in the area of holes 8 and 9 fairway and rough is to portions of the vegetative hedge or gravel maintenance area. In order to accommodate the wider Old US 93 typical section, an area of right-of-way approximately 250 feet long by five feet wide would be acquired as permanent right-of-way. No impacts to the 8th and 9th holes, fairways, or trees along the fairways would occur. See additional explanation under Issue F, which includes a graphic depicting impacts to the Missoula Country Club associated with the modified Old US 93 design. This information has been clarified in the FEIS.</td>
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<td>December 6, 2006</td>
<td>* 182: Whether or not Old US 93 improvements are made, traffic is expected to more than double along Old US 93 between 2005 and 2025. Congested conditions on Old US 93 without improvements, including left-turn provisions, would make access to and from adjacent businesses and Post Siding Road difficult. Under all of the build alternatives, traffic operations for major traffic movements would be improved compared to the No-Action Alternative (see Response Issue F, under “Access Issues-Missoula Country Club, Businesses, Post Siding Road”).</td>
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-1. The social, environmental, economic and land use impact associated with the loss of the Missoula Country Club as an operating golf course. The DEIS (E-11) suggests construction of a berm and to “replace vegetative hedge” but fails to describe the extent that the project will take land that is part of the Club’s course and the impacts to the course and therefore the Club as a result thereof; |

-2. The safety issue presented by access from the Club to Old Highway 93 after the highway becomes the proposed 5 lanes. Entry to and from 5 lanes of Old Highway 93 to the Club parking lot will be uncontrolled which will present a dangerous traffic situation for Club members and non-members, many whom are youths using Club facilities. |

-3. The economic, social and political impact to other businesses that adjoin and utilize Old Highway 93 have not been identified or addressed. There are approximately 21 driveways located on the east side of Old Highway 93 that access numerous businesses including Bitterroot Motors, Applebees, Pizza Hut, Missoula Veterinary and others. The DEIS is silent on how these businesses and their driveways will be impacted or any mitigation thereof. (See, E-5 of the DEIS.) |

-4. The DEIS fails to identify the impact on businesses and property owners that own property along Post- Siding Road. The design of the intersection of Old Highway 93 and Post- Siding Road is not provided in the DEIS. |

-5. The Club has many trees that border its parking lot and the golf course, some that are hundreds of years old. Impact to these trees and the club parking lot and potential mitigation is not explained in the DEIS. |

-6. The DEIS fails to identify the potential impact to Larchmont Golf Course. |

-7. The issue of noise and the potential impact that traffic noise may have on both golf courses has not been included in the DEIS. (E-7.) |

-8. There are significant safety issues associated with a major thoroughfare (i.e. 5 lanes, traffic increase of 475% and anticipated traffic of up to 25,000 vehicle trips per day) located so close to 2 major golf courses. Golf safety issues, including wayward golf balls are not addressed in the DEIS. |

-9. The illogical traffic configuration of the preferred alternative that will require club members to travel into Miller Creek in order to ultimately travel downtown is not identified or mitigated. |

**Appendix E: Comments and Responses**
Comment # 264 (continued)

Craig Genzlinger
December 6, 2006
Page 7

10. Failure to identify and analyze the impact to the intersection of Old Highway 93 and Reserve Street.

THE DEIS FAILS TO OFFER ALTERNATIVES TO OLD 93

NEPA requires that the DEIS offer alternatives to the proposed action. 42 U.S.C. §4332; 40 C.F.R. §1502.14. Although the DEIS offers various proposed alternatives relative to access from New Highway 93 to Miller Creek, the DEIS fails to offer any alternatives to the substantial action concerning Old Highway 93, except the "no-action" alternative. Failure to offer alternatives to the proposed improvements to Old Highway 93 does not comply with NEPA.

THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE DOES NOT ADDRESS THE BENEFIT, PURPOSE AND NEED OF THE PROJECT

The purpose and need of the appropriation and this project was to provide a second access into Miller Creek. As stated above and in numerous objections previously voiced, the preferred alternative simply provides a stop-gap measure in the form of modifications to surface streets without addressing the real purpose of the project. The purpose and need of the project is not met through adoption of the preferred alternative.

