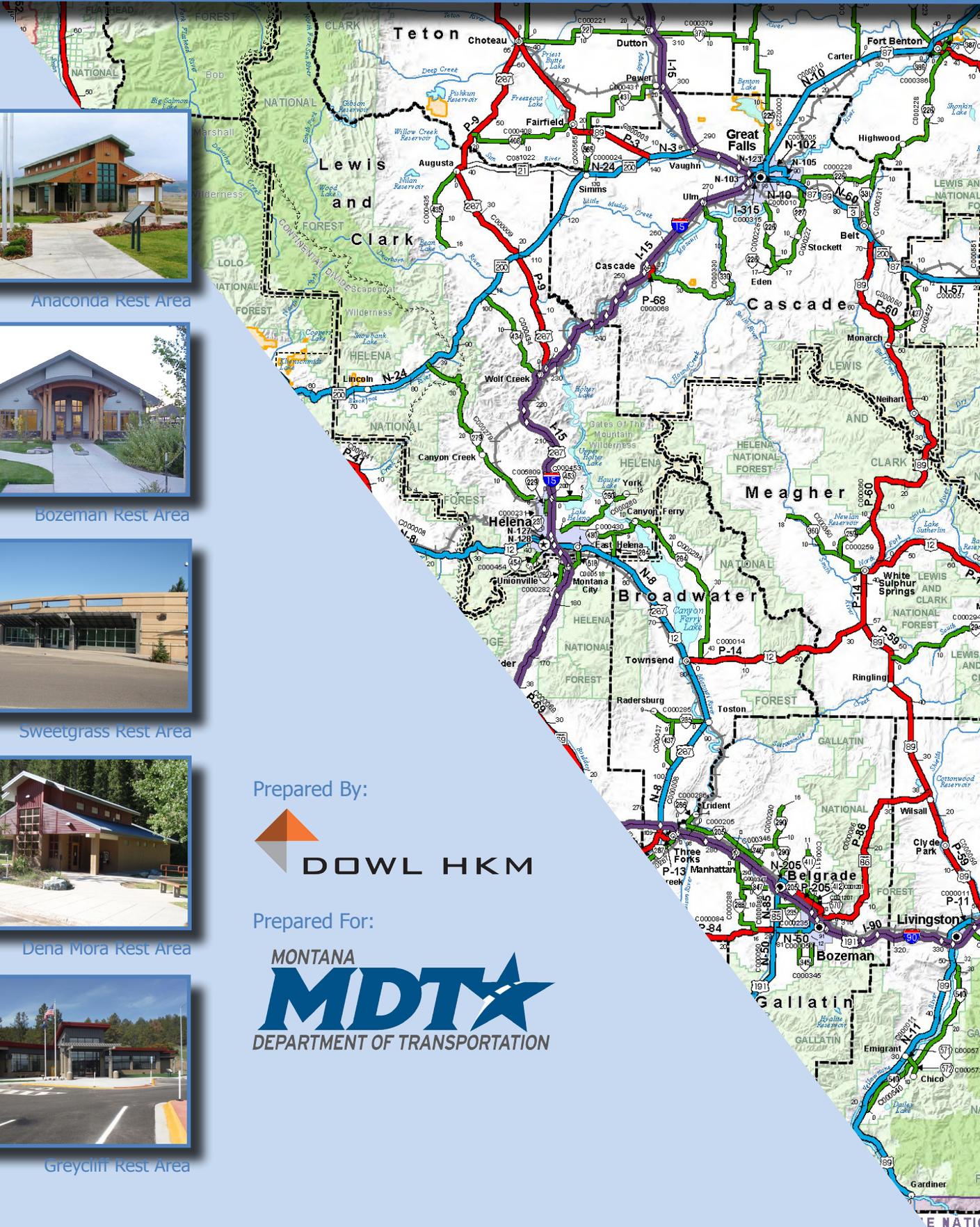


Montana Rest Area Plan

September 2014



Anaconda Rest Area



Bozeman Rest Area



Sweetgrass Rest Area



Dena Mora Rest Area



Greycliff Rest Area

Prepared By:



DOWL HKM

Prepared For:

MONTANA
MDT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Anaconda Rest Area



Armington Jct. Rest Area



Bad Route Rest Area



Bearmouth Rest Area



Bozeman Rest Area



Bridger Rest Area



Broadus Rest Area

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1.0 Executive Summary



Clearwater Rest Area



Columbus Rest Area



Conrad Rest Area



Culbertson Rest Area



Custer Rest Area



Dearborn Rest Area



Dena Mora Rest Area

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) recognizes the value of rest areas, and continues to focus on addressing critical rest area needs. This plan represents MDT’s comprehensive statewide vision for the MDT Rest Area Program in the context of challenges such as aging infrastructure, high rest area demand and visibility, and limited funding.

The Rest Area Program began in the 1930s with the development of primitive roadside picnic areas. Construction of formal rest areas began in the 1960s and continued through the 1980s utilizing a fairly standardized design. MDT initiated several planning efforts since the 1980s to formalize and improve the planning and construction of Montana rest areas, however, funding for rest areas remained limited and little progress was made to combat problems such as aging infrastructure and undersized facilities. Major changes to the Rest Area Program were initiated in 2009. The Rest Area Program received dedicated funding and developed a more formalized process for prioritization of projects and activities. Substantial progress has been made since 2009 with several rest area construction, reconstruction, and rehabilitation projects.

The MDT Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee meets regularly to discuss and advance the progress and priority of rest area projects and topics that affect rest area strategy, including the public experience and regulation. The committee employs an asset management approach to decision making and is driven by defined objectives and credible data from systematic assessments to justify investment decisions. The process allows MDT to develop an optimal investment plan and measure progress toward strategic transportation system goals.

The MDT mission is to serve the public by providing a transportation system and services that emphasize quality, safety, cost effectiveness, economic vitality, and sensitivity to the environment. This mission guides MDT Rest Area Program decisions and investments, with funding priority given to rest areas adjacent to higher order and higher volume roadways. The MDT Rest Area Program and Rest Area Plan are consistent with TranPlan 21, Montana’s long-range transportation policy plan.

Table 1 provides a summary of Rest Area Program guidelines, which support the MDT mission statement and TranPlan 21. MDT considered public and stakeholder feedback during the planning effort for the Montana Rest Area Plan.

Table 1 Rest Area Program Guidelines

Category	Guideline		Summary
State-maintained Rest Areas	1	Site Evaluation	Conduct regular site evaluations to assess the adequacy and availability of services. Evaluations include a numerical inventory of physical assets in addition to condition, demand, and service life assessments. Rest area elements are rated excellent, good, fair, or poor according to rating definitions. Ratings translate to numerical health index scores.
	2	Network Evaluation	Conduct regular network evaluations to assess rest area spacing. Desired spacing between stopping opportunities is approximately one hour of travel time.
	3	Project Identification, Prioritization, and Development	Identify and prioritize projects based on site and network evaluation results, program tradeoffs and risks, and input from the Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee and MDT Districts.
	4		Use the Phase I/II design-build process to develop rest area projects. Phase I involves evaluating the site for rest area investment and Phase II is the design-build process that designs and constructs the project.
	5 to 18	Design	<p>Follow guidelines for the design of parking lots, ramps, buildings, sites, and water and wastewater systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet current design standards and regulations, where practicable, in consideration of site-specific constraints and features. • Use best available data and consider site-specific conditions to identify number of parking spaces, restroom stalls, and design flow rates for water and wastewater systems. • Encourage innovative, low-maintenance, energy-efficient, cost-effective designs in consideration of the environment while still allowing flexibility for the design/build process. • Provide features that promote safety and accessibility. • Provide site-appropriate accommodations.
	19 to 26	Operation and Maintenance	<p>Follow guidelines for the operation and maintenance of parking lots, ramps, buildings, sites, and water and wastewater systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular maintenance evaluations and preventative maintenance procedures to maintain all rest area features in a safe and functional condition. • Employ private contractors as a cost-effective method to maintain rest areas. • Permit MDT-approved activities and visitor stays up to 12 hours. • Provide maintenance personnel with appropriate training and documentation to maintain and operate water and wastewater systems.
	State-maintained Parking Areas	27	Operation and Maintenance
City Park Rest Areas	28 to 29		
Other Sites	30		



