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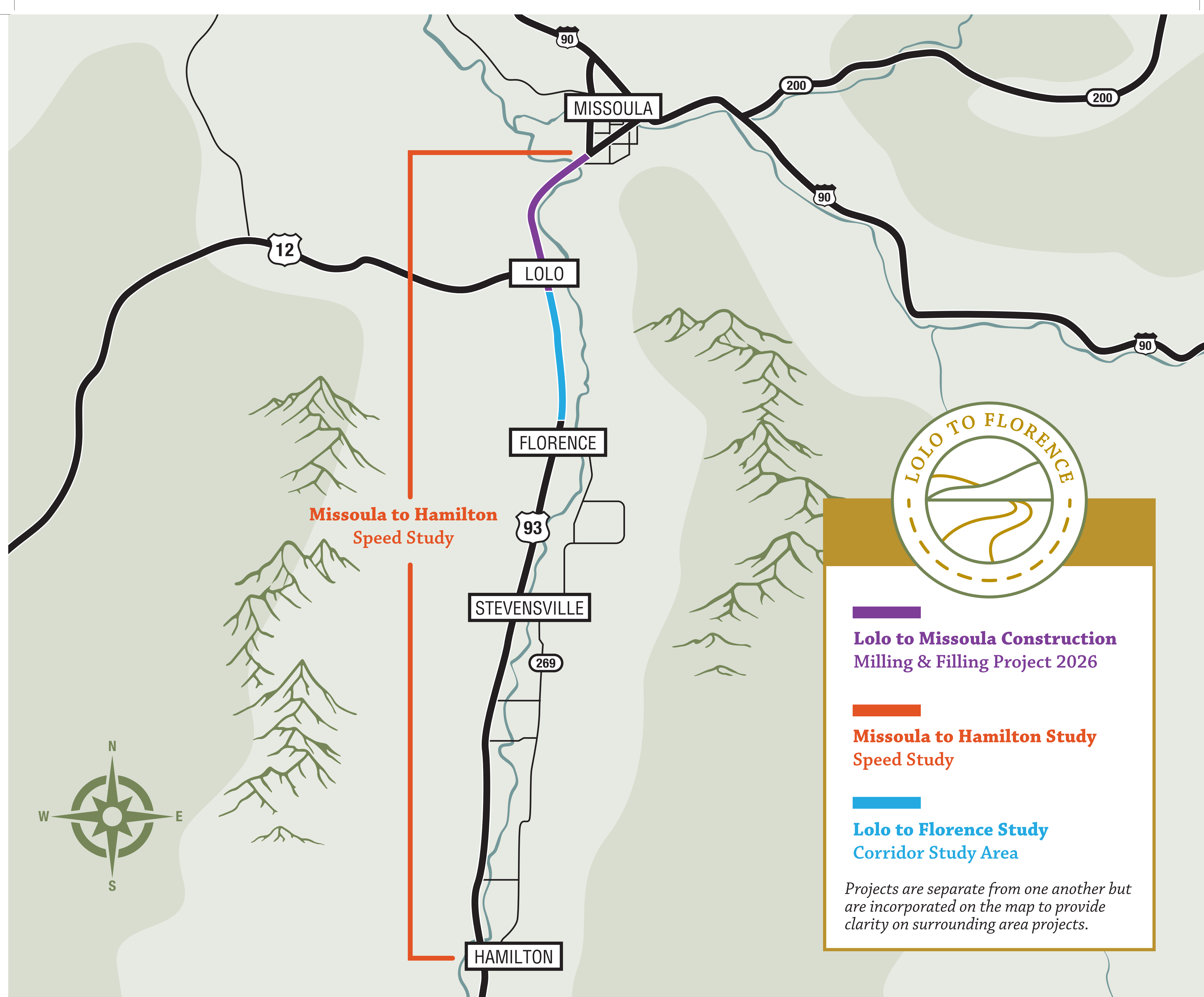


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[mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/loloflorence/](http://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/loloflorence/)





# Study Timeline



**2022 and 2023**

Corridor Study



**Late 2023 and  
Early 2024**

Study Results



**Future**

Design and construction anticipated  
(timing dependent on funding)