THE PUBLIC OPPOSES THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE AND THE PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO OLD HIGHWAY 93

Virtually all of the comments received on the DEIS to date have been in opposition to the preferred alternative and the proposed modification to Old Highway 93. The purpose of the DEIS process is to encourage public participation so to foster better decision-making. 42 U.S.C §4321; 40 C.F.R. §1501.1(c). Almost without fail the information offered by the public demonstrates not only that they oppose the preferred alternative but that it fails to meet the goal that was the impetus for this project in the first place.

For the foregoing reasons, and for the other reasons expressed at public hearings and by persons offering comments, and on behalf of the Missoula Country Club, we respectfully request that approval of the proposed DEIS for this project be denied.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Martha S. King
enclosure

cc: Missoula Country Club

Response to Comment # 264 (continued)

* 186: Noise levels at the Missoula Country Club for all project alternatives are predicted to be below the FHWA noise abatement criteria. This was clarified in Section 4.8.2 of the FEIS. Refer to Response Issue G, under "Noise and Visual" for more information.

* 187: For proposed Old US 93 laneage and traffic forecasting, please refer to Figure 2-5 showing the revised typical section of 3 travel lanes plus one turn lane, Figure 4-5 showing an ADT of 20,300 on Old US 93, and Table 4-5 sixth row indicating a 138% increase in traffic on Old US 93. Liability for errant golf balls will remain as it is currently.

* 188: As discussed under Response Issue F, in the DEIS it was shown that the left-turn movement from Old US 93 to US 93 was eliminated. In the FEIS, that movement could be maintained during non-peak hours; however, complete restriction of this left-turn movement may be warranted in the future, at the discretion of MDT who has jurisdiction of US 93.

* 189: Impacts to the intersection of Old US 93 and Reserve Street are presented in Section 2.6.2.1, Section 4.4.1.2, Table 4-5, Section 4.5.2, and Table 4-9 of the EIS.

* 190: Due to the constrained nature of the Miller Creek area, there are a limited number of options available to improve traffic operations in the area. No other reasonable alternatives to the Old US 93 improvements were identified. An alternative evaluated to avoid improvements to Old US 93 was to widen US 93, which was found to fail operationally because that would not accommodate an acceptable level of traffic volume. Refer to Response Issue B, under "Reasonable Alternatives for Old US 93." This information was added to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS.

* 191: The appropriation of federal funds for transportation improvements requires that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process be followed. NEPA requires that a range of reasonable alternatives be developed and evaluated, and reasonable alternatives cannot be constrained based on the intent of a Congressional appropriation. Three bridge alternatives were fully evaluated in the EIS. (Also refer to Response Issue B, under "Purpose of Congressional Earmark.") In 2004 and 2005 updated traffic volumes were obtained and traffic modeling was performed indicating that traffic flow along all study area roadways would be improved, thereby improving access for the Miller Creek area, by including Old US 93 with all the build alternatives. The Preferred Alternative 5A meets the purpose and need for the project, which is to provide safe and improved access between US 93 and Miller Creek area. See Section ES.5 of the FEIS for reasons why Alternative 5A was selected as the Preferred Alternative.

* 192: Numerous public and agency comments were received that supported Alternative 5A as the Preferred Alternative (see Response Issue A).
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APPENDIX 1
Comment # 264 (continued)

PUBLIC LANDS HIGHWAYS DISCRETIONARY PROGRAM
FY 2002 CANDIDATE PROJECT APPLICATION

1. State: Montana
2. U.S. Congressional District No(s): 1
3. U.S. Congressional District Member's Name(s): Senator Max Baucus, Senator Conrad Burns, and Representative Dennis Rehberg
4. Project Title: MILLER CREEK ROAD PRELIMINARY DESIGN AND EIA
5. Project Location: The project is in the Miller Creek and Linda Vista area. Specifically, the project is located in T12N, R19W, PFM Sections 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, & 35 and T12N, R20W, PFM Sections 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 13, & 14. A new road, bridge and the improvement of infrastructure will take place.
6. Proposed Work: Transportation improvements to the Miller Creek area will include a new bridge to be constructed across the Bitterroot River to access Highway 93. This will require a NEPA study. A new road will also be constructed to the bridge from Lower Miller Creek road. Lower Miller Creek road will be designed and improved. A NEPA study will be required. A portion of Miller Creek road will be designed and upgraded and constructed.