Divide Rest Area



Emigrant Rest Area



Flowing Wells Rest Area



Gold Creek Rest Area



Greycliff Rest Area



Hardin Rest Area



Harlowton Rest Area

2.0 MDT Rest Area Program Overview

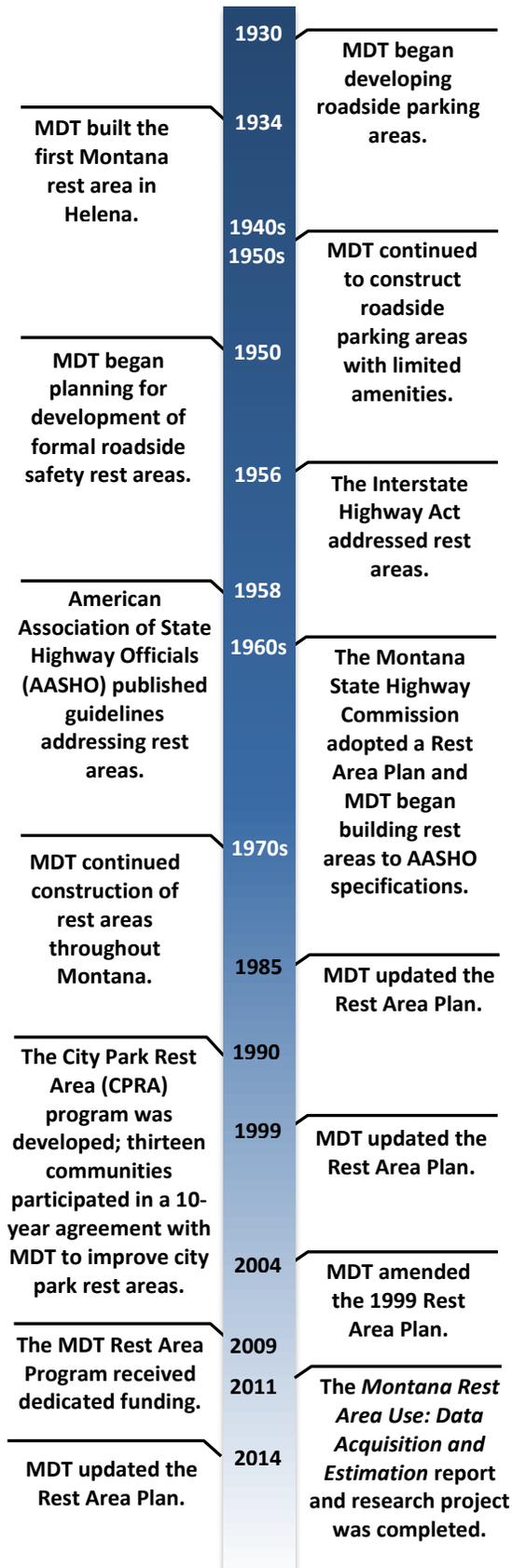
Rest areas play an important role in the statewide transportation network by providing safe stopping opportunities along Montana’s highways. Rest area activities such as walking, using a mobile device, sleeping, resting, and eating can aid in combating drowsy and distracted driving, potentially reducing crashes. Rest areas also offer safe places to stop during weather events and road closures, and support the tourism and trucking industries by offering hospitality to out-of-state motorists.

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) recognizes the value of rest areas, and continues to focus on addressing critical rest area issues. Using national guidance and best practices from state transportation programs throughout the country as a starting point, MDT has developed a program tailored to fit Montana’s specific conditions and needs. This plan represents MDT’s comprehensive statewide vision for the MDT Rest Area Program in the context of challenges such as aging infrastructure, high rest area demand and visibility, and limited funding.

2.1 Rest Area Program History

MDT began developing roadside resting locations for motorists in the early 1930s. The sites were primitive roadside picnic and camping areas consisting of picnic tables, a trash receptacle, historical markers, and a fire pit. In 1934, MDT built its first rest area located in Helena. In addition to picnic tables, this rest area included an information center, drinking fountain, and a circular stone parking structure. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, MDT continued to construct roadside parking areas with limited amenities for motorists.

MDT began planning for the development of formal roadside safety rest areas during the late 1950s. The Interstate Highway Act of 1956 created the interstate system and included provisions for roadside safety rest areas as part of the interstate design. Additionally, the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) published guidelines in 1958 specifying basic amenities for rest areas and a general site configuration. The Montana State Highway Commission adopted a Rest Area Plan and MDT began building rest areas in the early 1960s, adopting the AASHO guidelines for rest areas along interstates with modifications for rest areas along two-lane primary routes. Each rest area included a main building with running water, restrooms, and electricity. Site amenities included picnic tables, benches, and trash receptacles. Landscaping was unique to each site, utilizing the surrounding landscape. Montana rest areas constructed during the 1960s through the 1990s were fairly standardized with slight modifications depending on roadway system, site characteristics, and the decade in which they were built. Rest areas were constructed along highways while the highways themselves were being constructed, and early rest area spacing was inconsistent. The primary roadway system generally offered fewer, farther-spaced rest areas than the interstate system.



MDT updated the Rest Area Plan in 1985 to provide long-term guidance for future construction, maintenance, and abandonment decisions for both interstate and primary systems in Montana. MDT considered spacing and rest area usage when developing Rest Area Plan recommendations.

The city park rest area (CPRA) program was developed in the early 1990s. Legislative appropriations provided select communities with funding to improve city parks so they could be used as rest areas to help address rest area needs on Montana’s primary and non-interstate national highways. Thirteen communities initially participated in the program under a 10-year agreement with MDT.

The Rest Area Plan was updated in 1999 and amended in 2004 to reflect changing long-range policy issues. Key components of the 1999 plan included a field inventory of rest area facilities, an extensive public outreach process to determine user needs and opinions, and development of recommendations for rest area location, development, design, operation, and maintenance.

A small number of rest areas were constructed or rehabilitated since development of the 1999 plan; however, at that time, rest areas were competing with highway projects for funding and remained a low priority. Many rest areas faced problems such as aging infrastructure, undersized facilities, and an unappealing nature to the traveling public.

MDT renewed its commitment to rest areas in 2004 through various planning strategies including statewide inventory processes, stakeholder involvement, and the establishment of funding mechanisms. In 2009, the Rest Area Program received dedicated funding and a new program structure. The Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee was formed, and a more formalized process was developed for prioritization of rest area projects and activities utilizing an asset management approach. Extensive research was conducted on rest area usage to support various aspects of rest area planning and design. As a result of the improved Rest Area Program structure, substantial progress has been made since 2009 with several rest area construction, reconstruction, and rehabilitation projects. Projects completed since 2009 have utilized a modified project delivery process resulting in enhanced design efficiencies,

proper sizing of facilities, and unique building and site designs specific to each rest area project.

2.2 Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee and Rest Area Coordinator

The MDT Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee is comprised of MDT representatives from the Rail, Transit and Planning Division; Maintenance Division; and the Highways and Engineering Division (including Preconstruction and Construction Programs). The committee also includes representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

