


Notice of Intent—Federal Register

March 3, 2003





## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## Federal Highway Administration

[FHWA Docket No. 2003-14502]

## Request for Renewal of Currently Approved Information Collection: Certification of Enforcement of Vehicle Size and Weight Laws

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.  
ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the requirements in section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the intention of FHWA to request the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its clearance of the currently approved information collection identified below under SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.

**DATES:** Comments must be submitted on or before May 2, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** All signed, written comments should refer to the docket number that appears in the heading of this document and must be submitted to the Docket Clerk, U.S. DOT Dockets, Room ET-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. Please identify the specific collection of information that is being commented on by referencing its OMB control number. All comments received will be available for examination at the above address between 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Those desiring notification of receipt of comments must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or postcard.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Bob Davis, (202) 366-2997, Federal Highway Administration, Office of Freight Management and Operations, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**  
*Title:* Certification of Enforcement of Vehicle Size and Weight Laws.  
*OMB Number:* 2125-0034.

*Background:* Title 23, U.S.C., Section 141, requires each State, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to file an annual certification that they are enforcing their size and weight laws on Federal-aid highways and that their Interstate System weight limits are consistent with Federal requirements to be eligible to receive an apportionment of Federal highway trust funds. Section

141 also authorizes the Secretary to require States to file such information as is necessary to verify that their certifications are accurate. To determine whether States are adequately enforcing their size and weight limits, each must submit an updated plan for enforcing their size and weight limits to the FHWA at the beginning of each fiscal year. At the end of the fiscal year, they must submit their certifications and sufficient information to verify that the enforcement goals established in the plan have been met. Failure of a State to file a certification, adequately enforce its size and weight laws, and enforce weight laws on the Interstate System that are consistent with Federal requirements, could result in a specified reduction of its Federal highway fund apportionment for the next fiscal year. In addition, Section 123 of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1978 (Pub. L. 95-599, 92 Stat. 2689, 2701) requires each jurisdiction to inventory (1) its penalties for violation of its size and weight laws, and (2) the term and cost of its oversize and overweight permits.

*Respondents:* The State Departments of Transportation (or equivalent) in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden:* 4,160 hours. This number has not changed from the last approved OMB clearance.

*Frequency:* The reports must be submitted annually.

*Authority:* 23 U.S.C. 141; 44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A); 23 CFR 657; sect. 123, Pub. L. 95-599, 92 Stat. 2701; 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued on: February 24, 2003.

James R. Kabel,  
*Chief, Management Programs and Analysis Division.*  
[FR Doc. 03-4918 Filed 2-28-03; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 4910-22-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## Federal Highway Administration

## Environmental Impact Statement: Missoula County, MT

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.  
ACTION: Notice of Intent.

**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 .25 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 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 FHWA at the address provided above. Additional project information can be obtained at the Web site ([www.millereis.com](http://www.millereis.com)) or from the Telephone Information 'Hotline' (1-800-865-8905).

(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.)  
(Authority: 23 U.S.C. 315; 49 CFR 1.48)

Issued February 25, 2003.

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

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## Maritime Administration

## Reports, Forms and Recordkeeping Requirements Agency Information Collection Activity Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Maritime Administration, DOT.  
ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44

U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), this notice announces that the Information Collection abstracted below has been forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval. The nature of the information collection is described as well as its expected burden. The **Federal Register Notice** with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on the following collection of information was published on November 5, 2002. No comments were received.

**DATES:** Comments must be submitted on or before April 2, 2003.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Thomas Olsen, Maritime Administration (MAR-560), 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Copies of this collection also can be obtained from that office.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Maritime Administration (MARAD).

*Title:* Determination of Fair and Reasonable Rates for Carriage of Agricultural Cargoes on U.S. Commercial Vessels.

*OMB Control Number:* 2133-0514.  
*Type of Request:* Extension of currently approved collection.

*Affected Public:* U.S. citizens who own or operate U.S.-flag vessels.  
*Form(s):* MA-1025, MA-1026, and MA-172.

*Abstract:* This collection of information requires U.S.-flag operators to submit annual vessel operating costs and capital costs data to MARAD officials. The information is used by MARAD in determining fair and reasonable guideline rates for the carriage of preference cargoes on U.S.-flag vessels. In addition, U.S.-flag vessel operators are required to submit Post Voyage Reports to MARAD after completion of a cargo preference voyage.

*Annual Estimated Burden Hours:* 700 hours.

**ADDRESSES:** Send comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and

Budget, 725 17th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20503, Attention MARAD Desk Officer.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. A comment to OMB is best assured of having its full effect if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication.

Issued in Washington, DC on February 26, 2003.

Joel C. Richard,  
*Secretary, Maritime Administration.*  
[FR Doc. 03-4898 Filed 2-28-03; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 4910-81-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## Maritime Administration

## Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement; Correction

The notice, announcing the extension of the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA) for another two-year period until February 13, 2005, appearing on pages 8800-8808 in the issue of Tuesday, February 25, 2003, should have included the following flow chart entitled: "Figure 1—VISA Activation Process Diagram" at the end of the document.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.  
Dated: February 26, 2003.

Joel C. Richard,  
*Secretary, Maritime Administration.*  
BILLING CODE 4910-81-P





# Public Workshop #1

March 26, 2003







**MINUTES  
MILLER CREEK ROAD  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
FIRST PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING**

**Wednesday, March 26, 2003  
5:00 - 8:00 p.m.**

**Linda Vista Golf Course Clubhouse  
4915 Lower Miller Creek Road  
Missoula, MT**

The First Public Scoping Meeting for the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement was held March 26, 2003 at the Linda Vista Golf Course Clubhouse, Missoula, MT. One Hundred and Twenty Nine (129) people attended the public scoping meeting (sign in sheets attached). The meeting was an open house format from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. with a brief formal presentation given by Craig Genzlinger, Federal Highway Administration, and Jeanette Lostracco, Carter Burgess, Inc. at 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Comments were received from the public a number of ways: 1) personal comments given to project officials on 5 x 8 cards and immediately displayed for public review, and/or 2) written comments dropped in a comment box located at the comment table. All officials responsible for the project were available throughout the evening to answer questions, receive comments, and talk with the public regarding concerns, questions, and comments they had regarding the project.

**Project officials present:**

Craig Genzlinger, Federal Highway Administration  
Jeanette Lostracco, Carter & Burgess, Inc.  
Diana Bell, Carter & Burgess, Inc.  
Troy Halouska, Carter & Burgess Inc.  
Rich Garcia, Carter & Burgess, Inc.  
Steve Long, David Evans and Associates  
Kathleen Schulthies, David Evans and Associates  
Mike Odom, David Evans and Associates  
Scott Richman, David Evans and Associates  
Bret Forrester, David Evans and Associates  
Daren Sporing, David Evans and Associates

**Public Presentation**

Craig Genzlinger, FHWA, thanked everyone for attending the public meeting and gave a brief explanation that David Evans and Associates is the prime contractor for the Miller Creek EIS project, with Carter Burgess, Inc., handling the environmental portion of the project. He then introduced Jeanette Lostracco from Carter Burgess, Inc.

Jeanette Lostracco explained that this was the very beginning of the Miller Creek project and that public input was critical for a successful project. This public meeting would be instrumental in gathering comments to help identify issues. Those issues would eventually develop into a list of alternatives to be considered. That list would then be narrowed down to a short list to be

analyzed in detail in the EIS document. She explained it was important for the public to keep in touch with the project team throughout the project and assured them that the project team would be touching base with them through the process.

**Question:** How will we know that the issues and questions raised will be addressed?

**Answer:** Jeanette explained that the comments received at this public meeting would be displayed in the comment section for public viewing. She stated that all future meetings would include a summary of comments received. She also explained that comments gathered throughout the project would be posted on the Website for public viewing and encouraged the public to check the website often for updated project information.

**Sign In Table**

The following handouts were available to the public at the sign-in table:

- 1) Agenda for the meeting and explanation of room organization
- 2) Extra Copies of the First Project Newsletter
- 3) Comment Sheets

**Wall Displays**

Five (5) wall displays explained the project for public viewing as follows:

- 1) Project Information
  - a. Purpose of Tonight's Workshop snow cards
  - b. EIS Process graphic
  - c. Contents of an EIS snow cards
  - d. Schedule of Project graphic
  - e. Public/Agency Involvement snow cards
  - f. Miller Creek Aerial Photo
- 2) Purpose & Need
  - a. Purpose and Need Statement graphic
  - b. Traffic Issues snow cards
  - c. Traffic Volumes graphic (DEA)
  - d. 2003 Existing AM & PM Peak Hour Volumes graphic

- e. Vehicle Queuing During AM Peak Period (7-9 a.m.) photo
- f. Average Annual Daily Traffic graphic
- g. Intersection Accident Location Counts 2000-2002 graphic
- h. Historical ADT Volumes

3) Project Background

- a. Comp Plan snow cards
- b. Comp Plan graphic
- c. Congressional Funding Eamark snow cards
- d. Parcel Map graphic

4) Project Issues

- a. Project Issues snow cards
- b. Cross Sections graphic
- c. Project Issues map
- d. Environmental Issues Map
- e. Existing Roadway/Proposed Roadway graphic
- f. Upcoming Steps graphic

Contact Information

- g. Four Public Meetings Scheduled snow card
- h. Presentation Information snow card
- i. Project Website Address snow card
- j. Project hotline snow card
- k. Newsletters snow card
- l. Comments Contact Information snow card
- m. To Stay Involved Information snow card

5) Comments

Displayed for public viewing as they were received (listed below)

**VERBAL COMMENTS RECEIVED**

Proposal: 160 new homes for phase three of Maloney Ranch area south of Miller Creek. Have heard discussion of higher density over there.

**Safety**

Miller Creek Road should be upgraded to four lanes. Would help with problems, congestion/safety.

Speed limits on Miller Creek Road are inconsistent.

Need to slow speed from Missoula to 93 and Blue Mountain

Safety concern for school buses stopping at railroad tracks before turning onto 93 from Miller Creek. Also safety for Lower Miller Creek left turns.

Y intersection: two vehicles rolled off road (steep drop off) recently during slippery conditions

Property owner near Y: two deer hit on Upper Miler Creek Road have ended up on his property

Start a 45-mph zone from Blue Mountain Road to Miller Creek Road. It will reduce accidents.

Miller Creek Road (93 – Y) has a big safety problem. No shoulders. High speeds (40+ mph in 30 mph zone)

Y intersection is bad. Not a lot of good places for a light on Upper Miller Creek – too hilly

Need green right turn arrow from Miller Creek northbound to 93 northbound simultaneous to protected left turn from southbound 93 to Miller Creek

Accident data shows only two accidents at Y between 2000-2002. Several people believe there have been many more accidents at this location (many may not be reported)

Grade separation makes sense. Don't stop traffic. It is safer.

Safety at the Y is really bad – three wrecks last week.

Sight distance a problem at Y

Been six accidents in proximity of Y over last year.

Lower speed limit from Wal-Mart to Honda or Bridge site.

**Noise**

Noise will be an issue for residences near the “Y”.

An alternative on the private drive west of Lower Miller Creek Road (Totem Lane) would decrease property value and increase noise of traffic. What do I do??

**Wildlife**

What about Bald Eagle Habitat?

Need adequate wildlife crossings and improved at 93. Look at road kill data on 93. Opportunity to improve crossings. Mitigate wildlife and riparian impacts.

Wildlife crossing issues should be addressed and improvements incorporated into the project if possible.

**Environmental**

Farmland (in family for years) should not be bisected (cut in half) by new road

Leave as many large Pine trees as possible (part on Upper Miller Creek).

**Traffic**

Lower Miller Creek Road traffic has increased dramatically since 1996 (per property owner who lives west of Y). Growth in traffic 1996-2003 does not appear to be that significant on chart.

From 7 a.m. on, it is bumper-to-bumper traffic.

Make sure new access attracts enough traffic to relieve congestion on Lower/Upper Miller Creek Roads near Y.

Reduce traffic on Miller Creek. Disperse onto lower Y intersection

Reserve & 93 has the most fatalities northing improved south will help that  
Take more traffic out to 93 at Blue Mountain will only make backup on 93 worse (Miller Creek to Blue Mountain backs up in peak)

“Improvements to corridor” doesn’t necessarily mean traffic – so misunderstood the purpose (could mean flora/wildlife) not clear description. **(Note: P&N clarify)**

Number of houses (20-30) across from Lolo also only access is Miller Creek. They use upper Miller Creek Road.

Why drive new route when Upper Miller Creek Road direct route?

Blue Mountain light not timed right – semis are barreling down road.

Figure out traffic patterns southeast of project area

Use Upper Miller Creek. Most interested in how pressure is taken off Upper Miller Creek Road.

School buses have same problems at railroad tracks as semis do

On-ramp at Miller Creek to 93 north – so don’t have to stop and back up traffic

Peak rush hours -- winter/dark – can see what looks like bumper to bumper on 93. Another light would slow further.

The Y never should be signalized. Tough in winter

Lower Miller Creek backs up in the winter significantly

AM peak: 7:30 to 8:00 a.m. When Miller Creek light is red, traffic is backed up all the way to Blue Mountain. Rather than add another access and light, access at Blue Mountain (93 is loaded)

Most traffic heads into town in the a.m. and out of town in the p.m. so accommodate turning traffic across 93.

Volume of traffic on Upper Miller Creek Road is a problem. It needs easier way for Linda Vista people to come out. Now they have to go south to hit Upper Miller Creek Road and then north.

Will the project include measures to improve traffic conditions on 93? Is this included as part of the purpose?

Heavy traffic congestion in the vicinity of the Miller Creek Road “Y” that creates air quality problems.

Could you take some traffic from Upper Miller Creek over to 39<sup>th</sup> and Russell? Would be less expensive than a new crossing.

Areas outside of the study area (i.e., south of Miller Creek) will influence traffic in study area. So if these areas are not included in the analysis, then the project may not adequately address the traffic issues.

Section of 93 between Blue Mountain and Miller creek is very congested. Terrible intersection for bike is at Miller Creek “Y”

**Design**

Hook bridge into Blue Mountain Road

Bridge at Hays Creek – make intersection

Need a bridge

Bridge is necessary

Don't want another bridge – bad impact on river and fishery

Bridge & design of housing has to be such that traffic would use it over Miller Creek. Logical light @ Blue Mountain – adding other lights would be incredible backup.

Once development fills out down there is it logical to put bridge in at Lolo

Bridge with on ramp at Blue Mountain makes sense – so don't need to spend funds on another light.

Best place for access would be Blue Mountain –traffic signal

Need least amount of out-of-direction travel

Bridge at Blue Mountain makes sense if Blue Mountain becomes part of bypass

Bridge location potential south of Blue Mountain – makes sense to pull traffic out and change light timing at Miller Creek Road.

Possible to make Garrett a route in and out. Connect Upper Miller Creek Road to Gharrett at about Thomas Street.

Landowner east of Sports Medicine Center requested a right-turn land into area north of 93.

Blue Mountain Road intersection would be a good location. Any further to the south may not get used

Secondary access needs to be south of 93 cut section (graphic attached)

Need two turn lanes right – one through lane on Miller Creek north at 93 (graphic attached)

Rather than out to 93 -- make improvements to northeast connections (High Park/ 54<sup>th</sup> & 56<sup>th</sup> / Garrett)

If a new access/bridge is built, the road to the bridge needs to be designed such that it does not create additional traffic congestion in the Miller Creek area. Concerned that new development to occur in western portion of Miller Creek area could cause bottleneck of traffic from the east on Lower Miller Creek Road.

Consider improving Lower Miller Creek Road combined with a new secondary access connection to serve planned development in Miller Creek area.

Utilize the existing right-of-way and replace bridge. Line up with Blue Mountain. Why impact others when you have a right-of-way to use.

Non-signalized interchange allows more flexibility in locations

At canal north of Blue Mountain Road, flatten curve in railroad track (pulls it away from highway, makes room to cross). Put in interchange and bridge or at grade crossing with option for future interchange.

Don't go to far south with intersection. Maybe between Wornath and Blue Mountain

Tie into a relocated Blue Mountain Road at grade

Develop alternative that works with 93 instead of adding traffic to Miller Creek

Need safe access on 93. Higher level of development beyond what a signal would provide. Potential median refuge.

Separate Upper and Lower Miller Creek and connect to U.S. 93. No new bridge needed.

Build new access to take traffic off existing Miller Creek. Leave Y alone.

Crossing / new road should not occur on land that is not being developed. Any new road should occur on land slated for development

A new road and river crossing should not occur in vicinity of old bridge or just south of old bridge – (Bogus property vicinity) because of aesthetics and bald eagle use in that portion of the river.

Good access point would be straight north from Linda Vista to reduce out-of-direction travel.

Secondary access at Blue Mountain north will contribute to congestion at 93 / Upper Miller Creek Road.

Access must look at whole transportation system north to 90 south to Florence with connectivity to Lower Miller Road.

Connect Linda Vista Blvd straight north to 93 or northwest to 93 – possibly a bridge over golf course even or provide underpass for golf course.

Would not want a bridge or pier on property – north of Blue Mountain and east of railroad. I've lived there for 27 years and plan to stay.

Need a new bridge crossing especially since there are plans for a couple hundred more homes. Need improved collector system. Don't need another traffic signal on 93.

Any new access to 93 needs to consider the effects it will have on traffic on 93, not just within the Miller Creek area.

Could a new route be established to the east of the study area that would tie to 39<sup>th</sup> and Russell?

Secondary bridge could result in eastbound 93 trucks using the Ranch Road system as secondary access to 90 -- trucks through neighborhood.

Another access to the Miller Creek area is needed

Build a retaining wall along Upper Miller creek near the "Y".

A new crossing is needed. Need to provide right-turn lane (may encroach on Wal-Mart) from Miller Creek Road to northbound U.S. 93.)

Consider adding a lane between "Y" and U.S. 93 on Miller Creek Road. This would improve flow and reduce conflict at "Y". Northbound Upper Miller Creek Road would have free flow and not conflict with northbound Lower Miller Creek Road.

Access would be best at Blue Mountain road. Most logical.

Just north of the (fork) split in the Bitterroot River is a good location for the bridge crossing. A new crossing is critically necessary

Put bridge at Blue Mountain

Put bridge at Blue Mountain, but don't tie into Old Bitterroot Road and Lower Miller Creek.

Create new connection to Maloney Ranch subdivision. Needs to be faster than continuing to use Miller Creek.

Tie into Blue Mountain. Route traffic around Missoula –bypass 93 altogether.

Upper Lower Miller Creek needs redone. Straighten Upper Miller Creek and "Y" in Lower Miller Creek.

Possibly one way – Lower Miller Creek one way and Upper Miller Creek the opposite way.

Need left turn signal for U.S. 93 / Miller Creek intersection.

**Y Intersection**

Will this project address improvements to "Y" and Miller Creek Road (U.S. 93 – Y)? Y intersection is worse in the winter

Winter Lower Miller Creek Road, the grade is the problem – no landing and uphill to Y. One person stuck blocks everyone.

Improving Y intersection won't help

Leave the Y alone

What are plans for improving Y intersection?

**Bike/ Pedestrians**

Use this as an opportunity to address parks, bike and pedestrian issues for this area.

Bus service and pedestrian access needs to be improved

Need to have bike and pedestrian facilities incorporated into design.

Bus traffic not provided for. Closes stop is Wal-Mart. Need bus and bicycle accommodations in Miller Creek area.

**Misc.**

Project may be included in Missoula Transportation Plan update

Need clarification on local infrastructure improvements to be funded by development and more specific information on these development fees

Developers should pay for bridge

How will project be funded? Will I see an increase in taxes?  
Extend eastside highway through Miller Creek.

This needs to happen sooner

P-N-R on 93 at bridge crossing at about the Nordic Pines just north of river fork

Is all information presented on Website?

Access could cause more development north of 93 in Blue Mountain area

Be sure to look at zoning map as well as comprehensive plan. Couple subdivisions have been approved, but not yet platted and need to be accounted for in traffic modeling

Consider utilizing the railroad for commuter rail. Consider alternative funding sources.

TDM is important

Florence to Lolo traffic may need to be extended. This project should not preclude

Consider a P-N-R

How many logging trucks are actually still using the road?

If housing boom goes away in the timeframe of the project – will the crossing/access be needed?

How was study area boundary established?

Aerials seem older than last year

Best graphics I have ever seen

Define “corridor”. Are there plans to widen 93 in this area?

Why did county approve new development without a plan for providing adequate access to the area?

Show city boundary on maps

Is information on Maloney Ranch development approval available? How did county justify approval of development without access resolved?

Would rather see the study area become all open space not residential.

Miller Creek Road is the way out, but you can use Gharrett (though most people don't use it)

Aerials must be older than 2001. March 2001 construction buildings not shown.

West of Upper Miller Creek Road, Linda Vista buyers had to agree to annexation. East of Upper Miller Creek Road, Ravenwood is older with no homeowners association – don't want to be annexed.

The comprehensive plan is only a guide. The county zoning map should be considered when identifying the potential future growth in the study area, not the comprehensive plan.

Ginter house is not in 100-year flood plain

How are people going to access and exit planned development north of 93? Commercial development is planned north the Blue Mountain.

Plum Creek is going to be logging up Deadman's Gulch in May.

Really like the format of this meeting. Good idea not to open up to questions /answers to avoid someone monopolizing the meeting. Also good to have no chairs for folks to sit, better to have them circulate in the room.

The induced growth effects need to be addressed

Have a map of larger Missoula area at next public meeting.

Missoula OPG: parcel map does not reflect some subdivisions that have been approved, but are not yet platted.

Past studies that identified alternate access routes / river crossings should be considered and used as much as possible so as to not duplicate efforts / waste money.

**NOTES:**

Need to explain what congressional earmark can be spent on.

For next public meeting – put Missoula city limits on the map. Proposed annexation limits would be helpful too.

Need to bring snow cards from first meeting to the next meeting.

**WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED**

**New Comment:** I attended one of the presentations at Linda Vista Golf Course on 3/26 – thanks for doing this initial workshop. I live in Upper Linda Vista on Scott Allen Drive. My comments and questions follow:

1. Miller Creek Road between Hwy 93 and the Y is a deathtrap. Cold Springs School is a block away. Kids (and adults) frequently walk and ride bikes on this section (as well as other sections). This section has huge traffic counts and there is NO shoulder and no sidewalks. Upper Miller Creek Road South (uphill) from the Y is not much better – no shoulder, no sidewalks, kids waiting for the early morning bus in the dark, high speed traffic, steep hill that is icy in winter... The scoping timeline of two years with further delays for design and funding is unacceptable for this extremely high-risk area. Better to push for fast track now on this section, rather than after one or more kids get killed or injured. Further, apparently there is \$3 million of the approved \$5 million available for immediate improvements to this section. Let's move dirt within a year.
2. Generally, the scoping period seems too long. We have already waited years for something to happen on this project including the new bridge. If issues and conflict can be addressed more quickly, why can't we get the scoping done in a year? Further, why can't design on non-controversial aspects of the greater project get moving during the scoping project?
3. The extension of Christian Drive to the bridge (or other alternative road from Upper Linda Vista to the bridge) should have a parkway feel with set backs for houses (and preferably other side streets for housing access), and if possible a speed limit of 30 – 35 mph. With the correct design, this could mitigate the severe traffic issues on the current Christian Drive, especially for the hundred of apartments now in place in upper Linda Vista. For one, it would be nice to design the infrastructure to protect the neighborhood's safety and quality and still let people get in and out efficiently.

Thanks for your hard work!

**New Comment:** I have been a Linda Vista resident for 28 years. The need for traffic relief in this area is great. Thirty years of poor or no planning is readily apparent. The cost of this lack of planning should not be bore by only the Miller Creek residents. Who will pay for this project? Miller Creek residents, Missoula County residents, State, Federal? We are being taxed to death out there with S.I.D., R.S.I.D, property taxes, sewer, road improvements, etc., so that developers can develop the land and get rich with the Miller Creek residents paying the expenses.

Bridges are expensive; the project would also require lots of road fill to cross the Bitterroot River floodplain. Remember the high water of 1997. I think there could be cheaper route to get traffic out of the area.

This is a long detour to avoid traffic. Will drivers go south to reach the north? Traffic will still end up at the Miller Creek light to come into town, only the drivers going south on Highway 93 would benefit.

**New Comment:** People have moved to the Miller Creek area and it is a wonderful place to live. One of the things that drew people to this area is being able to see Margie Bogess' cattle, Sheriek's sheep, and the Ginter's hay fields. You either value these things enough to leave them in tact or they will be gone. And once they are asphalted over, they are gone forever.

**New Comment:** Thanks for all your efforts! My comments concern the Y. There is no reason to do anything drastic to the Y. This is a short road to 93 and nothing we do will alleviate the congestion.

My comment would be to build a bridge that connects to Blue Mountain Road. This gives people a choice of two different ways to go to work, town, etc. Then I would suggest using roads that are already in existence to go over the mountain top area and down to 39<sup>th</sup> Street. One excellent road would be the Russell Street Road. Some people are using that now, but more would use it if it became a viable road to work and town! That spreads the traffic out and gets rid of so much congestion!

**New Comment:** Traffic is past capacity on the Lower Miller Creek Road now. With the proposed additional homes in the Linda Vista and Maloney Ranch property, the need is imminent to provide roads to disperse traffic away from the Y. This is especially true during winter conditions (snow, freezing rain, and inclement weather).

Further, traffic pile-up creates excessive exhaust with the hillside retaining it to the east side of Lower Miller Creek Road. It is a dangerous junction. People are consistently driving too fast. It is vital to drive defensively.

Whatever can be done to minimize traffic at the Y is needed. There is no need to spend dollars to improve existing road there. Get the bridge across the Bitterroot (suggest to connect Blue Mountain Road)

**New Comment:** Additional access to U.S. 93 is necessary as new homes are constructed in Miller Creek and Lower Miller Creek areas. Probable best access is at Blue Mountain Road intersection, which is already partially developed. Any access further south would have an excess of out-of-direction travel. In conjunction – Miller Creek Road from the Lower Miller Creek Road intersection should be improved to meet future traffic loads. No signalization at this intersection should be a strong consideration due to winter travel conditions.

**New Comment:** A bigger intersection at Miller Creek and 93 would help. Two turn lanes heading into town, a dedicated straight lane and a dedicated left turn lane.

**New Comment:** You need to look into improving existing surface streets to take some of the traffic into town. The people in this neighborhood want to go into Missoula for work, etc., that does not mean they have to be routed into the highway.

**New Comment:** The time to do the planning is now because it will be more expensive and more difficult to do it later. I live at the top of Scott Allen Drive and therefore am partial to the extension of Linda Vista Drive across the river to Hwy 93. The road accident and traffic density studies indicate there is a slight problem now that will only get worse as time goes by and more and more people build in the area. I believe it might be a good idea to look closely at widening 39<sup>th</sup> and allowing traffic to safely go downtown that way.

**New Comment:** If the bridge is in the northern area, perhaps tying in at the Blue Mountain Road, less traffic will divert off Hwy 93 and shortcut through the residential area.

Bike lanes needed along Miller Creek Road.

Please put me on the mailing list. I am the president of the new Maloney Ranch Homeowners Association.

**New Comment:** Please consider adding TDM improvements/ strategies to this project, including: (1) Connecting Missoula to the trail running from Lolo to Florence; (2) Bike/Ped improvements; (3) Transit Service; and (4) Park & Ride areas to be served by Transit.

**New Comment:** I'd like to see the bridge intersect with Hwy 93 at/with the road that comes out at the light by the Fitness Center. There is a light right there currently.

**New Comment:** Project scope should include:

- (1) Alternate access out of Bitterroot, e.g., continuation of east side highway as alternate to single north/south Bitterroot access over Lolo Creek Bridge.
- (2) Alternate north/south route through Missoula Valley to I-90. Another north/south corridor to traffic to Reserve Street.
- (3) Slowing traffic on Hwy 93 to decrease accidents between Lolo and Missoula.

Greater vision than simply improve traffic flow out of Miller Creek area.

**New Comment:** There is a large tract of land on Hwy 93 South between Blue Mountain Road and the Buck House Bridge. How will the traffic be managed for whatever development that will go onto this property? Will there be a need for additional traffic lights and turnouts? Will the highway need to be wider than the existing two lanes if Miller Creek has a new bridge at Blue Mountain Road?

**New Comment:** One more concern about improvement at the Y?

**New Comment:** Burden on existing road junction of Upper and Lower Miller Creek should be relieved by drawing existing and future traffic to the new bridge – 93 access by convenience and flow from future Maloney Ranch and existing upper Linda Vista area.

The light @ Blue Mountain makes sense because it exists ... but does it pull traffic the right way? Does the position of the light give the existing traffic time to dissipate before dumping more onto the road?

The new connecting point needs to pull from the top of Linda Vista and future Maloney Ranch.

Tying into Lower Miller Creek/Old Bitterroot Road does not make sense. Any junction tying Maloney into Lower Miller Creek will be a problem area.

What is the projected cost to homeowners in the Miller Creek Area?

**New Comment:** We may ruin the “country environment” by increasing traffic that would jump off 93 across bridge into the housing area of Miller Creek/Linda Vista. Any time traffic congestion increases, drivers “jump off” into the back neighborhoods roads. Development of houses (160 Phase II Maloney Ranch) will increase traffic immensely. We need to plan the roads and access first before these 160 additional households are built.

**New Comment:** Prime opportunity to plan an expansion area of Missoula in keeping with visual beauty, improved access for pedestrian, cycling and bus transportation that contributes to quality of life, and recreation/living spaces being shared. In keeping with this philosophy,



planning alternatives to automobile transportation is very important. Asking developers to give up land for recreation, parks, bike paths, bike lanes, etc., is necessary.

Reducing speed on 93 from Blue Mountain into Missoula is a must – this has to be done in order to make the intersections safe – any intersection on that stretch of road.

Preserving the beauty and health of the Bitterroot River has to #1 priority – it was here first!

**New Comment:** We are definitely in support of a bridge, which would provide another access to Hwy 93. Traffic, congestion and the resulting “safety” issues are already serious on Upper Miller Creek – and this proposal is at least two years away. It is possible to provide some alternative traffic route any sooner?

**New Comment:** A logical (to me) location for a new 93-access bridge would be at Blue Mountain. We already have a light system there. Another light system would further hinder Bitterroot to Missoula traffic – bad enough already. Seems to be a fairly flat and accessible location. Thanks.

**New Comment:** Consider use of existing railroad (with upgrades) as high-speed commuter (sub funding). Reduce traffic on Upper Miller Creek Road. Consider park and ride parking areas between Miller Creek Road and Lolo – Upper Miller and Linda Vista.

## Questions and Answers Public Meeting March 26, 2003

**Question:** An alternative on the private drive west of Lower Miller Creek Road (Totem Lane) would decrease property value and increase noise of traffic. What do I do?

**Answer:** *While no alternatives are precluded at this time, we are still in the data collection and preliminary analysis phase of this project and have not selected a Preferred Alternative. Once preliminary alternatives have been determined evaluation criteria will be used and an impact analysis conducted (including looking at property and noise impacts) before recommending a Preferred Alternative.*

*Should the alternative involving Totem Lane be recommended as the Preferred Alternative, studies have shown that property values increased by 12 to 15 percent when the highway significantly increased the accessibility of residences, but the houses closest to the highway had this increase partially offset by a 0.2 percent to 1.2 percent reduction for each two-and-a-half decibel increase in the highway noise level. (Impact of Highway Improvements on Property Values in Washington, Washington DOT, March 1980).*

**Question:** What about Bald Eagle habitat?

**Answer:** *Field surveys will be done in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the presence of Bald Eagle Habitat. This information will then be included in the evaluation of alternatives.*

**Question:** Why drive new route when Upper Miller Creek Road provides direct route?

**Answer:** *Upper Miller Creek Road is at or near capacity today. As development continues to take place additional access will be required. Also, a secondary route is desirable for emergency access into the area.*

**Question:** Will the project include measures to improve traffic conditions on US 93? Is this included as part of the purpose?

**Answer:** *No improvements to US 93 will be included in this project that are not directly associated with the planned improvements for the new Bitterroot River crossing.*

**Question:** Could you take some traffic from Upper Miller Creek over to 39<sup>th</sup> and Russell? Would be less expensive than a new crossing?

**Answer:** Improving local street connectivity between Miller Creek Road and Gharrett Avenue would likely result in diversion of a small portion of traffic from Miller Creek Road and US 93 to 39<sup>th</sup> Street and Russell Street. Providing a new local street connection may also be less expensive than a new connection between US 93 and Miller Creek area requiring a new Bitterroot River crossing.

While improved connectivity between Miller Creek Road and 39<sup>th</sup> and Russell Streets may be beneficial and potential cost-effective from a transportation system performance standpoint, a new connection between the Miller Creek area and US 93 would still be needed to accommodate the substantially larger portion of traffic that would be expected to occur between US 93 and the Miller Creek area. (In other words, improving the connection between Miller Creek Road and 39<sup>th</sup> and Russell Streets would not meet the Purpose and Need of this project.)

**Question:** Why not put bridge at Blue Mountain Road? This makes the most sense.

**Answer:** This is one alternative of several that will be evaluated as part of the EIS process.

**Question:** What are the plans for improving the "Y" intersection?

**Answer:** Improvements or recommendations for improvements to the wye intersection are not part of this project. This project will assess operations and safety impacts to the wye resulting from construction of a secondary access and the No-Action Alternative. During the preliminary platting process for the Linda Vista Development the issue of the wye intersection of Upper Miller Creek Road and Lower Miller Creek Road was the subject of much debate. There were four alternatives put forth by the developer with a wide range of costs associated with each. The Board of County Commissioners selected the grade separation alternative while the city chose a different alternative. The county has initiated discussions with the city to determine if there is any common ground with the range of alternatives. Those discussions are ongoing at this time and no decision has been reached. Assuming a mutually agreeable alternative is reached, the county will work with the developer to implement the necessary improvements.

**Question:** I would like clarification on local infrastructure improvements to be funded by development and more specific information on these development fees.

**Answer:** Over the last several years, new development within Linda Vista and Maloney Ranch subdivisions have been contributing \$1,800 per residence to a fund for improvements in the Miller Creek area. The funds were set aside to assist with matching funds for the Miller Creek Bridge project (currently under way) and other infrastructure needs in the Miller Creek area. Additionally, the developer for Linda Vista is required to make additional improvements to Miller Creek Road. The scope of these improvements has yet to be determined.

The county has initiated discussions with the city to determine needed improvements.

**Question:** How many logging trucks are actually still using the road?

**Answer:** Currently, there are no logging trucks using this route. However, the road does provide access to National Forest lands for recreation and possibly logging use in the future.

**Question:** How will the project be funded? Will I see increase in my taxes?

**Answer:** It is anticipated that project funds will come from the Federal government, with no local tax increase.

**Question:** If housing boom goes away in the timeframe of the project—will the access crossing still be needed?

**Answer:** The existing conditions will be analyzed as part of a no-build alternative to determine the need for the project.

**Question:** How was the study area boundary established?

**Answer:** The purpose and need of this project is to provide a second access from Miller Creek to US 93.

There is currently one existing access at Miller Creek and US 93. The eastern boundary was offset approximately 3,000 feet from this existing intersection to incorporate Miller Creek Road, because a new access would not occur east of Miller Creek Road due to constraints posed by existing development.

The southern boundary of Miller Creek was established because of the steep slopes south of this boundary which would constrain build alternatives and require out-of-direction travel.

Since we intend to connect with US 93, we are including .25 mile north of the road to include as a "buffer" in our analysis area.

**Question:** Define "corridor." Are there plans to widen US 93 in this area?

**Answer:** The corridor includes all aspects of the roadway envelope which includes shoulders, side slopes, travel lanes, turn lanes, etc. In addition, the corridor is defined as the limits of the project. There are no plans to construct additional through travel lanes as part of this project. There may be widening at new intersections or interchanges to accommodate operations such as turn lanes.

**Question:** Is the information on Maloney Ranch development approval available? How did the county justify approval of development without access resolved?

**Answer:** Yes the information relative to the Maloney Ranch Subdivision is available. Maloney Ranch, as mitigation, has contributed \$1,800 per lot to correct deficiencies on Miller Creek Road. The file is available for public review at the county offices.

**Question:** Please explain how the congressional earmark can be spent and on what?

**Answer:** The earmark funds can be spent on the environmental impact statement and preliminary design for a second access from Lower Miller Creek Road to US 93.

**Question:** Generally, the scoping period seems too long...if issues and conflict can be addressed more quickly, why can't we get the scoping done in a year? Further, why can't design on non-controversial aspects of the greater project area to get moving during the scoping project?

**Answer:** The scoping for the Miller Creek Road EIS is estimated to last six months in order to identify all critical environmental and social issues. If the schedules can be shortened, we will compress schedules where opportunity presents itself.

Design of other projects can proceed independently—outside of this EIS and by other entities.

**Question:** I have been a Linda Vista resident for 28 years. Who will pay for this project? Miller Creek residents, Missoula County residents, state, federal?