The right-of-way necessary for the project will be obtained. The County of Missoula has a majority of the right-of-way available. This additional right-of-way will be required for the construction after the design is completed.

A new road from the new bridge to the Blue Mountain intersection will be designed in order to move traffic to a safe location to enter highway 93. This will be studied during the NEPA study for the bridge and road.

7. Public Lands Category: This project is adjacent to the National Forest. The Miller Creek road extends to and through the Lolo National Forest to Swartz Creek near Clinton, Montana. The new bridge will allow access to approximately 100,000 acres of the Lolo Forest to the west of Highway 93 via Blue Mountain Road. The Miller Creek road accesses additional Forest Service land (approximately 115,000 acres) to the southeast. Miller Creek road is also used to haul timber to market, whenever there are timber sales in that area. Access will be improved to a total of 215,000 acres of Forest Service land.

8. Project Purpose & Benefits: The need is for good infrastructure in the area that can take care of the growth. The only access road to the area, Miller Creek road, has already exceeded limits that the County set for traffic capacity and the Miller Creek comprehensive plan allows for additional growth. Because the area is close to Missoula and the growth meets the Miller Creek comprehensive plan allowance, it will happen. The need is for two accesses out of the Miller Creek area. The new bridge will make that...
Comments

Comment # 264 (continued)

Response to Comment # 264 (continued)

possible. This will improve the health and safety of the public. In an emergency the two
ways out will add to the safety and welfare of the public.

The upgrading of the infrastructure will move the logging traffic out of the residential
area for a number of years and this will reduce air pollution and increase safety for the
public.

9. Planning and Coordination: The Western Federal Lands Highway Division and
Missoula County will plan and coordinate this work.

10. Current and Future Traffic: As noted above, current traffic levels to the Miller Creek
area have exceeded the available capacity. Building this new bridge and access road will
accomplish the need to address this current and future growth.

11. Project Administration: FHWA-Western Federal Lands Highway Division, Vancouver,
WA

12. Amount of Federal PLH Discretionary Funds Requested: $5,000,000

13. Commitment of Other Funds: No other funding sources have been committed to this
project.

14. Previous PLH Discretionary Funding: This project has not received any appropriations
of PLH Discretionary Funding.

15. Future Funding Needs: Completing the Miller Creek Road will require additional
funding.

16. Project Schedule: Once the funding is available the following schedule would
commence:

One month – advertise for consultants with RFP. Two weeks to assess consultant reply.
Two weeks to award the project and give the order to proceed.

Nine months to complete the NEPA study and the preliminary design.

The road construction will have a separate NEPA study, therefore, portions of this
construction may take place concurrent with the bridge study.
The conferees direct that the funds allocated above be derived from the FHWA's public funds discretionary program, and not from funds allocated to the Fish and Wildlife Service's and National Park Service's regional maintenance discretionary program. Within the funds available for the interstate maintenance discretionary program, funds are to be available for the following projects and activities:

**Project name and Conference total**

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APPENDIX 2
Comment # 264 (continued)

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act for proposed transportation improvements in the vicinity of Miller Creek Road in Missoula County, Montana.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Craig Genzlinger, P.E., Operations Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, 2880 Skyway Drive, Helena, Montana 59602; Telephone (406) 449-5302, extension 240 or Ms. Jeanette Lostracco, Carter & Burgess, Inc., 707 17th Street, Suite 2300, Denver, Colorado, 80202; Telephone (303) 820-4808.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA hereby gives notice that it intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Pub. L. 91-190, 83 Stat. 852, 1969), as amended, for road and bridge improvements in the vicinity of Miller Creek Road, Missoula County, Montana. The study area is approximately four miles long and three miles wide including portions of US 93, the Bitterroot River, the city of Missoula, Missoula County and Lolo National Forest. The study area begins near the intersection of Miller Creek Road and US 93 to the north and extends southward approximately four miles along US 93. The east-west boundaries are approximately 2.5 miles west of US 93 and approximately 2.5 miles east of US 93.

