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Public Involvement Opportunities

An informational meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 21st** in the Gibson Room of the Great Falls Civic Center, 2 Park Drive South. The meeting will begin with a presentation at 6:30 PM, followed by a question and answer period. Time for informal discussions with the project team will also be available.

The meeting is intended to inform interested parties about the scope and purpose of the planning study and to solicit input on existing conditions and concerns that may be relevant to the planning effort. We encourage you to attend and provide feedback about your issues, concerns, and/or support for the study. More information on the study is available at: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive

Community input is a very important part of the process, and interested parties are encouraged to attend and participate. Comments and concerns may be submitted in writing at the meeting; by mail to Corrina Collins, Project Manager, MDT Statewide and Urban Planning, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001; or online at: www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml

Please indicate comments are for the *River Drive Corridor Study*. MDT considers all comments regarding the potential issues and concerns within the study area.

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's participation in any service, program or activity of our department. If you require reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please call Corrina Collins at (406) 444-9131 at least two days before the meeting.

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RIVERDRIVE CORRIDOR STUDY

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Please join us for an informational meeting on Thursday, January 21st at 6:30 PM. The meeting will be held in the Gibson Room at the Great Falls Civic Center.

Study Description

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and in coordination with the Great Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is developing a corridor planning study of River Drive North between 15th Street North and 38th Street North.

The study, referred to as the *River Drive Corridor Study*, will identify feasible improvement options to address safety, operational, and geometrical concerns (i.e. road width, horizontal curves, vertical grades, approach density, etc.) within the study area.

The purpose of the study is to develop a comprehensive long-range plan for managing the corridor and determining what improvements can be made to improve the corridor based on identified needs, public and agency input, and financial constraints. The study will include a package of feasible short- and long-term improvement options intended to address the transportation needs over the next twenty years. Identifying these improvement options will help the study partners define the most critical needs and allocate resources.

What is a Corridor Study?

A *Corridor Study* is a planning-level analysis undertaken before conducting project-level environmental compliance activities under the National and Montana Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA/MEPA). Corridor studies involve early communication with interested agencies and the public to help identify needs, constraints, and opportunities for a corridor and to determine if there are implementable improvements, given available resources and local support.

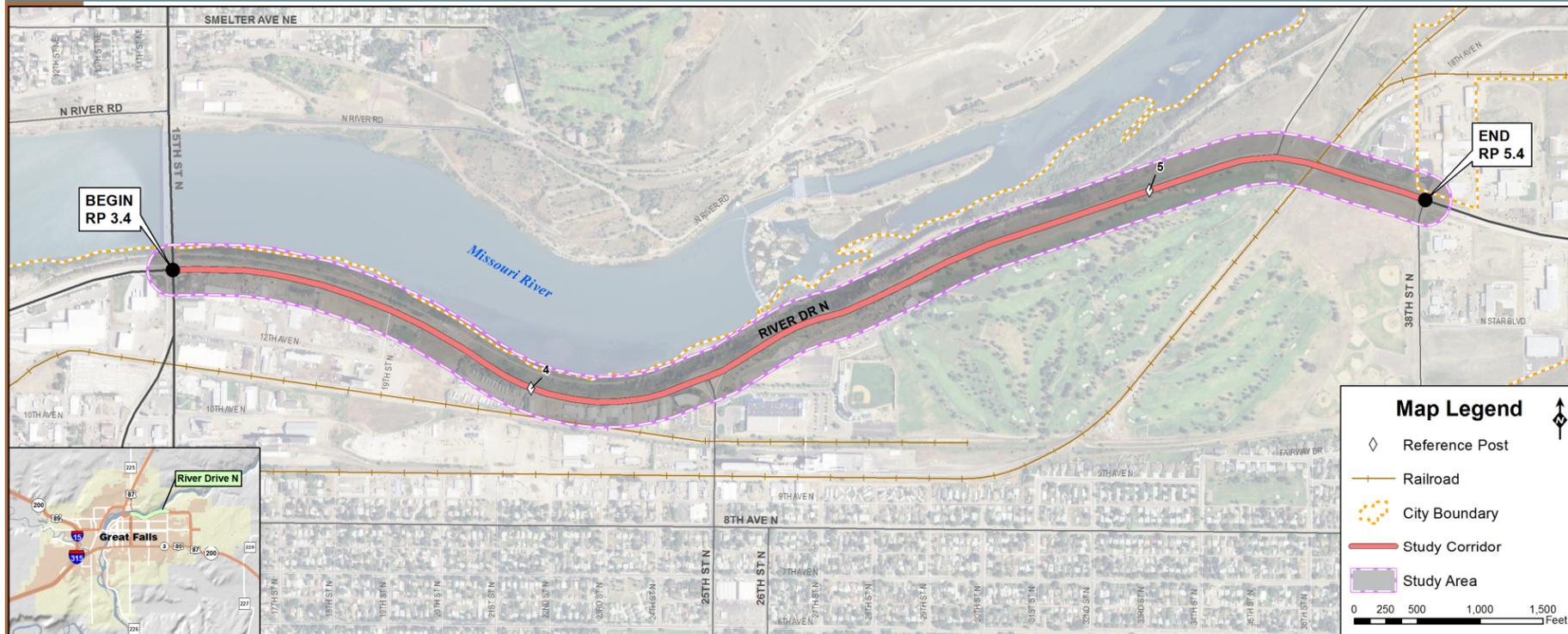
Corridor studies are planning activities rather than design or construction projects. The studies are designed to facilitate a smooth and efficient transition from transportation planning to project development and environmental review if a project is forwarded. The studies include consideration of multiple improvement options to address the needs and objectives within the study area. The planning process is distinct from NEPA/MEPA environmental compliance documentation and from the design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction phases of an individual project.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided upon request. Persons who need an alternative format should contact the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620. Telephone (406) 444-9229. Those using a TTY may call 1(800)335-7592 or through the Montana Relay Service at 711.