**Answer:** It is anticipated that project funds will come from the federal government, with no local tax increase.

**Question:** There is a large tract of land on Hwy 93 south between Blue Mountain Road and the Buckhouse Bridge. How will the traffic be managed for whatever developments that will go into the property?

**Answer:** It depends on the following:

- 1) The size and type of the proposed development that will occupy that space. Ultimately, the planned development will determine how much traffic will be generated and how it would be managed (see also #3).
- 2) The area is somewhat access-controlled now. Access on the south side of US 93 is controlled by the railroad, and the railroad is resistant to allowing new at-grade crossings. Access on the north side of US 93 is controlled by the state. Currently, MDT is analyzing this area to develop an access management strategy that is anticipated to be adopted before any new development occurs, and thus the development would have to conform to the new access standards.
- 3) If the size of the development is large and substantial new traffic volumes generated by and attracted to the development are expected; a systems impact review will be performed by the Traffic and Planning sections of MDT. A Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) paid for the developer(s) will also be needed.

**Question:** Will there be a need for additional traffic lights and turnouts?

**Answer:** The need for additional traffic signals or turnouts would depend on the location and configuration of the Preferred Alternative. Improvements could include turn lanes, ramps and/or traffic signals.

**Question:** Will the highway need to be wider than the existing two lanes if Miller Creek has a new bridge at Blue Mountain Road?

**Answer:** A new bridge located at or in the vicinity of Blue Mountain Road may require the addition of a right-turn acceleration and deceleration lanes in the northbound and southbound directions. Addition of these lanes would require some widening of US 93 in this area. There are no plans by MDT or as part of this project to add through travel lanes on US 93 regardless of whether or not a new bridge is proposed.

**Question:** What is the project cost to homeowners in the Miller Creek study area?

**Answer:** Nothing. It is anticipated that project funds will come from the federal government, with no local tax increase.


**Question:** Traffic, congestion, and the resulting safety issues are serious on Upper Miller Creek—and this proposal is at least two years away. Is it possible to provide some alternative traffic route any earlier?

**Answer:** *This project will not identify any early action projects. Improvements or recommendations for improvements to the wye intersection are not part of this project. This project will assess operations and safety impacts to the wye resulting from a secondary access and the No-Action Alternative. During the preliminary platting process for the Linda Vista Development the issue of the wye intersection of Upper Miller Creek Road and Lower Miller Creek Road was the subject of much debate. There were four alternatives put forth by the developer with a wide range of costs associated with each. The Board of County Commissioners selected the grade separation alternative while the city chose a different alternative. The county has initiated discussions with the city to determine if there is any common ground with the range of alternatives. Those discussions are ongoing at this time and no decision has been reached. Assuming a mutually agreeable alternative is reached, the county will work with the developer to implement the necessary improvements. The city and county, however, may consider these independently.*



# Public Opinion Survey

May, 2003





Dear Resident,

We would like your opinions as alternatives are evaluated for access from the Miller Creek Road area to US-93. We are enclosing a questionnaire to obtain your opinions. Your household was randomly selected to participate in this survey. Only a small number of households have been selected so it is especially important for a member of your household to respond.

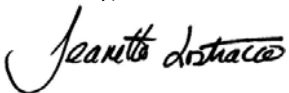
In order to obtain a representative and random sample, we have devised a simple method for you to choose which household member should complete the survey. **Please have the adult age 18 or older who most recently had a birthday complete this survey. The year of birth plays no role in the selection.** Your responses to this survey will be completely anonymous and results will be reported in group form only. When you complete the survey, please return it using the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

An independent transportation planning/engineering firm has been hired to study options for providing access from the Miller Creek Road area to US-93. National Research Center, Inc. is helping gather opinions and preferences from residents through this survey. Your participation is very important to us and to everyone who would be affected by any transportation projects that might be undertaken. The anonymous results will be shared with the project team and the local media.

If you would like more information about the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement Project, please call the toll-free project hotline at 800-865-6905 or visit the project website at [www.millerEIS.com](http://www.millerEIS.com)

Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,



Jeanette Lostracco  
Deputy Project Manager

Dear Resident,

About a week ago we sent you a copy of this survey about Miller Creek Road and US-93. If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, we thank you for your time, and ask you to discard this survey. **Please do not respond twice.**

If you have not yet responded, we encourage you to do so. We would like your opinions as alternatives are evaluated for access from the Miller Creek Road area to US-93. Your household was randomly selected to participate in this survey. Only a small number of households have been selected so it is especially important for a member of your household to respond.

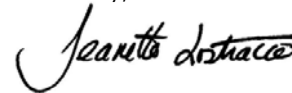
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Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,



Jeanette Lostracco  
Deputy Project Manager

# Miller Creek Road/US-93 Transportation Survey

This survey will be used to help form and evaluate alternatives for access from the Miller Creek Road area to US-93. The adult in the household 18 years or older who most recently had a birthday should complete the survey and return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. Your responses are confidential, and will be reported in group form only. Thank you very much!

For each question, please circle the number that most closely represents your opinion.

- How much of a problem, if at all, is congestion on Miller Creek Road when accessing US-93 during peak times? ..... 1 2 3 4 5  

no	small	moderate	major	don't
problem	problem	problem	problem	know
- How much of a problem, if at all, is congestion on Miller Creek Road when accessing US-93 during off-peak times? ..... 1 2 3 4 5  

no	small	moderate	major	don't
problem	problem	problem	problem	know
- How much of a problem, if at all, do you feel it is to get ON US-93 from Miller Creek Road during peak times? ..... 1 2 3 4 5  

no	small	moderate	major	don't
problem	problem	problem	problem	know
- How much of a problem, if at all, do you feel it is to get ON US-93 from Miller Creek Road during off-peak times? ..... 1 2 3 4 5  

no	small	moderate	major	don't
problem	problem	problem	problem	know
- How much of a problem, if at all, do you feel it is to get OFF US-93 to Miller Creek Road during peak times? ..... 1 2 3 4 5  

no	small	moderate	major	don't
problem	problem	problem	problem	know
- How much of a problem, if at all, do you feel it is to get OFF US-93 to Miller Creek Road during off-peak times? ..... 1 2 3 4 5  

no	small	moderate	major	don't
problem	problem	problem	problem	know
- Do you think that a second entrance into the Miller Creek area from US-93 would make your quality of life better or worse? ..... 1 2 3 4 5 6  

much	a little	no	a little	much	don't
better	better	change	worse	worse	know

8. About how often do you and other members of your household use Miller Creek Road to go north on US-93 (towards Missoula or further north) for each of the following types of trips? Please circle the number that most closely represents your household's typical travel, including all trips made by all household members.

- Commuting to and from work..... 1 2 3 4 5  

3 or more	2 to 4	1 to 4	Less than one
trips per day	trips per week	trips per month	trip per month
- Other kinds of trips ..... 1 2 3 4 5

9. About how often do you and other members of your household use Miller Creek Road to go south on US-93 (towards Lolo or further south) for each of the following types of trips? Please circle the number that most closely represents your household's typical travel, including all trips made by all household members.

- Commuting to and from work..... 1 2 3 4 5  

3 or more	2 to 4	1 to 4	Less than one
trips per day	trips per week	trips per month	trip per month
- Other kinds of trips ..... 1 2 3 4 5

10. About how often do you and other members of your household use US-93 north towards Missoula through the Miller Creek Road intersection for each of the following types of trips? Please circle the number that most closely represents your household's typical travel, including all trips made by all household members.

- Commuting to and from work..... 1 2 3 4 5  

3 or more	2 to 4	1 to 4	Less than one
trips per day	trips per week	trips per month	trip per month
- Other kinds of trips ..... 1 2 3 4 5

11. About how often do you and other members of your household use US-93 south towards Lolo through the Miller Creek Road intersection for each of the following types of trips? Please circle the number that most closely represents your household's typical travel, including all trips made by all household members.

- Commuting to and from work..... 1 2 3 4 5  

3 or more	2 to 4	1 to 4	Less than one
trips per day	trips per week	trips per month	trip per month
- Other kinds of trips ..... 1 2 3 4 5

12. Please rate how much of a problem each of the following is at the intersection of US-93 and Miller Creek Road.

- |   |         |         |          |         |       |
|---|---------|---------|----------|---------|-------|
| a. Traffic accidents.....                           | no      | small   | moderate | major   | don't |
|   | problem | problem | problem  | problem | know  |
| b. Traffic congestion during summer peak times..... | 1       | 2       | 3        | 4       | 5     |
| c. Traffic congestion during winter peak times..... | 1       | 2       | 3        | 4       | 5     |
| d. Traffic congestion during off-peak times.....    | 1       | 2       | 3        | 4       | 5     |
| e. Bicycle and pedestrian accidents.....            | 1       | 2       | 3        | 4       | 5     |
| f. Bicycle and pedestrian traffic congestion.....   | 1       | 2       | 3        | 4       | 5     |

13. How easy is it to travel on US-93 through the Miller Creek Road intersection for each type of transportation? What about ...

- |                               |           |      |      |      |            |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------|------|------|------------|
| a. By car or truck.....       | excellent | good | fair | poor | don't know |
| b. By bus.....                | 1         | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5          |
| c. By bicycle.....            | 1         | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5          |
| d. By foot.....               | 1         | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5          |
| e. By commercial vehicle..... | 1         | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5          |

14. How easy is to get on and off US-93 at Miller Creek Road for each type of transportation? What about ...

- |                               |           |      |      |      |            |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------|------|------|------------|
| a. By car or truck.....       | excellent | good | fair | poor | don't know |
| b. By bus.....                | 1         | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5          |
| c. By bicycle.....            | 1         | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5          |
| d. By foot.....               | 1         | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5          |
| e. By commercial vehicle..... | 1         | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5          |

15. What concerns, if any, do you have about the creation of a second access into the Miller Creek Road area? (Please check all that apply.)

- none
- it will bring more growth or development
- it will have adverse impacts on environment
- it won't be what's really needed
- it will disrupt traffic during construction
- it will change the character of our community
- it will make my commute take longer
- other \_\_\_\_\_

16. What benefits, if any, do you think will result from the creation of a second access into the Miller Creek Road area? (Please check all that apply.)

- none
- it will improve the quality of life
- it will improve traffic congestion
- other \_\_\_\_\_
- it will improve traffic safety
- it will bring more growth or development
- it will reduce traffic at the existing Miller Creek Road intersection



17. From within the Miller Creek area, how far south would you likely go to get access to northbound US-93?

	very likely	somewhat likely	somewhat unlikely	very unlikely	don't know
a. the Five Valley Honda on US 93.....	1	2	3	4	5
b. about 1/2 mile north of the Five Valley Honda.....	1	2	3	4	5
c. Blue Mountain Road.....	1	2	3	4	5
d. about 1/2 mile south of the US 93 and Miller Creek Road intersection.....	1	2	3	4	5

18. There are many issues to consider as part of this study. Please look at the issues below and rate how important or unimportant you think each issue is when considering a new bridge crossing.

	very essential	moderately important	not too important	not at all important
a. Improving the ease of travel on US-93 through the Miller Creek area.....	1	2	3	4
b. Improving the ease of getting on and off US-93 from the Miller Creek area.....	1	2	3	4
c. Decreasing traffic congestion on Miller Creek Road.....	1	2	3	4
d. Decreasing traffic congestion on US-93 through the Miller Creek area.....	1	2	3	4
e. Ensuring there is minimal impact on wildlife.....	1	2	3	4
f. Ensuring there is minimal impact on fish.....	1	2	3	4
g. Ensuring there is minimal impact on fishing areas.....	1	2	3	4
h. Ensuring fisherman access to fishing areas.....	1	2	3	4
i. Ensuring there is minimal impact on water quality.....	1	2	3	4
j. Ensuring there is minimal impact on historic properties.....	1	2	3	4
k. Ensuring there is a minimal impact on air quality.....	1	2	3	4
l. Reducing the visual impact of a new bridge.....	1	2	3	4
m. Improving traffic safety.....	1	2	3	4
n. Keeping the total width of the bridge as small as possible.....	1	2	3	4
o. Maintaining the region's rural character.....	1	2	3	4
p. Improving non-motorized travel access (e.g., bicyclist, pedestrian, equestrian) in the Miller Creek area.....	1	2	3	4
q. Improving non-motorized safety (e.g., bicyclist, pedestrian, equestrian) in the Miller Creek area.....	1	2	3	4
r. Enhancing bus service in the Miller Creek area.....	1	2	3	4
s. Minimizing residential and business relocations or conversions of private property for right-of-way.....	1	2	3	4
t. Minimizing residential growth rates in the Miller Creek area.....	1	2	3	4
u. Enhancing residential growth rates in the Miller Creek area.....	1	2	3	4

19. The Federal Highway Administration is considering changes to US-93 to improve access from the Miller Creek area. To what extent do you support or oppose each of the following options?

	strongly support	somewhat support	somewhat oppose	strongly oppose	don't know
a. Adding a new bridge and associated roadway improvements	1	2	3	4	5
b. Not adding a bridge or roadway improvements	1	2	3	4	5

20. If new access to the Miller Creek area is added from US-93, different options will have to be considered. If new access is constructed, would you prefer that the access:

- Be added as an interchange, with on- and off-ramps and elevated roadway bridges.  
 An interchange will not require a new traffic signal, but would have a greater visual impact and require more land area.

OR

- Be added as an intersection, where the roads are at the same level as the highway with a traffic signal.  
 An intersection would have less visual impact and require less land area, but would add another stop along US-93.

- strongly prefer an interchange
- somewhat prefer an interchange
- somewhat prefer an intersection
- strongly prefer an intersection
- no preference
- don't know

21. If construction does occur along US-93, how important or unimportant are each of the following issues during construction?

	essential	very important	moderately important	not too important	not at all important
a. Keeping the cost of construction low.....	1	2	3	4	5
b. Completing the project in the shortest time possible.....	1	2	3	4	5
c. Reducing impact on businesses during construction.....	1	2	3	4	5
d. Reducing the amount of traffic delay during construction.....	1	2	3	4	5
e. Improvements beginning as soon as possible.....	1	2	3	4	5
f. Performing construction during limited hours (such as at night only).....	1	2	3	4	5

22. Before taking this survey, had you heard of the possible improvements that might be made along US-93, or of the Environmental Impact Statement study being conducted?

- no
- yes → How had you heard of it?
  - newsletter
  - newspaper articles
  - public community meetings
  - committee meetings
  - "word of mouth" from friends or family
  - other \_\_\_\_\_
- radio
- television
- City or County of Missoula Web site
- Council or Commissioner meeting
- don't remember

23. Please rate your preference for receiving information in the future about possible improvements that might be made along US-93, or of the Environmental Impact Statement study from each of the following sources.

	strongly prefer	somewhat prefer	not at all prefer
a. a project newsletter mailed to your home.....	1	2	3
b. newspaper articles.....	1	2	3
c. public community meetings.....	1	2	3
d. committee meetings.....	1	2	3
e. radio reports.....	1	2	3
f. television reports.....	1	2	3
g. City or County of Missoula Web site.....	1	2	3
h. project website ( <a href="http://www.millerEIS.com">www.millerEIS.com</a> ).....	1	2	3

24. Please give us any other comments you would like to about a second access to the Miller Creek Road area from US-93.

### Demographics

Our last questions are about you and your household. Again, all of your responses to this survey are completely anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

25. About how long have you lived in the Missoula area? \_\_\_\_\_ years

26. Please check the appropriate box indicating the type of housing unit in which you live.

- Detached single-family home
- Duplex, condominium or townhouse
- Apartment
- Mobile home

27. Do you own or rent your residence?

- Own
- Rent

28. Do any children age 12 or younger live in your household? ..... 1 2

29. Do any teenagers aged 13 to 18 live in your household? ..... 1 2

30. Are you or any members of your household aged 65 or older? ..... 1 2

31. Do you live on a gravel road?

- Yes
- No

32. Please indicate the general area in which you live:

- South of Miller Creek
- North of Miller Creek, between US-93 and Upper Miller Creek Road
- North of Miller Creek, South of 39th/S.W. Higgins and East of Upper Miller Creek Road
- East of Reserve and North of 39th/S.W. Higgins
- West of Reserve and North of US-93/Bitterroot River
- anywhere else

33. About how much do you estimate your household's total income before taxes was in 2002? Please check the appropriate box below.

- Less than \$35,000
- \$35,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 or more

34. Are you employed at a job location outside your home?

- Yes
- No

35. What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 +

36. What is your race? (Please check all that apply.)

- White
- Black or African American
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

37. Are you Hispanic/Spanish/Latino?

- Yes
- No

38. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

Thank you very much for participating in this survey. Please send this questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to:

National Research Center, Inc.  
3005 30th Street  
Boulder, CO 80301

# Miller Creek Road/US-93 Transportation Survey: Report of Results

August 2003

Submitted by:  
National Research Center, Inc.  
3005 30th Street • Boulder, CO 80302  
tel. 303-444-7863 • fax. 303-441-1145  
e-mail: nrc@n-r-c.com • [www.n-r-c.com](http://www.n-r-c.com)

## Executive Summary

### Background

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for proposed transportation improvements in the vicinity of Miller Creek Road including a new connection to US-93 and a new bridge crossing the Bitterroot River. National Research Center was selected to survey residents in the study area to determine their opinions about proposed and potential changes.

Approximately 1,200 households were selected to participate in the survey, 600 from the Miller Creek study area (see map at the right) and 600 from a large area which included Missoula and the surrounding area, down south to the Missoula County line. The sample was selected for each area using a systematic sampling method. An individual within each household was selected using the birthday method.

Households received three mailings during May of 2003. The first was a postcard notifying them they had been selected to participate in a survey about alternative being evaluated for the Miller Creek Road area to US-93. About a week later a survey was mailed with a cover letter signed by Jeanette Lostracco, the deputy project manager for the study. Approximately one week after the first survey was mailed, a second survey was mailed, with a cover letter asking those who had not yet participated to do so, while informing those who had already completed the survey not to do so again.

In determining a response rate, which represents the proportion of surveys returned from eligible households, the "ineligible" households are removed from the calculation. In a mailed survey, the ineligible households represent addresses to which a survey was mailed but not delivered. These include addresses of vacant housing units and addresses which were not recognized by the post office. Of the 1,146 eligible households, 137 completed the survey providing a response rate of 13%.

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a "level of confidence" (or margin of error). The 95 percent confidence level for this survey is generally no greater than plus or minus 8 percentage points around any given percent reported. The confidence intervals are larger around estimates for subgroups.

### Resident Opinion about Transportation in the Miller Creek Road and US-93 Area

Residents of the Miller Creek area and residents from the rest of the study area defined for the Miller Creek Road EIS were asked a number of questions regarding their perceptions of travel in the Miller Creek Road and US-93 area.

- About one-third of residents, from both areas, thought congestion on Miller Creek Road was a "major" or "moderate" problem when accessing US-93 during off-peak times.
- Over 80% of Miller Creek Area residents, and almost three-quarters of residents from the rest of the study area thought congestion on Miller Creek Road was a "major" or "moderate" problem when accessing US-93 during peak times.
- Residents were asked how much of a problem they felt it was to get on and off US-93 from Miller Creek Road during peak and off-peak times. In general, respondents believed they have an easier time getting off US-93 from Miller Creek Road than getting on US-93 from Miller Creek Road during both peak and off-peak times.

- Eighty-four percent of Miller Creek area residents think traffic congestion is a problem during peak winter times, while 80% of these residents think traffic congestion is a problem during peak summer times.

- Respondents were queried about the ease of travel on US-93 through the Miller Creek Road intersection using various modes of transportation. These ratings were converted to a 100-point scale, where 0=poor and 100=excellent. Those in the Miller Creek Road area gave an average rating of 42 on a 100-point scale to traveling by car or truck, while those from the rest of the study area gave an average rating of 55 on a 100-point scale. A rating of "67" would be considered "good", and a rating of "33" as "fair," indicating that ease of travel on US-93 through the Miller Creek Road intersection by car or truck was considered less than good.

- When asked to rate the ease of accessing US-93 from Miller Creek Road, those in the Miller Creek Road area gave an average rating of 40, while those in the rest of the study area gave an average rating of 44 on the 100-point scale.

### Resident Opinion about Transportation Improvements in the Miller Creek Area

- A number of issues to be considered for a new bridge crossing were presented to those completing the questionnaire. The issue rated as most important was improving traffic safety, with over 70% in the Miller Creek area or the rest of the study area rating this item as "essential" or "very important." The proportion of respondents rating each issue as "essential" or "very important" was (Miller Creek area proportions are shown first, followed by the proportion from the rest of the study area):

- Improving traffic safety, 83%, 72%
- Ensuring there is minimal impact on water quality, 74%, 70%
- Ensuring there is a minimal impact on air quality, 71%, 62%
- Ensuring there is minimal impact on historic properties, 65%, 57%
- Ensuring there is minimal impact on wildlife, 58%, 57%
- Improving non-motorized safety in the Miller Creek area, 58%, 69%
- Ensuring there is minimal impact on fish, 57%, 56%
- Improving non-motorized travel access in the Miller Creek area, 57%, 63%
- Decreasing traffic congestion on US-93 through the Miller Creek area, 56%, 51%
- Improving the ease of travel on US-93 through the Miller Creek area, 55%, 44%
- Ensuring fisherman access to fishing areas, 55%, 53%
- Improving the ease of getting on and off US-93 from the Miller Creek area, 53%, 49%
- Decreasing traffic congestion on Miller Creek Road, 53%, 54%
- Ensuring there is minimal impact on fishing areas, 52%, 51%
- Enhancing bus service in the Miller Creek area, 46%, 43%
- Reducing the visual impact of a new bridge, 43%, 39%
- Minimizing residential and business relocations or conversions of private property for right-of-way, 42%, 46%
- Minimizing residential growth rates in the Miller Creek area, 38%, 37%
- Maintaining the region's rural character, 36%, 42%
- Keeping the total width of the bridge as small as possible, 18%, 22%
- Enhancing residential growth rates in the Miller Creek area, 15%, 12%

- When asked to what extent they supported or opposed changes to US-93 to improve access from the Miller Creek area, more survey participants supported adding a new bridge and associated improvements (85% in the Miller Creek area, 66% in the rest of the study area) than opposed it.

- Fifty-five percent of Miller Creek area residents thought a second entrance into the Miller Creek area from US-93 would make their quality of life better; only 6% thought it would make it worse. From the rest of the study area, 39% believed a second entrance into the Miller Creek area from US-93 would make their quality of life better, 9% thought it would make it worse.
- Survey participants were asked to indicate what concerns, if any, they had about the creation of a second access into the Miller Creek Road area. The proportion citing each concern was (Miller Creek area proportions are shown first, followed by the proportion from the rest of the study area):
  - None, 41%, 44%
  - It will have adverse impacts on the environment, 32%, 32%
  - It will bring more growth or development, 32%, 31%
  - It will disrupt traffic during construction, 23%, 29%
  - It won't be what is really needed, 19%, 21%
  - It will change the character of our community, 16%, 16%
  - It will make my commute take longer, 3%, 8%
- Those completing the questionnaire were asked what benefits they thought would result from the creation of a second access into the Miller Creek Road area. The proportion citing each concern was (Miller Creek area proportions are shown first, followed by the proportion from the rest of the study area):
  - None, 28%, 26%
  - It will reduce traffic at the existing Miller Creek Road intersection, 56%, 50%
  - It will improve traffic congestion, 48%, 57%
  - It will improve traffic safety, 41%, 47%
  - It will bring more growth or development, 15%, 13%
  - It will improve the quality of life, 11%, 9%
- Study participants were asked how far south within the Miller Creek area they would go to get access to northbound US-93. Over 60% Miller Creek area residents would go to Blue Mountain Road and 45% would go about ½ mile north of the Five Valley Honda. Exactly 70% of the respondents from the rest of the study area would go to Blue Mountain Road to access Northbound US-93, and 59% would go about ½ mile south of the US-93 and Miller Creek Road Intersection.
- Respondents were asked their preference for new access to the Miller Creek area. Opinion was fairly evenly divided, with a slightly greater proportion strongly supporting intersection compared to those strongly supporting an interchange. However, when the proportion "strongly" and "somewhat" preferring one option over another are combined, a slightly greater proportion favor an interchange.

#### Communication Issues

- Close to two-thirds of residents had heard of the EIS, with a slightly higher awareness among residents in the Miller Creek area. The most commonly cited sources of information about the project were newspaper articles, word of mouth, and television.
- Most respondents expressed a preference for receiving information about the EIS through the media: television, newspaper and radio. Over half would use the Internet, and about half wanted a newsletter mailed to their home.


#### Use of the Miller Creek Road and US-93 Area

- Respondents were asked about the frequency of their use of the Miller Creek Road and US-93 at the point these roads intersect. About a quarter use Miller Creek Road to go north on US-93 for their work commute once a month or more. Half or more use it once a month or more for other kinds of trips. Just under 20% use Miller Creek Road once a month or more to go south on US-93 for their work commute, while about 50% of those in the Miller Creek Road area and a third of those in the rest of the study area use it for other kinds of trips.
- Those in the Miller Creek Road area were more likely to use US-93 through the Miller Creek Road intersection than were those who lived in the rest of the area. Forty-four percent or those in the Miller Creek Road area said they do so at least once per month for their work commute compared to 24% of those who lived in the rest of the study area. About two-thirds of those in the Miller Creek Road area and about half of those in the rest of the study area did so for other trips at least once per month.



# Public Workshop #2

May 21, 2003





**MINUTES  
MILLER CREEK ROAD  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
SECOND PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

**Wednesday, May 21, 2003  
5:00 - 7:00 p.m.**

**Linda Vista Golf Course Clubhouse  
4915 Lower Miller Creek Road  
Missoula, MT**

The Second Public Meeting for the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement was held on May 21, 2003 at the Linda Vista Golf Course Clubhouse, Missoula, MT. One Hundred and Sixteen (116) people attended the second public scoping meeting (sign in sheets attached). The meeting was an open house format from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. with a brief formal presentation given by Steve Long, David Evans and Associates, and Jeanette Lostracco, Carter Burgess, Inc. at 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Comments were received from the public a number of ways: 1) personal comments given to project officials on 5 x 8 cards and immediately displayed for public review, and/or 2) written comments dropped in a comment box located at the comment table. Project officials were available throughout the evening to answer questions, receive comments, and talk with the public regarding concerns, questions, and comments they had regarding the project.

Project officials present:

Craig Genzinger, Federal Highway Administration  
Jeanette Lostracco, Carter & Burgess, Inc.  
Troy Halouska, Carter & Burgess Inc.  
Steve Long, David Evans and Associates  
Martha Wiley, David Evans and Associates  
Mike Odum, David Evans and Associates  
Scott Richman, David Evans and Associates  
Janene Caywood, Historical Research Associates

**Public Presentation**

Steve Long, David Evans and Associates, thanked everyone for attending the 2<sup>nd</sup> public meeting and gave a brief explanation of what had been done to date on the Miller Creek Project. At the first meeting we asked a lot of questions on your thoughts about the project. Since the last meetings the purpose and need for this project has been developed – basically to add a second access to the Miller Creek area. The first meeting demonstrated there was a lot of support for the project. He explained that the project team examined any previous studies done in the Miller Creek area, walked the project, looked at specific needs, and studied the current as well as projected traffic volumes for the Miller Creek area. Project traffic volumes will double or triple in the future. Since the Miller Creek intersection is currently operating at a Level of Service D

or F, from a technical standpoint, the project is really needed. A number of alternatives were presented to the public. He explained the purpose of tonight's meeting was to receive public comment on those alternatives. The goal with any alternative is to not adversely affect U.S. 93. To do that they were proposing: (1) building a "T" intersection with a traffic light; or (2) building a full interchange over the railroad tracks with ramps that would merge traffic efficiently onto U.S. 93. Along with the build alternatives, a no-build alternative is also an alternative to be considered. He then turned the presentation over to Jeanette Lostracco to explain where the project goes from here.

Jeanette Lostracco, Carter Burgess, Inc., explained that the next stage was to go through the screening process – take out any alternatives that do not make sense or do not meet purpose and need, and eventually come out with the preferred alternative. The criteria used for evaluation: (1) does the alternative meet purpose and need; (2) is the alternative safe, (3) is the alternative consistent with community plans; and (4) is the alternative an environmentally responsible solution.

Jeanette explained that the next meeting will be held mid-July. At that time the remaining alternatives will be presented and the public will be able to comment on them. The meeting then returned to the open house format so the public could talk one-on-one with project officials.

**Sign In Table**

The following handouts were available to the public at the sign-in table:

- 1) Agenda for the meeting and explanation of room organization
- 2) Comment Sheets
- 3) Summary of First Scoping Meeting, with question responses
- 4) Extra post cards
- 5) Extra copies of the First Project newsletter
- 6) Copies of the First Public Meeting Minutes

**Wall Displays**

Seven (7) wall displays explaining the project were available for public viewing as follows:

- 1) Project Information
  - a. Purpose of Tonight's Workshop snow cards
  - b. Purpose & Need Statement graphic
  - c. Study Area aerial
  - d. Project Schedule graphic
  - e. Public/Agency Involvement snow cards
  - f. Public Information Packet graphic
  - g. Environmental Impact Statement banner
  - h. EIS Process graphic

- i. Contents of an EIS snow cards
  - j. Miller Creek Area Comprehensive Plans banner
  - k. Comp Plan graphic
  - l. West Comp Plan snow cards
  - m. 1997 Comp Plan snow cards
  - n. Project Issues banner
  - o. Project Issues snow cards
  - p. Environmental Issues – Water Resources map
  - q. Environmental Issues – 4(f) map
  - r. Explanation of 4(f) snow cards
- 2) Traffic/Transportation
- a. Traffic Issues snow cards
  - b. Existing Average Daily Traffic graphic
  - c. Future (2025) Average Daily Traffic graphic
  - d. Intersection LOS Definition graphic
  - e. Existing Peak Hour Intersection Volumes and LOS graphic
  - f. Existing Plus Committed (2025) Peak Hour Intersection Volumes and LOS graphic
  - g. TDM snow cards
  - h. Existing/Proposed Bike & Ped Plans graphic
  - i. Existing Transit Routes graphic
  - j. Future Transit snow cards
- 3) Alternatives Development
- a. Range of Alternatives graphic
  - b. Alternatives Screening graphic
  - c. Considered for Defining Evaluation Matrix and Example Matrix graphic
  - d. Evaluation Criteria Text graphic
  - e. Potential Alternatives graphic – alignments with names
  - f. Interchange Profile graphic
  - g. Intersection Profile graphic
- 4) 2003 AM Peak Hour Volumes graphic – available for reference
- 5) 2003 PM Peak Hour Volumes graphic – available for reference
- 6) Comments
- a. Upcoming Steps graphic
  - b. Comments Box on table
  - c. Comments – displayed for public viewing as they were received (listed below)

**VERBAL COMMENTS RECEIVED**

- Safety**
- o Multiple accidents have occurred from drivers turning left northbound onto U.S. 93 and hit by vehicles southbound on 93.
  - o Safety and accidents are an issue at Hayes Creek Road and U.S. 93 large development area.
  - o “Y” is the big problem. Unsafe and needs to be fixed. Runoff roads in winter. “Y” fix needs to be merged “solved” in conjunction with Miller Creek Bridge.
- Noise**
- o Existing traffic is very noisy. Design should include some kind of noise mitigation (Kerr Drive to Ancabide).
- Air Quality**
- o Dust is generated by unpaved Forest Road. Project should consider possible solutions (dust is caused by forest traffic, recreational and logging).
- Wildlife**
- o There is Bald Eagle habitat in area of Bitterroot River where it braids and to south – south of Maloney Ranch alignment.
  - o Bio (wildlife) should include snakes, in addition to mammals, birds, and fish.
- Traffic**
- o Do not create a situation that stops traffic. Keep traffic moving on U.S. 93. Get rid of bottlenecks.
  - o Keep traffic moving. Using interchange would help.
  - o Upper Miller Creek resident believes: (1) existing average daily count for Linda Vista Drive/Upper Miller (i.e. jet.) road is low; (2) people turning onto Briggs from Upper Miller Creek Road slow traffic on latter.
  - o Traffic today originating west of Linda Vista Blvd. / Lower Miller Creek Road use Linda Vista to Upper Miller Creek Road to avoid turning left northbound from Lower to Upper Miller Creek Road at “Y”. A secondary access would serve this and future traffic.
  - o Need regional traffic plan. Highway 93 needs a state analysis. Cumulative traffic from Bitterroot Valley to Missoula. Need to look at a bigger picture than just this project. Consider rapid transit system coming up from Valley. Don’t do anything to preclude this.



- o Future traffic projections look too low on Hwy 93. If going to double, should be 45,000+.
  - o There is so much congestion at the “Y” and on 93 from Miller Creek to Blue Mountain.
- Design**
- o Lower/Upper Miller Creek Road “Y” needs merge lane. When will the “Y” be improved? This could solve current problems.
  - o Need left-turn signal at Highway 93/Miller Creek Road. Stoplight – for people heading up Bitterroot.
  - o There needs to be another route from Lolo to Missoula.
  - o Consider alignment that extends Lower Miller Creek west across Bitterroot River south of our southernmost alignment.
  - o Blue Mountain Road north of 93 may need to be widened/improved. Keep traffic off neighborhood streets. Analysis should include north side of 93 – don’t just stop at highway. Preserve neighborhood character.
  - o Need to coordinate improvements with others needed in the Miller Creek area (“Y”).
  - o Need to connect to a road on the high side of 93 – especially at Maloney Ranch.
  - o Don’t go through golf course.
  - o Highway through golf course doesn’t make sense!
  - o Temporary fix until things get resolved. How about a signal light at the “Y” working during morning (7:00 –9:00) and evening (4:00-6:00) rush hours. Otherwise caution light.
  - o Maybe some lights should be installed along U.S. 93 to regulate flow of traffic.

**Alternatives**

- o Likes Blue Mountain option with interchange.
- o Like “Blue Mountain” option. Makes sense to square up with Blue Mountain Road.
- o Resident near Upper Miller Creek Road/St. Thomas supports Blue Mountain Road alignment.

- o Do not like Gharrett option. Gharrett is already busy. Will not solve problem.
- o Gharrett Connector bad for several reasons: (1) too wide for school kids to cross, (2) why not just use Briggs instead?
- o The alternative from Blue Mountain south makes sense. The others do not make sense.
- o The Gharrett connector is not a good alternative.
- o Gharrett connection doesn’t make any sense – still doesn’t provide additional access.
- o Linda Vista option will introduce traffic into traffic that is backed up at Upper Miller Road.
- o Likes North Lower Miller or Linda Vista. Serves traffic now. What happens if site does not develop?
- o Look at alternative that follows ridge east instead of taking people to U.S. 93. Line up options with Hayes Creek Road (across from Honda).
- o Maloney Ranch alignment should line up with Hayes Creek Road on north side of U.S. 93. 56 houses on Hayes Creek Road and all must use U.S. 93.
- o Maloney Ranch intersection is at a spot where icing occurs.
- o If Maloney Ranch alignment connects to Maloney Ranch Road, it will impact residential neighborhood and without improving Miller Road will result in similar problems at Miller Creek Road and “Y”. Potentially causing a new problem.
- o Favor Maloney Ranch, S. Lower Miller Creek alternatives or even an alternative farther south. Farther south would accommodate future growth.
- o The southern three alternatives are better to accommodate future growth.
- o Alignment should impact people who are causing the problem. People who sold the ranch.
- o Resident near Blue Mountain Road opposes BMR alignment. Consider N-S alignment aligned with Yuhans driveway about ½ mile east of Blue Mountain Road. It would be logical extension north to relieve Reserve Street and provide new access to Airport.
- o My preferred alternative is Blue Mountain Road – there is already a traffic signal. Gharrett connector is a poor alternative
- o Blue Mountain makes good sense to tie into existing light.

- Blue Mountain will impact view. What if growth stops, where is sewer going?
- If Blue Mountain Road Bridge is built, people will continue north on Blue Mountain Road to avoid U.S. 93 northbound. A more effective long-term solution would be alignment that could be first phase of a new route to relieve congestion on U.S. 93 and Reserve Street. Long-term solution is to connect from North Lower Miller Creek to the Interstate. Too much of a load on Reserve Street.
- Blue Mountain is the best. Would be used by Linda Vista and Maloney Ranch. Want interchange.
- The alternatives to the north of Blue Mountain are no good.
- Blue Mountain alternative – move to north side of fitness center – less impact to businesses.
- Likes Blue Mountain Road option. Need more time on “Blue Mountain” – to make it easier to stop.
- Blue Mountain is first preference – least invasive to private property, already signal there.
- The southern alternative should connect to Hayes Creek Road.
- Interchange would be better but is probably too expensive.
- Favors North Miller Creek – intersection would tie into west side bypass.
- Consider adding another alternative – Hayes Creek Road – south of S. Lower Miller Creek. Don’t put it too close to town. Reject Linda Vista and North Lower Miller Creek.
- Favor a no-build alternative and use the funding for transit improvements.
- Would like option to focus on future development. Likes “southern” options.
- Prefer a grade separation for the long term.
- Want options to have least impact on private property.
- Don’t pick an alternative too far south.
- Look at an alternative further south near or south of Miller Creek. Maybe along the power line easement.