Alternatives being considered will include a no build and build alternatives. The build alternatives will connect to US 93 and provide a new structure crossing the Bitterroot River.

Improvements to the corridor are necessary as the population is expected to increase in the near future. The need for a second connection to U.S. 93 in this area has been a priority to the local community, Missoula County, and the city of Missoula. A second entrance into the Miller Creek area is needed for safety and to relieve congestion. An additional access could provide regional benefits to connectivity, improving air quality by reducing total vehicle miles traveled (VMT), improving pedestrian and bike circulation, facilitating bus service to the Miller Creek and Linda Vista area, and providing secondary emergency egress and, potentially, improved emergency response times.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have an interest in this proposal. A formal public scoping

http://frwebgate2.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/waisgate.cgi?WAISSdocID=968783523725+0+0+0&WAISact... 10/27/2003
Comment # 264 (continued)

Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 26th from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Linda Vista Golf Course Clubhouse located on 4915 Lower Miller Creek Road, Missoula, Montana. Brief identical presentations will be given at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. A series of public meetings will be held in Missoula. In addition, a public hearing will be held. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the meetings and hearing. The draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FTA at the address provided above. Additional project information can be obtained at the Web site (www.miller.eis.com) or from the Telephone Information Hotline (1-800-865-6905).

[Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this proposed action.]


Dale Paulson,
Program Development Engineer, Montana Division, Federal Highway Administration, Helena, MT 59602.
[FR Doc. 03-4856 Filed 2-28-03; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

Response to Comment # 264 (continued)
Comment # 264 (continued)

From: Martin S. King [mailto:mking@wthlaw.net]
Sent: Thursday, December 07, 2006 10:22 AM
To: Genzlinger, Craig
Subject: Miller Creek EIS

Dear Mr. Genzlinger,

In my comment letter of December 6 submitted on behalf of the Missoula Country Club I incorrectly refer to the "18th fairway" on page 2. That should be the "9th fairway".

Please make a note of this correction. My apologies for the error.

Martin S. King, Esq.
Worden Thane P.C.
111 N. Higgins Ave., Suite 600
P.O. 4747
Missoula, Montana 59806
Tel: 406-721-3400
Fax: 406-721-6985
mking@wthlaw.net

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Response to Comment # 265

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter A, D, F, G, H, I, and N.

* 193: The traffic light at the intersection of Reserve and 39th Street was included in the traffic demand model that was used as the basis for the future year (2025) traffic analysis of each of the alternatives. The alternatives traffic analysis indicated that there would be no notable changes to the number of vehicles forecast to travel on 39th Street under any of the alternatives. While congested conditions at and approaching signalized intersections would occur under any of the alternatives, neither the entire Miller Creek area nor the entire SW Missoula area are expected to become gridlocked.

* 194: None of the potential solutions reviewed during the alternatives development and analysis process were found to be as feasible as the MCR upper "Y" intersection configuration shown in the DEIS and FEIS.
**Comment # 266: Norm Balko**

Thank you for reviewing the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and for providing your comments. The DEIS is also available for review on the project Web site at www.milleresis.com. Please mail your comment to the address on the other side by November 6, 2006, to be a part of the official public record. You can also provide comments through the project Web site.

**COMMENT:** My opinion of this important matter is this: We have used up a lot of time... Seems the Missoula and Ravalli Counties Administrative Board Foremen and the people... My wife and I have attended all your hearings and meetings! We believe we are informed well enough to make justified judgment and decisions, as follows:

1. While your meetings (hearings) were conducted well, presenting plans and alternatives, you didn’t recognize the T&P that (sic) did not include all the people affected by the major changes, i.e., Blue Mountain. Big Flat residents and primarily between Missoula & Elk. This caused unwanted disturbance and division between neighborhoods and people which complicated progress and constructive decisions if needed.