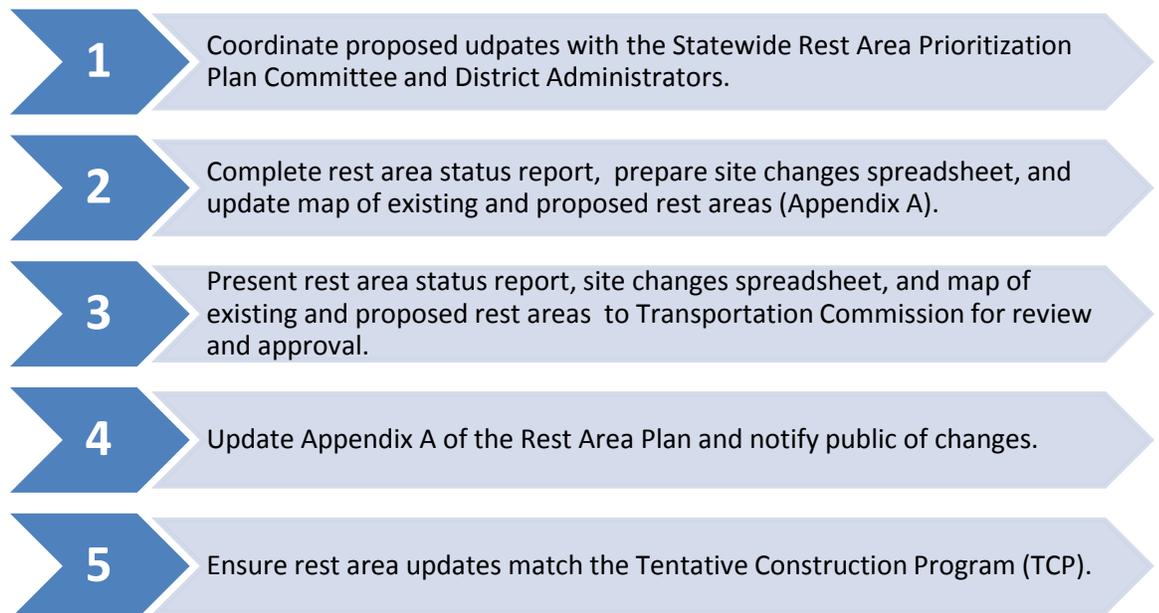
The committee meets regularly to discuss and advance the progress and priority of rest area projects and topics that affect rest area strategy, including the public experience and regulation. Collectively, the committee is charged with rest area research, funding recommendations, data management, technology, plan updates, facilities information updates, environmental evaluations, mapping, tracking legislative and regulatory changes, preparing future projects, monitoring current projects, and assessing past projects. The committee chair facilitates committee participation, advances discussions with stakeholders, and enables collaborative decision making. Appendix A illustrates committee decisions regarding recent and proposed rest area projects.

The Rest Area Coordinator is responsible for coordinating an annual review to provide a rest area status report to the Montana Transportation Commission. Figure 1 illustrates the annual review process.

Figure 1 Annual Review Process

Responsibility: Rest Area Coordinator

Frequency: Annually

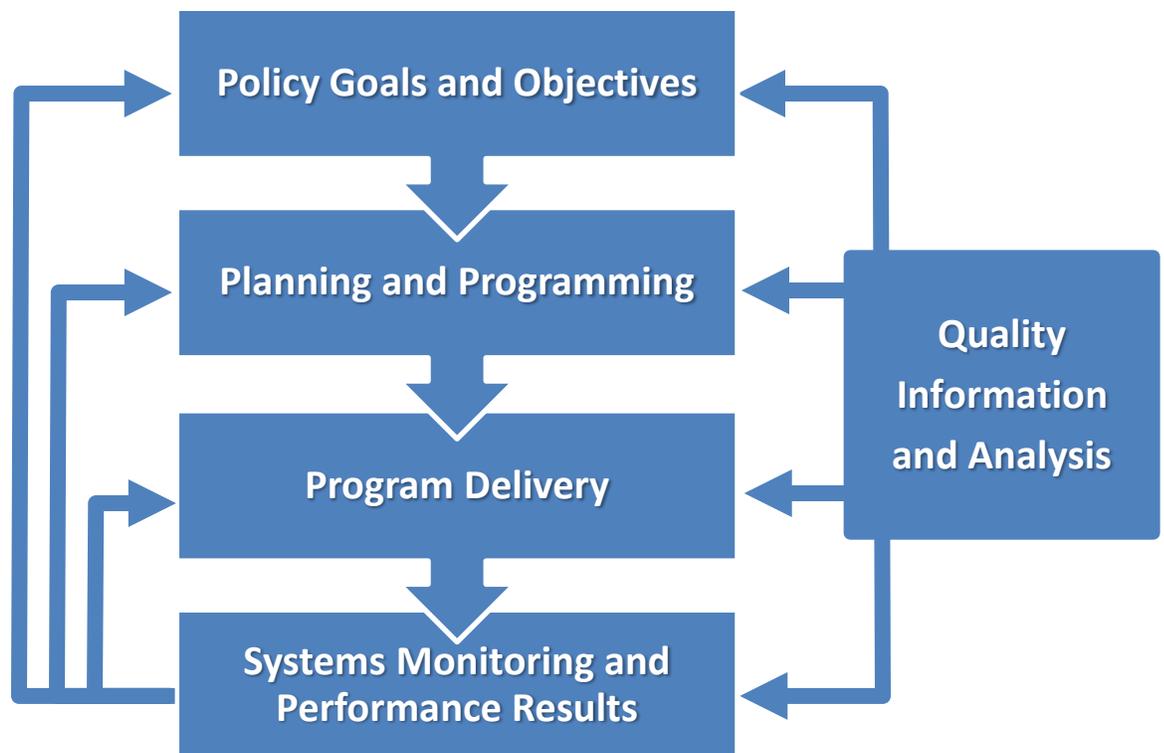


2.3 Asset Management Approach

The Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee employs an asset management approach to state-maintained rest areas. Asset management is a business process for resource allocation, and is driven by defined objectives and credible data from systematic assessments to justify investment decisions. An asset management approach provides many benefits, including objective, justifiable decision making; improved performance and service to customers; enhanced credibility, transparency, and accountability; lower long-term costs for infrastructure preservation; and improved use of available resources. The process allows MDT to develop an optimal investment plan and measure progress toward strategic transportation system goals.

The *Transportation Asset Management Guide* (2002), prepared by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), identifies an asset management framework to guide transportation agencies, which is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Asset Management Framework



Source: AASHTO, 2002.

The Montana Rest Area Plan incorporates these concepts as described below.

Policy Goals and Objectives

Policy goals and objectives are statements reflecting a comprehensive, long-term view of asset performance and cost. These statements support the public interest in good stewardship of transportation infrastructure, and translate into specific performance

measures and program targets. Sections 2.4 and 2.5 outline desired policy outcomes for the MDT Rest Area Program.

Quality Information and Analysis

Transportation agencies need accurate information to make objective, justifiable program decisions. Chapter 3.0 provides guidelines for the regular collection of asset inventory, condition, and performance data. Appendix B provides data from the 2013-2014 inventory and condition assessment. Chapter 4.0 describes MDT's process for assessing customer perceptions of rest area condition and service.

Planning and Programming

During planning and programming, transportation agencies consider available information to identify and prioritize needs, consider a range of investment options, and select options that best meet program goals and objectives. MDT makes fiscally-responsible resource allocation decisions in consideration of comparative costs, benefits, consequences, and risks. Chapter 3.0 provides guidelines to assist the Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee in planning and programming rest area projects.

Program Delivery

A defined, understandable project delivery process is important to ensure program efficiency and consistency. The MDT Rest Area Program delivers projects that incorporate safety, quality, cost effectiveness, and innovation. Chapter 3.0 provides guidelines to assist the Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee in delivering rest area projects.

Systems Monitoring

Systems monitoring provides a feedback mechanism to track and report program progress and accomplishments, and adjust priorities as needed. Chapter 3.0 outlines guidelines to assist the Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee in monitoring program progress annually.

2.4 MDT Mission Statement

The MDT mission is to serve the public by providing a transportation system and services that emphasize quality, safety, cost effectiveness, economic vitality, and sensitivity to the environment. The following elements guide MDT Rest Area Program decisions and investments, with funding priority given to rest areas adjacent to higher order and higher volume roadways.

Quality

MDT is committed to delivering quality programs and services to the traveling public. To this end, MDT strives to provide convenient, accessible, clean rest areas throughout Montana.

Safety

Traveler safety is a top MDT priority. MDT recognizes rest areas provide important safety functions, allowing drivers to stop, rest, and potentially avoid fatigued, drowsy, or distracted driving and hazardous roadside parking. MDT is committed to providing safe

opportunities for resting adjacent to Montana's highways, and MDT encourages travelers to use all rest area services and amenities to provide respite from driving.

Cost Effectiveness

MDT strives to efficiently administer limited funding. MDT Rest Area Program investment decisions are intended to target the greatest needs, produce the greatest anticipated benefits over time, and minimize risk exposure.

Economic Vitality

The MDT transportation system supports economic development and prosperity through the efficient movement of people, goods, and services, and by providing access to markets and employment opportunities. Rest areas play an important role in Montana's economic vitality by promoting tourism, potentially reducing costs associated with roadway crashes, and supporting the long-distance trucking industry.