#### Misc.

- Thank you for posting purpose and need. You listened to my comments! Thank you! Alternatives displays very well done.
- Project does not get me to work faster. So don’t do project.
- Segment of Lower Miller Creek Road between Totem Lane and proposed extension of Maloney Ranch Road will be vacated.
- Project should consider the cumulative effect of development in the study area on recreational traffic into the forest (Miller Creek Road).
- Is green area south of Lower Miller Creek Road on West Missoula Comprehensive Plan map designated/protected for open space or could development occur in this area? Some existing development is within this open space area.
- Maloney Ranch Road is planned to be extended west to Lower Miller Creek Road (it is flagged/surveyed) and is supposed to be done by October 2003. There are no sidewalks on Maloney Ranch Road.
- Need to consider a moratorium on slow down on construction of new homes in the meantime
- Buckhouse Bridge river crossing (bike/ped trail) and Maloney Ranch trail are not planned improvements but rather “potential” improvements. They appear on no documented plan.
- How will the bridge be funded? Many local residents can’t afford higher property taxes.
- Need a new 93 bypass besides Reserve Street.
- Glad to see you are including TDM strategies – they are needed!
- Need to build the extension of east side highway and west bypass.
- Need to explain and publicize effects on Miller Creek Road and Reserve Street intersections with preferred alternative.
- You still will need to fix Reserve Street intersection.
- Project definitely needed!

- Can you speed up the process? Emergency medical, fire, etc., doesn't have good access at present to townhouses.
- Bridge is definitely needed.
- The "flash" media to view the website is too advanced for some people.
- What are plans for Upper Miller Creek Road south of "Y"? Residents had been told that new houses would not be built west of Upper Miller Creek Road until the road was improved (widened to provide turn lane and bike lanes).
- In the future, better connections from Miller Creek/Linda Vista are to the east will be needed in addition to a new bridge connection.

#### WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED

**New Comment:** The present hearing (5/21/03 @ 5 p.m.) is not concerning the most important problem, i.e., the Lower-Upper Miller Creek Road intersection. A design incorporating a merging traffic lane coming out of the Lower Miller Creek area would be most suitable under the present situation. We have been promised something for the last ten years and nothing has been done. Until the present situation is acknowledged and something done about it, I would not vote for any other solution at this time.

Ed Mosier  
6113 Helena Drive  
Missoula, MT 59803  
406-251-4685

**New Comment:** I would prefer an interchange at Highway 93 that would route Blue Mountain Road and access to Hayes Creek via frontage road. The intersection should go through MDT's system impact system and be coordinated with MDT.

Loran Frazier  
MDT, Missoula  
406-523-5800  
[lfrazier@state.mt.us](mailto:lfrazier@state.mt.us)

**New Comment:** I saw several traffic projections for future traffic estimates. I hope the formulas and people who do the estimates are more accurate than those who missed the mark so bad with Reserve Street. I do not know how any of this works but I imagine that estimates are based on cars. One of the dozens of big trucks at any of the intersections waiting at a stop light and taking space way passed the normal zone lines separating turn lanes, etc., will cause major gridlock in an intersection that might normally work. Add one or two more big trucks with trailers to the mix and it takes forever to get through – even through big intersection like Reserve and Brooks Street.

W. Glen Bumgardner  
6205 St. Thomas Drive  
Missoula, MT 59803  
406-251-3764

**New Comment:** If a bridge, choose least invasive for affecting private property / golf course / Retriever Club. So, use Maloney Ranch or S. Miller Creek for bridge.

Unidentified

**New Comment:** If the Blue Mountain Road intersection is selected as the access site in connection with the new bridge, and Blue Mountain Road needs to be modified to enhance the flow of traffic from I-93 to the west. Please be sensitive to the possible impact on the neighborhood of 30-40 homes just south of Blue Mountain Road and west of I-93. It would be disastrous, for example, if Evergreen Road becomes an access thoroughfare of some type.

Please consider moving the traffic signal @ Blue Mountain Road a bit to the north of the Athletic Club, and tying into a newly contoured Blue Mountain Road that could be routed through mostly undeveloped land. (\* Currently in process of acquiring residential property on Evergreen Road.)

Mike & Pam Shapiro  
16425 NE 169<sup>th</sup> Place  
Woodinville, WA 98072  
(206) 406-3404  
[mshapiro@covad.net](mailto:mshapiro@covad.net)

**New Comment:** As a bicyclist I feel the bike/pedestrian aspect is of great importance. Now the only way to ride to town is to go along Miller Creek Road, which has no shoulders and is very dangerous. I hope good planning is put in place for this concern. I would think the Blue Mountain planned intersection makes the most sense. You would not be creating yet another intersection and if someone wanted to go to Blue Mountain Road from Linda Vista area you would not need to go on 93 and once again for ped/bicycles it makes sense.

Steve Goss  
4707 Scott Allen  
Missoula, MT 59803  
406-251-5509  
[Fourgenoss@yahoo.com](mailto:Fourgenoss@yahoo.com)

**New Comment:** Blue Mountain alternative seems to be the best at this point. Connect to existing Blue Mountain Road with traffic light. Also access for new development is critical. At this time more traffic would funnel to the Linda Vista option ... but would not help growth to the south. Also we have a great open space with the Retriever Club that should be developed.

Cory W. Claussen  
5605 Linda Vista Blvd.  
Missoula, MT 59803  
(406) 251-5290  
[cw@claussen@aol.com](mailto:cw@claussen@aol.com)

**New Comment:** Develop alternatives in the plan to SOV travel, i.e., transit and bicycle facilities. Good bicycle facilities will create the incentive to use the bike, thereby reducing congestion, pollution, and making a more livable community environment.

Neighborhood roads need to be resident friendly, not high-speed access routes. Do not destroy the Linda Vista neighborhoods with big and fast, uncrossable roads. Bike and pedestrian friendly design is a must. Noise impact of vehicles needs to be considered. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Bill Sawyer  
4683 Scott Allen Drive  
Missoula, MT 59803  
(406) 549-0896

**New Comment:** I would be concerned: (1) the streets used to connect to Gharrett are too narrow; (2) Briggs Street which is wide already served the purpose, (3) the school children coming off the hill would have to cross a busy street. The school does not allow parents to deliver their children off Briggs Street for their safety, (4) Gharrett and 39<sup>th</sup> is a poor outlet, (5) Briggs has sidewalks on both sides, and the alternates do not.

Chris Mastad  
2604 Garfand  
Missoula, MT 59803

**New Comment:** Process is very well designed and executed. Must be a good team in place for this project.

**Question:** What is the plan to improve capacity or alternative capacity of Brooks & Reserve Streets? The “Miller Creek Solution” seems well underway to get more people/autos onto Hwy 93 more effectively. However the ‘new’ bottleneck will be Brooks and Reserve.

Bill Kopetski  
3125 Lorraine Drive  
Missoula, MT 59803  
(406) 251-0301  
[kopetski@yahoo.com](mailto:kopetski@yahoo.com)

**New Comment:** Blue Mountain Road – would direct Bitterroot traffic directly (would not have to clog Upper Miller Creek light). Overpass on Blue Mountain would cost more.

Don’t believe there is “only one best plan.” Good luck on the screening. Population concentration in this area (Miller creek) must have workable “in” and “out”. I’m not familiar at all with the legal implications – right-of-way, density permitted, etc., but building is progressing like wildfire so there needs to be adequate, safe, affordable routes. Perhaps city bus service would be a very viable partial solution. I’m a senior and would certainly use such a service.

Mary Ann Andersen  
4855 Christian Drive  
Missoula, MT 59803  
(406) 549-9543

**New Comment:** Thanks for your thoughtful approach to this horrendous problem! It is appreciated! I favor a bridge across the Bitterroot with an overpass above the train tracks. However, there is a big problem. The light at Wal-Mart will stop the flow of traffic and bottlenecks will still occur. Is it possible to widen the highway to perhaps six lanes into Missoula thereby keeping the traffic moving along? This is important. Traffic must move. Perhaps a bridge at Blue Mountain or Maloney Ranch would work best. We need to keep enough space between the overpass and the first light on the highway to keep traffic moving. Thanks for your consideration to our requests.

Dr. Doris A. Balko  
4845 Lower Miller Creek  
Missoula, MT 59803  
(406) 251-2135

**New Comment:** I recommend going farther south toward Hayes Creek Road. There is blank land just south of Hayes Creek Road going toward Lolo and near the abandoned weigh station. Highway 93 drivers coming from the Bitterroot come around that cement wall and have been clocked at 115 mph by the Highway Patrol. Slowing down traffic with a bridge and light would help make that flat stretch safer.

The Maloney Ranch developer should donate the land on both sides of the highway since their new development caused the problem and need for a bridge!!

Susan Campbell Renenu  
5425 Skyway Drive  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 546-5458  
[bluemountain@montana.com](mailto:bluemountain@montana.com)

**New Comment:** I live up Hayes Creek Road off of Hwy 93. I would like to see an interchange type of profile at Hayes Creek. This would address the problem that Hayes Creek residents have getting on and off Hwy 93. This doesn’t appear to be one of the options at this point, however. If the interchange is located north of Hayes Creek, it would be better if it were an intersection profile. This would require traffic to stop and provide a break in traffic for Hayes Creek residents to access Hwy 93. With the interchange profile north of Hayes Creek, traffic would continue to be constant and allow for little opportunity to emerge from Hayes Creek onto Hwy

93. I also would like to see a pedestrian/bike trail to Lolo from Missoula. The only present route is down 93 and on a bicycle it becomes very dangerous where the road narrows down to the point there is little shoulder between the highway and the guardrail.

Shawn Kirfley  
Gogo Wilderness Trail  
Missoula, MT 59804  
(406) 251-6816  
[shawnk@big-sky.net](mailto:shawnk@big-sky.net)

**New Comment:** To help this traffic dilemma we need to do whatever it takes to keep traffic moving. A bridge across the Bitterroot River is necessary but if a light is put in to allow entrance to Hwy 93 another problem has been created. I feel that the present light at the Miller Creek/93 intersection needs to be removed and an overpass there would help a lot now ... not to mention 10-20 years from now. Also, looking ahead, the Hwy 93 needs to be widened to six lanes.

Finally, I do feel that a transit train between Missoula and Hamilton would reduce auto travel. This of course is not within the present change but should be filed for future development. The tracks are there.

Norm Balko  
4845 Lower Miller Creek  
Missoula, MT 59803  
(406) 251-2135

**New Comment:** I feel the Blue Mountain or North Linda Vista options are the better of the access shown. My thought is that no matter which option of the five is chosen, the traffic would move considerably quicker with the interchange profile. As I travel about this country, I pay particular attention to how traffic flows on and off major arterials. Whenever I see similar situations to Missoula, in general, I realize just how far we are behind in design.

Erling Gustafson  
3128 Eldora Lane  
Missoula, MT 59803  
(406) 251-3526

**New Comment:** What is the plan for directing all of the traffic coming off of this project onto Brooks and Reserve Streets? Both Brooks and Reserve are already crowded and with 1200 houses going in the Lower Miller Creek area they will become impassible. It would be a shame to put all this time and money into improving access to Hwy 93, and then have cars not be able to move once they got there.

Also, we strongly support "interchanges" instead of traffic lights for safety as well as improved traffic flow. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Vondene Kopetski  
3125 Lorraine Drive  
Missoula, MT 59803  
(406) 251-0301  
[vondene@earthlink.net](mailto:vondene@earthlink.net)

**New Comment:** With the sole exception of opening the backside of Upper Miller Creek and the valley below, accessing to U.S. 93 makes no real sense. My estimate would be that nearly everyone heads to Missoula in the AM, not south on U.S. 93. To put more traffic north on U.S. 93 anywhere south of Miller Creek Road is helping only Upper Miller Creek and Linda Vista and adding volume to an already dangerous road. How about accessing across the bridge going east and north from Upper Miller Creek to connect with Russell at 39<sup>th</sup>? Much existing road is already there, past Chief Charlo Elementary School?

Ray Vandelaac  
1204 Lakeside Drive  
Lolo, MT 59847  
(406) 273-5462  
[ritzravvvv@aol.com](mailto:ritzravvvv@aol.com)

**New Comment:** I recommend that the so-called Maloney Ranch connection to Hwy 93 be moved opposite to Hayes Creek Road. (This is shown improperly on exhibit "West Miller Creek Comprehensive Plan.") The intersection with Hwy 93 would then be a cross street preferably overhead with appropriate traffic control devices and free approaches.

G.A. Fluke  
5420 Hayes Creek Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
(406) 251-3710

**New Comment:** Absolutely NO Linda Vista Route! It would go through and be only formal dog training area in city area. If this route is selected, go through the Golf Course (there are many others in Missoula) and stay out of the dog training area.

Do the Gharrett Connector but move it south of the "Y", so upper traffic could route off and avoid lower road. I prefer the Blue Mountain Alternative (along with Gharrett Connector) over the other routes.

Julie Uchida  
P.O. Box 7911  
Missoula, MT 59807  
(406) 251-2743

**New Comment:** I'd like to know if and what the plans are for improving the "Y" area on Miller Creek Road? It seems to me we need a Comprehensive Plan that takes this area into account in the design of an alternate access to Miller Creek area. I think it best to favor an alternative that has the least detrimental effect on existing neighborhoods. For that reason I prefer the S. Lower

Miller Creek and Maloney Ranch alternatives. From the graphics, I can't really picture how the Charrett Connector would solve anything.

Laura Lee  
3333 Eldora Lane  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 251-4623

**New Comment:** The study area does not include the Upper (6 miles and beyond) of Miller Creek Road. We are and will be impacted by traffic patterns and continual development in the lower area included in the study area. The road is an unpaved road and does not receive any dust abatement treatment. During warm dry days the dust is so thick 100-yard visibility is often not possible. We have hundreds of vehicles pass by on a nice weekend day, hundreds pass by during hunting season, hundreds pass by for Christmas tree cutting, and large caravans of young people heading for beer and forest recreation on Friday and Saturday night. To compound the problem when large timber sales use Miller Creek as their haul route it is not uncommon for 20-60 loads of logs to go down the road in a single day. The county government has refused to address this issue other than offering an RSID, which is prohibitively expensive for owners of large tracks of land.

Next, I would encourage the study team to expand the consideration beyond the urban/suburban study area to the rural and true forest road and the impacts of development on this area. I, and my neighbors, do not provide the majority of the dust impact on this road and public funding should be used to rectify the situation.

Tom Leik  
10832 Miller Creek Road  
Missoula, MT 59803  
(406) 251-4344

**New Comment:** Due to the huge increased usage of this area within the next 20 years, are developers being asked to foot the bill for the increased costs? They publicly stated they would. Also, regarding the bridge plans, please don't put stoplights on U.S. 93! Your plan for an on-off ramp is excellent.

Unidentified

**Request:** Could I obtain a copy of the study area map with proposed crossing/alternatives marked?

Ray Vandélaç  
1204 Lakeside Drive  
Lolo, MT 59847

**Request:** Need a hard copy of posters presented on 5/21. Can't load your website. Quickly please.

Kathleen Johnson  
6165 Lower miller Creek Road  
Missoula, MT 59803

**Request:** I would like a copy of the West Miller Creek Comprehensive Plan – insert map 'B'. Please send a copy to:

Richard E. Haines  
5935 St. Francis Dr.  
Missoula, MT 59803

**New Comment:** After attending Workshop #2 earlier this evening, I offer the following comments and questions for your consideration.

1. I did not see any traffic projections at the various critical intersections in the project geographical area for the various alternatives. Is this done later? After or before the alternatives are screened down in number?
2. I encourage an integrated bicycle/pedestrian plan as an integral component of alternative selection. More specifically, I encourage bike/walking paved paths as far from main roadways as practical - at least a reasonable buffer from the road and most preferably a route that is separate and park-like in nature. This system should provide safe and efficient bicycle/ped access to the Blue Mountain Rec Area and to other bike routes North and East of Walmart.
3. I have commented earlier about the connection from Upper Linda Vista area to the new bridge (likely on Christian Drive), recapped here for completeness: Best is a parkway style with house set backs to permit somewhat higher speeds with minimal neighborhood impact, to avoid the traffic issues like those currently on Christian Drive.
4. Although information on the various alternatives is apparently limited at this time, I currently prefer the Blue Mountain alternative. It is far enough North so that Maloney Ranch residents traveling to Missoula will use it (and therefore relieve Miller Creek Road congestion) but not so far North that it causes issues with the Miller Creek outlet at Hwy 93. It has the advantage of a direct connection to Blue Mountain Road, which already has a traffic light. Another traffic light between Lolo and Missoula would be unfortunate for Hwy 93 travel efficiency.

- 5. The interchange design would be ideal but is probably too expensive.
- 6. The short distance between Hwy 93 and the railroad tracks on Miller Creek Road intersection seem to prohibit any significant rail traffic due to safety issues. People park on the railroad when waiting for the light now. It would be a shame not to try to address this in the EIS even if money to mitigate is unavailable at this time. A commuter train option from the Bitterroot should be included in the planning document, even though development will be in the future, but within the 2025 timeline, I expect.
- 7. Is the Garrett connector a stand alone alternative or could it be an addition to another alternative to improve traffic flow more? This would be a bonus as an addition to the Blue Mountain Road alternative but is clearly not adequate as a stand alone option.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Arthur F. Gidel  
4855 Scott Allen Drive  
Missoula, MT 59803  
406-239-7350  
yak@bigsky.net

**New Comment:** I attended the meeting yesterday the 21st of May, 2003 and have the following comments:

I believe a bridge over Bitterroot River and railroad tracks with an overpass and off and on ramps best option. In the long run it will probably be safer and could save lives and has the advantage of keeping the flow of traffic moving.

The best location is somewhat south of the Blue Mountain intersection. This gives more space between the Miller Creek Road intersection with Highway 93 and this intersection. We will need this as Bitterroot Valley traffic increases over the years to a point where the Miller Creek intersection overloads and causes long waits.

I would like to see other improvements that would coincide with the bridge project. A park and ride lot near the bridge and overpass with regularly scheduled busses to all parts of the city to help alleviate congestion that will increase with ever increasing Bitterroot valley population growth. The other improvement would be the Garrett street connection from Linda Vista. I think this will help alleviate congestion and help the flow by giving an alternative route in case of accidents on 93.

Thanks for your presentation, and giving me a chance to voice an opinion.

George Leighton  
3209 Paul Lane  
Missoula, MT 59803

**New Comment:** We attended the informational meeting at the Lynda Vista Golf Course outlining the future projections of population and the various proposals to put a bridge across the Bitterroot. It is our strong opinion that any bridge should not invade the established property of the owner who existed prior to the development of the Maloney Ranch. The bridge should be located within the boundaries of the development in a south location. This makes the most sense also because the future population would also come from there. A location closer to the Miller Ck-Highway 93 junction would only serve to create more of a traffic jam at that light. As it is now the traffic from the Bitterroot extends all the way to Lolo at times. The valley cannot sustain this kind of population and we certainly don't have room in our valley for freeway ramps. No one wants to become another Denver, Colorado! That's the place many of us left.

Don & Doris Nordstrom  
4975 L. Miller Creek Road  
Missoula, MT 59803

Questions and Answers  
Public Meeting #2  
May 21, 2003

**Question:** Lower/Upper Miller Creek Road "Y" needs merge lane. When will the "Y" be improved? This could solve current problems.

**Answer:** *Improvements or recommendations for improvements to the wye intersection are not part of this project. This project will assess operations and safety impacts to the wye resulting from construction of a secondary access and the No-Action Alternative. During the preliminary platting process for the Linda Vista Development the issue of the wye intersection of Upper Miller Creek Road and Lower Miller Creek Road was the subject of much debate. There were four alternatives put forth by the developer with a wide range of costs associated with each. The Board of County Commissioners selected the grade separation alternative while the city chose a different alternative. The county has initiated discussions with the city to determine if there is any common ground with the range of alternatives. Those discussions are ongoing at this time and no decision has been reached. Assuming a mutually agreeable alternative is reached, the county will work with the developer to implement the necessary improvements*

**Question:** I'd like to know if and what the plans are for improving the "Y" area on Miller Creek Road? It seems to me we need a Comprehensive Plan that takes this area into account in the design of an alternate access to Miller Creek area.

**Answer:** *See above response.*

**Question:** Gharrett Connector bad for several reasons: (1) too wide for school kids to cross, (2) why not just use Briggs instead?

**Answer:** *The Gharrett Connector alternative was suggested by an attendee at our first public meeting. After a technical review of this alternative, 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 Mille Creek area over the Bitterroot River). Likewise, the Briggs connection would be equally deficient and is not responsive to the Purpose and Need. Therefore, neither of these alternatives will be carried forward through this process. The Gharrett and Briggs connector may, however, be acceptable alternatives for other transportation goals and objectives and should be discussed with the City and County as a separate action or project. At this time, however, the connection appears on neither a near-term nor long-term plan.*

**Question:** Likes North Lower Miller or Linda Vista. Serves traffic now. What happens if site does not develop?

**Answer:** *Given the projected growth for the Missoula area and the limited areas for development, it is likely large portions of the study area will be developed in the future. There are numerous developments undergoing a subdivision review process with the County. This includes the proposed Maloney Ranch development which will develop 450 acres of the ranch in the northwest corner of the study area.*

**Question:** Blue Mountain will impact view. What if growth stops, where is sewer going?

**Answer:** *The alternatives analysis will include an assessment of visual impacts associated with each alternative. These impacts will be documented in the DEIS.*

*Projected population growth is anticipated to continue in the Greater Missoula Area, including the project study area. Development is expected to continue to occur in conjunction with this growth. The City of Missoula is committed to continue the provision of sewer service within their Waste Water Service Area. The portion of the study area south of the Bitterroot River is within the Waste Water Service Area.*

**Question:** Is green area south of Lower Miller Creek Road on West Missoula Comprehensive Plan map designated/protected for open space or could development occur in this area? Some existing development is within this open space area.

**Answer:** *This area is designated as residential in the plan for a build-out of one dwelling unit per 5 acres. It is likely that rural/suburban low-density development will continue in this area.*

**Question:** How will the bridge be funded? Many local residents can't afford higher property taxes.

**Answer:** *It is anticipated that project funds will come from the Federal government, with no local tax increase*



**Question:** Due to the huge increased usage of this area within the next 20 years, are developers being asked to foot the bill for the increased costs? They publicly stated they would.

**Answer:** Over the last several years, new development within Linda Vista and Maloney Ranch subdivisions have been contributing \$1,800 per residence to a fund for improvements in the Miller Creek area. The funds were set aside to assist with matching funds for the Miller Creek Bridge project (currently under way) and other infrastructure needs in the Miller Creek area. Additionally, the developer for Linda Vista is required to make additional improvements to Miller Creek Road. The scope of these improvements has yet to be determined.

The county has initiated discussions with the city to determine needed improvements.

**Question:** Can you speed up the process? Emergency medical, fire, etc., doesn't have good access at present to townhouses.

**Answer:** All reasonable efforts are being taken to maintain an aggressive schedule for the completion of the EIS. Emergency service requirements and access to residential and commercial areas are important considerations that will be studied in the EIS.

**Question:** What are plans for Upper Miller Creek Road south of "y"? Residents had been told that new houses would not be built west of Upper Miller Creek Road until the road was improved (widened to provide turn lane and bike lanes).

**Answer:** At this time, there are no plans for improvements past the southerly wye. Missoula County cannot preclude development in an area until certain road improvements are done. Development will occur like it is now and any mitigation required of that development will be included in a development agreement. At this time, a contribution of \$1,800 is required per lot to help correct existing deficiencies with the northerly wye.

**Question:** What is the plan to improve capacity or alternative capacity of Brooks & Reserve Streets? The "Miller Creek Solution" seems well underway to get more people/autos onto Hwy. 93 more effectively. However, the "new" bottleneck will be Brooks and Reserve.

**Answer:** Traffic generated by the Miller Creek development is expected to access US 93 and contribute to increased traffic on US 93 regardless of the presence or absence of a new connection between US 93 and the Miller Creek area. One of the primary benefits of a new connection would be dispersion of

traffic entering and exiting US 93 to two access points, instead of one access at Miller Creek Road.

Modifications to Brooks and Reserve Streets including the intersection of these two highway segments are beyond the scope of this project. Currently MDT has no plans to improve capacity of either Brooks or Reserve Streets (US 93) in this area. However, additional turn bays or signal timing adjustments may be implemented as necessary to maintain safe operations of US 93.

**Question:** Do not create a situation that stops traffic – keep traffic moving. An interchange would help – is this possible?

**Answer:** Maintaining traffic flow is of critical importance to the project development and design team, including the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), and the City and County. At this stage in the design process two types of new roadway connection alternatives are being considered.

1. At grade (with signal)
2. Grade Separated (interchange)

Further analysis to address environmental and community impacts, cost, and traffic operations and safety is needed before selecting the appropriate type of interchange design.

**Question:** I favor a bridge across the Bitterroot with an overpass above the train tracks. However, there is a big problem. The light at Wal-Mart will stop the flow of traffic and bottlenecks will still occur. Is it possible to widen the highway to perhaps six lanes into Missoula thereby keeping the traffic moving along? This is important.

**Answer:** Traffic generated by the Miller Creek development is expected to access US 93 and contribute to increased traffic on US 93 regardless of the presence or absence of a new connection between US 93 and the Miller Creek area. One of the primary benefits of a new connection would be dispersion of traffic entering and exiting US 93 to two access points, instead of one access at Miller Creek Road.

The amount of traffic forecast to travel on US 93 by the year 2025 including traffic generated from the planned development is addressed in the Missoula urbanized area travel demand model used by the City and County. Based on the travel demand model, possible future traffic operations needs are being identified and addressed in the new Missoula Transportation Plan Update.

**Question:** What is the plan for directing all of the traffic coming off of this project onto Brooks and Reserve Streets? Both Brooks and Reserve are already crowded and with 1200 houses going in the Lower Miller Creek area they will become impossible.

**Answer:** Traffic generated by the Miller Creek development is expected to access US 93 and contribute to increased traffic on US 93 regardless of the presence or absence of a new connection between US 93 and the Miller Creek area. One of the primary benefits of a new connection would be dispersion of traffic entering and exiting US 93 to two access points, instead of one access at Miller Creek Road.

Modifications to Brooks and Reserve Streets including the intersection of these two highway segments are beyond the scope of this project. Currently MDT has no plans to improve capacity of either Brooks or Reserve Streets (US 93) in this area. However, additional turn bays or signal timing adjustments may be implemented as necessary to maintain safe operations of US 93.

The amount of traffic forecast to travel on US 93 by the year 2025 including traffic generated from the planned development is addressed in the Missoula urbanized area travel demand model used by the City and County. Based on the travel demand model, possible future traffic operations needs are being identified and addressed in the new Missoula Transportation Plan Update.

**Question:** With the sole exception of opening the backside of Upper Miller Creek and the valley below, accessing to U.S. 93 makes no real sense. My estimate would be that nearly everyone heads to Missoula in the AM, not south on U.S. 93. To put more traffic north on U.S. 93 anywhere south of Miller Creek Road is helping only Upper Miller Creek and Linda Vista and adding volume to an already dangerous road. How about accessing across the bridge going east and north from Upper Miller Creek to connect with Russell at 39<sup>th</sup>? Much existing road is already there, past Chief Charlo Elementary School?

**Answer:** A new roadway connection between the Miller Creek area and 39<sup>th</sup> Ave. would improve roadway network connectivity in the southwest portion of the Missoula urban area. However, a new road south of the potential Gharrett Ave. connector would not meet the purpose and need of the project, and it would result in adverse impacts to established residential neighborhoods.

**Question:** I did not see any traffic projections at the various critical intersections in the project geographical area for the various alternatives. Is this done later? After or before the alternatives are screened down in number?

**Answer:** We are in the process of gathering the necessary data and placing it in geographical figures for the various alternatives. The forecast traffic data at intersections will be one of the measures used to screen the alternatives

**Question:** Is the Gharrett connector a stand alone alternative or could it be an addition to another alternative to improve traffic flow more? This would be a bonus as an addition to the Blue Mountain Road alternative but is clearly not adequate as a stand-alone option.

**Answer:** The Gharrett connector does not meet the purpose and need of this project and thus is not a viable stand-alone alternative. Although it is not likely to be part of this project, it could be considered as a separate action to improve transportation system connectivity. The Gharrett connector has not been identified as a recommended action in local transportation plans.

**Question:** Can you employ a temporary fix until things get resolved? How about a signal at the "y" working during morning (7:00-9:00) and evening (4:00-6:00) rush hours?

**Answer:** Improvements or recommendations for improvements to the Wye intersection are not part of this project. This project will assess operations and safety impacts to the wye resulting from construction of a secondary access and the No-Action Alternative. During the preliminary platting process for the Linda Vista Development the issue of the wye intersection of Upper Miller Creek Road and Lower Miller Creek Road was the subject of much debate. There were four alternatives put forth by the developer with a wide range of costs associated with each. The Board of County Commissioners selected the grade separation alternative while the city chose a different alternative. The county has initiated discussions with the city to determine if there is any common ground with the range of alternatives. Those discussions are ongoing at this time and no decision has been reached. Assuming a mutually agreeable alternative is reached, the county will work with the developer to implement the necessary improvements.



# Public Workshop #3

July 16, 2003





**MINUTES  
MILLER CREEK ROAD  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
THIRD PUBLIC MEETING**

**Wednesday, July 16, 2003  
5:00 - 7:00 p.m.**

**Linda Vista Golf Course Clubhouse  
4915 Lower Miller Creek Road  
Missoula, MT**

The Third Public Meeting for the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement was held July 16, 2003 at the Linda Vista Golf Course Clubhouse in Missoula, Montana. Fifty-Four (54) people attended the second public scoping meeting (sign in sheets are attached). The meeting was an open house format from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., with a brief formal presentation given by Steve Long (David Evans and Associates) and Jeanette Lostracco (Carter Burgess, Inc.) at 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Comments were received from the public a number of ways: 1) personal comments given to project officials on 5 x 8 cards and immediately displayed for public review, and/or 2) written comments dropped in a comment box located at the comment table. Project officials were available throughout the evening to answer questions, receive comments, and talk with the public regarding concerns, questions, and comments they had regarding the project.

**Project officials present:**

- Craig Genzlinger, Federal Highway Administration
- Jeanette Lostracco, Carter & Burgess, Inc.
- Diana Bell, Carter & Burgess, Inc.
- Troy Halouska, Carter & Burgess, Inc.
- Steve Long, David Evans and Associates
- Scott Richman, David Evans and Associates
- Janene Caywood, Historical Research Associates

**Public Presentation**

Jeanette Lostracco thanked everyone for attending the third public scoping meeting and explained that the purpose of this meeting was to bring the public up-to-date on project activities and present a list of alternatives for public comment. She introduced Craig Genzlinger (FHWA) and Steve Long (David Evans and Associates), and briefly explained the Miller Creek project.

From the information gathered at the previous two public meetings, the project team had originally identified seven alternatives along and one No-Action alternative. Those alternatives were evaluated and: two were eliminated because they did not meet purpose and need, five were brought forward, and two additional alternatives were added because of public input received at the previous public scoping meeting. Those seven alternatives were then evaluated and four

alternatives were eliminated. Those four alternatives and the reasons they were eliminated are listed below:

**Lolo South Alternative:**

- 1) Did not meet purpose and need because it did not provide a second connector to US 93 South.
- 2) Did not meet area plans.
- 3) Would have significant environmental impact because of the length of the connector road, which would impact a large, environmentally sensitive area.

**Maloney Ranch Alternative:**

- 1) Would cut across a MFWP Section 4(f) property, defined as publicly owned property used for recreation. Montana law requires those areas be avoided if other alternatives are available.
- 2) Safety issue – it required a large cut into a hillside, which made US 93 unsafe for the traveling public because of icing and site problems.

**Linda Vista Alternative:**

- 1) Would impact a very large floodplain, wetland and riparian area, and wildlife habitat.

**Garrett Commuter Alternative:**

- 1) Did not meet the purpose and need for the project.
- 2) Did not appear on any local area plans.
- 3) Would cut across a future planned park area, which is a 4(f) property.
- 4) Significant impact to surrounding streets because it would substantially increase traffic to neighborhoods.

Steve Long explained the results of the Visioning Session, which was held two weeks prior to this public meeting. The purpose of the Visioning Session was to help the project team understand the character of the area and acquire information from people in the local area regarding their vision for the future look and use of the area. The Session was made up of several local participants with a wide range of opinions about what the intersection should look like.

Three things became clear from that meeting: (1) the character of the new road should provide a link from a rural area to an urban area, i.e., winding, meandering type roadway with lots of vegetation and trees; (2) there should be some type of Neighborhood Center as a dispersion point, and (3) the road should not preclude but possibly encourage future plans for bus service, bike trails, pedestrians trails, etc.

Steve Long explained that the team had not yet determined what the bridge crossing would look like, and stated they were somewhat limited by the railroad crossing, which was causing the team to look at a more creative way to make it work.

He explained that over the next three months the team would be analyzing the impacts of each alternative in great detail. Based on those detailed studies, the team would come back sometime

in October to present the recommended Preferred Alternative to the public.

After Steve Long's presentation, the meeting returned to the open house format, providing the public further opportunity to comment and ask questions on the material presented or the project in general.

### Room Arrangement

#### Sign In Table

The following handouts were available to the public at the sign-in table:

- 1) Agenda for the meeting and explanation of room organization
- 2) Comments Sheets
- 3) Questions and Answers from the Second Scoping Meeting
- 4) Extra copies of the Second Project newsletter

#### Wall Displays

Six (6) wall displays explaining the project were available for public viewing as follows:

- 1) Project Background Information
  - a. Purpose of Tonight's Workshop snow cards
  - b. Purpose and Need Statement
  - c. Project Issues snow cards
  - d. Study Area aerial
  - e. Project Schedule
  - f. Public/Agency Involvement snow cards
- 2) Visioning Workshop
  - a. Purpose of Visioning/Attendees
  - b. Visioning Results
  - c. Goals Identified and Issues to be Evaluated
  - d. Development Concept
- 3) Alternatives Development
  - a. No Action Alternative
  - b. Range of Alternatives
  - c. Interchange Profile
  - d. Intersection Profile
  - e. Typical Section
  - f. Potential Alternatives—alignments with names
  - g. Alternatives Screening
  - h. Evaluation Criteria
  - i. Evaluation Matrix

#### 4) Environmental Issues

- a. EIS Process
- b. Contents of an EIS snow cards
- c. Water Resources/Wetlands map
- d. 303(d) List snow cards
- e. Endangered Species snow cards
- f. Riparian Habitat snow cards
- g. Sensitive Plant Species snow cards
- h. Floodplains map
- i. Cultural Resources snow cards
- j. NRHP snow cards
- k. Explanation of 4(f) snow cards
- l. 4(f) Resources map
- m. Comp Plan map
- n. Comp Plan snow cards
- o. Zoning map
- p. Parks and Recreation map
- q. Farmland snow cards
- r. Hazardous Material snow cards
- s. Air Quality snow cards

#### 5) Traffic/Transportation Issues

- a. Traffic Issues snow cards
- b. MDT Model for Alternatives snow cards
- c. LOS Intersection Definitions
- d. 2003 AM Intersection Volumes and LOS
- e. 2003 PM Intersection Volumes and LOS
- f. 2003 Existing Roadway Volumes
- g. 2025 AM Intersection Volumes
- h. 2025 PM Intersection Volumes
- i. 2024 Future Roadway Volumes
- j. TDM snow cards
- k. Existing/Proposed Bike and Pedestrian Plans
- l. Future Transit snow cards.

#### 6) Comments

- a. Upcoming Steps
- b. Comments Box and Extra Comment Sheets on table
- c. Comments – displayed for public viewing as they were received (listed below)

### Verbal Comments Received

#### Blue Mountain Road Alternative:

- Suggest a new intersection location for Blue Mountain Road alternative with BMR intersection – would be safer location than existing US 93/BMR intersection.
- Would an interchange fit at Blue Mountain? What would property impacts be? (Landowner south of 93 and east of Blue Mountain Road extension)
- Have two separate one-lane bridges been considered? Avoid interchange/intersection (See attached drawing).
- Concerned about traffic increase on Christian Drive, particularly with Blue Mountain Road and South Lower Miller Creek alternatives. Efforts by residents to get traffic calming implemented are meeting resistance from local policy makers. Traffic calming is needed on high volume, residential streets.
- Blue Mountain Alternative is preferred.
- Concerned about more traffic and safety on Christian Drive, especially if bridge location is here. Need traffic calming on Christian Drive now.
- LOS for future peak hour volumes (shown on visual) – traffic already backs up on 93 to Blue Mountain Road. How much more traffic will backup back of bridge?
- Favor Blue Mountain Road alternative. Need to consider slight realignment of Blue Mountain Road to avoid railroad/road close proximity. Need to slow traffic to 55 mph between Blue Mountain Road and Miller Creek Road to reduce accidents.
- Concerned about safety at Blue Mountain. Lots of skid marks there.
- Add residents along Blue Mountain Road to the mailing list.
- Doesn't like Blue Mountain Road Alternative since it would impact their land.