# Study Details



**Traffic Analysis**



**Crash Data Review**



**Field Observations**



**Environmental Evaluations**



**Review of Base Roadway Conditions**



**Pedestrian and Cyclist Impacts**



**Stakeholder Meetings and Feedback**



**Review Funding Opportunities**



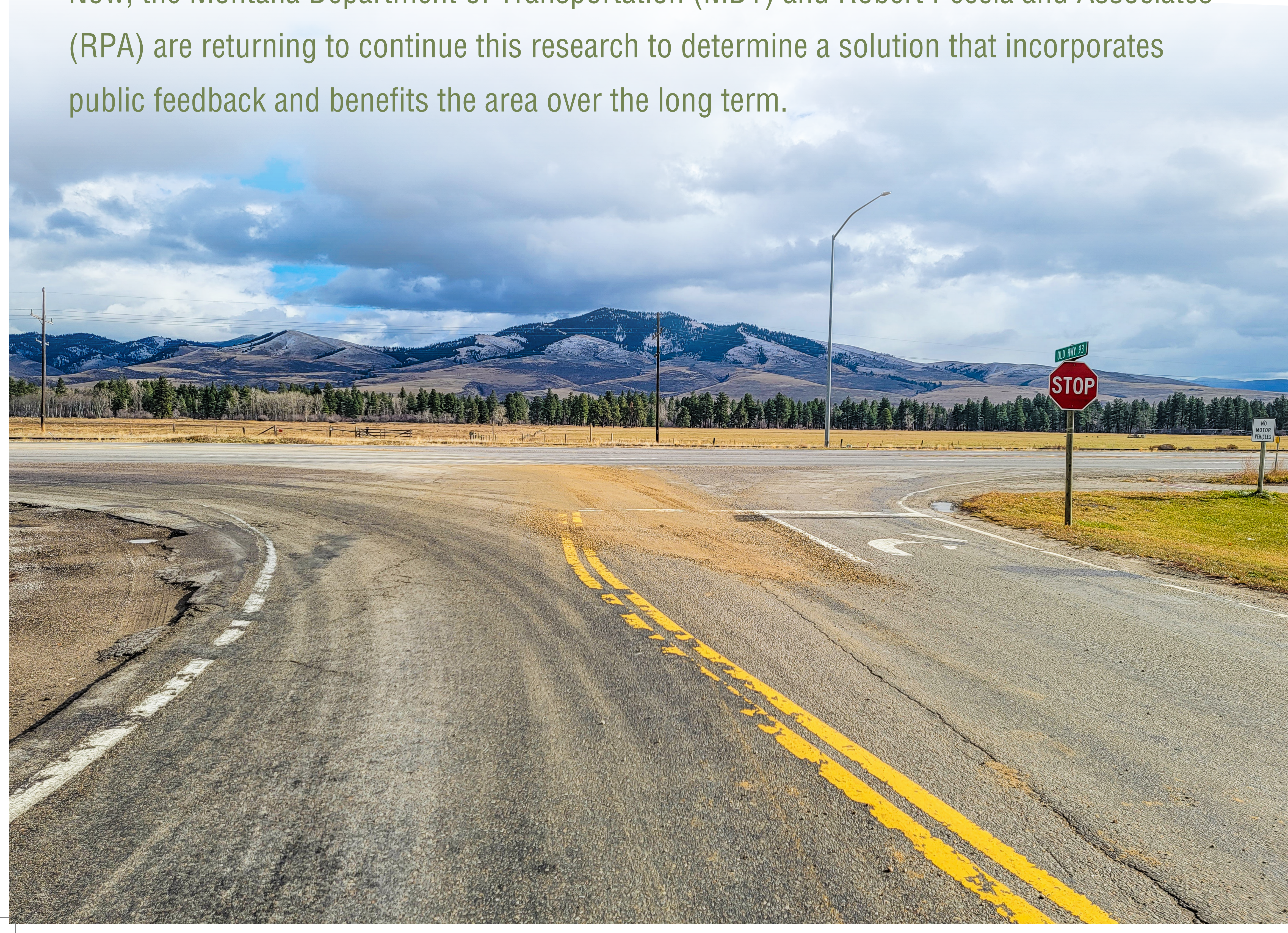
# Study Background

Thousands of travelers commute daily to and from the Bitterroot Valley and Missoula. Specifically, the corridor between Lolo and Florence has seen steadily increasing traffic through the years. These traffic volumes create a need for an improved and safer roadway.

This area was studied previously in 2008 to consider the expanded capacity of the roadway, multi-modal transit options (including cyclists and pedestrians), improved pedestrian crossings, and more. At the time, it was determined that an extensive construction project would need to occur, adding capacity or limiting access to US 93 on this busy thoroughfare.

Although some spot improvements were implemented, comprehensive long-term solutions from the 2008 study were tabled until future funding or additional resources could be secured.

Now, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and Robert Peccia and Associates (RPA) are returning to continue this research to determine a solution that incorporates public feedback and benefits the area over the long term.





**1997**

**US 93 - Hamilton to Lolo Environmental Impact Statement**

Identified improvements included additional lanes, park-and-ride lots, access control, and a separated shared use path.



**2001**

Construction of additional lanes on US 93 and adjacent path completed between Lolo and Florence.