Sensitivity to the Environment

MDT values the human and natural environment, and endeavors to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts, to the extent practicable, through appropriate rest area siting, construction, and management practices.

2.5 Consistency with TranPlan 21

TranPlan 21 is Montana's long-range transportation policy plan. It is part of an ongoing statewide planning process to identify transportation issues, evaluate public and stakeholder needs and priorities, and establish and implement policy goals and actions in cooperation with the public and Montana's transportation stakeholders. This process guides MDT in the development and management of a multimodal transportation system that connects Montana residents and communities to each other and the world. TranPlan 21 aims to address customer priorities and effectively direct transportation funds toward programs and projects that reflect those priorities by providing policy direction to MDT's highway asset management process.

TranPlan 21 Traveler Safety and Economic Development Policy Papers (amended in 2007) note the importance of rest areas in reducing driver fatigue and promoting tourism. These policy papers identify a need for additional rest areas, truck parking, and amenities, and list the following MDT actions for rest areas.

Traveler Safety: Action A.6. Address safety requirements, including both driver fatigue and personal safety, in updates to the Rest Area Plan.

Economic Development: Action D.1. Promote tourism through improved rest areas and co-location of travel information centers.

Guidelines provided in Chapter 3 outline design, operation, and maintenance considerations to improve rest area patron safety and level of service in accordance with TranPlan 21 actions.



Hathaway Rest Area



Hysham Rest Area



Jefferson City Rest Area



Lima Rest Area



Lost Trail Rest Area



Mosby Rest Area



Quartz Flats Rest Area

3.0 MDT Rest Area Program Guidelines

MDT distinguishes rest areas and parking areas based on the level of service provided at each facility type. Rest areas provide a higher level of service, generally offering dedicated parking spaces for passenger and commercial vehicles; a building containing flush toilets and sinks with running water; picnic areas; and other amenities. Parking areas generally provide open parking for passenger and commercial vehicles, and vault toilets without running water. Sites are further distinguished by the entity responsible for construction, operation, and maintenance. MDT is responsible for state-maintained rest areas, communities are responsible for CPRAs, and other entities (such as federal/state agencies) maintain rest areas and parking areas classified as other sites.

In support of the MDT mission statement and TranPlan 21, the following sections outline guidelines for state-maintained rest areas, state-maintained parking areas, CPRAs, and other sites.

3.1 State-maintained Rest Areas

3.1.1 Site Evaluation

Guideline 1

Conduct regular site evaluations of state-maintained rest areas.

Regular site evaluations are important to assess the adequacy and availability of services at state-maintained rest areas. Evaluations consider parking, site condition, structure condition, water and wastewater systems, and amenities (including interior and exterior security features) at rest areas, as well as highway signage. Evaluations include a numerical inventory of physical assets, a condition assessment to determine relative quality and performance, a demand assessment to determine parking and restroom usage, and a service life assessment to evaluate the remaining useful life of rest area elements.

The technical memorandum provided in Appendix B outlines recommended site evaluation procedures. Rest area elements are rated excellent, good, fair, or poor according to rating definitions. For example, a site with exterior lighting provided for parking areas, building entries, highway ramps, and walkways is considered excellent in that category, while a site with no exterior lighting would be rated poor. Ratings translate to numerical health index scores ranging from 0 points to 100 points, with a higher score indicating a better facility. Appendix B includes 2013-2014 scores for individual rest area elements and total summed health index scores for each site. Site evaluations are distinct from maintenance evaluations, which are discussed in Section 3.1.5.

3.1.2 Network Evaluation

Guideline 2

Conduct regular network evaluations.

A network evaluation assesses rest area spacing and determines where additional sites might be needed or where reduction in service may be warranted. MDT strives to provide stopping opportunities spaced by a maximum of approximately one hour of travel time. The network evaluation process is used in conjunction with the site evaluation process to make decisions for major or minor rehabilitation projects, reduction of service, or construction of a new rest area at a new site.

The technical memorandum provided in Appendix B outlines recommended network evaluation procedures. Spacing within the network is defined along corridor segments and considers stopping locations including rest areas, parking areas, and urban areas. The network evaluation also considers spacing within the network during winter months when seasonal rest area closures are implemented and stopping opportunities are reduced. Appendix B includes the results of the 2014 network evaluation.

3.1.3 Project Identification, Prioritization, and Development

Guideline 3

Identify and prioritize rehabilitation, reconstruction, and new construction projects based on health index scoring, network evaluation results, program tradeoffs and risks, and input from the Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee and MDT Districts.

Health index scores provide information about the level of performance at state-maintained rest areas. Rest areas with lower health index scores indicate greater need, and are generally targeted for improvements before rest areas with higher scores. Rest areas with health index scores of 70 or lower will be regularly evaluated by the Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee for potential improvements. MDT Districts may also nominate potential projects based on identified needs.

Results from the network evaluation can be used to determine corridor segments where new rest areas are needed or where reduction of service may be warranted. Construction of a new rest area at a new site will be considered on corridor segments exceeding approximately one hour of travel time between stopping opportunities, including rest areas, parking areas, and cities and towns with 24-hour services. Corridor segments lacking stopping opportunities or with greater distances between stopping opportunities will generally be prioritized before corridor segments just exceeding the one-hour threshold. The specific location of a new rest area will be identified in consideration of site-specific conditions such as utility availability (including water and wastewater service), site terrain, environmental impacts, highway/ramp geometry, visibility, available right-of-way, local support, and the need for emergency parking, with funding priority given to rest areas adjacent to higher order and higher volume roadways.

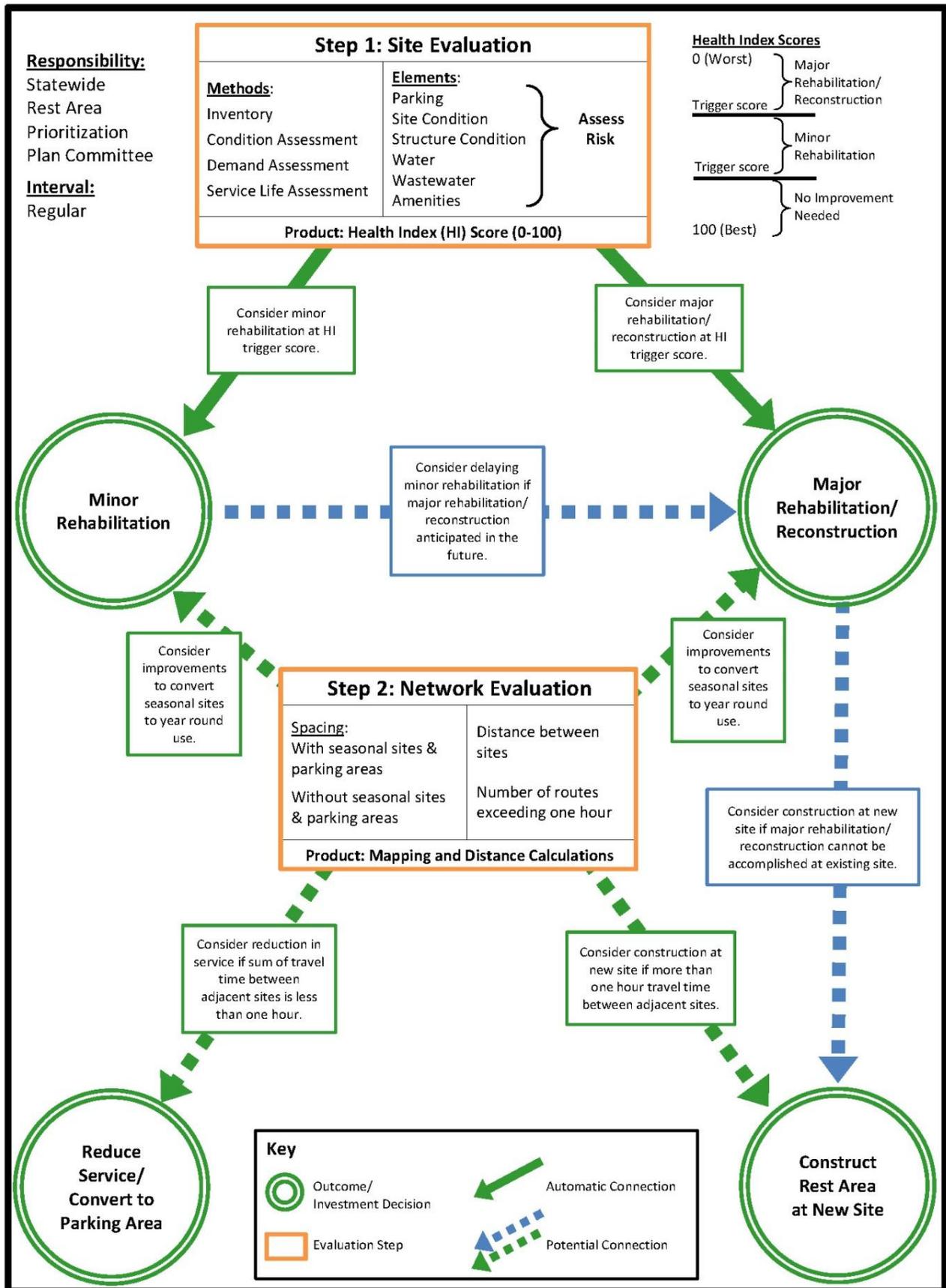
Reduction of service at an existing rest area location will be considered if the summation of upstream and downstream corridor segments is less than approximately one hour of travel time. Corridor segments are defined as the distance between stopping opportunities (including rest areas, parking areas, and urban areas).