#### North Miller Creek Alternative:

- North Miller Creek makes most sense.

#### South Miller Creek Alternative:

- Who will use south alternative? Too much back tracking.
- South Lower Miller Creek is best alternative. The others are too close to existing Bitterroot Bridge. Ask about Maloney Ranch Subdivision Bridge easement (promised?)
- South Lower Miller Creek is my choice because Maloney Ranch is building in that direction (at Blue Mountain Trailer Park or Shirt Shop with Bear).

#### General:

- Concerned about traffic increases on Christian Drive resulting from new connection.
- Request for clarification of project ID'd on "Existing and Planned Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities" project – "Ped/Bike trail and river crossing near Buckhouse Bridge connecting Fort Missoula to Missoula/Lolo Trail". New bridge near Buckhouse would be difficult, but may be more beneficial further north, closer to Fort Missoula.
- How much more does an interchange cost compared to an intersection? 4x to 6x as much?
- Is interchange overkill?
- 2003 ADT on Miller Creek Road between Briggs and Y is not shown correctly on "existing ADT" display. Should be 12,000 vpd not 1,200 vpd.
- Would an interchange fit?
- Any talk about running sewer across bridge?
- Cost shouldn't fall on property owners, should fall on developers.
- Meandering of the new roadway is good.
- People north of 93 need to be involved in the decision-making process.
- An overpass/intersection is much safer than crossing the railroad at grade.
- The dismissed alternatives are appropriate.
- Shouldn't have taken out Linda Vista. Would have more traffic using it. Doesn't think people will use South Lower Miller Creek or Blue Mountain Alternative (out-of-distance travel).

- If you put in medians and trees and grass, there is too much money and time spent on maintenance.
- The further south the better to eliminate traffic congestion and to accommodate growth.
- I like the two northern alternatives.

**Written Comments Received**

Please stop planting trees and shrubs to make roads pretty and construct practical roads and bridges that move traffic. No medians. No bike trail. No cute lamps for street lighting. Just the basics. An interchange is overkill and too expensive. Flow the bridge traffic into Hwy 93. And stop approving more huge developments at the Maloney Ranch. You don't have the sewer lines. Hwy 93 is too small for traffic from Bitterroot and Maloney/Linda Vista. Bridge should be at Lower Miller Creek farthest out by Blue Mountain Trailer Park area.

Unidentified

While we are making this major change, I feel that we need to do this with future needs in mind: (1) Because traffic will increase there should be no stopping. Use the interchange you have illustrated (over RR river and on/off ramp to Hwy 93). (2) Safety is paramount. We cannot do a "part-way" fix. Do it right. It will cost dollars but it will save lives. You folks are doing a good job. Keep it up.

Norm Balko  
4845 Lower Miller creek  
Missoula, MT 59801  
251-2135

According to evaluation matrix, Blue Mountain Road is most acceptable. As a landowner, taxpayer, I object to Blue Mountain Road as the most desirable. Our neighborhood, which would be adversely impacted by that decision, has received no notice of your meetings.

Blue Mountain is narrow, winding, and environmentally fragile – clearly not appropriate for further heavy traffic. My objections could go on and on. However, it is imperative that property owners north of 93 be contacted for their responses.

Helen Cereudanu, Esq.  
2555 Blue Mountain Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
(406) 721-8995

I notice the typical sections of the roadway display a 2-lane roadway. Seems to me you should

consider a 4-lane roadway now rather than an expansion later. Later widening is an expensive proposition, especially if you need to widen the bridge over the Bitterroot River. I suggest it is better to do a 4-lane now rather than later.

Tom Donahue  
5800 Pinewood Lane  
Missoula, MT 59803  
(406) 251-3542

What happened to the map of the entire city to show where people are trying to get?

Shaune Ginter  
Missoula, MT 59803

Please look to the future and pick the South Lower Miller creek Alternative. This is the area of the most intense new growth and it would not negatively impact the existing farmer/ranchers.

Unidentified

At grade railroad crossing – probably OK given number of trains that pass – normally one a week and there probably isn't a growing demand for train service – most lumber mills are gone.

I like the idea of the "boulevard" look. Acquire right-of-way adequate for 4-lanes – I think one lane in each direction will be outdated in 15-20 years.

Jan Hogan  
6706 Kelsey Court  
Missoula, MT 59803  
(406) 251-8524

Please consider the character of the neighborhood and do not force the Ginters, Shereibs, and Boggess out of the farming business. If North Lower Miller Creek or Blue Mountains routes are chosen, the change is forever. The rural face of Miller will be gone forever.

Unidentified



Two of the routes will negatively affect the long-standing tradition of agriculture in the Lower Miller Creek area. North Lower Miller Creek and Blue Mountain would each force two existing farms out of business. The reason people moved to this area and enjoy the changing landscape would be gone.

Shauna Ginter  
5080 Old Bitterroot Road  
Missoula, MT 59801  
(406) 251-4532

One of the key considerations of an EIS is trying to preserve the character of the neighborhood. Two of the proposed routes would change the character forever by forcing out at least two of the existing farms. This is a change and can never be reversed.

Unidentified

Has the sewer been looked at crossing the bridge? If the bridge is put at Blue Mountain there are a lot of existing homes and businesses that would use it. By putting the sewer across and connecting these homes and businesses we would remove the sewers from the aquifer.

If the bridge is put at Blue Mountain I believe that there would be a lot of bikes and pedestrians taking advantage of Blue Mountain recreation area and Maclay Flats river park.

Chris Mostad  
2604 Garland  
(406) 251-4366

Questions and Answers  
Public Meeting #3  
July 16, 2003

**Question:** Would an interchange fit at Blue Mountain? What would property impacts be?

**Answer:** *One of the alternatives being evaluated includes an interchange at Blue Mountain. Property impacts would include business displacements and changes to access for local businesses.*

**Question:** Have two separate one-lane bridges been considered? Avoid interchange/intersection.

**Answer:** *Yes, two separate one-lane bridges have been considered. We believe there would be no advantage to using one-lane bridges. They would cost more, have a greater impact area, and would complicate the intersection and interchange designs by requiring a separation of the travel lanes at the bridges with a resulting open area between the bridges that would need a safety treatment such as impact attenuators and/or guardrail. Use of one-lane bridges would not change the operational characteristics of the interchange or the intersection, but would negatively impact safety by introducing obstacles in the road median as noted above.*

**Question:** LOS for future peak hour volumes (shown on visual)—traffic already backs up on 93 to Blue Mountain Road. How much more traffic will back up back of bridge?

**Answer:** *By 2025, traffic volumes on major roadways within the study area are expected to increase over existing levels. Traffic on the segment of US 93 that passes through the study area is expected to increase by approximately 6,000 vehicles per day (vpd), a 25-26 percent increase over existing daily volumes. Traffic flow on northbound US 93 into Missoula is constrained by heavy traffic on the highway and by the need to accommodate large volumes of conflicting traffic movements at the signalized intersections with Reserve Street and Miller Creek Road. The combination of increasing traffic volumes on US 93 with the constraint of the busy signalized intersections is likely to result in longer vehicle queue lengths under any of the alternatives. Each of the build alternatives would result in a shift of approximately 6,000 (Alternative 4) to 9,000 (Alternatives 2A and 2B) vpd from Miller Creek Road to US 93 south of Miller Creek Road. However, provision of more green signal time for US 93 traffic at the Miller Creek intersection would mitigate the impact of this*

**additional traffic. The longest future queue lengths are likely to occur under Alternatives 2A, 2B, 3A, and 4, while elimination of the signal at Blue Mountain Road under Alternatives 3B and 3C would improve operations on US 93 near Blue Mountain Road.**

**Question:** Who will use south alternative? Too much backtracking.

**Answer:** Based on adjusted model results for the planning year (2025), DEA estimates that approximately 23,500 vehicles per day will use Miller Creek Road under the No-Build Alternative. Under each of the build alternatives, this daily traffic would be split between Miller Creek Road and the proposed new roadway connection. Under the South Lower Miller Creek Road Alternative, it is estimated that approximately 15,700 (67%) vehicles per day would continue to use Miller Creek Road, while approximately 7,800 (33%) vehicles per day would travel on the proposed alternative route. The South Lower Miller Creek Road Alternative is not expected to attract as much traffic as either of the other build alternatives, because it would require more out of direction travel for the majority of trips in and out of the Miller Creek area that are destined to Missoula. The South Lower Miller Creek Road Alternative would primarily serve planned future development in the Maloney Ranch portion of the Miller Creek area.

**Question:** South Lower Miller Creek is best alternative. The others are too close to existing Bitterroot Bridge. {Comment noted} Ask about Maloney Ranch Subdivision bridge easement (promised?).

**Answer:** The County does own right-of-way (not an easement) in the vicinity of the old bridge crossing the Bitterroot. The County owned right-of-way is 60 feet wide. The centerline of this alignment begins due south of the existing Blue Mountain/Highway 93 intersection, and generally parallels Highway 93 in a southwesterly direction for approximately 250 feet. The alignment then turns in a southeasterly direction, crosses the Bitterroot River, and proceeds approximately 500 feet. At this point the alignment turns east, travels another 2,500 feet where it transitions into the Old Bitterroot Road, and then ties into the Lower Miller Creek Road.

**Question:** How much more does an interchange cost compared to an intersection? Four times to six times as much?

**Answer:** An interchange will typically cost two to four times as much as an intersection. For the current alternatives, these costs could exceed the range due to the complexities introduced by the close proximity of the railroad and the river.

**Question:** Is interchange overkill? Would an interchange fit?

**Answer:** Depending on the projected volumes along US 93, the location of the new crossing and the anticipated use, an interchange may be required to provide a safe efficient connection. Interchanges can be designed in very limited space constraints. Several conceptual alternatives have been reviewed and they will fit with some impacts to adjacent properties.

**Question:** Any talk about running sewer across bridge?

**Answer:** Neither the County nor City has raised this as a need for the project. This type of detail is usually incorporated later in the design process.

**Question:** What happened to the map of the entire city to show where people are trying to get?

**Answer:** The map that was displayed was for the scoping meeting to give people an overall picture. We did not feel it was necessary to show it again. If you want to view the map, it is on the project website at [www.millersis.com](http://www.millersis.com) or you can call the project hotline at 1-800-865-6905 to request a hard copy.

**Question:** Request for clarification of project ID'd on "Existing and Planned Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities" project—"Ped/Bike trail and river crossing near Buckhouse Bridge connecting Fort Missoula to Missoula/Lolo Trail." New bridge near Buckhouse would be difficult, but may be more beneficial further north, closer to Fort Missoula.

**Answer:** The facilities shown on the map are recommended improvement based on what is shown on the Missoula Transportation Plan for 2025; it would not preclude an additional bridge closer to Fort Missoula.



# Public Opinion Survey

September, 2003





Dear Resident,

We would like your opinions as alternatives are evaluated for access from the Miller Creek Road area to US-93. We are enclosing a questionnaire to get your feedback and to find out your preferences among three alternatives. Your household was randomly selected to participate in this survey. Only a small number of households have been selected so it is especially important for a member of your household to respond.

In order to obtain a representative and random sample, we have devised a simple method for you to choose which household member should complete the survey. **Please have the adult age 18 or older who most recently had a birthday complete this survey. The year of birth plays no role in the selection.** Your responses to this survey will be completely anonymous and results will be reported in group form only. When you complete the survey, please return it using the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

An independent transportation planning/engineering firm has been hired to study options for providing access from the Miller Creek Road area to US-93. National Research Center, Inc. is helping gather opinions and preferences from residents through this survey. Your participation is very important to us and to everyone who would be affected by any transportation projects that might be undertaken. The anonymous results will be shared with the project team and the local media.

If you would like more information about the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement Project, please call the toll-free project hotline at 800-865-6905 or visit the project website at [www.millerEIS.com](http://www.millerEIS.com)

Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,



Jeanette Lostracco  
Deputy Project Manager

Dear Resident,

About a week ago we sent you a copy of this survey about access from the Miller Creek Road area to US-93. If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, we thank you for your time, and ask you to discard this survey. **Please do not respond twice.**

If you have not yet responded, we encourage you to do so. Your household was randomly selected to participate in this survey. Only a small number of households have been selected so it is especially important for a member of your household to respond.

In order to obtain a representative and random sample, we have devised a simple method for you to choose which household member should complete the survey. **Please have the adult age 18 or older who most recently had a birthday complete this survey. The year of birth plays no role in the selection.** Your responses to this survey will be completely anonymous and results will be reported in group form only. When you complete the survey, please return it using the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

An independent transportation planning/engineering firm has been hired to study options for providing access from the Miller Creek Road area to US-93. National Research Center, Inc. is helping gather opinions and preferences from residents through this survey. Your participation is very important to us and to everyone who would be affected by any transportation projects that might be undertaken. The anonymous results will be shared with the project team and the local media.

If you would like more information about the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement Project, please call the toll-free project hotline at 800-865-6905 or visit the project website at [www.millerEIS.com](http://www.millerEIS.com)

Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,



Jeanette Lostracco  
Deputy Project Manager

# Miller Creek Road/US-93 Transportation Survey

This survey will be used to help form and evaluate alternatives for access from the Miller Creek/Linda Vista area to US-93. The adult in the household 18 years or older who most recently had a birthday should complete the survey and return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to:

National Research Center, Inc.  
3005 30th Street  
Boulder, CO 80301

Your responses are confidential, and will be reported in group form only. Thank you for your participation!

1. Three alternatives for the location of new access to the Miller Creek/Linda Vista area from US-93 are under consideration, with a fourth option for creating no new access. The map below shows these three locations. At which of three, if any, would you most like to see the new access?

- No new access
- South Lower Miller Creek
- Blue Mountain
- North Lower Miller Creek



2. If new access to the Miller Creek/Linda Vista area is added from US-93, different options will have to be considered. If new access is constructed, would you prefer that the access:  
 - Be added as an interchange, where the roads are at the same level as the highway with a traffic signal.  
 An intersection would have less visual impact and require less land area, but would add another stop along US-93.

OR

- Be added as an interchange, with on- and off-ramps and elevated roadway bridges.  
 An interchange will not require a new traffic signal, but would have a greater visual impact and require more land area.

OR

- Be added as a grade-separated intersection, which is a small scale interchange with fewer connecting ramps and less visual impact. The grade-separated intersection may also require a traffic signal.

**Intersection**  
 - At-Grade  
 - Traffic Signals



**Interchange**  
 - Overhead Roadway  
 - Connecting Ramps



**Grade-Separated Intersection**  
 - Some Connecting Ramps  
 - Some Traffic Signals



Would you say you... .

- prefer an interchange
- prefer an intersection
- prefer a grade-separated intersection
- have no preference
- don't know

3. Please rate how much you support or oppose each of the following alternatives:

	strongly favor	favor	neither favor nor oppose	oppose	strongly oppose
a. No new access .....	1	2	3	4	5
b. An interchange at South Lower Miller Creek .....	1	2	3	4	5
c. An intersection at South Lower Miller Creek .....	1	2	3	4	5
d. A grade-separated intersection at South Lower Miller Creek .....	1	2	3	4	5
e. An interchange at Blue Mountain .....	1	2	3	4	5
f. An intersection at Blue Mountain .....	1	2	3	4	5
g. A grade-separated intersection at Blue Mountain .....	1	2	3	4	5
h. An interchange at North Lower Miller Creek .....	1	2	3	4	5
i. An intersection at North Lower Miller Creek .....	1	2	3	4	5
j. A grade-separated intersection at North Lower Miller Creek .....	1	2	3	4	5

4. The table below outlines some of the advantages and disadvantages of the four options being considered for new access to the Miller Creek/Linda Vista area. Given this information, which of the following four options do you prefer?

- No new access
- South Lower Miller Creek
- Blue Mountain
- North Lower Miller Creek

	Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Alternative*			
	No New Access	South Lower Miller Creek	Blue Mountain	North Lower Miller Creek
Is the alternative safe? (Would it decrease traffic accidents?)	Due to the existing and future travel demands along Miller Creek road and the "Y" and US 93 intersections, the accident rates may increase. <b>→</b> Poor	Sleep slopes on north face in canyon area could provide for design challenges, including steep grades, and roadway long. Emergency response and access into the area may be circuitous. <b>→</b> Fair	Due to the close proximity of the railroad to US-93, an intersection at this location is not ideal. A grade-separated intersection or full interchange would mitigate this condition but result in visual impacts and greater costs. <b>→</b> Fair	Due to the close proximity of the railroad to US-93, an intersection at this location is not ideal. A grade-separated intersection or full interchange would mitigate this condition but result in visual impacts and greater costs. <b>→</b> Fair
Is the alternative consistent with local plans?	The adopted comprehensive plan assumes a second access into the Miller Creek area. <b>→</b> Poor	Generally consistent with the Missoula Urban Comprehensive Plan and West Miller Creek Comprehensive Plan. <b>→</b> Fair	Completely consistent with comprehensive plan and provides additional system connectivity. <b>←</b> Good	Generally consistent with the Missoula Urban Comprehensive Plan and West Miller Creek Comprehensive Plan. <b>→</b> Fair
Will the alternative provide an environmentally responsible transportation solution?	From a natural / cultural resource perspective the alternative limits direct impacts. The alternative will not address travel delays or vehicle miles traveled. <b>→</b> Fair	The alternative would impact a portion of the riparian and river corridor and would be visually intrusive within a pristine undeveloped area. Potential for substantial impacts to wildlife habitats. Some business and residential impacts. <b>→</b> Fair	Some business and residential impacts. Relocation would be required. Provides system continuity. Minimal impacts to riparian and associated wetlands and wildlife habitat. <b>←</b> Good	Wide floodplain crossing. Impacts to riparian and associated wetland and wildlife habitat. Residential and business relocations would be required. <b>→</b> Fair
Will the alternative minimize impacts to the neighborhood?	The alternative will limit the direct land use impacts. The increase and anticipated delays of traffic flows and congestion may redefine the character as more urban than suburban. Potential cut-through traffic on adjacent neighborhoods may have negative effects. <b>→</b> Fair	Impacts to Miller Creek and surrounding neighborhoods would be improved by limiting delays, traffic congestion and cut-through potential. <b>←</b> Good	May increase cut-through traffic for northern neighborhoods. Land acquisition would impact open space agriculture/ranch use. <b>→</b> Fair	Land acquisition would impact open space agriculture/ranch use. <b>→</b> Fair

\*For more information on the advantages and disadvantages of these alternatives, please see the document on the Internet at: <http://www.milleris.com/images/july/PrelimEval%20Matrix.pdf>

5. Given the new information, please rate how much you support or oppose each of the following alternatives:

	strongly favor	favor	neither favor nor oppose	somewhat oppose	strongly oppose
a. No new access	1	2	3	4	5
b. An interchange at South Lower Miller Creek	1	2	3	4	5
c. An intersection at South Lower Miller Creek	1	2	3	4	5
d. A grade-separated intersection at South Lower Miller Creek	1	2	3	4	5
e. An interchange at Blue Mountain	1	2	3	4	5
f. An intersection at Blue Mountain	1	2	3	4	5
g. A grade-separated intersection at Blue Mountain	1	2	3	4	5
h. An interchange at North Lower Miller Creek	1	2	3	4	5
i. An intersection at North Lower Miller Creek	1	2	3	4	5
j. A grade-separated intersection at North Lower Miller Creek	1	2	3	4	5

6. Please give us any other comments you would like to about a second access to the Miller Creek/Linda Vista area.

**Comments**

Your last questions are about you and your household. Again, all of your responses to this survey are completely anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

7. Have you heard about the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement Project? **YES**  **NO**  1 2
8. Have you read any articles about the project? **YES**  **NO**  1 2
9. Have you gone to any public meetings about the project? **YES**  **NO**  1 2
10. Do any children age 12 or younger live in your household? **YES**  **NO**  1 2
11. Do any teenagers aged 13 to 18 live in your household? **YES**  **NO**  1 2
12. Are you or any members of your household aged 65 or older? **YES**  **NO**  1 2
13. Do you live on a gravel road? **YES**  **NO**  1 2
14. About how long have you lived in the Missoula area?  years
15. Please check the appropriate box indicating the type of housing unit in which you live.  
 Detached single-family home  
 Duplex, condominium or townhouse  
 Apartment  
 Mobile home
16. Do you own or rent your residence?  Own  Rent
17. About how much do you estimate your household's total income before taxes was in 2002? Please check the appropriate box below.  
 Less than \$35,000  
 \$35,000 to \$49,999  
 \$50,000 to \$74,999  
 \$75,000 to \$99,999  
 \$100,000 or more
18. Are you employed at a job location outside your home?  Yes  No
19. What is your age?  
 18-24  
 25-34  
 35-44  
 45-54  
 55-64  
 65 +
20. Are you Hispanic/Spanish/Latino?  Yes  No
21. What is your race? (Please check all that apply.)  
 White  
 Black or African American  
 Asian or Pacific Islander  
 American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_
22. What is your gender?  Female  Male

**Miller Creek Road/US-93  
Public Opinion Survey  
Summary of Key Results**

October 2003

**Miller Creek Road/US-93 Public Opinion Survey  
Summary of Key Results**

**What is the survey?**

In September 2003, National Research Center (NRC) conducted a survey of public opinion in the vicinity of Miller Creek Road in Missoula, Montana. Residents in the study area were selected by NRC to determine their opinions about proposed transportation improvements in the area. This document summarizes the key results of the survey.

**Who participated in the survey?**

Approximately 1,422 households were selected to participate in the survey. Of this number, 1,212 were from the project study area and 210 were from the Blue Mountain Road area, located just north of the study area (see the graphic on page 3). The sample was selected for each area using a common systematic sampling method.

**What was the response to the survey?**

The response rate represents the proportion of surveys returned from eligible households. Ineligible households represent addresses to which a survey was mailed but not delivered. These include addresses of vacant housing units and addresses that were not recognized by the post office. Of the 1,422 households selected to participate in the study, 1,242 were considered to be eligible. Of the 1,242 eligible households, 714 completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 57%. At this rate of response, there is a 95% confidence level in the results. In other words, the results of the survey reflect how we believe 95% of the people in the region would respond to the questions – with a plus or minus 4% range of accuracy.

Of the total respondents, 86% lived in the project study area and 14% lived in the Blue Mountain Road area.

**Who conducted the survey?**

The survey was prepared and conducted by National Research Center, Inc. (NRC), one of the leading strategic planning and survey research teams in the Rocky Mountain region, focusing on the information needs of the public sector. NRC is a part of the Miller Creek Road/US 93 study team.



### How will the survey information be used?

The information gathered from this survey, combined with additional project information will be used by the Miller Creek Road/US 93 study team as input to the definition of transportation improvement alternatives that will be studied. The actual definition of the transportation alternatives will occur during the Public Involvement process for the study. The alternatives and their potential impacts will be fully analyzed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The demographic information provided by respondents was used to compare the demographic profile of the survey respondents to that of the entire population in the study area. This information was used to determine that all populations were represented in the survey results.

### Where are the survey results available for review?

Full copies of the Miller Creek Road/US 93 Public Opinion Survey results are available on the project website at [www.millereis.com](http://www.millereis.com). A hard copy of the results can be requested by calling the project hotline at 1-800-865-6905.

### Percentage of Surveys Returned

Of the 1,242 eligible surveys, 86% were returned from the Project Study Area (see Figure 2 below). The remaining 14% were returned from the Blue Mountain Road Area.

Figure 1: Percentage of Total Surveys Returned by Area

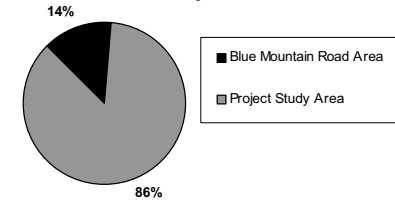
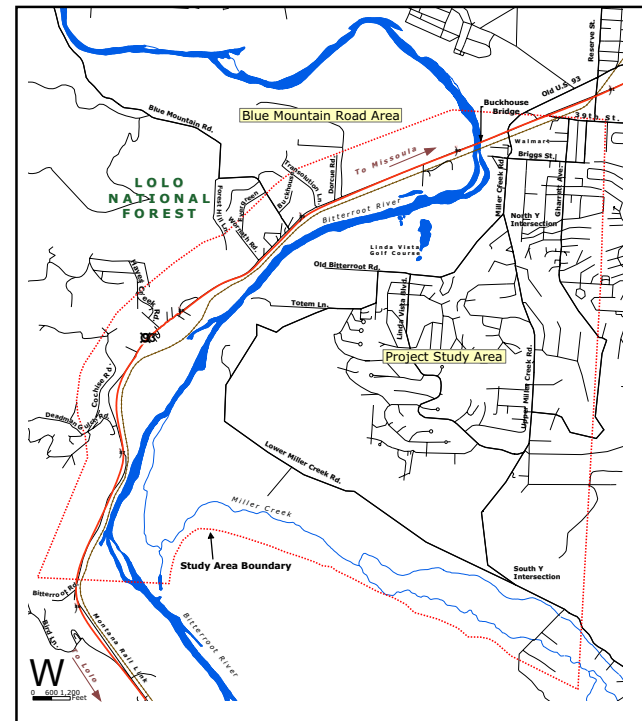


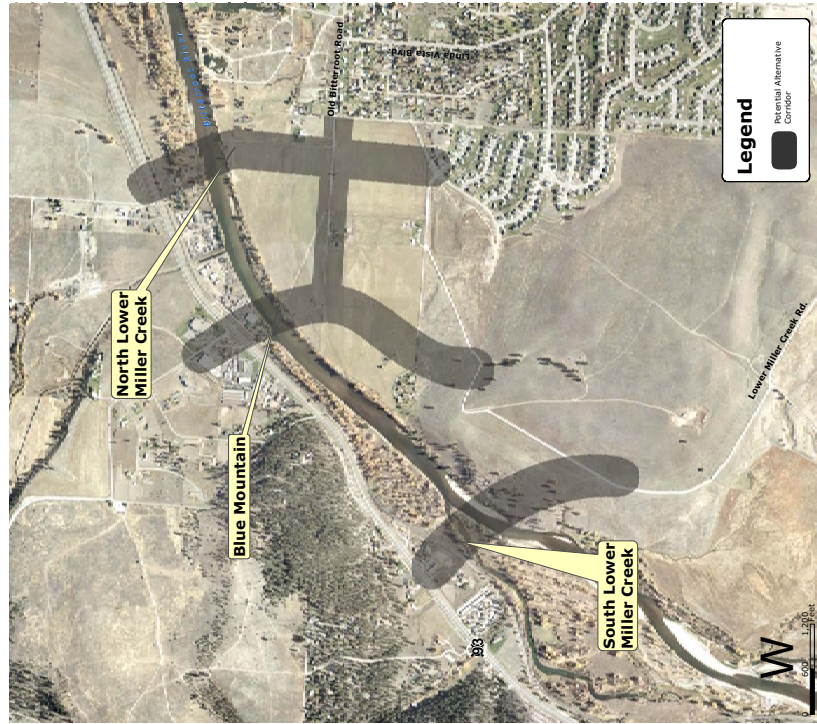
Figure 2: Areas Surveyed



### Preferred Alternative for New Access

Participants were asked which of three alternative locations (South Lower Miller Creek, Blue Mountain, or North Lower Miller Creek), if any, would they most like to see new access to the Miller Creek/Linda Vista area. These locations are shown on the graphic below.

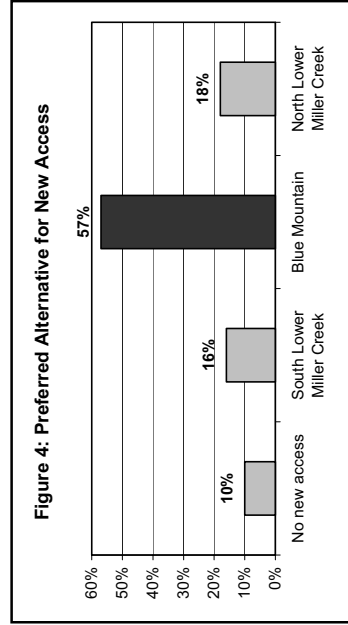
Figure 3: Potential Corridor Locations



After an initial consideration of their preferences, participants were asked to review a matrix of the technical advantages and disadvantages for each option. Given this information, they were then asked to reconsider their preferences.

Because opinions did not change greatly after reviewing the matrix, this document reports the opinions of the participants after being fully informed of the technical advantages and disadvantages for each option.

At which of the three, if any would you most like to see the new access?



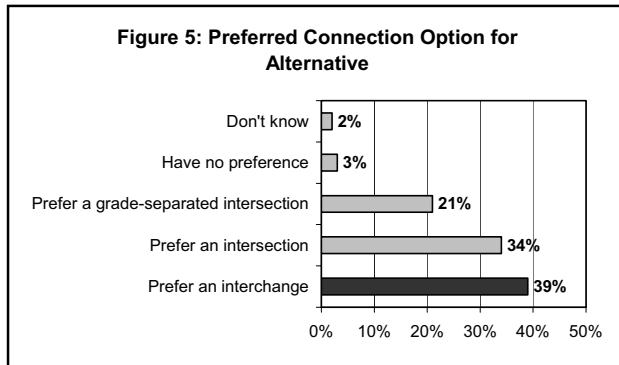
As Figure 4 shows, a great majority of residents (90%) preferred one of three listed access locations to a "no new access" option. A greater proportion of those responding to the survey (57%) preferred the Blue Mountain site. Only 10% of residents reported preferring no new access.

**Respondents most preferred the Blue Mountain Alternative for new access (57%).**

### Preferred Option for Alternative

Respondents were given descriptions of the options for constructing new access to the Miller Creek/Linda Vista area. They were asked to indicate which (intersection, interchange, grade-separated intersection), if any, they would prefer.

*If new access were constructed, what would you prefer?*



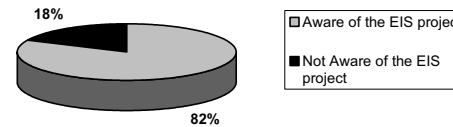
As Figure 5 shows, an interchange or intersection were the preferences of most respondents (39% and 34% respectively). Only 3% of residents reported having no preference.

**Respondents most preferred an interchange (39%) or an intersection (34%) option if access were constructed.**

### Awareness of and Involvement in the Miller Creek Road EIS

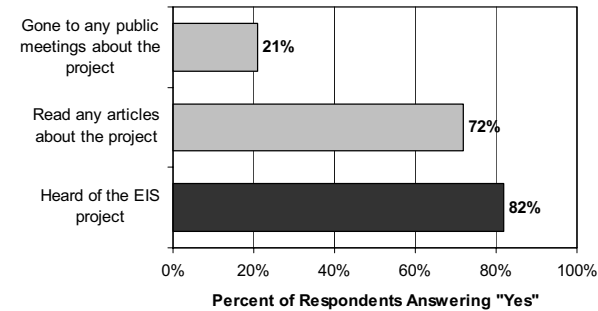
Several questions were asked to assess resident awareness of and involvement in the Miller Creek Road EIS. A majority of respondents had heard of and read about the EIS Project, but only 21% reported they had gone to a public meeting about the project.

Figure 6: Awareness of Miller Creek Road EIS



**While a majority of respondents reported hearing of and reading about the EIS project, only 21% reported attending a public meeting about the project.**

Figure 7: Awareness of and Involvement in the EIS Project







**Blue Mountain Road and Hayes Creek Road  
Area Community Meeting**

**September 11, 2003**





MINUTES  
MILLER CREEK ROAD  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
Blue Mountain/Hayes Creek Community Meeting  
Thursday, September 11, 2003  
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
Emmanuel Baptist Church  
4907 Blue Mountain Road  
Missoula, Montana

A community meeting with the Blue Mountain and Hayes Creek residents for the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement was held September 11, 2003, at the Emmanuel Baptist Church, Missoula, Montana. Seventy-six people signed in at the meeting. Comment sheets were provided to those who wanted to submit written comments. Project officials gave a short presentation and then opened the meeting to a question-and-answer session.

**Project officials present:**

Craig Genzlinger, FHWA  
Steve Long, David Evans & Associates  
Jeanette Lostracco and Troy Halouska, Carter & Burgess  
Mike Kress, Missoula City and County Planning

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

Jeanette Lostracco opened the meeting with introductions.

Helen Orendain requested that she make a brief presentation as well. In her opinion, the EIS process was not taking public comment, so she wrote a letter to the editor of the Missoulian. She emphasized that this is an important meeting because this project could lead to the site for the western corridor bypass. Helen also stated that an Omaha consulting firm is doing a transportation plan for Missoula. A representative from the firm said Blue Mountain is on the table as a bypass. She said that a local resident, Don Peressini, wants to share his plan for the bypass.

Jeanette stated that public comments have been taken throughout the EIS project and at each of the three public meetings held to date.

A presentation will be made first then question-and-answer will follow. A member of the public requested this meeting recorded by a transcriber. Jeanette explained that under NEPA only the public hearing is required to be recorded, and that notes were being taken.

Jeanette gave an overview of the project and meetings held to date. She informed everyone that what the Project Team plans to do is come up with a preferred alternative.

Steve Long explained the purpose of the Miller Creek Road EIS. This project is to provide secondary access to the Miller Creek area. The EIS will examine cumulative and secondary impacts. The project team identified seven alternatives based on public comment. For the first level of screening, each alternative was evaluated to determine whether it met the purpose and need. Steve listed screening criteria and explained why each of the four alignments was screened out. Steve explained that for the Miller Creek area the County has already adopted growth plans and our job is specifically to look at a new connection to US 93 from the Miller Creek area.

**QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD**

**Question:** How many homes are there in the Miller Creek Road area?

**Answer:** A couple thousand

**Question:** What is the adopted local plan you referred to?

**Answer:** Miller Creek Road Comprehensive Plan.

**Question:** How are you figuring out what the traffic volumes will be?

**Answer:** We are using a computer model to find projected volume.

**Question:** Are these people going to want to go to Missoula?

**Answer:** Yes, now and in 2025 the majority of people will travel into Missoula.

**Question:** Is the local plan you referred to approved?

**Answer:** Yes, by the Missoula County Board of County Commissioners. Commissioner Jean Curtiss reaffirmed this statement.

**Statement from a member of the audience:** Charlie Brown wrote the plan. (The purpose for the plan is that growth in Miller Creek is ahead of schedule.) There are no plans for east/west bypass.

**Question:** What you are doing is inconsistent with NEPA. You have to look at both sides of the road (meaning US 93).

**Answer:** We will look on both sides of US 93, and cumulative and secondary impacts.

**Question:** We are concerned that the arrow on the comprehensive plan map makes Blue Mountain Road appear to be the only option.

**Answer:** The arrow is a generality showing that the plan is flexible. Craig Genzlinger explained that the project team is looking at all alternatives equally.

**Comment:** I support the north lower Miller Creek alternative. I feel this road will be used the most. This looks like it will have the best chance of alleviating traffic. I am concerned that Blue Mountain Road will not be able to handle more traffic. Recreation for the area needs to be preserved. The South Lower Miller Creek is too out of the way—too many environmental impacts.

**Question:** Why was the power line route not looked at? Why was Linda Vista rejected?  
**Answer:** The power line route was not raised during the scoping process, so it was not analyzed. The Linda Vista alignment had much greater impacts to floodplains and riparian habitat compared to the N. Lower Miller Creek and was very close to the N. Lower Miller Creek alignment.

**Question:** How is this going to affect traffic?  
**Answer:** We are looking at how it is right now and in 2025.

**Comment:** The history of the projects in the area is relevant. There is going to be a big problem with traffic when the two-lane replacing the current one-lane McClay bridge goes in. We have this interest because of an increase in traffic. There is a 20-year-old map that shows a connection at Blue Mountain Road. You are affecting a ten-mile area with this intersection. You have to stay north of Buckhouse.

**Comment:** We don't care for any of these plans. There is a better plan out there. Don Peressini presented his plan for a western bypass of Missoula.

**Question:** How do we get people involved in making decisions to listen to us?

Mike Kress began to speak about the City plans. He also talked about plan updates. The west bypass has been talked about since 1980. In the updated plan the west bypass is not included. The City has no capabilities for construction of a bypass for at least 20 years.

**Question:** We need to have these corridors established so people don't develop into them. If there is no plan, what is going to happen with the traffic?

**Answer:** The City's plans are fiscally constrained plans. We can't identify the western bypass as part of the plan since there is no funding for it.

**Question:** Reserve Street is bad to drive on now due to commercial zoning. Are we now going to see commercial development at this intersection?