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www.milleresis.com

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**Response to Comment # 266**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, and O.
**Comment # 266 (continued)**

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**Response to Comment # 266 (continued)**

2) Because of the increased development of Southwest Missoula (Moloney Ranch) with limited/indigent income and age, your Preferred Alternative SA is unacceptable as a solution. It is a costly proposal and causes an unsatisfactory change to the area.

You have been informed strongly about the need for a bridge over the Bitterroot River north of the Miller Creek/Burnt 93 intersection. The majority of the residents and County officials favor this as a needed change to rectify the reduced lower Miller Creek Rd traffic.

3) Changes are needed on Burnt 93/Miller Creek Rd and Thirty 93/Reserve St intersections in addition to the Bitterroot River Bridge.

www.millereis.com
Comment # 266 (continued)

Response to Comment # 266 (continued)

* 195: Agency coordination and public involvement occurred throughout the project, and is presented in Chapter 5.0 of the DEIS and FEIS.
### Comment # 266 (continued)

**Comment:**

A large amount of money has been paid out by our community and County for a solution to a serious traffic problem we have to live with. Enough time has been used that by now, should have produced an acceptable solution. If the next meeting isn’t inclusive of what I have submitted, we will not have addressed to resolve our urgent needs and the problem will increase, safety will decrease and result in unwanted and undesired community dissatisfaction.

Respectfully submitted,

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<th>Name:</th>
<th>Norm Balto</th>
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<td>Address:</td>
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### Response to Comment # 266 (continued)

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**Comment # 267: Stephen R. Dailey**

Craig Senzlinger P.E.,
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Office
505 Shepard Way
Helena, Montana  59601

OCT. 27, 2006

Dear Mr. Senzlinger,

Having gone over and discussed the proposed DEIS, for Miller Creek - Old Highway South, in Missoula, MT, I am convinced a more, and more serious study be made.

It appears that an already congested area, will become even more congested. The proposal doesn’t seem to solve anything. The congestion around the Missoula County Club will be greatly impacted, plus the loss of Missoula County Club land.

Nothing in the DEIS at this time is even close to being acceptable.

Sincerely yours,
Dr. Stephen R. Dailey
501 Benton Ave.
Missoula, Mt. 59801

**Response to Comment # 267**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter A, D, F, G, and I.
Comment # 268: David V. Diggs

October 30, 2006

Craig Genzlinger, PE
Federal Highway Administration
Montana Division Office
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601

Re: Proposed DEIS for Milleer Creek/Old Highway 93, preferred alternative 5A

As a long time member of the Missoula Country Club, I strongly oppose the change proposed for Old 93. The change would greatly impair and make much more dangerous access and egress to the Country Club and spoil the layout of the golf course.

I do not feel that the entire project answers the need or the objectives of the assignment. The definite purpose of the change was to provide a second road providing access to and from the Miller Creek area. Your proposal does not address this need at all. The obvious and soon to be necessary answer is a second bridge across the Bitterroot River south of Buckhouse bridge. Why would you even consider a temporary band-aid solution which messes up the Country Club and the businesses along Old 93?

I would say, scrap this plan, and get on with providing the real need in this situation which is a new bridge across the river.

Very Truly Yours,

David V. Diggs
607 West Crestline Dr.
Missoula, MT 59803

Response to Comment # 268

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter A, B, D, F, and G.
Comment # 269: Kaye & Roger Helms

Dear Mr. Genzliner,

As 20 year members of the Missoula Country Club, we wish to express strong opposition to the Draft EIS Alternative SA. This would pose a severe social and financial impact on nearly 600 families (golfing & social) who frequent the golf course, dining room & swimming pool.

Kaye & Roger Helms
PO Box 8763
Missoula, Montana 59807

CC - Senator Baucus
Mayor Eisen
Missoula Co. Commissioners
Missoula Country Club

Response to Comment # 269

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter F and G.
## Comments

**Comment # 270: Amy Joyner**

October 30, 2006

I am writing to express my concern over the Miller Creek Road project. I have attended nearly every public meeting for this project since the process began.