The results of the seasonal network evaluation can be used to identify rest areas that would benefit from conversion to year-round use through minor or major rehabilitation projects.

It is important to consider program tradeoffs throughout the project identification and prioritization process. Candidate investments are compared based on their ability to meet program objectives and optimize performance. MDT also considers risk when determining program priorities. Identifying the likelihood, consequence, and impact of potential risks (e.g., failure of one or more rest area components, such as water or wastewater systems) helps MDT plan appropriately to mitigate risk exposure.

Figure 3 illustrates the Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee's process to consider and prioritize rest area investments.

Figure 3 Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee Flowchart



Guideline 4

Use the Phase I/Phase II design-build process to develop rest area projects.

MDT historically developed rest area projects using a design-bid-build process. MDT found that design and construction of building, water, and wastewater components was challenging to MDT resources, contractors, and design consultants that were traditionally charged with highway construction. Additionally, MDT identified a critical need for early evaluation of safety, right-of-way needs, site constraints, and design elements that may affect provision of service (e.g., water and wastewater systems).

To improve efficiency, MDT currently uses a two-phase process to develop rest area projects. During Phase I, MDT selects a consulting firm through a competitive process to evaluate a proposed site for rest area investment. The selected firm is tasked with evaluating water (including supply, quality, rights, and impacted adjacent sources); wastewater (a complete nondegradation analysis to include total effluent flow, anticipated advanced treatment, and footprint for treatment and dosing); right-of-way (including needs for current and proposed buildings, parking, wastewater treatment, picnic structures, and other site features); environmental constraints (such as biological resources, cultural resources, wetlands, and water bodies); and preliminary identification of the rest area footprint and orientation on the site. During Phase I, consultants prepare environmental documentation in compliance with the National and Montana Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA/MEPA) and other applicable environmental regulations. In addition, consultants secure final permitting for the water supply system, conditional permitting for the wastewater system, and subdivision, when applicable, through DEQ. MDT staff (including Rail, Transit and Planning Division; Consultant Design Bureau; and MDT District staff) consider results from the Phase I process to confirm the feasibility of on-site rehabilitation/reconstruction. If results from the Phase I process indicate major rehabilitation/reconstruction cannot be accomplished at an existing site, MDT may consider construction of a new rest area at a new site. In that case, the Phase I process described above is applied at new locations to determine site viability.

Once MDT has confirmed site viability, MDT initiates the Phase II design-build process by selecting a team through a competitive process that typically includes an architect, engineer, and contractor. The Phase II team designs and constructs the project in compliance with minimum requirements outlined in the Phase II scope of work using inputs developed during Phase I. The team finalizes design and construction plans for water and wastewater systems conditionally approved by DEQ during Phase I. The design-build team also retains responsibility for construction engineering and inspection, and is responsible for all construction-related permitting.

Using the Phase I/Phase II design-build process, MDT has improved project development efficiency and delivers safe, functional, cost-effective rest areas by employing innovative designs and construction methods. MDT will continue to evaluate project development methods (including the design-bid-build process) to deliver the greatest program value and efficiency.

3.1.4 Design

Parking and Ramp Design

Guideline 5

Design entrance and exit ramps in accordance with applicable MDT design standards, where practicable, in consideration of site constraints.

The *MDT Road Design Manual (RDM)*, *MDT Traffic Engineering Manual (TEM)*, and *MDT Geotechnical Manual* outline standards and guidelines for the design of highway entrance and exit ramps. MDT will strive to meet current MDT design standards for highway ramps at new sites.

Existing highway ramps will be evaluated during the Phase I process for a major rehabilitation or reconstruction project at an existing site. Opportunities to address features that do not meet current design standards will be explored. Site constraints such as available right-of-way, the presence of environmental features, and other limitations unique to each site may affect the practicability of meeting current design standards.

Guideline 6

Use site-specific usage data, where available, and consider site-specific conditions to identify the appropriate number of parking spaces for cars and trucks at rest areas.

The *Rest Area Use: Data Acquisition and Usage Estimation* report (2011) prepared by the Western Transportation Institute (WTI) provides guidelines to estimate parking demand at rest areas in Montana. The technical memorandum provided in Appendix B provides additional discussion of methodology for estimating parking vehicle demand.

For planning efforts, MDT considers peak-day usage estimates (based on rest area building door count data, where available) to assess rest area parking demand. Appendix B provides 2014 parking demand based on peak-day door count data. Peak-day planning-level estimates provide a basis for assessing relative statewide needs.

To enhance demand calculation accuracy during design, MDT will consider collecting usage data (including entrance and exit ramp volumes, vehicle classification, and dwell time data) at least one year in advance of a major rehabilitation or reconstruction project at an existing site. When assessing parking demand and supply, MDT will consider preserving the current number of parking spaces at existing rest areas (if greater than the number of spaces indicated in demand calculations).

At new sites where existing usage data is not available, MDT will consider demand at existing rest areas anticipated to exhibit similar usage patterns. Similar rest areas may be identified based on mainline highway classification, traffic characteristics (such as percentage of trucks and daily/seasonal variations resulting from commuter or recreational traffic), and other factors.

For new sites and existing sites, demand calculations will consider site-specific conditions that may influence demand during key time periods (such as vehicle parking needs during weather-related road closures). These conditions may not be accurately reflected in short-term data collection used for demand calculations. Site constraints such as available right-of-way, the presence of environmental features, and other limitations unique to each site may affect the practicability of meeting current and future parking demand.

Guideline 7

Design parking area configurations in accordance with applicable MDT design standards, where practicable, to enhance circulation, access, and safety for vehicles and pedestrians.

The RDM, TEM, *Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines* (ADAAG), and the *Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines* (PROWAG) outline standards and guidelines for parking area configurations. MDT will strive to meet current design standards for parking areas at new sites.

Existing parking areas will be evaluated during the Phase I process for a major rehabilitation or reconstruction project at an existing site. Opportunities to address features that do not meet current design standards will be explored.

For new rest areas and existing rest areas, parking design will emphasize safety and accessibility for pedestrians and vehicles. Sites will comply with the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA), including the appropriate number, type, and location of designated parking stalls and other building and site features.

Passenger vehicle and truck parking proximity to building entrances, snow removal and storage operations, separation of pedestrian routes from vehicular traffic circulation paths, and flexibility for potential layout reconfigurations (such as restriping passenger vehicle and truck parking areas) will be considered.

Building/Site Design

Guideline 8

Encourage innovative, site-appropriate, low-maintenance, energy-efficient, cost-effective building and site designs in accordance with minimum MDT requirements.

MDT recognizes the importance of providing flexibility in the Phase II process for design-build teams to propose unique building and site designs specific to each rest area project. This approach encourages design-build teams to submit high-quality, competitive proposals while still complying with minimum requirements and specific design criteria listed in the Phase II scope of work for each project.

MDT will continue to encourage innovative building and site design. Innovative elements can include new methods, the use of new products or materials, or a new way of using established products and materials. Innovative design and construction elements add value to rest area projects by improving rest area function, reducing maintenance requirements, and minimizing capital and operations costs.