**Answer:** Yes, there is already commercial development going on.

The meeting was closed by urging everyone to submit written comments. Project staff remained on-hand to answer questions one-on-one.

#### WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED

Forget Blue Mountain Road.

Put the interchange immediately up stream from the Linda Vista Golf (Boulevard) Course. You would have room for the interchange with a minimum disturbance to existing Building, or Take NO Action.

(Elden Inakint, 9245 Butler Creek Rd., Missoula, MT 59808)

Why was the high voltage powerline route that runs north-south (and intersects then parallels) lower Miller Creek Road never put forth as an option?

The two northernmost alternatives will be flatly rejected by both multi-generational ranching families that own the land.

It should be known that Ginter is an heir to the sale of the Maloney Ranch.

Linda Vista rejection reasoning doesn't hold water. There is a lot of riparian, white-tail deer, and bald eagle habitat involved in all options.

Reasoning, arguments and statements for rejection of this option are inconsistent.

I live very near Blue Mountain crossing. Jake brakes consistently start on the curve several hundred yards southwest of the light. The curve is shaded and icy early in the evening throughout the long winter.

Need response to question about NEPA requirements for impacting northside of Highway 93.

(No name given)

My concerns:

1. A South Lower Miller Creek light/access would be too close to Hayes Creek Road for us to get into north lanes safely. (Too many cars are in passing lane, when not passing.)
2. Two stoplights on Highway 93 too close together slows traffic flow and increases road rage. Blue Mountain currently isn't used to capacity—we go from 65 mph to 0 mph. For many times 1 car—or the car is headed South (R turn) and we stop for nothing.
3. After what has happened on Reserve I'm not confident the Long Range is considered. It seems an interchange without a light on the highway would be safer and keep traffic moving.  
After using this stretch of highway for 20 years the traffic gets worse every year, and now you want to feed more cars onto it.
4. 65 MPH is too fast because a large percentage of cars are going 80+ mph, especially at rush hour.
5. With all the rubber marks on the highway at the Blue Mountain stop light (and it seems an accident per month there) the state should be more concerned about the current safety issues and address that.

(No name given)

If the road comes out at the Blue Mountain area I would suggest that the egress be east of Blue Mountain so people will funnel to 93 but be hesitant to try and go west to cut across Blue Mountain Road.

(Lynn Baker)



Would like to see the crossing at the north Linda Vista.

(Geoff Stott, 5580 Hayes Creek)

The three proposals made are flawed and should not be considered at this time because:

1. By advisement at the 9/11 meeting, the prime reason for the project is to provide traffic flow for the majority of Linda Vista residents who want to drive to Missoula.
2. The traffic on 93 south of Buckhouse Bridge is already heavy. The increased traffic will clog the present two-lane road for hours.
3. The plan is flawed because it does not consider the present or future conditions within Missoula for traffic. No plan can be considered that does not consider the existing and future plans for Missoula.
4. The only way to control things is to stop further expansion south of Linda Vista and do a Missoula overall traffic plan for the next years, not 20 years out. Obviously the far out plans so far are all wrong on predictions.
5. To continue studying the present three plans is a waste of money without considering the above comments.

(Mr. and Mrs. Dennis H. Barthel, 2975 Evergreen Rd., Missoula)

First of all, wondering why all the homes in upper Miller Creek were approved before there was some sort of road access for these new and upcoming homes that's progressing fast. This should have been done before all that was approved. Maybe the contractors/land owners that are making tons could help start the fund for this huge project?? Also there's probably going to be a need for a new school built in the area for all these thousands of homes, right? Who's going to pay for that??

Now for the road—one idea I had would be to make Miller Creek Main road into a four-lane road (five with middle turn lanes) starting all the way up by the rodeo ranchettes—as that will soon be heavy access—then at the Highway 93/Miller Creek have an interchange that directs over to the road beside the County Club GG (the back road) and then when its connection with Reserve Street—you will need to have another interchange to converge onto there. However, that would need to make Reserve Street into a six-lane highway at that point not to jam up that area as well? This would be least costly by widening Miller Creek than all other projections and less impact.

(Vicki Ayala, 5080 Evergreen Rd., Missoula, MT 59804)

It appears the major traffic from Miller Creek heads toward Missoula. In that case, it makes sense to have the new bridge closer to town making the North Lower Miller Creek options the most practical.

It also appears that this will solve very little in that the same number of cars will end up on 93 at the same time going the same place. The advantage would be an extra entrance/exit for emergencies in Miller Creek.

(Vicky Ecton, 5055 Evergreen Rd., Missoula, MT 59804)

I hope it is clear by the meeting last night (Sept. 11) that the community is against a bridge with out extensive study of the effects north of Highway 93. In particular a road/bridge connecting with Blue Mountain is of particular concern since this option would greatly increase traffic and the construction of commercial development in the area. A further concern is the traffic on 93 is already bad between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. and dumping all the cars for Miller Creek further south on the highway would only increase this traffic, shifting traffic problems of the Miller Creek residents on to residents who use Highway 93. With this increase traffic it will greatly affect bypass routes such as Blue Mountain Road, which should be protected for two reasons. One it is an unsafe road for major traffic use and is not built for this use. It is in no way desired to be a through fare around Missoula's traffic problems. No to Blue Mountain option!

(Ben Osburn, 4870 North Wornath Rd., Missoula, Mt 59804)





# Public Workshop #4

November 13, 2003





**MINUTES  
MILLER CREEK ROAD  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
FOURTH PUBLIC MEETING**

**Thursday, November 13, 2003  
4:30 - 7:30 p.m.**

**Linda Vista Golf Course Clubhouse  
4915 Lower Miller Creek Road  
Missoula, MT**

The Fourth Public Scoping Meeting for the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement was held November 13, 2003 at the Linda Vista Golf Course Clubhouse, Missoula, MT. One Hundred and Thirty Four (134) people attended the fourth public meeting (sign in sheets attached). The meeting was an open house format from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. with a brief formal presentation given by Steve Long (David Evans and Associates), Jeanette Lostracco (Carter Burgess, Inc.), and Scott Richman (David Evans and Associates, Inc.) at 5:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. Comments were received from the public a number of ways: 1) personal comments given to project officials on 5 x 8 cards and immediately displayed for public review, and/or 2) written comments placed in a comment box located at the comment table. Project officials were available throughout the evening to answer questions, receive comments, and talk with the public regarding concerns, questions, and comments regarding the project.

**Project officials present:**

Craig Genzinger, Federal Highway Administration  
Jeanette Lostracco, Carter & Burgess, Inc.  
Diana Bell, Carter & Burgess, Inc.  
Troy Halouska, Carter & Burgess Inc.  
Steve Long, David Evans and Associates  
Scott Richman, David Evans and Associates  
Mike Odom, David Evans and Associates

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION**

**Jeanette Lostracco, Carter & Burgess, Inc.**, thanked everyone for attending the 4th public meeting and explained the purpose of the meeting was to bring the public up to date on project activities and get feedback. Jeanette explained that this was a public meeting and not a public hearing.

Purpose and Need: Jeanette explained that the project started several years ago when Missoula County officials expressed the need for a second connection for the Miller Creek area. She then read the purpose and need statement. The EIS process began with the first public scoping meeting held in March 2003, and has continued to the meeting tonight.

Fatal Flaw Screening: From environmental and transportation data collected and analyzed, and information gathered at the previous three public meetings and additional stakeholder meetings, the project team identified seven alternatives along with the no action alternative. Those alternatives were screened through evaluation criteria, reviewed with the public and technical advisory stakeholders and a preferred alternative emerged. Those seven alternatives were then evaluated and four were eliminated. A summary of the alternatives evaluation was posted as a wall display for public viewing and was part of the latest newsletter. She explained the remaining alternatives would be studied in detail and presented in the **draft environmental document**. She encouraged the participants to write down their comments and leave them in the comment box or mail them to Carter Burgess.

Public Opinion Survey: Jeanette stated that a public opinion survey was taken recently and 57% of the surveys were returned for a 95% confidence level. The survey showed the majority of participants preferred a new connection at Blue Mountain Road, however, the majority of people who live near Blue Mountain Road do not prefer a new connection to Blue Mountain Road.

What's Next?: Once the **draft environmental document** is published, a public hearing will be held sometime mid-next year. There will be a 45-day comment period and then the Final Environmental Impact Statement will be published. After that a Record of Decision document will be published. When funding becomes available, the project will move to the construction phase.

**Steve Long, David Evans and Associates** explained that over the last three months the team developed and analyzed the impacts of alternatives within each of the three proposed corridors in more detail. Based on those studies, the team was recommending the preferred alternative presented tonight. He explained that three approaches were considered for the new connection: (1) a full interchange, (2) a traffic signal, and (3) a combination of the two called a "grade separation." The alternatives were each looked at to see which approach would work or be eliminated with the following results:

South Lower Miller Creek

- 1) A full interchange would be most compatible with US 93 operations in this area
- 2) A traffic signal would not work because of safety issues
- 3) A grade separation with a traffic signal would not work because of safety issues

Blue Mountain Road

- 1) A full interchange would work
- 2) A traffic signal would work
- 3) A grade separation with or without a traffic signal would work

#### North Lower Miller Creek

- 1) A full interchange would not work because it was too close to existing signalized intersection at Upper Miller Creek Road and Blue Mountain Road.
- 2) A traffic signal would work
- 3) A grade separation with a traffic signal would work

The Advisory Teams: Two groups came together to analyze the data in a one-day workshop. They compared all the impacts not only to the Miller Creek area but also the impacts outside the Miller Creek area and how it would affect the traffic on U.S. 93. They all agreed on the preferred alternative. Those two groups are listed below:

The Social, Economic, and Environmental (SEE Team) consists of representatives of the following groups:

- 1) Missoula City and County officials
  - 2) Montana Department of Transportation
  - 3) Federal Highway Administration
  - 4) Missoula City Fire Department
- The Interdisciplinary (ID) Team consists of representatives of the following agencies:
- 1) U.S. Forest Service
  - 2) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
  - 3) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
  - 4) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
  - 5) Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department

**Scott Richman, David Evans and Associates, Inc.**, summarized the key transportation issues and analysis findings that were presented on one of the wall display areas. He noted that the EIS was happening at the same time that Missoula was updating its 20-Year transportation plan and that the transportation analysis conducted for the Miller Creek EIS was coordinated with the urban area transportation plan. The projected 20-year growth in the Missoula area will result in substantial traffic volume increases on U.S. 93 through the study area. He explained that the projected growth for the Miller Creek area would introduce more than 1,000 new households in Miller Creek area, which would result in a near doubling of the traffic now using Miller Creek Road south of U.S. 93. He noted that traffic using Blue Mountain Road traffic is expected to increase with or without a new connection between US 93 and the Miller Creek area.

Scott explained that the analysis showed that as the connection is moved farther away from Missoula and farther away from Miller Creek Road, the traffic use of the connection would decrease. This is due to the majority of existing and future travel occurring between the Miller Creek area and the Missoula community located north and east of the area.

Scott explained that the Montana Department of Transportation was very concerned about how U.S. 93 would be impacted by the new connection. The traffic analysis of the alternatives showed that each of the build alternatives would improve traffic flow on U.S. 93 by dispersing it between two locations instead of just one at Miller Creek Road. The recommended preferred alternative would provide the greatest benefit for U.S. 93 traffic flow by eliminating the traffic light at Blue Mountain Road. The grade-separated connection combined with removal of this light would provide a continuous flow of traffic on U.S. 93 without any stops and would reduce stop-and-start operations and turn movements on U.S. 93 near Blue Mountain Road. He noted that MDT supports the recommended preferred alternative.

Several people gave comments and asked questions at this point. They are noted below.

**Comment:** FHWA is not following their NEPA process. Log on to FHWA web site for information on the process.

**Comment:** I would like to see the hands of the public that supports this preferred alternative. Approximately seven hands were raised. How many would support a bridge closer to Missoula? Many hands were raised.

**Comment:** We want an opportunity to hear comments from the public and for other people to hear comments we have. We won't have the opportunity to read all the comments before the document is written.

**Question:** If you have a right turn only, what happens when the traffic is backed up because of Reserve?

**Answer:** The recommended preferred alternative includes an additional lane extending from the right turn that would provide a vehicle storage area for traffic merging onto the highway.

**Question:** **That is where they take off to Blue Mountain Road?**

**Answer:** The traffic forecasts for the alternatives on the Blue Mountain Road alignment estimate that an additional 300 vehicles per day would travel on Blue Mountain Road compared to the No Build Alternative.

**Question:** Maclay Bridge is a single lane?

**Answer:** (Scott Richman) The recommended project for the Maclay Bridge is to build a new 2-lane bridge on the South Avenue alignment to replace the single-lane Maclay Bridge. The regional travel demand model used for the Missoula transportation plan update assumes a 2-lane connection over the Bitterroot River on South Avenue.

**Comment:** I feel the Target Range people were not brought into this project. They should have been brought into this sooner.

**Question:** How far down did you include your survey? Did you include north and south?

**Answer:** No. We didn't go down that far. It went up to the Maclay Bridge.

**Question:** I feel the survey was slanted to the Blue Mountain people. They were asked to check the box for the best alternative and the survey was given to people who didn't care where the interchange went.

**Comment:** I feel the preferred alternative is good because it spreads the traffic out.

**Comment:** Can we break back up into the open house so people can ask their individual question?

At that point, the meeting returned to the open house format so the public could continue to comment and ask questions of the project officials one-on-one.

**ROOM ARRANGEMENT**

**Sign In Table**

The following handouts were available to the public at the sign-in table:

- 1) Agenda for the meeting and explanation of room organization
- 2) Comments Sheets
- 3) Minutes from the First, Second, and Third Public Scoping Meetings
- 4) Questions and Answers from the First, Second, and Third Public Scoping Meeting
- 5) Minutes of the Sept. 11, 2003, Blue Mountain/Hayes Creek Community Meeting
- 6) Extra copies of the latest project newsletter

**Wall Displays**

Seven (7) wall displays explaining the project were available for public viewing as follows:

- 1) Project Background Information
  - a. Purpose of Tonight's Workshop snow cards
  - b. EIS Process graphics

- c. Study Area aerial
- d. Project Schedule graphic
- e. Public/Agency Involvement snow cards
- f. Summary of Public Meetings snow cards
- g. Summary of Comments Received snow cards

- 2) Missoula Planning
  - a. Definition and Feasibility of Western Bypass snow cards
  - b. Map of Missoula graphic
  - c. Comprehensive Plan map graphic
  - d. Comprehensive Plan snow cards

- 3) Public Opinion Survey Results
  - a. Summary of Results snow cards
  - b. Preferred Alt. For New Access graphic
  - c. Preferred Connection Option graphic
  - d. Summary of Key Results Handout

- 4) Alternatives Development
  - a. Purpose & Need Statement graphic
  - b. No Action Alternative graphic
  - c. Range of Alternatives graphic
  - d. Existing Roadway / Problems graphic
  - e. Bridge Section graphic
  - f. Corridor Section graphic
  - g. Development Concept graphic
  - h. Alternatives Screening graphic (Step 1 banner)

- i. Evaluation Criteria graphic
- j. Potential Corridor Alternatives graphic
- k. Alignment Evaluation Matrix graphic (Step 2 banner)
- l. Example Photos of Intersections graphic
- m. Connection Evaluation Matrix graphic
- n. Screened-Down Alternatives (6 Alts) graphic (Step 3 banner)
- o. Preferred Alternative Matrix graphic
- p. Preferred Alternative graphic

- 5) Environmental Issues
  - a. Water Resources/Wetlands/Floodplains/Grasslands map
  - b. 4(f) Resources/Cultural Resources/Parks & Recreation map

- c. Explanation of 4(f) snow cards
  - d. Zoning map
  - e. Haz Mat/Noise map
  - f. EIS Summary Evaluation Matrix graphic
- 6) Traffic/Transportation Issues
- a. Traffic Issues snow cards
  - b. Alts Transportation Analysis Summary
  - c. LOS Intersection Definitions graphic
  - d. Affect of Daily Traffic Volumes
  - e. Future Traffic Volumes Changes
  - f. Preferred Alt vs. No-Action Alternative
  - g. TDM snow cards
  - h. Future Transit snow cards
  - i. Multi-modal Considerations
- 7) Comments
- a. Preferred Alternative Rendering
  - b. Upcoming Steps graphic
  - c. Comments Box and extra Comment Sheets on table
  - d. Comments – displayed for public viewing as they were received (listed below)

**VERBAL COMMENTS RECEIVED (on Snow Cards)**

- Health Club  
Preferred alternative impacts replacement drainfield for Health Club.  
Costs between the north alignment and Blue Mountain alternative should be compared. Impact to Health Club need to be considered.  
Preferred alternative impacts existing drain field septic tank and pumps for Health Club.  
Lots of utilities around Health Club
- Access  
Can Gamer's Auction access be maintained under the preferred alternative "4810 Hwy 93"  
Would like right in access to Lorán's Carpet off new ramp.  
Need to consider ranch access across new road on south side of river.  
Will property owners be compensated for access impacts?  
Richard Overcast  
Storage Business – Access to storage business will not work. Trucks accessing the site will have a difficult time turning into the property and turning around to exit the property..

- Shirley Alsbury "Parcel #1429"
- 1) Access impacts planned use of property. Area where access connects is rented to a construction company and used for storage. Their lease is currently due for renewal.
  - 2) Lack of access from hwy 93 will impacts business "How do you pay for damage?"

Jim McDonald

- 1. Access to parcels is not acceptable. Owns 3 parcels in the NW quadrant at Blue Mtn. Rd. All 3 parcels need access for planned use.
- 2. Plan shows lot of parcel immediately adjacent to the corner of Hwy 93 and Blue Mtn. Rd. Would like to retain and provide access across other parcels. Please provide a map and he will give you feedback on access concerns.

Process

See Google website: NEPA, CEQ regulations "direct indirect cumulative effect"

- No residents were on the committees and that is a concern.
- Do not believe that residents have been involved in the process

Purpose and Need

The Purpose and Need is flawed. It needs to address the entire Missoula Transportation System.

Steve McCool:

- 1) Opposed to overpass; visually intrusive.
- 2) Purpose/Need: How to get traffic in and out of Miller Creek

Traffic

Will the speed limit be affected by any of the alternatives?

The speed limits are too high on U.S. 93.

North Lower Miller Creek option seems to attract more traffic, why not select this as preferred?

Northbound left from Hayes Creek Road is particularly difficult during evening peak traffic period with heavy southbound traffic. This problem will get worse as traffic increases and gaps created by the existing signal at Blue Mountain Road not longer exist with the removal of the signal.

Environmental Issues

The county floodplain needs to be verified. It could be to narrow on Blue Mountain alternative.

Deer being killed at the "y" intersection is a big problem

Consider the berms/trees behind McDonalds. Need to replace this if the project impacts it.

Meeting Format

Do not like this format. It should be a town hall meeting so people can express their opinions.

Appreciate this type of meeting format. Helps to understand detailed project information.

Misc.



When will construction begin once the ROD is signed? How long will it take to construct?

Preferred alternative does address future development along U.S. 93.

We need to show planned development south of Christian Drive.

Will this project get people out of the Miller Creek area any faster?

Alignment through property for Blue Mountain alternative should cut a straighter line – should not have to fit the Maloney Ranch subdivision lines.

Put a path along the river (s. side) so bikes/peds don't have to use Miller Creek Road.

Miller Creek Road from U.S. 93 to the "y" should be fixed first.

Is the Fire Department looking at a new station in this area?

Give star ratings on the matrix instead of colored dots to show relative rankings.

Blue Mountain Road residents feel their homes are their investments.

The Maloney Ranch corridor needs to be reconsidered. Has the least impact on residents and businesses.

Preferred Alternative takes manufacturing vs. retail.

Need frontage road on west side of Highway 93 to provide direct access to businesses.

Need to more seriously consider up to three new connections between Upper Miller Creek Road and Gharrett Avenue instead of a new bridge and connection to U.S. 93.

Do not like the preferred alternative. It will not work. You should look closer at North Lower Miller Creek.

Miller Creek Road improvements should happen as soon as possible with or without the new connection.

Vicky/Dan Eaton:

- 1) No consideration being given to impacts to Blue Mountain.
- 2) Noise is major concern
- 3) Questions in survey lead to Blue Mountain
- 4) Safe access for Hayes Creek

Boggs:

- 1) Alignment impacts ability to irrigate, and
- 2) One foot flood raise better than alignment impacts.

Jon Zarembolias 5050 Hwy 93S

I don't want a ramp built through my parent's house and land. I don't want a road going through my future inheritance. Will my family be property compensated? Is the development ready to pay to relocate us to suitable land, the equivalent of what we now have? Opposed to preferred alternative. Choose a route that doesn't affect people's homes and lives (map included)

**WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED**

Prefer North Miller Creek 213 – Why? Will be used much more than those farther south by residents. Residents will not drive that far out of way and come back. Will use current access instead.

Suggest dead end on Lower Miller Creek to stop current access (before Linda Vista Blvd.) to encourage use of new access.

2B needs traffic light (coordinate with Blue Mountain light) to eliminate two stops.

Build a longer bridge if needed over flood plain to decrease floodplain impact.

Road is "Yumas" not "Yumas" Ranch Road.

Marty Orishuk  
5855 Pinewood  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 251-2754

- 1. Missoula Planning states a goal as keeping the rural environmental – this interchange will totally destroy the rural environment of Blue Mountain.
- 2. North Lower Miller Creek impacts far fewer people – it makes no sense to eliminate that option
- 3. The original survey was skewed to influence people to choose Blue Mountain so it's not surprising to have 57% of the respondents favor it – in fact it's surprising it was only 57%.
- 4. The noise and air quality will be highly impacted in the Blue Mountain area – where in the EIS?
- 5. Why wasn't public input allowed at this meeting – if indeed it is so favored by the public?
- 6. The visual impact will be tremendous.

- 7. A 1995 map indicated this bridge almost exactly – my take is this study has been biased to favor a concept envisioned years ago.

Vicky & Dan Eaton  
5055 Evergreen  
(406) 251-5288

We believe your public opinion survey was biased and misleading. It led to a pre-determined conclusion. It did not include all areas impacted by the redirection of traffic at Blue Mountain

Betty Peressini  
S 4800 Evergreen Road  
(406) 251-4505

We live up Hayes Creek Road. At the present it is very difficult to enter onto Hwy 93 going north in the evening when Bitterroot residents are headed home. We look for a gap in traffic from the north, which I believe is presently

created by the Blue Mountain stoplight. My concern is that if the light is eliminated there will be no gaps making a bad situation worse. While I'm not against the Blue Mountain interchange, this concern needs to be addressed since it is a difficult situation, which may become extremely dangerous as the traffic up the Bitterroot increase over the years, which it is sure to do.

Shawn Kitley  
6090 Wilderness Trail  
Missoula, MT 59804  
(406) 251-6816  
[shawk@bhsbv.net](mailto:shawk@bhsbv.net)

Miller Creek Road is the BEST and most obvious route – no bridge, etc. The BEST way to increase access and flow is to double the size of both Miller Creek Road and Lower Miller Creek Road far enough from the current intersection of U.S. 93 and Miller Creek Road. This alternative is cheaper and does not interfere with current traffic flow of US 93, which is poor often. If double the traffic flow in the current streets is impossible perhaps the development should be reconsidered as not viable.

Marin Elison  
4300 South Avenue W.  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 549-9791  
[m26566@msu.edu](mailto:m26566@msu.edu)

I do not like the idea of Blue Mountain Road Grade Separated Intersection. I would prefer at North Lower Miller Creek at Grade Intersection.

Delmer Vietz  
4680 North Womath Road  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 251-3865

- 1) This redirection of traffic will impact Blue Mountain, Hayes Creek, O'Brien Creek, Big Flat and Target Range. These neighborhoods were not properly represented in the Public Opinion Survey.
- 2) What's going to be done about noise, visual impact, and air quality in the Blue Mountain area.
- 3) What provisions will be taken to re-establish sound berms and trees removed by new construction.

Don Pessini  
4800 Emerson Road  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 251-4505

Project analysis does not appear to take into account growth of Missoula going south (which will happen despite present zoning) and therefore could suggest to study an alternative further south of present ones with a better stream of traffic on US 93. No matter what is chosen, it needs improvements on US 93, Brooks, Mallfunction Junction.

Bernard Constantin  
610 Big Flat Road  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 721-6333  
[berno@montana.com](mailto:berno@montana.com)

A recommended preferred option for Blue Mountain Road was reached without opportunity being given to residents from Target Range, Blue Mountain, and Big Flat residents to give their input to the EIS.

This decision increases traffic flow on a narrow winding road (parts of Blue Mountain and Big Flat), which is icy in winter and creates unsafe driving conditions. There is a proposal now before the County Commissioners to lower the speed limit from 45 mph to 35 mph on parts of Big Flat. How would you accommodate increased traffic without widening the road at what cost? Both monetarily and environmental impact?

This proposed changes the nature of the existing neighborhood from a rural environment to a more urban one.

Why have 12,000 more homes (units) been given prior approval for development in South Miller Creek without a study of traffic impact done?

Nancy & Tom Graves  
600 Big Flat Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
(406) 721-5117  
[coachhorn6@aol.com](mailto:coachhorn6@aol.com)

I support the proposed site but you have to work with DOT to get a third lane from the Blue Mountain site to Reserve Street to allow people to merge onto US 93. This is especially important for a.m. (8:00) traffic going to town. Otherwise you will just bottleneck at the US 93 merge site and it will be faster to use Lower Miller Creek Road and the light by Walmart.

Greg Salsbury  
5026 Rev Court  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 251-1522

I am concerned about being able to get onto US 93 from Hayes Creek Road if the stoplight at Blue Mountain is removed. As it is now, in the evenings from about 5-7 p.m., it's hard to get out to go to town unless the stoplight is red. Removing the light will be dangerous for us. Some other alternative like a Frontage Road over to Blue Mountain would be needed.

Lisa Kitley  
6090 Wilderness Trail  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 251-6816

While I think a second alternative exit from the Linda Vista – Miller Creek residential area is a good idea, there is an over-riding issue of what and where does the traffic flow to when its gets onto Hwy 93 eastbound. The major blockage comes at the Reserve Street intersection. I realize that is most likely not in your scope of engineering, but somehow needs to come to the attention of state, county, and city officials.

The information presented this evening was great. Thank you.

Erling Gustafson  
3128 Eldon Lane  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 251-3526  
[swedenrha@comcast.net](mailto:swedenrha@comcast.net)

Preferred Alternative looks good. I do question northbound and southbound being able to merge without a traffic light at grade. Think it might be better with an interchange without light vs. grade separated with no light. Good presentation. Thanks.

P.S. Please keep the light at Blue Mountain.

Tom Boivar  
3235 Parr Lane  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 251-5520 (home)  
(406) 523-4237 (work)

My children 5 & 3, my wife, and I live on Big Flat Road near River Pines. This brings up my first (and lesser concern): There is no doubt that the preferred Blue Mountain alternative will increase traffic on Blue Mountain/Big Flat Road. This road, narrow and winding, is already dangerous and traveled too fast. Increasing its load will lead to more accidents and damage.

Secondly, my concern is economic in nature: The South Hills/Linda Vista area was ok'd for development. The developer undoubtedly sat back waiting for the obvious traffic increase, and subsequent highway safety issues. When they outstripped the existing infrastructure and new access was necessary, the developer sits back and lets all the taxpayers in the county pay. The cost of this project should rest solely on the developers of the area.

Andy Puckett  
440 Big Flat Road  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 728-8372  
[puckett@bigskv.net](mailto:puckett@bigskv.net)

Would like to see the speed limit on Hwy 93 issue addressed. Right now at the stop light @ Blue Mountain Road, you can see the skid marks from vehicles trying to stop after they've accelerated to 65 mph and as they head out to Msial. With the proposed grade separated intersection @ Blue Mountain Road, the stop light would be removed and traffic is likely to go even faster than it does now!

Sharon & Leon Scott  
5300 S. Wornath Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
(406) 251-0187

I initially supported the Blue Mountain intersection. After much thought, I now favor a North Miller Creek intersection for the following reasons:

- 1) As business grows along the Hwy 93 corridor, traffic will increase.
- 2) Speed limits must be reduced to 45 mph through the Blue Mountain interchange. It is very difficult to turn left from the fast lane.
- 3) A North Miller Creek interchange would slow traffic approaching Blue Mountain interchange making Blue Mountain safer. I feel a North Miller Creek interchange will have a traffic calming effect that will impact up to the Hayes Creek Road.

John Zimovind  
3416 Durrell Lane  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 251-2912

I strongly support the preferred alternative. Incidentally, it was really dumb to not include local resident representation on the various planning groups/committees. You are giving people a legitimate reason to oppose the whole process.

Alan McQuillan  
7190 Miller Creek Road  
Missoula, MT

- 1) Unimaginable that the residents of Blue Mountain and Big Flat Roads haven't been more included in the process when you see it as probable to increase Blue Mountain Road traffic!
- 2) The people making the profit from the massive development of Miller Creek should be included in the financing of the bridge.
- 3) The people funding all of this (us) should be allowed to openly discuss concerns. Understandably it isn't as easy as this "write it down process" but it is the only fair way to do it.
- 4) I do appreciate the obvious amount of effort going into this evaluation.

Glen J. Jarrett  
Big Flat Road

I have many concerns – it seems our neighborhood was not included in your public opinion survey – but we will certainly be impacted by your recommended Preferred Alternatives! No wonder your public opinion survey was so biased!

I feel our alternatives evaluation summary is positively and negatively worded to reach your recommended Preferred Alternative without regard to fact.

We do not need increased traffic on Blue Mountain / Big Flat Roads. It is a narrow, winding, dangerous road as it is. Miller Creek's problems should not become our problem! If you are really trying to get traffic out of Miller Creek to US 93, it seems Alternative 2B is the solution to that problem.

Nancy Munro  
520 Big Flat Road  
Missoula, MT 59804

- 1) Moratorium on buildings should be feasibility of getting ROWs
- 2) Cost
- 3) Hate the format of the meeting should be able to ask questions when the group is assembled.

Unidentified

If the reason for the bridge is to provide emergency access to the new development, why haven't the following been considered: (1) put in a fire station, (2) put in an emergency medical center. This will solve the problem of quick access.

I also think that the access point should be closer to town if considered. Blue Mountain and Hwy 93 is treacherous enough already. The wish for the stoplight at Blue Mountain to go away is silly. Progress and population and expansion mean that there will be stoplights on major roads. Put in an entire new intersection and add another stoplight – that is the safest alternative. Slow the traffic down until they are truly out of town. Ramps and overpasses are for closed access highway. On regular roads they do not alleviate congestion, they just back traffic up to the nearest stoplight or stop sign.

I lived in Austin Texas for awhile, population 500,000 to 1,000,000, they built ramps, they built fly-overs, it still backed up traffic for miles, and that was a closed access interstate. The only solution to traffic congestion is less people on the roads, not entirely the road design.

Jon Zabolias  
2304 Hillview Ct. #1  
Missoula, MT

I don't believe that the Blue Mountain alternative is favored by the public. I think it was favored by the committee. This meeting was the first (11-13-03) meeting when I heard someone ask which route was preferred and I don't believe I saw but only 1 here hands being raised.

Also if one of your main problems is quick access for emergency medical, why not build a fire station and emergency medical center. I'm sure Western Montana Clinic would love to have another facility. If you're concerned about the medical services not getting to the area fast enough, even with two access roads it will still take the same amount of time. The North Miller Creek alternative would be perfect because it's closer to town.

Mainly I don't want a road through my family house – 5050 Hwy 93.

Karen Zabolias  
2304 Hillview Court #1  
Missoula, MT

Target Range area is affect by FORCE routing the traffic either entering or existing our Target Range area as a means to connect US 93 as proposed. You have not asked for any input from an area (being Target Range) who doesn't want this proposal because of how it adversely affects our local neighborhoods and our area boundaries. The first step is to inquire if we want our neighborhood to be drastically changed by traffic, zoning, noise, and to no longer be the hideaway Target Range has always been for most of us who live there. The first step you took was to spend money with this proposed project that we do not want. This is not FOR THE PEOPLE. It is against our wishes. Toss this idea. We at Target Range DO NOT want it.

Angela Bourquin  
4311 W. Central  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 543-7709

I'm very concerned that none of the alternatives adequately allow for wildlife passage along the riparian corridor. A long bridge with 200 feet of clear passage on either side of the river is needed and even then movements of wildlife up and down the river will be impeded.

Also, none of the alternatives provide for enhanced public access to the Bitterroot and this is very difficult now at Macley Bridge.

Also, I'm concerned that the "improvements" will serve to funnel even more traffic onto this portion of Hwy 93,

which is already terrible. No Action Alternative for me!

Sterling Miller  
P.O. Box 822  
Lolo, MT 59847  
[smillers@nwrfore](mailto:smillers@nwrfore)

When you redirect traffic from Miller Creek to Blue Mountain, we in the Target Range area, in fact, all residents north of the interchange will be affected. There are a number of us extremely concerned that the input from EIS is insufficient and is lacking considerable research regarding the impact on the Blue Mountain and Target Range areas. Public Surveys 1422: 1212 surveys were Miller Creek and 210 surveys were Blue Mountain/Target Range. Fair input?

Rene Quinn  
2304 Woodlawn Avenue  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 721-2615

My reason for choosing North Lower Miller Creek over Blue Mountain – Who would use the intersection at Blue Mountain or any point farther south unless they are going south (to Lolo or other Bitterroot destinations)? True, more development in the area southwest of the latest parts of Linda Vista is planned, but the traffic congestion problem exists with the current status of home development and population. To alleviate it for the large number of people going into the city, a more northerly access is needed. No?

Paul Mast  
4860 Christian Drive  
Missoula, MT  
(406) 251-7972  
[paul@music.org](mailto:paul@music.org)

Process gives the impression that this is a done deal and you're just going through the motions. Even your terminology "Preferred Alternative" gives that impression.

You have the wrong impact area. This decision will affect homeowners in Big Flat, Target Range, West Side Missoula areas and those areas need to be included in your impact analysis. Saying that you use input from other comprehensive plans doesn't relieve you of your responsibility to disclose impacts of this proposed project.

You must show all costs of alternatives, not just economic cost of bridge, but all costs to existing population in the actual impact area that must be considered.

Fed Stewart  
4675 South Avenue West  
Missoula, MT 59804

I dislike the Blue Mt. Road (BMR) connection and would prefer a N. Lower Miller Creek (NLMC) connection w/ a light. This connection would also involve a frontage rd. on the north side of Hwy 93 (using Buckhouse Lane) and removing the light at Blue Mt. Road. A light at NLMC would decrease the bridge length (cost) and safety concerns would be decreased by removing the light at BMR. Limited exit from BMR could be done (no left hand turn). I do not think folks are looking for a win win solution and are weighted to picking BMR w/o thinking of all the impacts. Preliminary info show more impacts to businesses – homes choosing BMR. Access to the rec area at BM is still

double w/the above option. In addition the cost of a larger bridge (if the grade separation option at NLMC is preferred because of the water backup due to the floodplain. This could also include leaving the light at BMR then) could be outweighed by the business purchases, waste site removals, noise & sound reduction costs choosing the BMR option.

Sherri Kenyon  
4775 Evergreen  
406-251-4818  
kenyonknege@marsweb.com

I attended the workshop on Nov. 13'03 – I have the following concerns:

- a) EIS & transportation analysis is a very limited, restricted view – focuses on Blue Mountain intersection & needs of Miller Creek/South Hills commuters. Ignores people living around & off Blue Mtn. Rd - & people "downstream" around O'Brien Creek, Macleay Bridge, Big Flat Road areas.
- b) Traffic flow increases of 10-30% by 1=2025 very superficial & lack credibility – based on increased traffic since paving of Blue Mtn. Rd. from Trailhead to Blue Mtn./Big Flat/O'Brien Creek just 2 years ago there will be a much larger increase.
- c) Public opinion survey shoddy & not geographically representative.

The outlet for Miller Creek/South Hills is a short run fix that will be out of date within 2 years after completion.

Stew Seinger  
9775 O'Brien Creek  
Missoula, MT 59804  
406-721-1422  
stew.seinger@business.umt.edu

Of the options put forth, the "preferred alternate" @ Blue Mtn. Rd. is the only one I would "vote" for, if given the chance. However, I have serious concerns about whether all possibilities were really considered. I don't feel that all the concerns of area residents have been adequately addressed, nor that a really good long-term vision for Missoula as a whole has been developed. It's all piece-meal, crisis management, retro-fitting.

All development needs to stop. All road construction planning must cease. It is my understanding from representatives @ this meeting, that THERE ARE NO FUNDS to build this road anyway! Thousands of homes have been planned, without adequate access, no fire department annex funded, no funds in fact for any public services. To build all these homes without planning & funding for necessary services is a crime of greed & poor planning, that sets Missoula up for serious problems in the future. Stop all development NOW, and let's take a step back and plan for Missoula as a whole, and find the funding to do it right.