**2008**

**US 93 Corridor Study - Missoula to Florence**

Identified spot improvements, policy tools, multimodal options, and enhancements for the vanpool/carpool program to address future transportation needs.



**2011**

Vanpool program expanded.



**2007 & 2013**

Pavement preservation projects completed between Lolo and Florence.



**2020**

**US-93 South Safety Improvements**

Studied traffic operations and safety conditions at six key intersections on US 93 between Florence and Lolo. Identified short-term improvements.



**2022**

**Missoula to Hamilton Speed Study**

Evaluation of existing speed limits and recommendations for potential adjustments.



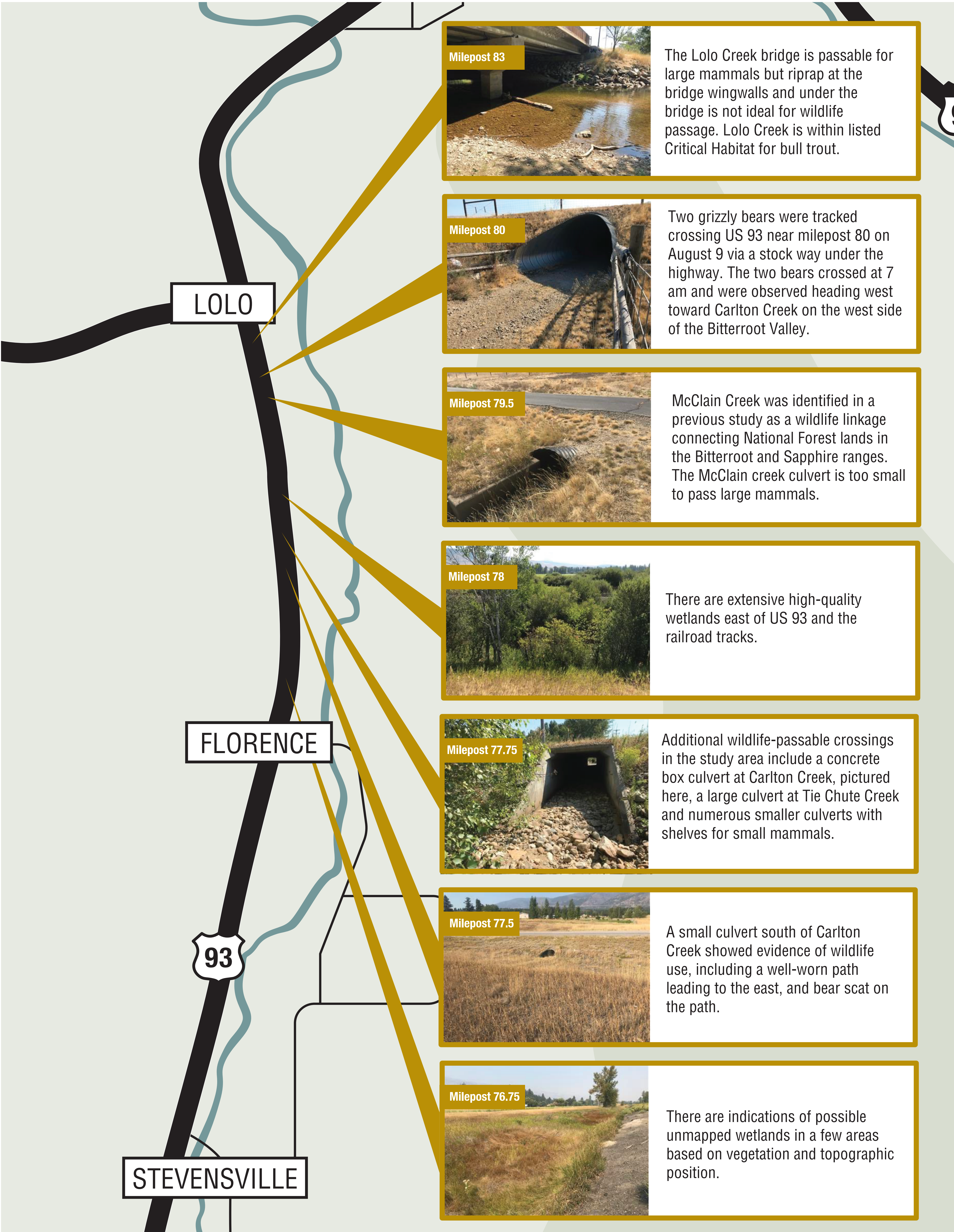
**2022-2023**

**US 93 - Lolo to Florence Study**

Identify long-term traffic and safety improvements.

# Key Findings

## for Wildlife and Wetland Resources



The Lolo Creek bridge is passable for large mammals but riprap at the bridge wingwalls and under the bridge is not ideal for wildlife passage. Lolo Creek is within listed Critical Habitat for bull trout.