Building designs will be appropriate for the site. Each rest area location poses unique challenges and opportunities. The Phase II design-build process encourages contractor teams to maximize site opportunities and develop designs that best address site constraints.

MDT will continue to emphasize use of high-quality, durable products, materials, and workmanship that will provide long-term performance, require minimal interior and exterior maintenance, and reduce electricity and water usage.

Use of low-maintenance, efficient building and site features can reduce long-term life cycle costs. Examples may include water-conserving plumbing fixtures; xeriscape landscaping techniques; renewable energy sources; and energy-efficient lighting, heating, and cooling systems, as appropriate.

Guideline 9

Use site-specific usage data, where available, and consider site-specific conditions to identify the appropriate number and configuration of restroom stalls.

The WTI report provides guidelines to estimate restroom stall demand at rest areas in Montana. The technical memorandum provided in Appendix B provides additional discussion of methodology for estimating restroom stall demand.

For planning efforts, MDT considers peak-day usage estimates (based on door count data, where available) to assess restroom stall demands. Appendix B provides 2014 restroom stall demand based on peak-day door count data. Peak-day planning-level estimates provide a basis for assessing relative statewide needs.

To minimize building costs, MDT may establish a maximum number of restroom stalls to be provided at rest areas, recognizing that some restroom queuing may be acceptable.

Restroom configurations may vary depending on the specific building design developed during the Phase II process. Configurations may include separated men's and women's facilities with grouped stalls, or single user toilet rooms. For all configurations, interior building features will comply with ADAAG and PROWAG.

Guideline 10

Provide appropriate building and site features to promote patron safety and accessibility.

Rest area building and site designs will incorporate features that promote patron safety and accessibility (e.g., entrance/exit locations that minimize blind spots and large building windows to enhance site visibility). Interior and exterior lighting features will illuminate parking stalls, building entry/exit points, picnic shelters, walkways, and other appropriate locations. Safety features and traveler safety information will be provided, as appropriate for each site.

ADA components will be installed, including interior and exterior building features. Pedestrian routes will comply with ADAAG and PROWAG, and provide access to the rest area building and features throughout the site.

Signage should comply with the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD), ADAAG, and PROWAG to inform and guide patrons. Appropriate signage may include but is not limited to regulatory, warning, guide, general information, general service (including rest area and other roadside area), recreational and cultural interest, and emergency management signs.

Guideline 11

Provide site-appropriate accommodations in consideration of constraints and needs.

Accommodations enhance the patron experience at rest areas. Site and user characteristics will be considered to identify appropriate accommodations that improve rest area function and appeal. For example, rest areas in bear country that experience high winds will provide bear-proof, wind-proof waste receptacles. Rest areas along recreational routes may benefit from traveler information targeting out-of-state visitors. Accommodations may include but are not limited to display cases, picnic shelters, trails/walking pathways, information boards/interactive monitors, vending machines, pet areas, wireless internet access, highway maps, bicycle maps, and tourism/recreation information.

MDT will prioritize and approve traveler information materials for display at state-maintained rest areas as space permits. MDT will also consider opportunities to partner with the Montana Department of Commerce to provide visitor information centers through the Rest Area Kiosk Program for the purpose of improving traveler information and promoting tourism in Montana.

As a condition of using rest area pet accommodations, owners must keep animals within designated and signed areas, leash their animals outside of fenced pet areas at all times, and dispose of animal waste.

The AASHTO *Guide for Development of Rest Areas on Major Arterials and Freeways* (2001) provides guidelines to estimate the approximate number of picnics tables and waste receptacles that should be provided at rest areas. Results of the 2014 analysis are provided in Appendix B. MDT may consider these calculations in determining appropriate site accommodations.

The Phase II scope of work will identify appropriate accommodations for individual rest area projects.

Water/Wastewater Design

Guideline 12

Design water and wastewater systems in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations.

Most state-maintained rest areas serve at least 25 people per day for at least 60 days out of the year, and are classified as public water and wastewater systems per Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 75-6-102. DEQ requires a professional engineer to design the following systems or components:

- all community/public water and wastewater systems;
- subsurface wastewater treatment systems (drainfields) with a daily flow of 2,500 gallons or greater;
- wastewater lift stations and lagoons;
- gravity water storage tanks; and
- water treatment, such as filtration, disinfection, and nitrate/arsenic removal.

New public water systems or improvements to existing public water systems must be reviewed and approved by DEQ prior to construction per the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 17.38.101. Public water systems must adhere to all DEQ water system design standards including *Circular DEQ-1 Standards for Water Works* and *Circular DEQ-3 Standards for Small Water Systems*. Public water systems serving rest areas are classified as transient non-community water supplies, meaning they serve 25 or more persons per day, but do not regularly serve the same persons for at least six months per year. Transient non-community water supplies adhere to a specific set of water quality regulations administered by DEQ.

Wastewater generated from toilets, drinking fountains, and sinks must be treated or disposed to avoid nuisance or health threat to the public. As with water systems, DEQ views any system that serves at least 25 people per day for at least 60 days out of the year as a public wastewater system. Requirements for wastewater systems are outlined in *Circular DEQ-2 Design Standards for Public Sewage Systems*, *Circular DEQ-4 Montana Standards for Subsurface Wastewater Treatment Systems*, and State of Montana nondegradation rules (ARM 17.30.701 et seq). A DEQ wastewater approval is required prior to construction. Certain counties in Montana require local on-site permits as well. There may be local planning and other requirements which differ from DEQ regulations.

Subsurface systems with a design flow of 2,500 gallons per day (gpd) or greater must be designed by a professional engineer; systems with a design flow of 5,000 gpd or greater require a discharge permit issued by the Water Protection Bureau of DEQ. A discharge permit may require collection of a year's worth of background data before a permit is issued.

Guideline 13

Utilize municipal water and wastewater systems, where practicable.

It is preferable for rest areas to connect to municipal water or wastewater systems if connection is economically feasible. Using existing municipal systems eliminates the need to develop and maintain on-site water source or wastewater treatment systems. MDT is still responsible for maintenance of water and wastewater piping and infrastructure located on site. If the rest area is equipped with a water meter from a municipality, water quality monitoring is not required. If a municipal water meter is not installed, MDT must complete sampling as specified for transient non-community systems.

Proposed upgrades or new rest area water/wastewater systems must obtain permission to connect to a municipal system per ARM 17.36.328 if the site is within 500 feet of a municipal system or within a municipality's jurisdiction. The receiving municipal system must demonstrate they have the capacity to meet the rest area water demands, as well as collect, treat, and dispose of the wastewater from the proposed MDT system. If the municipality cannot accept wastewater from MDT's proposed system or provide adequate water supply, on-site systems will be required.

Guideline 14

Use site-specific usage data, where available, to calculate water and wastewater design flow rates.

MDT collects usage data from door counters and water flow meters at some state-maintained rest areas. Patron data can be obtained from door counters, and water usage can be obtained from flow meters. Water and wastewater systems will be sized as necessary to accommodate current and expected future daily flow. If site-specific usage data is unavailable, design flows can be calculated using methodology detailed in the WTI report.

Guideline 15

Acquire water rights on all new or existing water sources serving the rest area.

At the time of a project, MDT will review existing water rights at sites that utilize onsite wells for domestic and irrigation use. As of the publication date of this report, individual exempt wells (not including multiple connected or “manifolded” wells) are allowed to pump no more than 35 gallons per minute (gpm) and 10 acre-feet per year as specified per the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). Many existing rest area sites either do not have recorded water rights through the DNRC, or have water rights that reflect the well pumping rate at the time of original well development. Many times, the existing water right reflects a well pumping rate less than 35 gpm. Therefore, existing water rights may need to be modified to provide adequate water to the current facility up to 35 gpm or 10 acre-feet per year.

If well capacities are needed in excess of 35 gpm or 10 acre-feet per year, the well will not be able to utilize DNRC’s exempt well status, and an application for a new water right will be required. Acquiring additional water rights in Montana can be a fairly lengthy process requiring substantial additional analysis. Obtaining a water right in a basin closed to new appropriations requires extensive analysis to show that water being used will be replaced or mitigated such that net loss from the aquifer is zero. In lieu of pursuing new water rights for rest areas anticipated to use more than 35 gpm, MDT will consider water conservation measures, which may offer a more economical and practicable solution, or use other MDT existing water rights.