Jean C. Pflu  
6905 Cochise Drive  
Missoula, MT  
406-251-8460

I have lived in Miller Creek area all my life, so have seen Missoula expand for quite a few years. The need is for solid planning for the future. Right now the preferred bridge site is Blue Mt. Road site which dumps us out on Highway 93, which is already backed up with traffic. Blue Mt. Road will probably get more traffic from this bridge site, which is not good as it is a narrow road on a mountain side & shaded in winter time. We need a better bypass route to the north side of Missoula where more of the jobs are & industrial businesses are located. I contend the northern bridge site the one closest to town might be better for the bridge & all of Highway 93 traffic. This

interchange would be in line then with a possible new bypass route to the north side. This route from Highway 93 to the freeway on the north side has been checked out somewhat and sounds like it could be feasible to do. We need to look more at the big picture not just Miller Cr. area. Thank you.

Unidentified

Your preferred alternative at Blue Mountain gives no consideration for noise abatement, negative visual impacts, or fugitive dust and exhaust fume impacts on the Residential Zone District #18 immediately north of the proposed interchange.

PLEASE! Incorporate protection for our neighborhood in your EIS considerations.

D. Perasini  
4800 Evergreen Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
406-251-4505

### COMMENTS RECEIVED THROUGH PHONE CONVERSATION

Owns two large commercial properties, and also owns or holds leases to multiple businesses located on the south side of US 93 directly east of the Water Master Rafts building, east of Blue Mountain Road. Also owns Gardner's Auction, and Gardner's Mini-Storage, and leases out Best Buy Auto, Western States Trailer Sales, and Stewart Truck and RV.

Concerned about the impacts of the project upon access to his properties and businesses. He had been informed that access to his properties would not be impacted by the project. However, the plan-view drawing for Alternative 3B shows that his only access to US 93 would be closed to accommodate the proposed eastbound US 93 acceleration merge lane from the new connection. Access to his property would be limited to a frontage road that would connect to the approach to US 93 eastbound from the proposed Blue Mountain Road connection. This would require extensive out-of-direction and inconvenient travel to his property, particularly for people traveling westbound on US 93 from Missoula.

Would like to request a small version of the Alternative 3B plan-view drawing.

Kevin Gardner  
Property/Business Owner

Owns the commercial-zoned property located on the north side of US 93 directly east of the Montana Athletic Club.

Site work is currently being done for construction of an 80,000-square-foot building for Loren's House of Carpet, and the site also will contain a 40,000-square-foot building, plus a pad that could accommodate a 10,000-square-foot building.

Inquired as to whether or not the proposed access road that would curve around the MT Athletic Club would impact his proposed parking lot and circulation. He noted that the proposed road would impact the septic drain field of the athletic club, and that the proposed realignment of Buckhouse Lane would impact the septic drain field for his property.

Requested that a right-in/right-out only access to his parking area be provided from the northbound-westbound lane of the proposed access road to mitigate for the realignment of Buckhouse Lane north of its current alignment. He recognizes that accommodating left turns to his property from the access road would probably not be reasonable.

Chris Mowad  
Property/Business Owner

At the last meeting I heard the “fat lady sing.” This project is as good as done and I can’t imagine why you want comments at this point, but here goes:

Since it appears that 3B is going forward in spite of what residents directly impacted by this decision think, it makes the residents of Miller Creek/Linda Vista happy. Pat yourselves on the back.

Also, could you at least make the on/off ramps as ugly as possible and give no thought to the massive increase in traffic noise to local residents. You’re practically building this on top of us. We should at least get some input on the design, right. If we can’t stand the increased traffic and noise we can always move. Wait a minute, residents of Linda Vista & Miller Creek could have done that too. Easter to dump it on someone else, though – screw the few for the benefit of the many. 2B would have worked for them without disrupting quality of life for anyone.

Unidentified

I attended the recent meeting regarding the recommended alternative for the Miller Creek bridge proposal. I left after the presentation because it was obvious that there would be no constructive dialogue so am choosing to comment on this sheet instead. First of all, I would comment that while an out-of-state firm can be more “objective” to the needs of our community, you do not understand the thoughts of the people who live in the area and who do not see development as a positive change. If I look at our self-interest your proposal certainly helps us out because it diverts some of the increased traffic (which after living 31 years in our home we hate) away from the front of our home. Our concerns are three-fold. 1) After experiencing the traffic coming from the Bitterroot, we are not at all sure that they will be the opportunity to merge from the Blue Mountain location. I believe that merging will have to take place farther south to be effective. From Miller Creek we cannot make a right turn on red at traffic hours anymore because the traffic is steady and back-upped at times. 2) I believe it is very insensitive of your company to even consider this proposal without a personal meeting with the Bogges family whose property would be effectively cut in half. The same is true for any other residents or businesses that would lose property. It is simply rude and unethical of your company. 3) Although this proposal may solve the Miller Creek access problem, it is short-sided in the long-term if it does not address Blue Mountain, another access to the airport, and the Eastside Highway expansion.

Doris O. Nordstrom  
4975 Lower Miller Creek Road  
Missoula, MT 59803  
406-251-4088

The Blue Mtn. Option 3B appears to be the best for access onto US 93. However, the feeder road should be steered into the existing highly developed residential area to encourage travelers to use the interchange. For example, making Bitterroot Road the main feeder with a “Y” connection for traffic coming from the southern & western lower M. Crk. Rd. area & the future proposed subdivision on the ridge & the Maloney Ranch as yet another future addition. With the main access as shown on your map existing residents in the developed area would have to travel too far in the “wrong direction” before they could access US 93. This is against human nature (a drawing was attached to this comment).

J. Corn  
555 Lost Mine Loop Rd.  
Missoula, MT 59803

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Highway 93 Blue Mountain Connection  
Citizen Sponsored Public Meeting

February 5, 2004







**MINUTES  
HWY 93 – BLUE MOUNTAIN CONNECTION  
PUBLIC MEETING**

**Thursday, February 5, 2004  
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.  
Target Range School (Gym)  
4095 South Avenue West  
Missoula, MT**

A Public Meeting to discuss the Hwy 93 – Blue Mountain Connection was held February 5, 2004 at the Target Range School, Missoula, MT. Approximately one hundred and fifty (150) people attended (sign in sheets attached). The purpose of the meeting was to: (1) Increase the understanding and awareness of the proposed project and the preferred alternative; (2) Provide the public with the opportunity to comment and ask questions; and (3) Generate a list of potential issues or concerns specific to Blue Mountain.

**Panelists present:**

- Fred Stewart, Target Range Area Resident
- Craig Genzinger, Federal Highway Administration
- Dale Paulson, Federal Highway Administration
- Mike Hillis, Retired Wildlife Biologist
- Sue Colyer, Engineer, Lolo National Forest
- Steve Potts, Environmental Protection Agency, NEPA Coordinator
- Sandra Mack, Facilitator, AQUEST Collaborative Solutions

**ROOM ARRANGEMENT**

**Sign In Table**

The following handouts were available at the sign-in table:

- 1) Sign In Sheet
- 2) Agenda
- 3) Graphics Package
  - Where We Are In The EIS Process
  - Alternatives Screening
  - Preliminary Range of Alignment Alternatives
  - Preliminary Evaluation Matrix
  - Connection Alternatives
  - Alternatives Evaluation Summary
  - Why is this Alternative Recommended as Preferred
  - What's Next
- 4) Miller Creek Road Study Area Pamphlet "Save Our Blue Mountain"

**5) Display Board**

- a. Map of Miller Creek Land Use (Oct. 1996)
- b. Accident Rate on Blue Mountain Road
- c. Graphic of West Miller Creek Comprehensive Land Use Designations
- d. NEPA Regulations
- e. Section 4(f) Protection for our Recreation Areas

**Wall Displays**

Wall displays of the Miller Creek Project were available for public viewing as follows:

- 1) Map of Missoula Urban Area
- 2) Potential Alternative Impact Area
- 3) Estimated (2025) Peak Hour Volumes and Level of Service
- 4) Existing Average Daily Traffic
- 5) Estimated 2025 Average Daily Traffic
- 6) Major Intersections Concept Graphics (July 2003)
- 7) Corridor Section Concept (July 2003)
- 8) Bridge Section Concepts (July 2003)
- 9) Purpose and Need (Updated July 2003)
- 10) Study Area Aerial Map (November 2003)
- 11) Primary range of Corridor Alternatives (July 2003)
- 12) Connection Alternatives (September 2003)
- 13) How Would the Proposed Road Connection Affect Daily Traffic Volumes in Study Area (November 2003)
- 14) Alternative 1 – No Build
- 15) Alternative 2A & 2B – North Miller Creek
- 16) Alternative 3A & 3C – Blue Mountain road
- 17) Alternative 4 – South miller Creek Road
- 18) Upcoming Steps Graphics
  - a. Analysis of Advanced Alternatives
  - b. Preparation of Draft EIS
  - c. Presentation of Draft at Public Hearing
  - d. Preparation of Final EIS
  - e. Development of Implementation Plan for Recommended Improvements

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Fred Stewart, Opening**

Fred Stewart opened the meeting. My name is Fred Stewart and I am one of the homeowners in the study area. We said we would try and start at 7:00 p.m. and we promise we will be done at 9:00 p.m. That means with the number of people who are here it will be difficult for everybody to be able to ask questions, but we will certainly try to answer as many questions as possible.

Let me give a few reasons why we are here. At some of the public meetings for the Miller Creek Road project, a number of us were concerned because it didn't seem that the meeting format truly allowed us to get the kind of information we needed and have some group discussions about the pros and cons of the project. Because of that frustration we thought we would like to have a meeting where there was a better flow of questions and answers and information being passed back and forth. So we decided to have the meeting ourselves because we didn't feel that the contractors were interested in going in that direction. So that is the reason we are meeting tonight and our intention is to provide accurate information about the project. We have invited a number of people to be here to provide that information to you. Our group has hired a meeting facilitator to help with this meeting. We hope to have good, clear, accurate information. The other objective is to express our concern with the individuals that matter. So there are two parts (1) information, and (2) to express our concerns about this particular project.

Now we will have some brief introductions. Craig Genzlinger with the Federal Highway Administration in Helena. Dale Paulson is also with the Federal Highway Administration in Helena. He will tell us something about the NEPA side of things. Mike Hillis is a retired Forest Service Wildlife Biologist. He has worked in the Missoula area for twenty years and has worked on a lot of items associated with projects. He probably knows more about wildlife and its implications than any man in northern Montana. So we are glad that he has agreed to come talk to us this evening. Sue Colyer is the Forest Service representative. Sue is one of our neighbors. So she is in kind of a tough position in some respects. So we have asked her give us the Forest Service perspective with the information she will share with us. Finally Steve Potts, with the Environmental Protection Agency, will be providing some information as well. These are the panelists that have agreed to meet with us this evening. Sandy Mac at the far end of the table is our facilitator. She lives in Corvallis and her business is AQUEST Collaborative Solutions. We wanted to find a moderator that could moderate the session for us.

I wanted to point out that we had invited the County Commissioners to come and they sent a written reply declining to come to the meeting.

"The Four County Commissioners thank you for your invitation to serve as panelists at the public meeting on February 5<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Miller Creek EIS. However this meeting is premature and therefore respectfully decline to participate. We appreciate your concerns

and feel they will be addressed in the upcoming process. The alternatives will be fully analyzed and reported in the draft EIS document. The draft EIS will be released and a public hearing will be held to receive further comment. This process is scheduled sometime in April or May of this year and public comment will be received in 45 days. We urge you to work with Carter Burgess during that time in the public process."

We also invited the Director of Public Works and he respectively declined our invitation also. So in some respects, and the panelists can correct my gross over simplification, this started with the County Commissioners responding to the needs and concerns of the Miller Creek area, to go find some money from Conrad Burns, and then the Federal Highway Administration attend the job, the Forest Service attends the job, ....(inaudible) ... for pure profit.

**Sandy Mac, Facilitator**

Thank you very much Fred. My role tonight is just to help you have a collective guideline. I think I have the easiest job here and I'm very excited to help facilitate and moderate this meeting. I'm extremely impressed with this community, I'm impressed with your neighbors, and the professional and respectful manner that they put this meeting together in order for you to have a better understanding and awareness of the Miller Creek project. I'm also quite impressed with the panelists and their interest and eagerness to come and talk to you tonight and share with you the project from their perspective, and from the point where they at right now, and their interest in hearing and fully understanding your issues and concerns.

We will proceed with each of the panelists taking a few minutes to share with you their understanding of the project, their role in the project and the process, and where we are in the process right now.

We will hold questions until the end. We will spend the whole evening giving each of you an opportunity to speak or at least as many of you as we can get to, to share your concerns, your issues, ask questions, and get a better understanding. These issues may be something in terms of a benefit you see for this project, or may be a concern. We will capture your ideas on this flip chart, making sure that we understand your ideas and issues.

At the conclusion of this meeting we will summarize those issues and give them to the Federal Highway Administration to include in their assessment of the Miller Creek Project, in particular the Blue Mountain Connection, which is the preferred alternative. We also have Annell Fillingger from Federal Highways and she will be recording this meeting as well. We will spend about 10-15 minutes at the end of the meeting to summarize what you have accomplished tonight and to talk about the next steps. We want to be respectful of your time and we will try to end right at 9 o'clock or as soon thereafter as we can since we started a couple of minutes late.

To help assure the meeting is conducted with a good tone of dialogue, we have put up a few ground rules that I would like everybody to adhere to. One, we don't have real good acoustics and so if we could have one person speak at a time it will be very helpful to hear your neighbors and also the speaker. With background dialogue it will be difficult for us to hear each other. Listen for understanding. You may not agree with our neighbor who is speaking and you may not agree with the panelists, and the panelists may not agree with you, but really try to understand where that person is coming from and from their perspective why they are feeling the way they are. I'm extremely impressed with the respectful and the professional nature this community raises their concerns and I'm confident that it will continue tonight – to treat each other with respect. The last ground rule that I have is that in order to honor the objective the two who organized this meeting, to have as many people have opportunity to voice their opinions as possible, we will try and limit your comments to two minutes. That might be a little frustrating because you may have lots to say, but that will allow other people to comment. If at the end we don't have any more comments, you can come back and speak some more. That will be great. Shirley will have the microphone and she will be holding it for the people who have comments. With that I would like Dale Paulson to start the presentation. Thank you very much.

**Dale Paulson, Federal Highway Administration**

The first thing you need to understand about a process like this is that it is a decision making process that is done through the NEPA process. This 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. It says something like Miller Creek Road Preliminary Design EIA, well it is really an EIS, but that how it was stated in the document. In conjunction with that, the application for those funds included a bridge across the river. That is where we started with this project. We started with scoping. Although if you look at this document, you will see that we are well beyond scoping, but I believe scoping continues all the way through from the very beginning of the process until we get very deep into the Draft EIS. In other words, your ideas are still very valuable, and anything you want to tell us we want to listen to. It will still help us determine how to put together that Draft EIS.

Part of that is the determination of reasonable alternatives – those are alternatives that get detailed discussion in the Draft EIS. After we get the preliminary alternatives put together, then we move to finalizing the Draft EIS and that is sent out to everybody so you can read it. There will be a public hearing where there is another chance for input. That is real important point for putting your input forward. At that point you will have the opportunity to see what we've written, you will have the opportunity to comment on what we've written, and that is a very important point in time. The other thing you should know about that is that there is a time limit on that – 30 plus days. So be sure you get your comments in during that time period because there is a cutoff period for comments on that draft.

Then we take all that information and kind of go away for a little while and put it all together in the Final EIS. You will also get a chance to comment on the Final EIS before the Record of Decision (ROD) comes out. But there is nothing formal about it. That Final EIS will be distributed, feel free to comment on it, we will look for your comments, but there won't be a formal public hearing or anything like that. That information is considered in the development of the Record of Decision and that is finally the end of the process. I'm not going to say a whole lot more than that right now, but we can talk in more detail as time goes on and see what happens.

**Craig Genzlinger, Federal Highway Administration**

First of all I want to thank you all for coming out tonight. This is great to see this many people turn out. We are always glad to see people interested in our highway projects. You don't seem to have much trouble with that in Missoula; you are always interested in highways here.

First I want to tell you what my role is as the Federal Highway Administration. This is a federal highway project not a county project. The Federal Highway Administration is administering the contract and I'm the contract manager for that. When you hear people talk about consultants, Carter Burgess or David Evans, they are under contract to Federal Highways and they report to me. So I control that process and oversee that. So when decisions are being made, they are being made by the government agencies and not by the consultant teams.

Dale talked a little bit in general about the NEPA process, so I want to talk just real briefly a little more about where we are actually at with the Miller Creek project today. You saw the newsletters at the door, which is the last newsletter that was mailed just last fall. Some of you probably got the newsletter in the mail as well. We also have a website and it is available on the website and you can certainly get more information there – [www.MillerEIS.com](http://www.MillerEIS.com).

What we've done so far is that we've gone through the public process, we've gone through and identified a range of alternatives, and you probably saw those on the map over here (referring to graphic). We originally had seven alternatives and we narrowed that range down to three different alternatives that we are fully analyzing right now – the North Lower Miller Creek Connection, the South Lower Miller Creek Connection, and of course, the Blue Mountain Connection. We are finishing the data collection and analyzing the data on all those alternatives to identify what the impacts and benefits of each one of those would be. We haven't completed that yet, we are still in the process of doing that. Some of the areas we have fairly complete data, some areas we still have to get additional information. After we finish that data we will be drafting the Draft EIS. Our projection is that should come out sometime later this year depending if we stay on schedule and don't get any big surprises. So you should see that come either this spring or summer. As Dale mentioned, there will definitely be a public hearing at that point and we really encourage you to come out and make sure you comment, and get a chance to see what is in our document, and what you agree with and what you disagree with.

The one thing I do want to make clear is that no decision has been made yet. You hear people talking about the preferred alternative; the preferred alternative is not a decision. The Draft EIS isn't a decision. All we are doing right now is collecting data. The decision doesn't actually come until the Record of Decision is signed and we're about a year away from that at least. So you're input certainly is valuable right now.

Like I said, we are still gathering information, so I really appreciate a meeting like this tonight and I really commend the people and the community that put this together. This is really impressive. A meeting like this is really valuable for us and we want to make sure our document does address all your concerns and addresses all the issues of the community. So we want to know what they are now so we make sure to include those in our document.

Helen sent me a list of questions, and I don't want to take a long time and go through every one of them specifically, but I do want to touch on a few of them and especially the ones that overlap. I'm here to hear from you tonight.

One question was on the study area. There is a map that many of you might have seen and it might even be in the newsletter, that shows a line drawn on a map and it was called the study area. There were a couple of questions on who drew that line and why we aren't looking at impacts outside of that? I guess I'll take the blame for drawing the line – I was part of the group that sat down and drew that line. But there has been a lot of misunderstanding of what that actually means. That doesn't mean we aren't looking at impacts outside of that area. What we did very early on in this process was to look at the location and what we were doing for the project and what the EIS was and said: "Where is a reasonable area that we would expect direct impacts – ground disturbance type impacts." In other words, where we think we could actually cross the river. That is what we drew that line for. Certainly in our document if we have any impact regardless of whether it is inside or outside that line, it is going to be analyzed. One of the examples that I'm sure is on many people's minds here tonight is the traffic impacts up Blue Mountain Road. Just because it is outside that area, we definitely are doing impact and traffic projections on how much additional traffic we expect to see up Blue Mountain Road with each of the alternatives.

Another question was on the preferred alternative and how that was selected, and why it was selected. I'll start with who did it. We have two different groups or teams that are providing input to Federal Highway Administration as part of this project – the SEE (Social, Environmental, and Economic) Team and the ID Team. The SEE Team is made up of a number of government agencies – the City, County, State, and Federal Highways. They provide input for their jurisdiction and what they oversee. The ID Team is made up of resource agencies like the Forest Service, Corp of Engineers, and EPA. So we got those two groups together and went through all the impact data that we have and looked at it and said: "Does one of these alternatives look to us like it kind of shakes to the top based on what we know so far?" That is

how the Blue Mountain Road grade separated connection kind of shook to the top for us. Again that is not a decision. That could still potentially change before the draft EIS comes out depending on what we find and what we continue to hear.

One other one I wanted to comment on very briefly was a question about the "Y" intersection and existing Miller Creek Road. Why improvements to those aren't shown in the document? To date we haven't shown improvements there because we have not had a local transportation plan that showed any improvements included in it. One thing I will say is that we've done a little bit of analysis and regardless of what we do or wherever we make the connection, it appears to us that improvements still are needed at the "Y" and the existing Miller Creek connection. I know there have been some questions about that and if you have further concerns about those two areas, I would sure be interested in hearing those from you tonight.

The last thing I'll say is that I just want to stress that we haven't made a decision yet. We definitely want your input that is why we are here tonight. We are not here to defend anything we've done. We are really here to listen to you and hear your concerns and issues. The list that comes out of tonight will be posted on our website when we get it from Sandy. I appreciate you coming tonight and I'll be interested to hear what you have to say.

**Mike Harris, Biologist**

Let me start out by saying that I live in Corvallis and I don't really a rip about Blue Mountain and Miller Creek – that is to get people somewhat relaxed. I am familiar with the process, and how things are evaluated, and decision making so I will talk to you from that standpoint. When you look at Western Montana, everybody knows that we have really high biotic values. You pick out the highest values that are generally are riparian, river and streams, and you pick out the highest rivers and streams, there are those feeder systems that are low grade and unimpounded with dams, free flowing, and flood frequently. So if we look at the Bitterroot River from the Buck House Bridge to the confluence of the Clark Fork, that is pretty neat chunk of habitat. It isn't affected by a barrier like the Clark Fork, it isn't affected by heavy metals like the Clark Fork and Upper Blackfoot. So we can look at that and say "wow, that is a pretty neat wildlife resource." It's got some problems; it has a lot of exotic species like leafy spurge and bullfrogs. I haven't heard anything about bullfrogs, but they've had devastating affects on mating amphibians but those couple of things aside, it is a healthy system. So what do we look at in terms of risk? Well, thirty years ago the biggest thing affecting free flowing rivers were impoundments – those are no longer an issue. Twenty years a subdivision in the 20-year and 100-year floodplain was an issue – that isn't much of an issue any more. We generally don't allow people to build in a 20-year floodplain. And when you look it's not really very developed down the river corridor.

The issue that does tend to pop out with large river habitats is that, because people love them so, they tend to isolate them and build cities around them or high density development and cut off

some other chance of habitat. And you need to look at that chunk of river to the east, it is basically cut off, it's all urban all the way to Mount Selway. A good example is the Little Bitterroot from Lolo up to Darby. If you think about it that is a pretty healthy system. To the west you've got the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness – a fairly healthy system. To some degree 93 has separated those habitats so they are not as functional as before. But federal highways and a bunch of other groups have put a lot of energy into trying to rectify that situation but it is difficult. It would have been a lot easier to do 50 years ago and no doubt a lot cheaper.

So we've kind of have the same situation potentially with Blue Mountain Road. If you think about the Bitterroot River, it is pretty well connected to upland habitats to the west. But we have this little sleepy Blue Mountain Road. Think back 10 years ago when it was a two-lane gravel road, with fairly sporadic traffic there and slow traffic – not really a problem for animals. But today it is a two-lane paved road, with sporadic traffic but a little higher speed traffic – really not a problem if you are deer or a coyote, but if you are a western toad, or a lone-toed salamander, or a rubber boa, it starts to become a problem. So incrementally as you make traffic decisions that change the flow, then you have these real subtle and ultimately cumulatively significant impacts on habitat connectivity.

The County Commissioners have gone record that habitat connectivity in the greater Missoula county area is a very, very important issue. So I agree this is an issue that we need to make them aware of – to say, “here is a place you need to apply that.” I was glad to hear that at least some of those issues are being tracked and will be addressed. But I think it needs to be done in the context of, not just what it does to homeowners or traffic flow around Missoula, but what does it do to animals in and around Missoula. I think that is a fairly significant wildlife issue. So if you want to proceed with that then talk to me later and I can give you some suggestions on how to proceed with that.

**Sandy Mac, Moderator**

Next I'm going to jump to ask Fred if he will start our list of issues. Mike, what I heard you say is that an issue that an issue you would have assessed is habitat connectivity as it relates to traffic flow. Is that correct? Answer: Yes.

**Sue Colyer, U.S. Forest Service**

I've been asked to talk about what the Forest Service's role is in this project. As Craig talked about earlier, there was an ID Team established for this EIS. The goal of the ID Team members is to bring to the table any resource issues that affect the project or that the project could potentially affect, and then to help work through those issues and use those issues to take the alternatives that are studied.

One of the reasons the Forrest Service is involved is because for this project to have been eligible for the type of funding that is being used, the project had to provide either improved access or access to National Forest Service lands. So technically if additional access to Miller Creek is created then that will provide additional access to Forest Service lands in Miller Creek. Mainly we also are at the table because National Forest Land is in that study area. So again, our role is to bring to the Team any issues that we feel will impact National Forest lands.

**Steve Potts, EPA**

I'm Steve Potts the National Environmental Policy Act Coordinator for the Environmental Protection Agency in Montana. You've heard a little bit about the NEPA process and that the EIS is being prepared by the Federal Highway Administration. EPA's role in this process is basically one of consultation with the lead federal agency, the Federal Highway Administration, and reviewing comment on the EIS. NEPA asks all federal agencies that prepare EISs to consult with other agencies that may have jurisdiction by law or special expertise when they are doing an EIS. EPA as a Chief Federal Environmental Agency often is considered to have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to environmental impacts. EPA also has some unique authority under Section 309, The Clean Air Act. That directs EPA to review and comment on EISs that are prepared by other federal agencies. So EPA looks at EISs for other federal agency projects, reviews the EIS, and submits written comments to the lead federal agency. So EPA's role in this is one of an advisory role, consultation and review, and comment on the EIS.

Areas of EPA EIS review can cover any area that involves a potential affect on our environment. Generally EPA's most substantive comments are in areas where EPA has a regulatory mission – looking at water quality affects, air quality affects, pollution affects, and impacts to wetlands. EPA's comments also can get involved in the completeness of analysis in and EIS – the information in the EIS, the methodology used for assessing environmental impacts, consistency with environmental laws and other environmental requirements, whether or not the EIS addressed environmental concerns adequately, and looking at mitigation of impacts and disclosure of impacts.

EPA also has an EIS rating system where we rate environmental affects – the level of environmental impacts as well as the adequacy of environmental analysis of disclosure. When EPA submits written comments to the lead federal agency, we include the rating of the EIS. If EPA has major concerns or objections to a proposed project, it is reflected in an adverse rating. Usually what happens in those circumstances is EPA begins a consultation or dialogue with the lead federal agency to try to get issues addressed and the conflicts resolved. That discussion of issues with the lead federal agency can be elevated to higher and higher levels and agency management and can go all the way up to the Council on Environmental Quality which reports to the White House. That is basically the extent of EPA's hammer involved in another federal agency's EIS project. We do not have veto authority over another federal agency's project; we

just have this review and comment role and the ability to elevate issues within agency management all the way up to the Council on Environmental Quality.

It is also pertinent to know that NEPA law does ask that other planning environmental review procedures and requirements be integrated into an EIS process. So if the project needs to get a permit, a license, or some other approval, those requirements and approvals need to be evaluated as part of the EIS process. You don't want a project to go through the EIS process and then find out at a later date that for some reason you can't get a permit or a particular approval. So those approvals and permit processes need to be integrated into the EIS process. As an example, on this project one of the proposals in the emergent process will be a new bridge over the Bitterroot River, and any placement of fill material in the river like that generally requires, by the Clean Water Act, a 404 Dredge and Fill Permit. Those permits are issues by U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. EPA has a role in that permit program in that EPA worked with the Corp to develop the environmental criteria under which permits are reviewed and evaluated. EPA also reviews and comments on individual 404 Permit applications. EPA actually has veto authority over a 404 Permit. So in addition to EPA's consultation, review and comment role, a particular project may involve some of EPA's regulatory roles such as the Clean Water 404 Act Dredge and Fill Permit.

I also want to emphasize that public involvement is a really important part of the NEPA process. I think we all value the opportunity to hear public concerns on this project.

**COMMENTS/QUESTIONS RECEIVED**

- Q: (Tracy) What firm is preparing the EIS?
- A: (Craig Genzlinger) We actually have a team of two consultants that are working on preparing the EIS: David Evans and Associates is the lead consultant is doing most of the engineering; and Carter Burgess is doing most of the public involvement and environmental analysis.
- Q: (Tracy) My second question is for Sue. Can you tell us at this time what you think the impact to the forest area of Miller Creek/Blue Mountain?
- A: (Sue Colyer) Frankly, we don't see a new access to Miller Creek would have a major impact on Blue Mountain recreation area. We do recognize that, with any of the build alternatives, there probably would be additional traffic on Blue Mountain Road and the consultant from David Evans and Associates has actually done the traffic study and that study shows that if either the north or the south alternative were selected, traffic on Blue Mountain Road would increase about 7%. If the alternative at Blue Mountain Road is selected, that would be more like 13%. So we don't have any reason to refute those numbers. That is the best information we have now. We do recognize that with urban

growth there is going to be additional traffic and there will be additional noise, and that is going to happen, but we don't really expect the recreation experience to change or the reason people go to Blue Mountain Recreation Area now to change. We don't see a substantial impact because of this project.

Q: (Fran Ean) My question is directed to a statement that Sue made about the traffic problems. I spoke to a person named Bill Riceman approximately three weeks ago. I was referred to him by Troy Halouska of Carter Burgess. My question for Troy, and Bill who he referred me to, was how did they determine that number of 13% in terms of increase of traffic on Blue Mountain Road? I was told by Troy Halouska that their ... (inaudible) ... and the Federal Highway Administration can take what he said. But they are saying there really isn't a whole lot of increase of traffic on that road if the preferred alternative is Blue Mountain, and consequently they really don't need to look at the environmental impacts to those recreation areas, in particular the flat river corridor. So Bill Riceman informed me that his projections are that by the year 2025 the number will really only increase 50% which means that is incremental over seven years and that is really not a whole lot of traffic. I asked him if he had driven down Blue Mountain Road and understood it really wasn't a particularly safe road in terms of bringing a lot of traffic down that corridor? He said yes, he had. Then he proceeded to tell me that there is really no way a lot of traffic would go down that road anyway because it is not a paved road. I said yes, it certainly is a paved road and it has been for at least a year. He said "oh really?"

So my question is how can we trust his projections and numbers that they are talking about if they don't even have accurate information about Blue Mountain Road?

Issue: (Sandy Mac) I heard two issues or two concerns. One is concern with the projections of increased traffic on Blue Mountain Road. The second was safety related to any increased traffic on the road under the current conditions.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) As far as how the traffic numbers are acquired – there is a traffic model that is jointly done that covers the whole city area of Missoula and is generally done by the City of Missoula and the Montana Department of Transportation. All the traffic numbers that we've seen and displayed have come out of that model. They put in the Blue Mountain Road connection, and North Lower Miller Creek Road and they run the model and it will show you where the cars will go after you put that road in. That is the model we are using. I'm not sure who Bill is with that Troy referred you to, but we got our numbers from the Montana Department of Transportation and the City of Missoula.

Certainly safety is a big concern up there as well. I'm not sure why he told you there was not an increase in traffic to the point that we would have to consider impacts. If we feel

like that will be adding an impact, then certainly that will be analyzed. If the traffic went up to such a point that noise was an issue, you people would have a noise impact. Sue mentioned the traffic numbers, but what we are interested in showing up there is the most significant increase in traffic is going to take place over the next 20 years even if we don't do anything. Our traffic projections show that Blue Mountain Road will go up to 1,800 cars per day by 2025 with the No Build Alternative. So the 13% Sue referred to was above that with the Blue Mountain Road connection. It varies, like she said, depending upon which connection it was. So we are showing an increase in traffic if we connect to Blue Mountain Road.

Q: (Howard Glenn) I live up Lower Miller Creek. In the mornings when I go to work between 6:00 and 8:30 a.m. and I come to the Miller Creek and U.S. 93 junction, I can look to the left and see two lanes of traffic backed up beyond the Blue Mountain Road stop light. What I'm concerned about is if you are going to put in the bridge at the Maloney Ranch and Blue Mountain Road, and you are going to add the volume of 2000 homes, let's say you add those homes and they are parents who take their children to school, are they going to go over that bridge, get on U.S. 93 and come in off 93 to Miller Creek, turn right at to Briggs and then turn left on Briggs when all of Miller Creek is backed up? At the "Y" at Miller Creek, I've timed this and measured it, and many mornings I'm backed up close to 5/10 of a mile backed up to go over Miller Creek. I'm wondering why there can't be a single lane underpass at the "Y" at Miller Creek, double lanes - one you can turn off at Briggs and one can go to 93 and make a right hand turn. All of that traffic from the Bitterroot is going to increase it, all these homes from Maloney Ranch is going to increase it. I don't see how much more it can take and not understand it, and it is one my concerns.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) You have a concern with the existing traffic loads at the Miller Creek "Y" junction. You would like to try and find a way to minimize that back up.

Q: (Howard Glen) Yes, not only that but the popular in and out on Upper Lower Miller Creek. What is going to happen if all traffic coming out of the Maloney Ranch making right turns and coming up 93? It is already backed up way beyond that. How are they going to get out of there?

A: (Craig Genzlinger) I think we all have the same concerns as far as the operation of Highway 93. We don't want to do anything that makes 93 worse. I can assure you that we are looking at U.S. 93 operations. We are looking at the existing signal and the existing traffic volumes, and trying to make sure that this project doesn't degrade an already congested situation as certain times of the day.

Q: (Unidentified) You answered my question when you said 7% was over and above the projected 18% increase with the No Action Alternative. Is that correct? That would mean that with the bridge in there we can expect a 25% increase?

A: (Craig Genzlinger) I'll go off the top of my head and try and recall the numbers for you - they are on the map over there. I think we are showing the existing traffic volumes up Blue Mountain Road, not in the vicinity of 93 but farther up the road, somewhere around 700 today and we are projecting under the No Build Alternative in the year 2025 that is going to go up to 1,800 vehicles per day. With our connection at Blue Mountain Road, we are showing it going up to about 2,050.

Q: (Unidentified) That brings up the problem, there are many of us who don't believe the projections.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) Well, it is not an exact science and I'll certainly agree with you there.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) There is an issue of concern with the method used for modeling the projected traffic.

Q: (Steve McCool) Thank you very much for coming and explaining different things to us. I have a whole list of comments so I'll try and keep them short. Several of them are made in the spirit of trying to be constructive of the EIS process and not criticism. First of all the EIS does not consider all the reasonable alternatives. The reason for that is that the purpose and need is related to finding a location for a bridge and not trying to figure out how to get traffic in and out of Miller Creek. So it is flawed in that way. I mentioned this to the consultant and they were not very enthusiastic about hearing that kind of comment.

In the EIS you recommend a preferred alternative. For the life of me I can't understand why you wouldn't select one that leads to the least cumulative environmental impacts. The one that does to the lead to the least cumulative environmental impacts is the No Action Alternative. So it seems that you would have to have pretty overwhelming arguments to select an alternative that impacts people and the environment as much as your EIS says.

The spirit of the public engagement process I think is pretty flawed. Again the consultant doesn't seem to be very responsive to the suggestion that -- in fact I can say that because the fact that we are having this meeting indicates that it has a few flaws in it.

Those are three pretty specific comments, but the more general comment is that this whole planning exercise with respect to...(inaudible)... and not thinking on a larger

scale, not thinking about how the whole region operates. We are thinking about one thing at a time and pretty soon you end up with a set of cumulative impacts.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) You brought up three issues – (1) the scope of this project is very narrow and should consider the larger issue of the traffic in the area. (2) the issue about the least impact and saying that any alternative other than the no action would have the least impact. (3) a process issue in terms of public input to date.

A: (Dale Paulson) As far as the preferred alternative goes, there is mixed opinions on how a person approaches that and whether or not you really say that you have a preference or not. NEPA tells us that if there is a preference we should tell you what that is. I think that is the best way to do it although the preferred alternative can change. That way you know what we are thinking, and then we get to hear what you are thinking. And that makes for a real good exchange of information when there is a preferred alternative.

Q: (Al) I live on Brian Creek meadows. I want to thank all of you for showing up tonight. It is good hear different subjects from the state hierarchy. I want to especially thank Helena Orendain for bringing all of us together. I have had the unique privilege of working with this lady on a previous project, and as a matter of fact she pushed me up to be the front man when we got that dusty Blue Mountain Road paved. We can actually breath the air in Brian Creek easier in the summer time now. But the meeting tonight is about the environmental impact, we should be very careful because that road is about 60% of the air pollution – the south part of Missoula used to be a brown hays down there in the summer. I don't know if any of you were involved but we pleaded with them and the county and they thought we were wrecking it for them, when all we were trying to do is show them a nice place they could put their cuttings if they tore out the railroad bridge on Reserve Street.