Two grizzly bears were tracked crossing US 93 near milepost 80 on August 9 via a stock way under the highway. The two bears crossed at 7 am and were observed heading west toward Carlton Creek on the west side of the Bitterroot Valley.



McClain Creek was identified in a previous study as a wildlife linkage connecting National Forest lands in the Bitterroot and Sapphire ranges. The McClain creek culvert is too small to pass large mammals.



There are extensive high-quality wetlands east of US 93 and the railroad tracks.



Additional wildlife-passable crossings in the study area include a concrete box culvert at Carlton Creek, pictured here, a large culvert at Tie Chute Creek and numerous smaller culverts with shelves for small mammals.



A small culvert south of Carlton Creek showed evidence of wildlife use, including a well-worn path leading to the east, and bear scat on the path.



There are indications of possible unmapped wetlands in a few areas based on vegetation and topographic position.

# Traffic & Safety

★ Study Intersection



## AM Commute (7:15 - 7:45 AM)

- Heavy traffic in the northbound direction
- Busy in southbound direction
- Congestion drops off quickly



## PM Commute (4:30 - 5:30 PM)

- Heavy traffic in the southbound direction
- Minimal gaps in traffic
- Platooning near signals
- Heavily patrolled by police



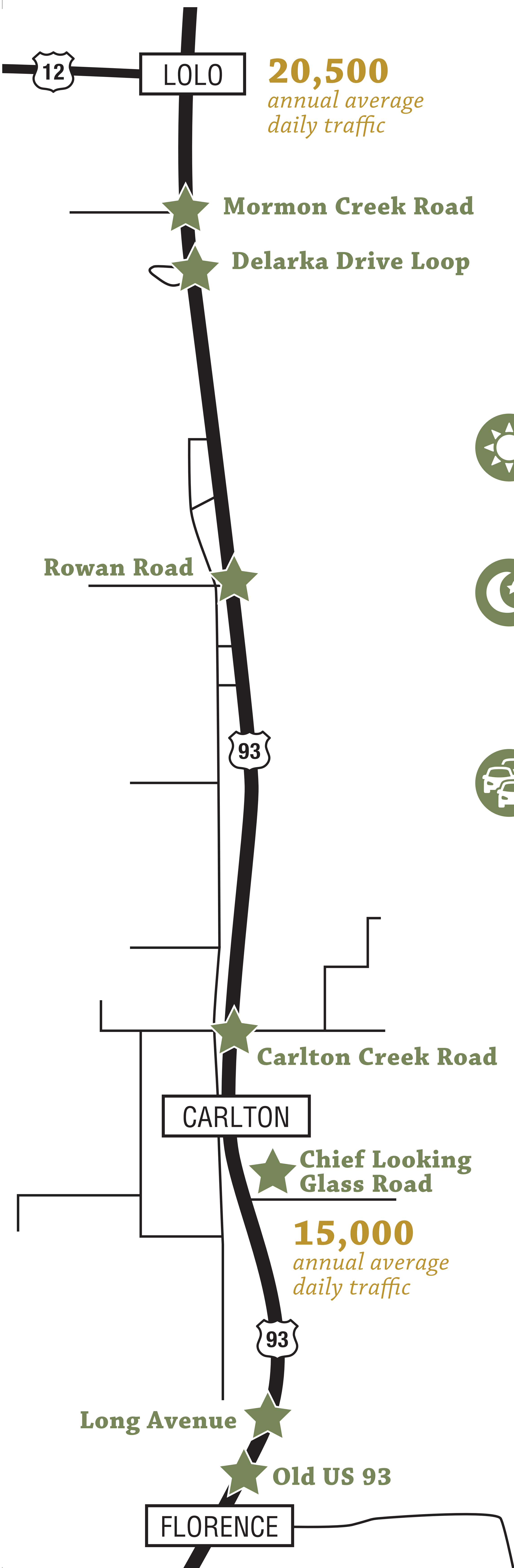
## General

- Large range of travel speeds
- Sight distance issues at intersections
- Intermittent dedicated turn bays at intersections
- Difficult left turns from minor streets



## Safety Trends (2016-2020)

- 198 crashes (~40 crashes per year)
- 2 fatal crashes (4 fatalities) and 5 severe injury crashes (13 severe injuries)
- 13 impaired driver involved crashes (2 fatal and 1 severe injury crashes)
- 55% of crashes were wild animal crashes
- Other crash types - rear end (9%), rollover (7%), fixed object (6%), right angle (5%)
- 13% of crashes occurred at/were related to an intersection
- 42% of crashes occurred at night where there was no street lighting





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Better roads ahead!