Guideline 16

Consider water conservation measures.

As noted in Guideline 15, acquiring new water rights at rest areas can potentially be an extensive process. As an alternative to pursuing additional water rights, water conservation measures could be implemented. Rest areas may be equipped with water-conserving plumbing fixtures to reduce water usage. Additionally, xeriscaping techniques may be implemented at rest area sites. Xeriscaping is a term generally encompassing water-conserving landscaping practices, including the use of drought-resistant native plants and installation of ground cover plantings, mulch, and hardscape materials in favor of water-demanding turf. Water-conserving irrigation practices can also reduce demand. These practices include scheduling irrigation to occur at night or in the early morning hours instead of mid-day and the use of drip-irrigation systems as opposed to above-ground sprinklers to minimize evaporation and runoff. This practice also allows the timing of irrigation to be offset with peak visitation times. These types of landscaping techniques lessen maintenance requirements and require less water, thereby reducing the overall water demand at a rest area.

Guideline 17

Evaluate the need for water treatment of contaminants (other than those required by DEQ) on a case-by-case basis.

The majority of state-maintained rest areas are considered transient non-community water systems. Per DEQ, mandatory monitoring for transient non-community systems (not under the influence of surface water) includes microbiological quality, nitrates, and nitrites. Although not required for transient non-community water supplies, MDT is proactive in the pursuit of drinking water quality for state rest areas and often monitors rest areas for other drinking water contaminants listed under the national primary and secondary drinking water regulations. Primary drinking water standards are enforceable maximum allowable levels while secondary standards are non-enforceable standards. The presence of primary contaminants in drinking water is a health concern due to their potential to cause cancer when consumed over long periods of time. Secondary contaminants primarily affect aesthetic qualities of the drinking water such as taste, odor, and color. MDT evaluates the risk and level of water treatment needed at each site based on cost, concentration levels, taste, appearance, and back wash disposal area.

Guideline 18

Encourage advanced on-site wastewater treatment systems, where practicable.

On-site wastewater treatment at Montana rest areas has historically been accomplished through the use of septic tanks and gravity-fed or pressure-dosed soil absorption drainfields. Rest area wastewater is different from typical residential wastewater in terms of its composition. In residential systems, a variety of sources contribute to wastewater, including toilets, sinks, showers, laundry, and dishwashing. By comparison, the main source of wastewater at a rest area is from toilets. Therefore, the concentration of rest area wastewater is much stronger due to less dilution from other sources and the practice of installing water-conserving plumbing fixtures. Due to higher concentration levels in rest area wastewater, pretreatment or advanced treatment is encouraged before discharge to drainfield systems, where practicable. Advanced treatment may be necessary to meet nondegradation requirements, and may allow a reduction in drainfield size for sites that have limited right-of-way availability.

During the Phase II process, design-build teams may select an advanced treatment system from the options approved by MDT and DEQ for use at rest areas. Final system design will be performed by a professional engineer based on site-specific parameters.

3.1.5 Operation and Maintenance

Parking and Ramp Operation and Maintenance

Guideline 19

Maintain parking lots and entrance/exit ramps in safe and functional condition.

Maintenance plays an essential role in the long-term life of a pavement. Asphalt and concrete pavement left to deteriorate without timely maintenance treatment will likely require more costly treatments sooner compared to properly-maintained facilities. Additionally, pavement deficiencies or distresses can negatively affect safety and ride quality. MDT strives to maintain pavement assets to provide safe facilities, preserve the state's investment, maintain functional condition, and retard future deterioration.

Parking areas and ramps are maintained and preserved in accordance with current MDT maintenance practices as described in the *MDT Maintenance Manual*. Depending on need and level of pavement deterioration, MDT may utilize preventive or reactive maintenance treatments. Preventive treatments preserve the structural capacity of the pavement, and may include crack and joint sealing, chip seal, and thin overlay strategies. Reactive maintenance is used to maintain the pavement until a rehabilitation or reconstruction project is initiated. Examples of reactive maintenance treatments include hand patching, thin overlay in spot locations, and rut fill with a chip seal.

Prioritization of maintenance treatments may be based on degree of pavement deterioration, impacts to safety and ride quality, demand levels (reflected in average daily traffic volumes), coordination with adjacent construction projects, and funding limitations.

Building/Site Operation and Maintenance

Guideline 20

Conduct regular maintenance evaluations at state-maintained rest areas.

Regular maintenance evaluations are important to assess the condition and function of state-maintained rest areas; identify elements in need of repair or service; and provide facilities in safe, clean, and attractive condition. Building evaluations consider cleanliness, odor, supply stocks (e.g., soap and paper towels), vandalism, and operation of rest area features (e.g., hand dryers, sinks, and lighting). Site evaluations consider the condition and function of fencing, picnic shelters, sidewalks, signage, landscaped areas, and other site elements. MDT will follow procedures to record maintenance and operational problems and document how and when issues were resolved.

Based on the results of maintenance evaluations, MDT will complete ongoing maintenance and minor repairs as soon as practicable after a deficiency is identified, and in a manner that will not inhibit patron usage, to the extent practicable. Recurring maintenance/repair issues and major repairs are referred to the Statewide Rest Area Prioritization Plan Committee to consider the potential need for a minor rehabilitation project at the site.

Guideline 21

Employ private contractors to augment routine maintenance conducted by MDT.

MDT contracts caretakers (e.g., cleaning and supply services) and some maintenance services depending on need and MDT staffing availability. Currently, using contractor services is a cost-effective method to maintain rest area facilities.

Contractors perform site visits and provide services at rest areas as specified by contract requirements. MDT personnel routinely inspect contractor performance for compliance with contract provisions. Contractors follow procedures outlined in operation and maintenance manuals and report maintenance and repair issues outside the scope of their contract to MDT.

Guideline 22

Allow rest area visitors to remain at state-maintained rest areas up to 12 hours.

To promote highway safety and to enable commercial motor vehicle operators to comply with hours of service regulations under 49 CFR 395, MDT allows rest area visitors to remain at state-maintained rest areas up to 12 hours. In cases of emergency, visitors may remain for a period of up to 24 hours. Tent camping is prohibited at state-maintained rest areas.

Guideline 23

Permit lawful, MDT-approved activities at state-maintained rest areas.

23 CFR 752.5 states that no charge to the public may be made for goods or services at rest areas except for telephone services and articles dispensed by vending machines. Federal regulations permit states to place state-operated vending machines dispensing food, drink, or other articles (not including petroleum products) in existing or new rest areas located on highway rights-of-way.

Montana Code Annotated 60-5-110 prohibits operation of a commercial enterprise or structure on the publicly-owned or leased right-of-way of a controlled-access highway or controlled-access facility, with the exception of informational kiosks and vending machines installed by certified blind vendors.

In accordance with state and federal regulations, MDT prohibits for-profit commercial activities and operations at state-maintained rest areas. Activities and operations conducted by nonprofit organizations or by blind vendors are subject to MDT review and approval.

Water/Wastewater Operation and Maintenance**Guideline 24**

Establish a preventive maintenance program to address water and wastewater maintenance needs.

MDT is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and monitoring of rest area water and wastewater systems. A preventive maintenance program specific to rest area water and wastewater systems will be implemented to preserve system components and prevent service interruptions and failures. Preventive maintenance procedures for on-site rest area water and wastewater systems can include procedures such as pump station inspections, maintenance, and repair; scheduled inspection and cleaning of system piping; valve maintenance; making arrangements for removal of septic waste as necessary; periodic inspection and replacement of filters; and maintenance activity reporting and documentation. While operation and maintenance procedures are fairly standard for each rest area, there can be site-specific variations. Therefore, it is good practice to prepare a written site-specific preventive maintenance plan for each rest area to capture and document system details and functions. MDT will also implement procedures to record maintenance and operational problems and document how and when issues were resolved. Use of telemetry (i.e., automated data collection and status reporting) is desirable, where economically feasible.

Guideline 25

Provide trained maintenance personnel to operate rest area water and wastewater systems.