That is what you've got on Blue Mountain Road. You do not have a smooth surface. That will not handle trucks. As a matter of fact, the .... (inaudible) .... Forestry went in and finished the south part of Blue Mountain Road. Now I understand that was built up so you can actually haul logs of Blue Mountain there. But if you folks double again the amount of traffic going up that road with the river on one side and the canal on the other, I'll guarantee you that you will have a dust generator in 6 to 18 months. It was not built for that, I think it has one sealer coat over it from the Reserve Street repair money.

I also can also tell you with the increase in traffic we've had that my wife is feeding a bunch of crippled deer, because with the canal there and the road and the river on the other side, they have to get over to the river to drink water. We do have a wildlife corridor, I don't know if you are aware of the Blue Mountain wildlife corridor. The only person who is not paying any attention to our neighborhood rules and their relationship to

the wildlife corridor is ..... He has put a fence in and over the past three years I've dug about four deer off of his fence, and that is not a pretty sight.

So there are a lot of things that are being overlooked: (1) I haven't talked to anybody at all yet in that entire region that is in favor of putting that connection on the Blue Mountain access. I've talked to quite a number of folks from the south area of Hayes Street that really have a problem getting on that road. What I see right now the way the county is going is they are going to throw another 50% traffic into an already mile and a half gridlock from Wal-Mart through the Blue Mountain intersection down to Hayes Creek. So we need to think about merging traffic onto 93 a little further south so that it is all organized. Another thing we need to consider in our environmental impact statement is road rage. Come to find out that from a person in California that road rage comes from these design flaws. Montana is notorious for building problems like this.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) I heard four different issues: (1) this community has a history of working with government, and a specific example was the dust issue on Blue Mountain. (2) You are concerned with the surface of the Blue Mountain Road and the increase traffic and how that will affect the condition of the road and increase in the dust. (3) You are concerned about the wildlife corridor and the impact of increased traffic on deer and elk. (4) The congestion and you suggested moving the connection further south.

Q: (Johnny Fulton) I live in Missoula. I don't live in the area but I have an extremely deep interest in this. This gentleman down here as far as I'm concerned has the best answer about how we try to fix Miller Creek so the Upper Miller Creek Road will work better. I hope the design planners will take note that it is a good answer. To get that intersection changed into a separation would be pretty easy to do.

What I'm really concerned about is Missoula does not have a really good bypass on the west side – west of Reserve. This is an ideal opportunity for that. The section lines and Power Street could and should not only become the next main bypass around Missoula. As discussed here, this is just a bridge and a "one subject" focus. There is a south and then Blue Mountain north intersection that lines up with Power Street and would be a really good first step in a bypass system for Missoula. The traffic loads on Reserve Street are 42,000. They have been the same number for 20 years and haven't changed. It leads to Malfunction Junction, we talk about that history ... (inaudible) ... But the 33,000 cars that run toward Reserve need relief. This could easily be a first step in providing that bypass system. Yet I'm afraid that isn't going to happen if we don't expand the vision of this project and take a look at what the real issues might be. From what I've read we aren't looking at this comprehensively enough. I would hope that this room would at least takes notes and think about that.



I hope that we take some kind of straw poll of this audience as to what they feel is the right position for this bridge to go.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) Your issue is with the scope of this project – you would like to see a plan for a bypass and look at the bigger picture. You are concerned that the scope is too narrow and not considering all the needs.

Q: (John Marino) I live in the original Linda Vista. Having lived out there from day one, I can see the need for better egress and ingress out of the area. Initially I was in favor of the intersection coming out of Blue Mountain – a) because it was easiest; and b) because it would be the least expensive. But after having looked and started thinking outside the box, I see that the easiest and least expensive is not always the best. We can spend \$458 million dollars to put a few SUVs on Mars and there are no roads there. There might be a Wal-Mart, but there are no roads. So looking at the long-term I believe the proper route should be just north of Gardner’s Auction.

The speed limit has been reduced to at least 45 mph on Blue Mountain Road. As you see the development that is happening along that corridor between Wal-Mart and Blue Mountain Road, at 65 mph there will be more and more accidents as people are looking for the right place to turn off to get to where there homes are.

You talked about safety. Craig mentioned safety was very important. Well Blue Mountain Intersection is on a curve as you are going south, and as you are going north you’re coming down a hill, and around that same curve we have \_\_\_\_\_. There are a tremendous amount of accidents. At Hayes Creek, you are on a hill and curve also. Just over to Gardner’s Auction north it is flat and straight. Free visual both north and south. And when it comes time to do this western bypass, it is easy to take off from that and go north from there.

The other the thing that has to be done is the intersection at the “Y” for Upper and Lower Miller Creek has to be improved and I hope the designer who did the light at the intersection is left completely out of the process. And the intersection at U.S. 93 and Miller Creek Road needs to be expanded to allow more people to turn left and right and also go straight.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) (1) The issue of the least expensive and easiest might not be the best solution always. So we need to look at all sorts of criteria not just those two. (2) Safety, you’re concerned about the viewing distance for accessing the highway – the design and curve. (3) There are some other traffic issues in the area that you feel are important to be looked at, not just this connection.

Q: (John Molten) The last three years I’ve driven U.S. 93 once a month. I start in Missoula and head to Hamilton and leave at 7 a.m. I’m afraid when there is an accident that happens – and we talk about a 7% increase.... (inaudible) ... the Maclay Bridge cannot stand any more traffic. The intersection south of here is terrible and in my opinion, whoever designed that should be shot. The city is doing everything they can to eliminate that and the east west corridor through there is causing more road rage. I have a strong belief that any increased traffic off Blue Mountain attempting to find its way back to Missoula will find a reasonable alternative. When I travel in other cities I know there is a similar concerns. I would love to see this go forward, it is needed, but let’s make the best one we can.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) You said to look at the Maclay Bridge and the situation there, and look at historic use and historic planning and learning from that and build a better structure in the future.

A: (Craig Genzinger): We had a question about Maclay Bridge before and that impacted our traffic volumes particularly since that is extremely narrow and under-designed right now. My understanding is that the traffic model we’ve run includes improvements at the Maclay Bridge to a two-lane bridge. So any of the projections that we are showing has that in it. The one thing that a number of you are hitting on that I think we all see down there, is there is a lot of need in this area. There is U.S. 93, whether it is Reserve Street/Brooks Street intersection, improvements at the “Y”, improvements at Blue Mountain Road, and access to Hayes Creek is a problem, access to 93 all up and down throughout this corridor is a problem. So there are certainly a lot of needs out there and I certainly understand that frustration. But as far as the Maclay Bridge, we are analyzing with improvements at Maclay Bridge.

Q: (Terry) I have a number of comments. First of all I see these areas of Pine Creek, Big Flat, Blue Mountain, Target Range and the original study area, we are still seeing bias as far as the people that need the most help which is the people in Miller Creek. Which means it is a self-fulfilling prophecy by only asking them “is this a good idea or not a good idea.” Some of us out here have been through this process and some of us feel that we are being led down a path and we see the long-term consequences. In 1995, this location in the Miller Creek area was drawn up by the developers. In 2001 this location and the map was drawn in the application for grants funds to Conrad Burns. So we are not surprised that this is the preferred alternative. It has been on the maps since 1995 and we feel like we are treated like country bumpkins a little bit thinking that this scoping process is something that we have a real say in when it seems like this is a pre-ordained or predestined location. This has happened before here in Miller Creek.

Second flaw. In the Visioning Team Study, there was discussion about preserving the bypass and the county Transportation Plan of 2025 has a bypass on Blue Mountain Road,

yet there is kind of like this big elephant in the room here that no one is talking about. The moment that bridge is put as a linkage to Blue Mountain, you have what the next discussion will be – well, we already have the bridge we might as well do the bypass. So it is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Third, in my view, I'm somewhat disgusted by the fact that we are spending \$5 million in federal funds on a local county road which represents a giant pork subsidy to the developers who stand to make millions. The county application to Conrad Burns clearly states that the primary reason for the bridge is to relieve traffic congestion. In my view, that is caused by ill-conceived housing developments without proper infrastructure in place.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) I heard three things: (1) You have a concern and issue about the public process and a bias toward the Miller Creek area and in your estimation not enough public input from this community. (2) You have a concern, from your perception, you do not have confidence that the alternative analysis is really an open process. You feel the decisions have already been made. (3) You have a concern that the federal highway project is subsidizing development.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) I just don't want to have anybody feel excluded from our process. That is really one of the main reasons we are here tonight because we do want to hear everybody's comments. Just because we drew that line in the study area, I don't want the perception that it is constrained in any way. In my opinion, it never did. We are looking at impacts and we are looking at alternatives. We do want people to be involved in the process and I appreciate your comments and we will see what we can do to make sure you feel like you are part of this process.

Q: (Jerry) But in the selection process, you already put down the preferred alternative and we didn't get cards and letters asking us to give comments back on the original design.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) I think you are talking about the public opinion survey that went out. Not everybody got a public opinion survey – that was a sampling method. That was really just to gauge public input at that time. That has never been the overriding factor by any stretch of the imagination in leading us to the preferred alternative that we looked at to date. Like I mentioned earlier, that preferred alternative still could change. So we want people's input and that is why we are here tonight. We still have the public hearing coming up when the Draft EIS comes out. We want people to comment on what we are doing and give us their concerns and input.

Q: (Susan Campbell) I live in Hayes Creek area and happily there is no longer going to paved two-lane highway through the Blue Mountain Recreation area. That is a battle we just won yesterday.

I have 150 signatures of many people who are not in this audience that are extremely concerned and they are outside of the Miller Creek/Blue Mountain area. I was a member of a Citizens Group Planning Committee which is kind of a joke, because if we citizens are never listen to, who met with developers prior to the Maloney Ranch being constructed back in 1994, 1995, and 1996. I served with Mr. Morino and Peter Berg, and some other very concerned citizens. At that time, Dr. McCarty and the people who were buying that beautiful Maloney Ranch offered land that would allow a bridge to be built at approximately where China Boring is. They were also talking about the Hayes Creek Road, and that never came up the current material that has come out. They offered \$250,000 – I don't know where that money would come from and don't know where it would go. They also said there would be an assessment to the people who were buying lots. By the way it is not a \$20 million dollar bridge and all of us know that. It will be a minimum of a \$30 million bridge. I used to work for the Traffic Transportation in Washington D.C. So \$30 million is going to be the right amount.

I would like an answer to this – why is it that we the taxpayers have to foot the bill for growing development in the Maloney Ranch and the Miller Creek area, that was anticipated by the citizens back in 1994 and 1995, and yet the politicians who refused to come and listen to 250 voters – I think we should all note that the County Commissioners are not here – keep approving all of the development in the Maloney Ranch, which back in 1994 – 1996 was 6,000 homes, they whittled it down to 4,000.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) I noted four things. (1) You want each panelist to know there are people who are not here tonight that have concerns. (2) You don't feel that citizens are generally listened to. (3) To look at the actual costs of the bridge, your concern is that the projected costs are low – way low. (4) Concern for the citizens subsidizing development. (5) There is an additional issue – the amount of money and land promised by the developers of the Maloney Ranch.

Q: (Karen Dryer) I live on South Avenue but lived in Target Range for about 18 years. I have a couple of concerns. (1) I would like to know why we are trying to move a problem from the Miller Creek area and U.S. 93 over to the Target Range area and the Big Flat area without the residents having a vote? We were not consulted on this and this will impact us and our children. (2) What is happening to the increased traffic on North Avenue possibly Third Street and South? This school we are in right now sits on South Avenue. What impact is that going to have? We've got children that have to cross the street, that walk to school, ride their bikes to school, that have to get across the street to the school. That is huge. That is huge. We are going to have from 7:45 until 8:15 in the morning a traffic problem for those that have to get to school at 8:30. Then we have another traffic problem from 3:00 to 5:00. You are just going to add more cars on this road and there is no more space to add more cars. I'm definitely against it.

No one in this area was consulted. It seems that the whole concern is for the Miller Creek people. They chose to purchase homes in that are. They wanted to live in the Miller Creek area. They knew what the road were and were not. When we chose to live here and we knew what our roads were when we moved out here. We don't want more cars.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) You have a couple of concerns: (1) You have a concern about the public input process. It is important to you that as this project goes forward through the EIS process and the assessment of alternatives, that the issues and interests of this community are included in that. (2) You also have a concern for safety specifically for schools.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) As far as the public involvement all I can say is that is why we are here to night and that is why we will have the public hearing coming when we release the draft document. You concern about impacts to the community – traffic and schools, will all be disclosed. Anywhere we think we are having any kind of impact as the result of our project, it will be disclosed in the document. All I can do is encourage you when we release the Draft EIS and whatever alternative we come with, to look at it and if you disagree or if you think there is an impact that we haven't covered in there, then provide us that comment at the public hearing or in writing and we will make sure we respond to that.

Q: (Karen Dryer) In addition to that, on the wildlife biology end, every week or every two weeks there is a deer killed on South Avenue. How many more are going to be killed?

Issue: (Sandy Mac) You have an issue concerning the wildlife corridor and a concern about deer and elk.

A: (Sue Colyer) I would add that a resident of Target Range and not my involvement on the Forest Service end, but I did get the survey that was sent to the residents of the Miller Creek area. So some surveys were sent to the Blue Mountain area. I don't know what percentage.

Q: (Karen Dryer) Maybe that was because of your position with the Forest Service.

A: (Sue Colyer) No it isn't. The Forest Service wasn't even involved in project at that point. So some surveys did go out.

A: (Mike Harris) I can talk to the deer and elk issues. That is a huge issue nationally. There is probably no place in the country where it is not a big issue. It is kind of out of control. The issue of beautiful houses around a river environment, and a number of you people stated that – if that is an important issue to you, your focus is too small. We don't resolve

those kinds of problems peace meal. You have to have a broad scale plan to deal with that.

Q: (Renee) I live in the Target Range area. I asked this question at the Miller Creek November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Regarding the survey area, surveys were sent to residents. They told me that 1,422 surveys were sent out and of that 210 surveys went outside the Miller Creek area. I didn't get a survey and I know that a lot of people in this area didn't get a survey. So that kind tells us that there were 1,000 surveys sent out in the Miller Creek area.

Craig, one more question that I have is that you said there are plans for a double lane bridge to be constructed? They call it the Maclay Bridge project. Can you elaborate on that a little bit and tell us where the application is going to be?

Issue: (Sandy Mac) Two concerns: (1) The survey and how it was generated – some concerns about adequate participation from this community. (2) The Maclay Bridge Project.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) First on the survey, I can't speak to the specific numbers tonight on where they went out, I don't have that information with me. But I do know that a certain percentage went to the Blue Mountain area. You're right, the bulk of them were probably in the Miller Creek area and that general vicinity. All I can say about the survey is that it is not the overriding public involvement decision-making tool as far as this process. The Public Hearing is going to be the most public involvement for decision-making on this project. So we aren't utilizing that public opinion survey in the process any more at all.

As far as the Maclay Bridge, I can't talk about it. I haven't been involved in the environmental assessment that they did on that or the design that has happened. All I know is that the question came up about it and I checked with the City for traffic volumes and with the consultant and was told that the new two-lane bridge was used in the traffic volume projections. That is all I can tell you about the Maclay Bridge, it is not our project. I believe it is a county project. Greg Robertson is probably the best person to contact regarding the Maclay Bridge project.

Q: (Renee) They told us that Linda Vista Meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup> that David Evans Scott Richman said that it was on the Transportation Plan and he called it the Maclay Bridge project and said it was a double lane bridge. And I asked if it there were making the single lane into two lanes at Miller Creek? He said no it was a double lane bridge heading south.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) Scott is the one I asked to look into it to make sure that all the traffic volumes were included.

Q: (Unidentified) There are some very basic NEPA laws in place, so if these laws have been followed why has it been necessary for the citizens of this area to convene this meeting? We really have felt locked out for some time and this meeting is proof of that. If you look at the activities on this project you will find the individual agencies involved have committed a blatant violation of the law. Look at the Internet on NEPA and you will find that. In Missoula people have been locked out for some time from lawful participation. If you guys have a rating system when you preparing EIS's, we have compared some from all parts of the county mostly done in Montana that show that the EIS's here are very ommissive and flawed overall. The public has been misled and actually denied their legal rights and their valid comments have simply been ignored. What we are witnessing here is improper planning, and failed EIS's for decades in Missoula, and I can show you documents if you want to look. The EIS process has been intentionally short-circuited and we are witnessing a feeding frenzy for development paid for on the backs of existing taxpayers. Typically some sort of development has been planned in the area for community life and people talk about that. Senator Burns is throwing money around while people can't feed its kids or provide health care. There is evidence of falsified grant applications for four projects that Senator Burns participated in in terms of funding all of which had falsified documents. If the government is working with them lets examine Mullen Road and Rapid Snake EA's, what you will see there is a trampling of the law. Look at Missoula Wastewater Facility Plant operating if you really want to see a travesty – we are talking about traffic, increases in pollution, and our state officials simply forgot to do a mock test. This situation has to change.

Q: (Jody Anderson) We live on Highway 93, Cochice Drive. Three things I want to mention. First of all it is time to do more than a band-aid job on this whole traffic situation. We favor some kind of a bypass – an intelligent bypass. I would like our people to put in their notes the name of Don Perisimi to also contact on this. He lives in this area. He is an engineer that has done much roadwork. He has written at least two letters to the Editor of the Missoulian that were exceptionally intelligent. His views need to be taken into account.

Highway 93, as you all know, is almost a death trap trying to get on any time there is traffic. Hayes Creek residents know this certainly, we know this on Cochice Drive, and I think others know it. We need either a bypass, we need a traffic light, or we need a speed limit, or something to be able to slow down. We live in fear that if this bridge goes through at Blue Mountain an interchange will be put in that will do away with the existing traffic light, which gives us at least some reprieve.

The third thing and the most important is that the only route down through the Bitterroot is on the highway, except for going clear around. When there is an accident, it is impossible for emergency vehicles to get down there. So we need a way for another lane

of traffic for people who really need help. Craig, you said you had some ideas you were working on for Highway 93; I would love to know what they are. Thank you.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) (1) There is a lot of need on Highway 93 in this area and there is an interest from this community to look at a broader picture. (2) Also emergency vehicle access is a concern.

Q: (Heather) First I would like to clarify if there will be any improvements to the Blue Mountain and Big Flat road – adding of a lane, leveling, or any kind of improvement to the road?

A: (Craig Genzlinger) We are not planning any of those services as part of our project right now. The increase in traffic that we are showing is part of our project. At this point, if that connection were to be there, we aren't showing a need for those improvements.

Q: (Heather) If it is snowing and I'm driving my 4-wheel drive vehicle, I sometimes slide off the road. If you know that road, then you know there is a cliff going down to the river. The other side of the road is a hill and it is not wide enough to pull over. That road already has so much traffic from contractors and subcontractors with big trucks, so driving in that snow they tail gate me and there is nowhere for me to pull off. This is not a safe road at all. I can't imagine the traffic increasing. That is at the area where there is simply to lane to pull off and if you were to slide you would go into the river.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) Safety on Big Flat under current conditions.

Q: (Ted Lyndale) I live on Blue Mountain Road. A few of us have mentioned tonight this north/south bypass. There is going to be a north/south bypass in the very near future. We need to look at this now. Don't pretend it is going away, it is just going to lead from one step to the next and we are going to have a north/south bypass right on Blue Mountain Road.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) As far as the bypass goes, we haven't ignored that. We do realize the bypass issue is out there. I guess the only thing I can say is that is not the intent of our project – for the bypass to go forward it would have to have a separate environmental process. Everything to date we've gotten from the Local Transportation Plans shows that it isn't even on the 20-year plan. If you support a bypass, then you really need to talk to your local representatives, the county commissioners, and city engineer and get them to support the bypass and get it into the transportation plan. But they aren't planning on it anytime in the foreseeable future at this point.

Q: (Ted Lyndale) It doesn't have to be far looking, we've got the map right here.

A: (Mike Harris) Ted makes a real good point. If you look back a decade when the bridge went in, a couple of years later Maclay Bridge and Blue Mountain got paved... (inaudible) ... to Reserve. You add them together and, what Ted said is true, ipso-facto a north/south bypass. The objective is to avoid all the environmental impacts to deal with.

That is an issue that you guys can make with some success about the different lands. We realize that the issues with budget and we get little incremental blips to deal with projects and I don't know how you get around that. But I think Ted makes a good point, if you just sit back and let things happen ipso-facto, then you have to deal with huge hassles down the road that cost a ton of money.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) What Ted and Mike are saying is that in the cumulative effects assessment, you look at the foreseeable future development that will stem from this including a bypass and make sure they are assessed too.

Q: (Don Gregs) I'm up on Big Flat Road. I just want to add a little addendum to the young lady who spoke down here in regard to the paving on Big Flat. I notice that on this document that I have in front of me that the speed limit currently on Blue Mountain Road from Highway 93 up until we get to River Road is 45 mph. The speed limit on Big Flat was just reduced by the State from 45 to 35 mph because of the danger and the only exception is the Hidden Heights Homeowners Association and now I'm looking on this map and it shows 45 to 50 mph. Anyway, that means there would be a difference at that particular point. It is not safe for 45 mph certainly and that is why it was reduced to 35 mph, and now we're looking at 50 mph.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) Speed is an issue and was reduced for safety in the past and now they are talking about potentially increasing the speed.

Q: (Cal) I live up Moose Creek Road. My suggestion would be this has become completely congested and will be worse off and possibly attaching a bridge at Hayes Creek Road with a signal to improve the traffic on Highway 93 would be reasonable. All the ... (inaudible) .. in the large cities have to have traffic lights now so I'm sure an overpass wouldn't help in any way.

Q (Sandy Mac) Is that an option, has that been looked – Hayes Creek?

A: (Craig Genzlinger) If I understand him correctly he is talking about an intersection at Highway 93 and the Hayes Street area? If I understand you correctly it is one of the alternatives that were looked at – just a little bit north of where Hayes Creek is right now but there was a concern for the safety of a traffic signal in that location. We will take your comments in consideration and make sure we take a good look at that again and make sure it is covered in the EIS.

Q: (Wally Still) I live at 2103 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. I can't believe that it hasn't been mentioned that if you cut across Blue Mountain Road and tie in with River at the end of South Avenue, you are going to create problems that you haven't even imagined. Not only going by a school but over here by Big Sky, then as it is right now the traffic is backed up beyond the hospital at 12:00 noon when the high school kids go get their lunch. So you have got to be thinking in terms of an on ramp off ramp situation by Rosauer's. Secondly this bridge, and this was said about 15-20 years ago by a Highway Department employee who came and spoke to us at the Leadership Missoula Program and he indicated that the projection at that time for when the \_\_\_\_\_ Bridge was completed was that within 10 years there would be some 60,000 vehicles going down South Avenue – 60,000, because when you build it they will come. We have real estate people from the Land Owners Agency going down to California and working with the Congressman to urge people to relocate to western Montana. Believe it folks because I go to San Diego and they have some of the most beautiful ads you have every seen on television encouraging people to locate here to Missoula, Montana and to western Montana. So we have to think in terms larger, not just in terms of Miller Creek, without taking all of these extraneous things into account because we are going to be severely impacted. The Target Range Homeowners Association was incorporated in 1980 and I was part of that. At that time we wanted to keep this area in a semi-rural condition. We want to keep this from becoming an East Reserve mess and that is the biggest mess in the world on Reserve Street. Instead of two houses per acre, you are going to see 17 residences per acre.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) You would like to see that with any assessment of future growth and future traffic that a maximum number is looked at. There would be value in looking at a maximum that it could increase.

Q: (Unidentified) I just have a couple of quick questions for Craig. When you look at this hand out that says "does the alternative meet purpose and need statement", is the only purpose and need is to find ingress and egress from Miller Creek? Is that the only purpose and need here?

A: (Craig Genzlinger) The purpose and need is more than just ingress and egress out of the Miller Creek area. I have a copy of it here if you want to look at it. It talks about multi-model facilities and transit, and safety as well. It is not just purely ingress and egress out of Miller Creek but that is included in the purpose and need statement.

Q: (Unidentified) Ok. The biggest problem in that area is traffic on Miller Creek, right? So how will an additional bridge make it quicker to get from Lower Miller Creek to downtown? I don't understand that because the same number of cars will be involved on Highway 93. So that is where this ... (inaudible) ... comes in, because the thing doesn't make any sense unless purpose is to better promote Highway 93.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) We are showing that any of the three build alternatives that are currently being analyzed will improve operation on Highway 93. I guess the most simple term I can put it in for you is that instead of all that traffic going through one location, by moving it to two points, we can have more green signal time for Highway 93 traffic that exists in Miller Creek. Where right now you have to have so much red time for all those people to get on Miller Creek, if you split them into two separate locations you get more green time on Highway 93.

Q: (Unidentified) But you still have Reserve Street and then you've got the same red light at Reserve Street.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) Well certainly, but you aren't going to be fix with this project all the issues. There are problems on Highway 93, and it is almost at capacity as well too. But that is our operation in general terms as shown right now and it will be much more detailed in the Draft EIS. So see what you think then, and provide those comments at the hearing.

Q: (Ken Hartman) I live up along the ranch area. I just want to go on record to say that I am for a bridge. I don't know exactly where yet. I would say that the preferred alternative is as good a location as any. The "Y" intersection and Lower Miller Creek Road do need to be addressed, that is a big issue. One of the gentlemen brought up the point about Highway 93. The growth is already here, there are cars everywhere. I don't see how the bridge is going to necessarily greatly impact the Blue Mountain Road. It is a bridge connecting Miller Creek to Highway 93. The roads already from Highway 93 two miles apart through all that area, I wouldn't be coming out of the bridge and going the Blue Mountain way to get to downtown Missoula. I would probably keep going up the "Y" area. I guess I'm trying to say that the bridge is connecting the Miller Creek area to Highway 93, and I don't see a lot of excess traffic going from Miller Creek just to go through Blue Mountain Road. I just want to say that I'm for a bridge and right now the preferred location is as good as any.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) So you want to emphasize that you see the need for the bridge and that this location seems appropriate to you.

Q: (Roxanne Drao) I live up Pine Creek. I think I can summarize most of the feelings here tonight. I think we are just truly concerned about the increased traffic on Blue Mountain Road. If you put that intersection at Blue Mountain Road and you increase the Maclay Bridge, more will come. That was said earlier. As soon as the light went in at Highway 93 and Blue Mountain Road traffic increased because they know it is a shortcut to go from Highway 93 over the bridge to South to get to Reserve at certain times of the day. I think for Sue with the Forest Service that should be a concern because that will affect the River as well as all the other concerns that were mentioned. As far as the safety of that

road, there is no way to expand that road without totally changing the recreation area and the condition of the asphalt.

Q: (Gary Froshack) I live at Target Range. I have a question about the EIS procedure. Based on the information we have received tonight obviously the EIS portion of the Miller Creek area grossly misrepresented, in my estimation, the area affecting Blue Mountain Road. I looked at the map you have up here and the prior to build lists about 1,800 cars and you added about 200 cars after the bridge was put in. Either that is a mistake or I think it needs to be looked at because the lady just mentioned about the light and how it increased traffic. You area going to get 10 times that amount based on that intersection because common sense tells you that it is a preferred route for the bypass right now to Colville and this business about South Avenue coming along, you have got to either extend the EIS to give a more corporate look at something that is being created by this whole process.

Q: (Don ) I would just like to inquire if you can write you contractor a change order to back this EIS up? I know you don't like to do that. What I'm getting at is the next thing that I believe you should study and should have studied in the first place, and that is putting a fix on Miller Creek Road from the "Y" to Highway 93. I don't know how you can run and EIS study without considering the option of improving that road and the amount of traffic that is going pass through there. I don't know how you can deal with the traffic. I don't know how you can get public opinion. If you are over in Linda Vista and you don't have the option to go ... and all you have is the option of four bridges, what you really want to do if you are in Linda Vista is to get to town. You want a better road at Miller Creek first, number one. Then you do your EIS. But you need to do a no build, that should be in the no build category, but it was taken off the table. You know what it was? I asked my first question in May, and they said it was not to be considered. I don't understand how your study is valid without consider it.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) Certainly we always have the option of stepping back all the way to the Record of Decision and going back and looking at things. I appreciate your commenting on the existing Miller Creek and we've actually been talking about some of the issues internally. One of the things we are going to do certainly after this meeting and all the comments and concerns you have raised, is to get together and put our heads together and look at what we've done so far and see if we are still heading in the right direction, or if there are areas that we do need to back up on and take another look at. So I guess that is all I can tell you right now.

Q: (Pete Thompson) Target Range. Is it within the scope of this analysis to consider the private land that may be available for development that wouldn't require the extensive infrastructure development that this project seems to be generate? Consider the land

between Mullen Road and Highway 10, and Highway 10 and the interstate that is west of town comes to mind. Is that part of the consideration of this?

A: (Craig Genzlinger) Are you asking if we are considering if development does not occur in the Miller Creek area but occurred somewhere else, would this infrastructure still be needed? Is that the summation of your point?

Q: (Pete Thompson) The county would seem to have fulfilled their obligation to the landowner to consider their proposal for subdivision of the Maloney Ranch. They did that. They find it acceptable. Now you are considering this extended infrastructure development to make that happen. I'm not sure what the county's obligation is to that. So again the question is -- if that is what you are considering, and if this really comes down to this proposal that the county approved now requires extensive infrastructure to make it happen, it seems to me that you have look at what other private land may be available that hasn't come to you yet but may be available that doesn't need this kind of support.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) As far as development goes, we are looking at that mostly tie-in to our study would be traffic generation. We are looking at what is conceivable, reasonable, and foreseeable in this area where development is going to generate traffic and those kinds of things. So all I can say right now is to say that we are looking at a full build out of the Miller Creek area as to the traffic generation that is perceived.

Q: (Unidentified) We talked earlier before the meeting started and I made you aware of how I felt about the map. The thing that comes to my mind personally is the reason for this meeting. We don't feel that the times that Carter Burgess got together with us that we had the input for us to be able to prevent this and I would like to see happen is this thing to go backwards one step back and get back to that input that we've given you tonight and see if it really working. See if we are actually going to have some other alternative besides Blue Mountain with no surface. My moto is to keep it simple stupid. I think we need to do a bridge out of Miller Creek, I think we need to do that because the people there need it. The question then becomes do we want to inconvenience everybody else in the world to make some people happy.

Q: (Dick Haynes) I'm Dick Haynes and I'm the State Representative from the Miller Creek area. I'm here tonight to listen and learn. One thing I will say is that when I hear the comment about backing this process up, I really would encourage you to do that. Obviously the EIS has not considered a rather large segment of the population that this project will affect. Furthermore, I think another segment that isn't here tonight is Lolo. Because when that bridge is finally built and with 2,000 homes going into there you area going to see an expansion to Lolo because Lolo is will begin to substitute for some of businesses in Missoula because it will be easier to get there. Talking to some people in

Lolo, they seem to think on one hand this is great, we are going to have more businesses down there and more jobs. But there are other people who feel like a lot of folks here tonight they don't want the expansion, they don't want the intrusion that comes with increased traffic and increased homeownership in that area. I have no idea how this will play out but I sure do think that you need to expand the area of consideration going into this EIS. You need to look very hard at what these folks are telling you tonight and also talk to the Lolo folks and get their input too.

Issue: (Sandy Mac) You would like to see the scope of this project expanded to look at the broader view and also to make sure the public input has heard from all the communities that may be impacted by it.

**CLOSING**

(Sandy Mac) I would like to thank all of you tonight for your efforts. I think you met all of the objectives that your neighbors set out to accomplish by this meeting. There has definitely been an increase in understanding and awareness not only by you about the project but I believe also by the Federal Highway Administration and others regarding your interests and concerns. You have had an opportunity to voice your opinions and that is very important. This is not the last time you will have an opportunity to do that. We also have a list of issues.

The next steps -- the list of issues will be compiled and emailed to anyone who has signed in and left an email address in a legible manner. If you did not sign in when you came in, they are on the sign-in table. Craig informed us that a summary will also be posted on the website -- the Miller Creek Project website and you can access his comments there.

As Craig mentioned earlier, during the early stages of their NEPA process, the first Draft of the Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled to come out sometime this summer. There will be a public hearing connected with that and it will be very important for you to review the document and make sure your comments are heard during that public hearing period.

I would like to have everybody thank the panelists for coming, and your neighbors for organizing this session.

(Fred Stuart) One final comment, our group has no political affiliation, it has no name, and we are chipping in to help pay for Sandy's time and some of the other expenses. There is a jar over here and if you would like to help us defray some of the costs, we would certainly appreciate it. I would like to point out that we provided the recorder this evening. If you would make sure that you leave your address and email, we can get in

Hwy. 93 and Blue Mountain Connection Public Meeting February 5, 2004  
touch with you in the future and get you the summary. That summary will also be on the Miller Creek web page – [www.millereis.com](http://www.millereis.com)

I want to thank you all for coming this evening. We really had the kind of exchange that we were hoping for that hasn't been available in the past. So thank you for coming and maybe we will see you in the future.

## ISSUE SUMMARY

### HWY 93 - BLUE MOUNTAIN CONNECTION MEETING THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2004 TARGET RANGE SCHOOL

#### BACKGROUND

Approximately 130 people attended a public meeting organized by residents of Target Range and Blue Mountain communities. The meeting had three objectives:

- 1) Increase the understanding and awareness of the proposed project and the preferred alternative.
- 2) Provide the public with the opportunity to comment and ask questions.
- 3) Generate a list of potential issues or concerns specific to Blue Mountain.

A panel of five specialists gave brief presentations to increase the public's awareness and understanding of the Miller Creek Project, the Blue Mountain Connection alternative and the environmental assessment process. Panelists included:

- Craig Genzlinger-Fed. Hwy. Administration, Lead Agent for Project.
- Dale Paulson - Fed. Hwy. Administration, Program Dev. Engineer.
- Mike Hillis - Wildlife Biologist, retired
- Sue Colyer - Engineer, Lolo National Forest
- Steve Potts - Environmental Protection Agency, NEPA Coordinator

Participants asked the panelists questions and expressed their opinions and ideas.

The Federal Highway Administration professionally transcribed the full meeting.

Sandy Mack of AQuest ~ Collaborative Solutions provided neutral facilitation services for the meeting and compiled this issue summary.

#### LIST OF ISSUES

As participants expressed their opinions and concerns two recorders captured the issues on flip charts. The issues are summarized here, not in the order presented but under common topic headings. The purpose of this summary is to provide the information to the Federal Highways Administration for their consideration through the Environmental Impact Statement process as appropriate.



**PROJECT SCOPE:**

- Need a larger scale approach and scope for valid direction to development.
- Developing the system in piecemeal bits will have negative cumulative effects.
- The purpose & need statement is limited to ingress and egress to Miller Creek. It should be expanded.
- The scope of the EIS is too limited.
- Consider potential consequences on South Ave. Consider traffic increases.
- Blue Mountain Road - Default Bypass.
  - Blue Mountain Bridge will lead to western bypass.
  - Talk to BCC regarding a bypass.
  - Need an "intelligent" bypass.
  - I would not use Blue Mountain Road as a bypass.
  - Expand the scope of the project to include planning for a bypass.
  - Need to consider a west side bypass that would line up with Tower Road.
  - Traffic will search out reasonable alternatives when there is an accident on 93 - bypass.
  - There may be a self-fulfilling prophecy to build the bridge and that will then lead to the west side bypass.
- Need to consider a "fix" from the "Y" all the way to this intersection on 93.
- "Y" intersection needs to be addressed.
- Need to get existing Y at lower Miller Creek improved.
- Concern for exiting traffic congestion on Hwy. 93 that already backs up beyond the Blue Mountain Road. This project will not alleviate that issue.
- Purpose & Need statement is too narrow. Should look at dealing with traffic, not where to build a bridge.

**SAFETY:**

- Consider safe speed limits on Blue Mtn./ Big Flat roads.
- Consider the existing condition of the road and safety with increased traffic.
- Blue Mountain road may be inadequate to receive increased traffic.
- Concern for safety on entering highway at Hayes Creek and Blue Mountain Rd. The site distance is poor. No break in traffic without light.
- Concern for Gardeners Auction Access.
- Need a traffic light for safety.
- Hwy. 93 access is very dangerous.
- Access by emergency vehicles is non-existent when accidents occur.
- Concern about physical limitations of existing Blue Mountain Road with increased traffic.

- Already have problems getting onto Hwy. 93.
- We're moving a problem from Miller Creek to west side communities including safety concerns for school children walking/biking to school.
- Blue Mountain and Big Flat Roads are not safe at current traffic levels, much less at higher traffic volumes.

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

- The format of previous meetings did not allow citizens input that could lead to other alternatives.
- Need to expand the study area to include the Lolo community.
- There are members of the public who are concerned but who are not here at this meeting.
- Of the 1,422 surveys that were conducted only 210 were given to residents outside the Miller Creek Area.
- Have not received full public input to date. The process has been flawed.
- Communities outside the "study area" feel they are being left out of the process.
- Some citizens feel they've been left out of what is required in terms of legal requirements of the EIS.