Of course, everything has been revised so many times, the preferred alternative looks nothing like the Miller Creek residents were hoping for. Improving existing roads falls short of addressing our essential need for safety.

Yes, the “Y” of Upper and Lower Miller Creek Roads does need a major adjustment. It is a hassle for drivers and a headache for emergency personnel during peak hours. But, no matter what it looks like, the same ever-increasing number of drivers will be using the same single access road to the growing region. Please do the retrofit proposed for the Preferred Alternative.

But, no not drop the previous proposal of a bridge over the Bitterroot River. This is also essential for safety, and a bonus for convenience. We can’t keep plugging homes into an area with only one way in and one way out. I am aware that the Corps of Engineers will not approve a bridge at this time. No reasonable answer to that was given at the last meeting, yet the Alternatives 2B, 3B and 4C were all posted on the wall. So in fact, we were presented options that are, in truth, not options at all.

So, yes I do support the Preferred Alternative as Phase one. However the grading of Upper Miller Creek has to be done in a way that will lessen wintertime ice slides for cars traveling north down the road to the new stop light.

Don’t stop there. Phase two has to be a second access, which necessitates a bridge. For that, I support either 2B or 3B. It looks as if 3B would be the best and easiest to maneuver, but cost much more. But, as was stated in the Missoulian editorial of October 26, 2006, let’s do it soon. Construction costs won’t get any cheaper if we wait another 10 years.

Thank you,

Amy Joyner
5201 Frazer Ct.
Missoula, MT 59803
406-251-0011

## Responses

**Response to Comment # 270**

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter C, D, E, F, H, and O.

* 196: Alternative 5A (Preferred Alternative) does not preclude construction of a bridge in the future.
Comment # 271: MJ Horner

It has come to our attention that three years ago when the proposed Environmental Impact Statement for Miller Creek was drafted, Old Hwy 93 was NOT an alternative. In fact it was not even included in the original proposal.

Yet, because Blue Mountain proposal was shut down by 105 families – Old Hwy 93 is a suggested alternative! How is the impact study on that proposal? How is this going to effect property or families on Old Hwy 93?? How is it going to provide a second access point into or out of the Miller Creek area? Is this just an extension of the one already there!

Alternative 3 is not going to solve the problem with their configuration, but is going to cause more problems with the traffic increase flow. That about the traffic that will be created past Cold Spring school? Are the growing to be given any consideration toward the safety of those children?

As parents we cannot allow children in the Missoula school district! So these always divided the fact that so many schools are already on busy streets including Cold Spring now!! Think about the impact...
Appendix E: Comments and Responses

E-388

A = Reference number for summary response issue
(comment letter ended here)

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Comment # 271 (continued)
Comments

Response to Comment # 271 (continued)
Responses
final environmental impact statement

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miller creek road


Comment # 272: Deborah P. Cole

Thank you for reviewing the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and for providing your comments. The DEIS is also available for review on the project Web site at www.milleres.com. Please mail your comment to the address on the other side by November 6, 2006, to be a part of the official public record. You can also provide comments through the project Web site.

**COMMENT:**

I think we need a bridge over the Miller River. To provide an alternative route into and out of the Miller Creek area. At this time I don't see any point to widening the short span of road from the Y to the light at 93. There is no need to shoot people down Miller Creek Rd faster when they can get out on 93 any faster. The hold up is at the light, not on Miller Creek. The traffic is only heavy for, at most, two hours per day - from 6:30 am to 8:30 am. I don't think the wait time is excessive. Any other area of the country would be thrilled with only a fifteen minute wait in traffic! I can leave my home Monday through Friday at 7:55 or 7:59 and be down to the light in two minutes and out to the light at reserve in about five minutes. I live at the Y on Miller Creek. I think you just wasted a bunch of money on a study and are not planning to give the residents what they want and need.

Name: Deborah P. Cole
Address: 1111 Miller Creek Rd
Phone: Have lived here for 31 years
Date: 12/24/06

Response to Comment # 272

Responses to this comment letter can be found under Summary Response issue letter C, D, F, H, and I.