A water and wastewater operator must be familiar with site facilities in order to provide routine maintenance at the site, and address any non-routine maintenance, troubleshooting, and repair needs. All water and wastewater operators will be trained to maintain and operate the specific on-site water and wastewater systems, and to perform routine water quality sampling and reporting per DEQ requirements.

The supplier of the advanced wastewater treatment system will be required to maintain and adjust the system during the startup phase. The advanced wastewater treatment system supplier will train MDT staff or supply long-term maintenance through a contract for proper operation of the system. A wastewater treatment system operator will be on call 24 hours a day, every day, and will also be on site for inspections and sampling on a monthly basis, or as determined by the DEQ.

Guideline 26

Require contractors/engineers to submit operation and maintenance manuals for all water and wastewater equipment.

A copy of the as-built (as-constructed) drawings, along with a letter from the designing professional engineer certifying the system was constructed and installed per approved plans and specifications, will be required at the completion of all rest area construction projects. The operation and maintenance manual is a valuable tool providing guidance to operating personnel on water and wastewater system components and equipment, design criteria, cleaning and inspection requirements, and safety. A copy of the operation manual, applicable manufacturer information, and current maintenance logs will be kept within the rest area mechanical room for easy access.

3.2 State-maintained Parking Areas

Guideline 27

Continue to maintain parking areas throughout the state to provide safe stopping opportunities.

Although parking areas offer a lower level of service compared to rest areas, they provide important stopping opportunities and fill network spacing and truck parking needs along corridor segments. Continued maintenance and operation of parking areas is needed to provide safe locations for motorists to stop during weather events and to avoid drowsy or distracted driving. When planning reduction of service at existing rest areas, MDT considers maintaining sites as parking areas to provide safe stopping opportunities, if practicable. MDT conducts regular inspections and maintenance for parking areas (including vault toilet operation and snow removal) to ensure public access and safety, as appropriate at each site.

3.3 City Park Rest Areas

Guideline 28

Follow a standard funding cycle.

MDT will offer additional funding assistance based on availability to participating local governments to maintain or improve CPRAs that MDT determines are still serviceable. Funding assistance is subject to appropriation by the Montana Legislature through the General Appropriations Act (House Bill 2).

MDT distributes CPRA program funding based on availability in response to requests by eligible CPRA program participants. Applicants must demonstrate proposed improvements are needed to maintain or improve the facility and will directly benefit the traveling public. A standard CPRA funding cycle supports program efficiency. Consistent annual deadlines for CPRA funding applications, agreement execution, and funding disbursements provide consistency and predictability for MDT staff and CPRA funding recipients.

Guideline 29

Employ program controls and performance standards.

Program controls are important to ensure CPRA facilities are maintained in a clean, safe, functional manner for public use and CPRA funds are spent appropriately. MDT follows a defined policy outlining responsibilities associated with CPRA program participation, and consequences for failure to meet those responsibilities. For example, responsibilities include appropriate use of CPRA funds distributed by MDT and compliance with defined performance standards relating to rest area cleanliness, safety, and function. Consequences may include withholding future funding or removal from the CPRA program. Program expectations will be clearly communicated to program participants when agreements or amendments are executed.

Site inspections by MDT personnel will be performed regularly to review the condition and function of CPRAs and identify elements in need of repair or service. The terms of agreements between MDT and CPRAs will specify that continued participation in the program is contingent upon addressing identified deficiencies within a defined time period. Maintenance and minor repair issues will be addressed as soon as practicable, while larger repairs and improvements will be addressed by a defined date following the upcoming funding cycle.

Audits by MDT personnel will be conducted as needed to ensure deficiencies identified in the inspection process are addressed in the time period required, and funding allocations are spent as intended.

3.3 Other Sites

Guideline 30

Work cooperatively with partners to provide stopping opportunities throughout the state.

Rest areas and parking areas maintained by other entities (such as federal/state agencies) can assist in filling spacing gaps in the statewide network. These sites provide a safe location for motorists to stop and rest in locations not served by state-maintained or city park facilities. MDT will continue to work with partners to make other sites available for public use and to advertise these sites in MDT statewide rest area mapping.



Reynolds Pass Rest Area



Roberts Rest Area



Sweet Grass Rest Area



Teton River Rest Area



Troy Rest Area



Vandalia Rest Area



Vista Point Rest Area

4.0 Public and Stakeholder Involvement

MDT conducts regular customer satisfaction surveys to monitor the opinions, needs, and expectations of the public. Survey results continually indicate rest areas are a top priority to MDT customers. Public and stakeholder participation is a critical element to this plan and is essential to MDT’s planning process. The following sections discuss the public and stakeholder outreach activities conducted for the 2014 Montana Rest Area Plan. Additional public and stakeholder documentation is provided in Appendix C.

4.1 Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder groups were invited to attend a meeting to discuss issues and concerns regarding Montana rest areas. An invitation letter was sent to stakeholder groups representing trucking, tourism, economic development, hospitality, and law enforcement interests. A copy of the invitation letter and list of stakeholders is provided in Appendix C.

A stakeholder meeting was held for the Montana Rest Area Plan on June 3, 2014, at the MDT Commission Room in Helena. The meeting began with an overview of the planning process, followed by a discussion period. A representative from the trucking industry expressed concern about a lack of semi-trailer truck parking when temporary rest area closures are in place. Another stakeholder suggested adding walking paths at rest area locations with signage to call attention to and promote their use. A copy of the presentation and meeting minutes are provided in Appendix C.

Stakeholders and resource agencies were invited to submit written comments on Rest Area Program guidelines listed in Section 3.0. Multiple comments were received from a representative from the Five Minute Healthy Habit Walking Pathways Campaign, advocating walking trails at rest areas in an effort to reduce traveler fatigue. A copy of the resource agency letter is provided in Appendix C. No comments were received from resource agencies.

WTI was invited to submit written comments on the technical memorandum provided in Appendix C. The technical memorandum incorporates a health index scoring process for every rest area site using the WTI report as the initial basis for parking, restroom, water, and wastewater demand calculations. The technical memorandum details modifications to WTI methodologies to reflect site-specific conditions at rest areas. A copy of the WTI letter is provided in Appendix C. No comments were received from WTI.

4.2 Public Involvement

The draft Montana Rest Area Plan was made available for public review and comment for a 30-day period beginning July 18, 2014, and ending August 18, 2014. An electronic version of the draft plan was posted to MDT’s website on July 18, 2014. Print copies of the draft plan were distributed to MDT headquarters and district offices around the state. MDT issued a statewide press release announcing the availability of the

document and placed laminated posters on rest area buildings and information kiosks to further inform the public about the planning process.

MDT received 12 written comments during the review period, as well as four written comments before and after the comment period. Topics noted in multiple comments are listed below.

- Requests for additional truck parking spaces and truck parking signage.
- Requests for separate truck and passenger vehicle parking spaces.
- Comments regarding the value of safe stopping opportunities and the need to maintain existing rest areas.
- Comments regarding the general condition and maintenance practices at rest area buildings and sites.
- Requests for provision of walking trails, bicycle facilities, site features, and other accommodations.

The complete set of comments is included in Appendix C, along with MDT responses.

MDT hosted a project-specific website for the Montana Rest Area Plan update process. The website provided access to information about the planning effort, study contact information, links to documents, project schedule, and a comment page. MDT also provided access to information about the plan update through various social media platforms.

In addition to the public involvement activities conducted for the Montana Rest Area Plan, MDT regularly conducts customer satisfaction surveys as part of TranPlan 21. TranPlan 21 is Montana's long-range transportation plan and part of an ongoing process that regularly evaluates public and stakeholder needs and priorities. Public involvement and stakeholder surveys are conducted every two years to examine perceptions of the current condition of the transportation system, views about actions that could improve the system, and opinions about the quality of services MDT provides to its customers. 2013 survey results regarding rest areas indicate that customers would like to see rest areas kept open in the winter, and would generally like to see more rest areas, especially on non-interstate highways. Biennial public satisfaction ratings on the use, usefulness, and traveler experience at state-maintained rest areas have provided increasingly positive feedback on the Montana Rest Area Program since 2001.

The public may submit comments via MDT's website at any time. Comments regarding the transportation system, including rest areas, may be submitted online at the following address: http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml

Additionally, MDT provides site-specific information on rest area location and amenities online at the following address: <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/restarea.shtml>