Study Area

River Drive North serves as a key route in the Great Falls transportation system supporting both local access and regional travel demands. The study area for the *River Drive Corridor Study* begins at the intersection with 15th Street N (Reference Post [RP] 3.4) and ends at the intersection with 38th Street N (RP 5.4). The study corridor is a designated truck route and provides access to several businesses, industrial areas, residential neighborhoods, and community resources.



Schedule

The *River Drive Corridor Study* began in September, 2015 and is expected to be completed by August, 2016.

WORK TASKS AND DESCRIPTIONS	SEP-15	OCT-15	NOV-15	DEC-15	JAN-16	FEB-16	MAR-16	APR-16	MAY-16	JUN-16	JUL-16	AUG-16
Project Management and Accounting	[Solid bar]											
Develop Corridor Study Work Plan	[Solid bar]											
Develop Existing and Projected Conditions Report		[Solid bar]										
Identify Needs, Issues, Goals, and Screening Criteria					[Solid bar]							
Determine Alternatives Advanced and Not Advanced						[Solid bar]						
Recommended Alternatives							[Solid bar]					
Prepare Corridor Study Report									[Solid bar]			
MEETINGS												
Informational Meetings												
Resource Agency Meeting												
Advisory Committee (12 Total)												
MISCELLANEOUS DELIVERABLES												
Corridor Study Website												
Public and Agency Involvement Plan (PAIP)												
Study Newsletters / Flyers												
Press Releases/Advertisements												
Environmental Scan (by MDT)												
Draft Existing and Projected Conditions Report												
Final Existing and Projected Conditions Report												
List and Description of Corridor Needs and Objectives												
List of Screening Criteria												
Alternatives Advanced and Not Advanced Technical Memorandum												
Recommended Improvement Options Technical Memorandum												
Statement of Purpose and Need												
Corridor Study Report												
Evaluation of Corridor Planning Process												
Meeting Agendas and Minutes												

Key Findings

The following initial considerations have been identified through on-site reviews and preliminary data analysis. This list is not all-inclusive and is subject to change over the course of the planning process.

Transportation System

Access and Right-of-way

- West of 25th Street North, businesses closely front the roadway which provides little room for ingress/egress and for parking.

Non-motorized

- The River's Edge Trail is located on the north side of the roadway.
- The Caboose Trailhead is located just east of 19th Street North and provides parking and access to the River's Edge Trail.
- There is a trail spur that terminates at the intersection with 19th Street North. There are no crossing treatments at this location.

Rail/Freight

- There is an at-grade crossing between Giant Springs Road and 38th Street North.
- The study corridor is a designated truck route and is part of the Northeast Bypass.
- The route currently experiences approximately 7.2 percent heavy vehicle traffic.

Traffic Operations

- The intersection with 15th Street North is projected to experience operational deficiencies during the AM and PM peak hours.
- The intersection with 25th Street North currently experiences operational deficiencies during the PM peak hour.

Geometrics

- Two vertical curves do not meet current standards for rate of curvature.
- The roadway grade between RP 3.8 and RP 4.0 exceeds current standards.

Safety

- Crash clusters were noted at the intersection with 15th Street North, at the Big Stack Mobile Home Court entrance, and at the intersection with 25th Street North.
- A trend of rear-end crashes was noted along the study corridor.

Environmental Considerations

Physical Environment

- The roadway is constrained to the north by the Missouri River.
- The study area is located within the Great Falls Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) area.
- There is a public water supply well located within the study area.

Biological Environment

- Noxious and exotic plant species may be located within the study area.
- Two bald eagle nests are located within the general proximity of the study corridor.
- Three species of concern have the potential to occur and breed within the study area.

Social and Cultural Environment

- The median income within the study area is likely below the statewide average.
- The minority population within the study area is likely higher than the statewide average.
- There are likely cultural, historic, and/or recreational resources with special significance within the study area.
- There are 10 historic-age properties adjacent to the study corridor.
- There are sensitive noise receptors within the study area.
- Visual resources include multiple scenic pull-outs, the Black Eagle Falls, the Veteran's Memorial Park, and the sandstone outcroppings along the cliffs.