**PROJECTIONS - TRAFFIC & COSTS:**

- How is the projected increase in traffic numbers arrived at? Is it quality information and is it dependable?
- Traffic model may be unreliable. i.e. Reserve Street.
- Concern for increased traffic numbers being valid.
- Inadequate assessment of the costs to construct the bridge.

**ENVIRONMENTAL:**

- How will the increased traffic affect the Blue Mountain elk herd crossing to the river? - Wildlife corridor issue.
- Concern for interruption of the wildlife corridor on Blue Mountain.
- Habitat connectivity as it relates to transportation project.
- Mortality of wildlife along roads.

**OTHER CONCERNS/OPINIONS:**

- Developers are being subsidized. Development is occurring without provisions or obligations for infrastructure costs.

- Money and land for infrastructure was promised in '94 by the developers of Maloney Ranch.
- Is it within the scope of the EIS to consider an alternative that would include developing private land that doesn't require developing the infrastructure that this study area requires?
- The least expensive and easiest alternative is not necessarily the best.
- This project is needed.
- Put bridge at Hayes Creek.
- What are the effects of project on recreation @ Blue Mountain Recreation Area.
- The no build alternative has the least impacts.
- Look at past transportation construction to learn for future construction.



# Public Workshop #5

June 22, 2004





**MINUTES  
MILLER CREEK ROAD  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
FIFTH PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING**

**Tuesday, June 22, 2004  
4:30 - 7:30 p.m.**

**Best Inn Convention Center  
3803 Brooks Street  
Missoula, MT**

The Fifth Public Scoping Meeting for the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement was held June 22, 2004, at the Best Inn Conference Center, Missoula, MT. One Hundred Twenty Seven (127) people attended the fifth public meeting (sign in sheets attached). The meeting was an open house format from 4:30 to 5:30 pm with a formal presentation about the project given by Craig Genzlinger (FHWA), Steve Long (David Evans and Associates), and Scott Richman (David Evans and Associates) from 5:30 to 6:00 pm followed by a question/answer period from 6:00 to 7:00 pm facilitated by Carson Taylor (The Settlement Center). Comments were received from the public a number of ways: 1) personal comments given to project officials on 5 x 8 cards and immediately displayed for public review, and/or 2) written comments placed in a comment box located at the comment table, and 3) comments were received during the question/answer period of the public meeting. Project officials were available throughout the evening to answer questions or concerns and to receive comment on the project.

Project officials present:

- Craig Genzlinger, Federal Highway Administration
- Diana Bell, Carter & Burgess, Inc.
- Troy Halouska, Carter & Burgess Inc.
- Steve Long, David Evans and Associates
- Scott Richman, David Evans and Associates
- Joe Hart, David Evans and Associates
- Tom Bennet, David Evans and Associates
- Carson Taylor, The Settlement Center

**ROOM ARRANGEMENT**

**Sign In Table**

The following handouts were available to the public at the sign-in table:

- 1) Agenda for the meeting and explanation of room organization
- 2) Comments Sheets
- 3) Extra copies of the latest project newsletter

**Wall Displays**

Four (4) wall displays explaining the project were available for public viewing as follows:

- 1) Project Background Information
  - a. Purpose of Tonight's Workshop snow cards
  - b. EIS Process graphics
  - c. Aerial map of study area
  - d. Public/Agency Involvement snow cards
  - e. Summary of Public Meetings snow cards
  - f. Old Purpose and Need with "X" / New Purpose and Need graphic
  - g. Project Schedule graphic
  - h. Screening Process Triangle
- 2) Traffic/Transportation Issues
  - a. Traffic Issues snow cards
  - b. Transportation Analysis Update graphic
  - c. Existing and Future (No-Build) Traffic Volumes graphic
  - d. Five Year Crash History (1999-2003) graphic
  - e. Miller Creek Road Improvement Options: Traffic Volumes Comparison graphic
  - f. TDM snow cards
  - g. Future Transit snow cards
  - h. Multi-Modal Considerations graphic
- 3) Alternatives Development
  - a. No Action Alternative graphic
  - b. Need for Improvements snow cards
  - c. Evaluation Criteria graphic
  - d. First Evaluation Matrix graphic
  - e. Potential Corridor Alternatives graphic
  - f. Designs for Alternatives 5A and 5C
  - g. Second Evaluation Matrix graphic
- 4) Comments
  - a. Upcoming Steps graphic
  - b. Comment Sheets available on table
  - c. Comment Box
  - d. Snow cards with comments displayed

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION**

**Carson Taylor (The Settlement Center)**

My name is Carson Taylor. I am a facilitator. I live in Bozeman and I work at helping organize public meetings and public workshops. My goal here is to use the next hour and half, or longer if we need it, to get as many opinions and voices in the room as we can. You will see some of the ground rules here (referring to graphic). That was based on a random poll of you out there as to how much time you thought you might need to speak. You don't have to speak for three minutes if you don't want to.

The format for today is three relatively brief presentations from people who know where the project is now. Then we will take questions and comments, your input, your thoughts, or whatever you would like to say. I will limit you to about three minutes or a little bit longer, then if we have more time at the end and if everybody is done saying their piece, we will come back around to the people who would like to say other things.

The rule on speaking which I got from a Native American person is "this is the talking stick" (referring to the microphone), so if you have this in your hand you can talk. It works pretty well and so far there hasn't been any negative feedback.

So that we maximize our time, I'm going to start right away. The first presenter is Craig Genzlinger from the Federal Highway Administration.

**Craig Genzlinger (Federal Highway Administration)**

First on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration, I want to thank you all for coming tonight. There should have been a sign-in sheet when you came in the front door and if you signed-in, I appreciate that and if you haven't, please try and do so on the way out especially if you are interested in continuing to get mailings on the project. I think the most important thing tonight is that we hear all your comments one way or the other. If you want to do it during the question/answer session, or we have written forms over here, or there are consultants and other representatives of the project here tonight and you can give them your comments too and we will write them down and make sure they get included as well.

I just want to make a few comments real briefly and then I'll let the consultants talk in more detail about the specific design. As many of you know we have received a lot of comments on this project and I want to highlight three changes that we have made tonight based on those comments.

The first one is that we received a lot of comments about the purpose and need statement. In the past you've seen the purpose and need statement and it talks specifically about a secondary

access into the Miller Creek area. We had a number of people asking why it was limited that way. We went back and looked at it and basically agreed that those were good comments, so you will see a revised purpose and need statement over there. Essentially it is much briefer and it just says: "to improve access to the Miller Creek area from U.S. 93."

The second change we made and one we are going to be talking about tonight is to the alternatives, which Steve will describe it to you in just a couple of minutes. With that change people asked why we weren't looking at improvements to the existing road; why can't we improve the existing road and bring it up to a higher standard and improve the access. So Steve will show you a couple of alternatives to improve the existing area that we are analyzing in the EIS.

The third change we made is the public meeting format that we are going through tonight. We had people who were frustrated about not having the question/answer time and just having the open house format, so we combined them. The first thing we did was to get a facilitator who you already met to help us organize the meeting and keep things moving along. In addition to the open house that we've gone through for the last hour, we will have an hour or so for questions and answers or just comments that you want to give us.

One other thing I want to mention is the schedule. People want to know how things are moving along and what is going to happen from here. We are going to finish analyzing these alternatives. That should take us two, three, or four months. We need to write a document and do some reviews. That document should be out for public review about January 2005. We will have a public hearing at that point. I strongly encourage you stay involved. I appreciate you coming tonight and watch for that Draft EIS which will have a lot of specific information in it. Please come to our public hearing when we have that, and please don't leave tonight without giving us your comment. If you have a comment, we will make sure we write it down.

That is all I really had to say. Steve and Scott are going to talk a lot more about the specifics of the project and the alternatives and some of the traffic data.

**Steve Long (David Evans and Associates)**

I want to introduce a few other people that we have here with us tonight from the consulting team that FHWA has hired to do this project. My name is Steve Long from David Evans and Associates. I'm a Civil Engineer and the project manager for this project. Scott Richman, Transportation Planner with David Evans and Associates; Diana Bell, Environmental Planner with Carter Burgess, subconsultant to David Evans; Tom Bennett, Civil Engineer and Designer with David Evans and Associates; Troy Halouska with Carter Burgess. So anybody with a tag on here tonight is going to be helping me answer questions and hopefully already have been helping you on some of the graphics that we put together for our open house format.

I want to start by taking off from what Craig was talking about regarding the schedule and where we are. Now originally this project was scoped to be done in two years with the Environmental Impact Statement being completed in two years. When we got to the point in the process, we decided to stop and take additional input and kind of re-evaluate where we are. We've been in this phase of the project, this middle phase of alternatives development, for about nine months now. As Craig mentioned we are re-evaluating some of the alternatives we previously looked at because we need to weigh them against the new Purpose and Need. The other thing we've done is to add alternatives. When we changed the Purpose and Need of the project, we also looked at a broader range of alternatives, which I will go over in a few minutes.

Now the basis of our Purpose and Need is founded in transportation planning, so I'm going to let Scott Richman talk a little bit about the existing conditions out there and what we've learned over the past nine months regarding transportation in this area.

**Scott Richman (David Evans and Associates)**

My name is Scott Richman. I've been leading the transportation analysis in concert with the development of alternatives for this project. We did end up modifying the Purpose and Need and in some sense that gave us a little more flexibility to look at improvement options or transportation options in addition to simply a second access between U.S. 93 and the Miller Creek Area. Steve will be talking a little bit more about the Miller Creek Road options that we are considering at this point.

I think most of you are familiar with some of the issues related to traffic that are going on right now with increasing congestion on U.S. 93. A lot of it is related to development not only in this area but development that is going on south of here in the Bitterroot Valley in the Lolo area that is being used largely as a commuter route. I don't want to belabor that point because those problems will be described in the DEIS. Some of these growth related issues are summarized on these cards up here (referring to graphic).

Over the last several months some of the things that happened that I want to highlight that are relative to the transportation analysis are: (1) the urban area of Missoula, both the City and County, adopted the Missoula Urban Transportation Plan Update. That was adopted just last month and one of the aspects of that is the future transportation growth forecast. That has given us somewhat of a foundation to consider in our forecast updates. We've taken a little bit more refined look at this part of Missoula as opposed to the Transportation Plan, which is considered the whole urban area. We really focus on a somewhat smaller area, so we've got refined numbers.

We are in the process right now where we have made some daily volume forecasts for some of the collector and arterial roadways in this area. We are in the process of refining those at key intersections – refining the morning and evening peak traffic period intersection analysis. So we

have a little bit more detailed refined operational findings that will be documented in the DEIS as well.

We've done a couple of other studies just based on some of the input that we've been hearing: concern about traffic originating on U.S. 93 and heading into Missoula using Blue Mountain Road and traveling over the Maclay Bridge and ending up on South Avenue as an alternate route to remaining on Brooks and turning on Reserve. We did a travel time comparison in May during the worst part of the morning rush hour. Rush hour is such an oxymoron because the traffic is not moving. It was done during the most congested period and people started at the intersection of U.S. 93 and using Blue Mountain Road and ended up on Reserve and South Avenue. The results are summarized here (referring to graphic); the travel distance on Blue Mountain Road is more than twice as long in both distance and time that it took. Other information we gathered: the Montana Department of Transportation has provided crash data through 2003, which is the most current complete year available. We have a five-year crash history summarized, which will be documented in more detail in the DEIS.

I mentioned the alternatives – we have daily volume projections into the year 2025 for each of the proposed alternatives that will be carried through the EIS. With that I will turn it back over to Steve who will talk a little bit more about the alternatives development and evaluation.

**Steve Long (David Evans and Associates)**

Just for a little bit of background information on who is here tonight, can I get a show of hands of everybody who has been involved in a public meeting in the past for this project (majority of hands raised). Ok, let me ask it another way: who has not? (several hands raised) Ok, very good.

We started this project about a year and a half ago when we came to you and asked what values you are trying to hold here. What is the purpose of the project? Help us define the purpose of the project. Help us understand what you, as a community, are trying to achieve. And that part of the community was very focused on Miller Creek area, as Craig eluded to earlier. Since that time we understand that this project would have an impact on a lot bigger area than just the Miller Creek Road area. That is why we are here tonight. We are here to really understand again, revisit where we've been, and to make sure that we are addressing everybody's concerns to the best of our ability, at least to assess what those are and then compare and contrast those. It is what we call an evaluation process. We begin with a broad range of alternatives and then start narrowing them down. As Civil Engineers and Transportation Planners we are looking at impacts – when I say "impacts" I mean how the roadway operates. Does it meet the objective of getting people from point A to point B safely? How does it affect the environment? What are the elements of the environment that we are concerned with? These aren't just a list that I care about we want to hear what those are from you. You've done a great job to this point to make sure that we have a good checklist as we are going through this process.

As far as any Environmental Impact Statement or any NEPA process that we go through, we have to be able to use a baseline condition called a “No-Build.” Now to define a No-Build we typically look at what is out there today – that is the No-Build. One other facet of the No-Build is to make sure that we understand what are planned improvements and put that into the No-Build. On this project, we know what is out there. We can go take a picture of it. What is unknown right now is what is already funded. On this project it is a little bit difficult because there has been some residential impact fees associated with these properties that have been collected for quite a few years now. So we know there are going to be some improvements on Miller Creek Road and I’m sure all of you have heard about those for quite a few years. In a nut shell what those improvements are going to do, as we understand it today, is to provide possibly some additional lanes, possibly make the roadway safer—it is a very unsafe roadway today with a lot of dangerous curves and hills, more site distance at the intersections – there are a lot of accesses with poor site distance. That is what the Miller Creek Road proposal is today and our No-Build scenario. So when we say that we are going to compare all of our alternatives against a No-Build, it is the existing infrastructure that is in place plus these planned improvements. OK? That is where we start.

The other thing we have to do: we are saying we need a secondary access; so now we need to improve the access into the Miller Creek area. Well, one way to improve access into an area is define what the access is. We are actually trying to move people and goods through or to an area. Well, there is more than one way to do that than just building infrastructure. We can have travel demand, which actually manages the people better to put them onto the street, when they are going to be on there, how they get from point A to point B – car pooling, improved transit. So those will all be packaged in our alternatives. So we have to think about this project as not just how to get into the Miller Creek area but how do we move people from one point to another.

Next, as we went through the purpose and need, we need to focus a little bit on how we define safety. What is the threshold of “safe” and part of that is to look at the statewide average. We look at the way we would expect a system like this to operate. So we can use that as a gage. So the purpose and need is to provide safe and improved access between U.S. 93 and the Miller Creek area. So I hope I’ve set the ground rule as to what we are trying to accomplish.

Now I want to talk about the alternatives. It looks like the majority of you have been at previous meetings. I deliberately chose not to hang up a bunch of alternatives that we’ve already gone through – it is just volumes and volumes of material. That material is available on the website or if you don’t have access to the web just tell somebody with a tag on – give them your name and address and tell them what you want and we’ll make sure to get it mailed to you.

About a year ago when we came to you we had a group of alternatives. These alternatives ranged all the way from a Lolo connection or a westerly bypass of the existing highway all the way down to Lolo and clear up to a Garrett connector. So we had a wide range of alternatives that we

needed to screen through. At that time we used our purpose and need as criteria to be able to screen that through. These are what we called the alignment alternatives – where was the roadway going to go? What made sense? So we looked back at our objectives, our goals, our purpose and need, and we came up with alternatives. As Craig mentioned, that purpose and need has changed, so therefore our alternatives needed to be re-evaluated. We were now comparing them against a different case because the rules had change. So that is what we did.

The second thing we did is that we added alternatives. The purpose and need changed – it no longer said a secondary access. Well, maybe now there is just one access. So we added the Miller Creek Road alternative. Everything that you see in front of you here, with the exception of the Miller Creek Road alternative, was on the table a year ago. Changing purpose and need, we added the alternative. Many of you have seen our evaluation matrix here, but we had to go back through that again and weigh it against the new purpose and need.

After we did that we found out that basically the alternatives we had proposed before (the green alternatives) stayed in. Nothing really changed. There were a few of these “pills” that changed color but in the end the final disposition stayed the same – either we accepted it or dismissed it. And the addition of the Miller Creek Road.

I want to make sure that we all can distinguish the difference between the No-Build Miller Creek Road improvements that I was talking about and what this alternative is. There is a difference or there can be a difference. We are here tonight to understand a little bit better from you. The No-Build Alternatives have some improvements. Maybe our new alternative could be bigger and better than that. Maybe it could provide a single access into the Miller Creek area if it could meet the demand. So we’ve been calling this kind of “Super Miller Creek Road Alternative” rather than just our No-Build improvements. We don’t know what that is yet.

As we went through the process, after we determined which alignment options were viable, then we needed to start thinking about how we were going to connect both into the community and to U.S. 93 and we came up with a wide variety of options to connect at each one of these locations. We had signals – we could just run it right to a signal. We decided maybe there should be interchange alternatives where there would be high-speed ramps, like a diamond interchange or maybe a park low interchange where people can have direct access from one facility to another without a signal. Then the last alternative connection that we looked at for each of these was kind of a hybrid between the two. Instead of high-speed and big fast ramps like you might see on a diamond interchange, what about lower speed ramps, kind of button-hooks that might come down. Those might come down to a signal, they might just come down to a right-in/right-out – turning right in or having cars come right out. So that is what we call a “grade separated intersection”. You still have a bridge over the highway but you kind of do some real quick buttonhook ramps; low speed maybe 30-35 mph ramps.



So we looked at those alternatives for each of those and we screened those down. That is what this matrix does over here (referring to graphic). So we have intersection grade separated interchange for each of these alternatives. Ok, is everybody following that?

In addition we added our Miller Creek Road alternative. In the past couple of months we've come up with different ways to handle our "Super Miller Creek Road". That is to possibly widen Miller Creek Road, do something at the "Y". We don't know what that is yet but do something there – it might be grade-separated, it might be a T-intersection with a signal, it might be a round about, we don't know yet. Improve the roadway so that it might be able to carry all the Miller Creek Road traffic up to U.E. 93. Then how do we deal with U.S. 93? Well, one option is to put a signal there, add some turn lanes, make it bigger, better, wider, try and facilitate more traffic through there. Another idea was to take it from that point and go up old Highway 93 and add a new signal at Reserve. There is an existing signal here (referring to graphic) and we are saying that we might be able to propose a new signal and these signals could work together in unison. They could actually be timed so they act as one signal. But you are actually starting to disperse some of that northbound traffic out of this area and separate it from the long left-turn lane. This is kind of a standard practice you see when you have closely placed intersections. Now this alternative for a signal can be with or without this and I want to hear your input.

Boy I see a lot of strange faces out there, like you are really confused or are thinking that is the craziest thing I've ever seen in my life. Any way there are kind of two alternatives here. Maybe we can pick something here (referring to graphic) and maybe extend it up and actually help out the Reserve Street problem too.

The next alternative we looked at is to put in an interchange, let's try and put in a diamond interchange, let's try and put in an interchange where we could make full high-speed movement. Well, we found we didn't get very far because there is so much development in that area, it is so very tight that it would be very difficult to do especially on this eastern leg (referring to graphic). So we ended up looking at putting in some low-speed access on and off the roadway, and on the west side we can put in some higher-speed ramps. This ended up being a mix and match, somewhere between my grade-separated intersection idea on the other alternatives and the interchange – King of half and half.

We did look at one other alternative that is not up here that is a pure grade separated intersection alternative and that was too restrictive also. We really didn't get any bang for our buck. We were taking a lot of property over on this quadrant (referring to graphic) and we found that this alternative, being a hybrid, was more effective and so we decided to look at that.

We went through an evaluation process for all these connection alternatives I've talked about for each alignment. Again, weighing it against purpose and need criteria. What we ended up with is actually advancing quite a few of the connection alternatives in conjunction with the alignment and none of those changed from what we looked at before. However, we added the Miller Creek

Road alternative and of that these two were the two that were advanced (referring to graphic) – the at-grade intersection and the hybrid interchange.

With that before we jump into the bigger picture, does anybody have any specific questions about anything I've presented or that you are confused about? Is everybody clear on what I've presented here?

- Q: (Unidentified) I would just like clarification on how many more cars there would be?
- A: (Steve Long) Ok, that is a pretty specific question. Is there anything that I've presented that you didn't understand?
- Q: (Unidentified) You need to explain the term you used when you were talking about a grade separation.
- A (Steve Long) Ok, a grade separated intersection vs. an interchange. A grade-separated intersection is where we have a bridge over the highway but we would have roads that would buttonhook down or ramp down to U.S. 93 but they would be real low speed, i.e., 30-35 mph. That is in comparison to an interchange where you actually have 55-60 mph ramps. That is the difference.

Q: (Unidentified) There is an existing traffic light there right now.

A: (Steve Long) That is a good point. There is an existing signal here today. The at-grade intersection we are talking about with this alternative widens the intersection out and makes it bigger. Thank you very much. I'll turn it back over to Carson Taylor to give you some direction in asking more specific questions.

**Carson Taylor (The Settlement Center)**

Some ground rules: you can ask a question, talk, or say whatever you want. I did have a sign-up sheet out front thinking that would give me an idea about how many people wanted to say something, and the number of people who signed up was two. So they each have half an hour and nobody else can say anything (laughter). No I will do this: I'm going to sit down and at three minutes I will stand up and at four minutes I am going to tell you it is four minutes. Try and keep yourself within the four minutes if you can. Ok? I'll bring the microphone to you, and once you get it you are on your own. So I will start with the list because those people dared to sign up.

Q: (Don Peressini) I want to get something straight with this first thing we talked about up here. This study right here (referring to graphic) you've got 2.9 miles compared to 6.9 miles, but this guy starts out at Blue Mountain and U.S. 93 and so does this other fellow,

and this guy goes to South Avenue and Reserve but the other guy goes to Brooks and U.S. 93. They are not going to the same place.

A: (Scott Richman) They both end up at Reserve and South Avenue.

Q: (Don Peressini) They both end up here at that point? Ok, I see that. I thought there was about a two-mile difference there.

A: (Scott Richman) No.

Q: (Don Peressini) My real concern here is the fact that none of this stuff serves any purpose as far as transportation solutions. That is the biggest problem I have with the whole thing. Every one of these things has to be tied in with what is happening in the valley. To be fair to taxpayers, to be fair to the people who are coming here from the Bitterroot, and to be fair to all the neighborhoods to the north, these routes have to be studied and planned to solve problems on U.S. 93, Reserve Street, and Russell. And none of these proposals and all the money and all the studies have done nothing to correct the transportation problems if all we are going to do is build a bridge across Blue Mountain, and you have already stated that nobody is going to take Blue Mountain Road. I guarantee you they will. They do now. When you make this facility in here, there will be a lot more. You are going to be pumping traffic to a single lane wooden bridge that will cave in immediately. There is not enough money anywhere to fix that bridge. Ok, down the road we are going to plan a little South Avenue. South Avenue is going to bring traffic into what are main road streets. They are not collectors. You can't call them collectors, people back right out of their garage onto the street. Where is the money in the budget for that? The first thing you said is that this doesn't solve any transportation problems, is that right?

A: (Steve Long) The purpose and need is to access the Miller Creek area. Your Transportation Plan that was just adopted is what we use for a framework to solve all those problems then we tie our solution into that Transportation Plan. The Transportation Plan actually identifies, in a very broad sense, the secondary access. Does that make sense?

Q: (Don Peressini) But in the Transportation Plan you've got a conclusion about corridor preservation. It tells you that you are spending \$257 million dollars in that plan and you are not doing anything to solve traffic problems. It tells you right there in the conclusion. I'll show it to you later if you want.

A: (Steve Long) That is the solution that Missoula has come up with to solve their transportation problems and I'm not questioning what it says or not. This project fits within that skeleton to then drill down to fix this problem.

Q: (Don Peressini) How do you do it? It is the blind leading the blind? The conclusion in the Transportation Plan says that this plan is nothing more than a management tool. It doesn't solve what needs to be solved. That is stated right in there by the people who did that. I think you guys should take a good look at that. I think you should take a good look at that and the only thing I could see that you could come up with that makes sense to me is this one here (referring to graphic). But it has to tie in with the corridor preservation to the east side of the airport. I don't know how the Federal Highway Administration, the state highway department, and the county management can put their head in the sand and not address something like this. This is all great but where do we go? Who takes the traffic off Reserve Street? That is what you have to think about. That is what you have to tie together and that is what the Federal Highway Administration should be responsible for doing. It is Hwy 93.

Q: (Fred Stuart) What is the impact area they used? You made reference to the fact that there were closed comments that came up before, so what will be the impact area that is going to be used?

Q: (Scott Richman) What do you mean by impact area?

A: (Fred Stuart) I mean which area will you be analyzing the impacts of the alternatives? Originally it was bounded by Hwy 93 and then it went over into the Miller Creek area.

A: (Scott Richman) I think it depends on what we consider to be impacted – we've got socio economic impacts, land use impacts, environmental impacts and they each have different analysis areas. For example, if you have a river impact from a new bridge, that is pretty localized. If you have an historic building, that is pretty localized. For traffic impacts, we are looking at an area where we feel confident, based on the projections of where we can assign future traffic volumes. For instance, where they start to get outside the area where they are influenced by this project or alternatives. I don't know if that answers your question. There is not necessarily a specific line drawn.

Q: (Fred Stuart) I'm specifically interested in socio and economic impacts, so that is a much broader kind of question than where the traffic is going to go, or what the impacts are from a bridge.

A: (Diana Bell) The socio economic impacts would be for a much larger area – direct impacts and also indirect impacts. Direct impacts are going to be more localized to a particular neighborhood. Cumulative, we have a much larger general region meaning not the entire Missoula area but we look at a much larger area. Do you have a specific concern?

Q: (Fred Stuart) In the case of a Blue Mountain bridge, there is a lot of concern from a lot of people about what happens to the traffic and what the impacts are on the communities that would be impacted by the traffic going in other directions? As an example, on your thing here it talks about “will the alternative minimize impacts to the character of the neighborhood?” It appears to me that the neighborhood that is being addressed here is the specifically the Miller Creek area not the broader area that will be impacted by the additional traffic, would that be correct?

A: (Diana Bell) No. We have included the character of the Blue Mountain area and particularly some of the comments that have come in related to the streets where there are schools and the increased traffic that would come to those areas. So we are looking at that on a broader scale. This is a very general large scale. As we’ve narrowed down our alternatives evaluation to more specific alternatives and then what you will find in the Draft EIS, each level gets more detailed and specific. These were fatal flaw screenings – so if it was not feasible from an engineering perspective because of the way the horizontal curves were along the alignment, or if there was something that made it not feasible.

A: (Fred Stuart) We brought a number of photographs that are around in terms of the area that you would have to travel through if you are going from Blue Mountain Road to get into town that way. There is one particular example here, for those of you who have gone by the Target Range School, it is a two-lane road. There are kids on bikes, there is a crossing guard, there are all kinds of things that would change in terms of impacts to that community associated with moving traffic out of Miller Creek, and it displaces the impacts into a much larger area. So that is why I’m asking the question – to make sure those kinds of impacts are displayed.

My second question: is it possible to have an objective EIS in light of the existing political pressure to build a bridge? Let me give you an example of political pressure. In the Miller Creek Transportation Proposal is says “the Miller Creek Bridge and road improvement project was identified by the Missoula County Commissioners as the number one priority project in 2001. The County priority list was sent to members of the Montana Congressional Delegation in February of 2001. Montana State Department of Transportation now ranks this project as a major priority of western Montana. Montana State Senator Vickie Cocherelli, Chair of the Montana State Transportation Committee, has also made this project her priority. It should be noted that Missoula County already possesses the right-of-way to the desired bridge development.” So it is kind of stacking the deck toward building a bridge. Things are stacked up so much that it is not really possible to be objective about the analysis because of political pressure that is already in place.

A: (Craig Genzinger) The only thing I can tell you is that from Federal Highway Administration’s standpoint, I don’t believe we felt any pressure from any political level whether local or national to come up with a specific alternative. Certainly the county right-of-way does exist at Blue Mountain. I can’t go back to applications or comments that were made by the local politicians and contradict whatever they said. One thing I can say is that I hope on our part ... originally it was constrained by that second access over the river because that was some of the original thinking that went into the project. But based on the comments from many of the people here, that is why we have these two additional alternatives that don’t include that. We got back and looked at the regulations and reviewed what we had done and basically agreed with a lot of people who said we too narrow. From Federal Highway’s standpoint I don’t think we are feeling a lot of pressure from any political level, either local or national.

Q: (Fred Stuart) The \$5 million that was made available to fund this study was based upon an application. And it was a Miller Creek Road preliminary design and EIA that was a request for federal funds. So my question is very similar to the other ones: is it going to be possible to have an objective EIS, including a non-bridge alternative, when the money has already been appropriated and is being funded through the Forest Service to do this kind of a build project. In the application it talks about the fact that it is going to connect one section of the Lolo National Forest with another section of the Lolo National Service. That is the rationale for the money going through the Forest Service, as I understand it. If you think about how we are going to connect these two areas of the forest, well it is pretty much with a bridge across the Blue Mountain area. Also in the application it talks about the fact that this is an area ... this project will allow hauling of timber to the market whenever there are timber sales in the area. Another connection is upgrading the infrastructure that will move the logging traffic out of the residential area for a number of years and increase safety for the public. I asked the Forest Service how many timber sales have been in the Miller Creek area in last ten years and it is none (laughter). That is not funny. This is part of the rationale for why there is \$5 million in federal money to do this. And how many sales are planned in the future – none. Yet if we think about a rural funding program, it just seems again that it makes it difficult to do an objective non-bridge alternative when you look at where the money is coming from and what somebody had in mind in terms of approving that money and it is really not a hypothetical question.

A: (Steve Long) I just want to make sure you know that we are aware of that and, if you notice, all of our evaluation criteria to date has not made any specific reference to the logging. We are looking at a bigger broader picture than the direct connection of the forest. It didn’t say “direct connection” it said “connection”, so many of our alternatives make the connection for some way to cross across there, it is not necessarily direct. So I have thought about that in the sense that this is pure and open and make sure it is not tainted by a pre-conceived connection.

Q: (Unidentified) Many of us in attendance are interested in Blue Mountain and we are also interested to know if there has been any change in your mind since the November selection of Blue Mountain alternative as the preferred alternative. Could you elaborate on that for us?

A: (Steve Long) We've gone back with the change in purpose and need, we re-evaluated every one of our alternatives against the new purpose and need. We don't have a preferred alternative here today. We do have some new colored "pills" for our fatal flaw analysis. That is where we are. We've recycled back through the alternatives. So we will be moving ahead now with refining these to come up with a preferred alternative. Does that answer your question?

Q: (Jonathan Weber) It seems like the concern of a lot of people here is that this project in one way or another is going to force a lot of traffic north through Blue Mountain. This traffic analysis basically says that there is no difference in the traffic through Blue Mountain no matter what the alternative. Is that a correct understanding of this? Because if you look at these numbers here, it is very marginal – there is only a tiny difference, one hundred cars more or less. The differences in the amount of traffic through Blue Mountain between the different alternatives are trivially small – 3200, 3400, 3700. My question is that I feel like that traffic analysis, which is partly based on this sort of flawed travel time study here, basically defines away the whole problem. So then if you assume there is no additional traffic, then you go back to the impact analysis and there is not going to be any impact. But I don't think people believe that.

A: (Scott Richman) We are trying to be consistent with the Transportation Plan which uses demographic, economic, and population forecasts for 25 years up to the year 2025. We use some other methods also – looking at some historic roads, looking at planned development in this area, again this is a \_\_\_\_\_-refined analysis and if you compare our projections to those in the Transportation Plan, there are actually a little bit more aggressive with higher projected volumes for Blue Mountain Road. Now the differences between any of the connection alternatives, whether it is Blue Mountain Road or North Lower Miller Creek Road which is a little further east, South Lower Miller Creek Road, which is further west, the difference between each of those and the No-Build Alternative is relatively marginal. That is a true statement. There are some variations. The primary reason for that is because the margin between say a Blue Mountain Road Alternative and the No Build Alternative would be largely a direct influx of traffic originating in the Miller Creek area deciding to use that route and we are convinced that based on the No-Build Alternative which does include some improvements to the existing route, that the traffic operations for this area would be such that there wouldn't be as much diversion as may be some of the perception. That is my best answer. If we were to make up a number that is much higher, we don't have any confidence or anything to base that on other than people's perception that it is going to be a nightmare.

A: (Steve Long) Just for everybody here, could you give them the relative differences of the No-Build Alternative vs. what is there today? If we choose not to build anything, what is the difference?

A: (Scott Richman) As you well know the traffic volumes on Blue Mountain Road vary depending on whether you are close to Hwy 93 or closer to Maclay Bridge primarily due to some of the recreation center and the commercial activity which will be increasing in this area as it is being built and the recreation opportunities along this more southern part of Blue Mountain Road. So existing volumes that were counted through the Missoula Count Program indicate just over 2,000 vehicles per day just north of Hwy 93 and just less than half of that up close to O'Brien Creek and Big Flat River Pines. Big Flat volume is just over 1,600 right now. Those volumes south on Blue Mountain Road closer to U.S. 93 not quite doubles. It is projected to go up by 1,000 closer to Hwy 93, it goes up to about 800 closer to Big Flat River Pines, Big Flat volumes close to this intersection would almost double and go up to about 2,900 vehicles per day. Then if you look at South Avenue, which in the future assumes that the South Avenue Bridge will be constructed, there are some projected volumes on South Avenue – existing Maclay Bridge is roughly 2,300 vehicles per day vs. almost double that to 4,200 on the South Avenue Bridge and then continuing east with increased volumes on South Avenue and South.

Q: (Unidentified) Just to follow up on one point in relation to sort of the liability in these traffic forecasts, the travel time analysis is presumably designed to show that divergent doesn't make sense because it is actually slower, right?

A: (Scott Richman) Right.

Q: (Unidentified) Now, people who live out there know that apparently a lot of people don't find it slower already because people do divert that way. But furthermore, it doesn't take into account the new bridge. So once there is a new bridge that cuts a lot of time off that diversion. So to use a study based on the current Maclay Bridge rather than the new South Avenue Bridge is definitely going to give you much different conclusions.

A: (Scott Richman) You and I were just talking about that. An easy fix to that is to subtract the amount of time that it takes to go over the Maclay Bridge and this additional out-of-direction travel that wasn't accounted for. What that would do, of course, is to bring those travel times closer together. You would still see quite a bit of variation there. That is pretty easily done. That is a good point.

Q: (Carrie Ganishack) I'm from Miller Creek. I first want to say that I understand the concerns that all of you in Blue Mountain have about your neighborhood, but I have

concerns about my neighborhood when I look at this. So I would like to direct it to this new proposal and get some more information about that. That is why my first question is how many cars are we taking about coming down here, this is just the beginning. I live way over here (referring to graphic) and then there are all these other people where all the building is going on, and we all funnel down onto this road here and we all fight at this intersection and during rush hour you are actually waiting way back here and you are being tail-gated the whole time by the high schoolers who can't wait to get to school or are late to school, then you've also got everybody who is late. So my concern is about these cars that are now going to be crowding all of these roads that are coming into the super highway, which also concerns me. So that is my questions about the cars.

A: (Steve Long) Ok, let's start talking about the No-Build – how many cars travel that roadway today – 12,000 per day. About 12,000 cars go through that today. If we do the No-Build and don't have any other way for them to get out of the Miller Creek area, in 20 years it almost doubles to just over 22,000 vehicles per day. It goes up by 10,000 cars per day. So it about doubles much like Blue Mountain which doubles. In rough general terms everything doubles.

Q: (Carrie Gumishack) My question is, like the Blue Mountain people, what is going to happen to our neighborhoods then? All along here are houses (referring to graphic.) Even now going by houses to get to work and then you have all these people coming from all those areas through residential areas trying to get here all at the same time and get to work by 8 o'clock.

A: (Steve Long) And that is what we will be looking at. We will be looking at those in the same way we will be looking at Blue Mountain, to tell you those impacts in our Environmental Impact Statement. So that will be reviewed. How much lane-age would that have to be? How big will that have to be? What are the impacts to those properties? What do the cue's look like for those waiting down there? We will be looking at that.

Q: (Carrie Gumishack) Just one more thing and this is for you Blue Mountain people, this is my first time here and the reason is because I heard about this. I actually only accidentally heard about it because I sat next to someone on the airplane who is from one of the companies going home and she happened to mention it to me. I talked to some of my neighbors and I don't know if a lot of Miller Creek people are really aware of this going on even though we got something in a letter. So as you are thinking about how to preserve your neighborhood, I hope you will also be thinking about how we preserve our neighborhood. A single road for us I don't think is the best way for us.

Com: (Mike Shapiro) We are building a house in Blue Mountain. My question is obviously if we have a big area like Miller Creek that has an increasing population density, then some kind of safer more efficient quicker access in and out of those neighborhoods becomes

critical. But if all we are doing is making it safer and more efficient and quicker to get everybody from Miller Creek to the gridlock of Reserve and Hwy 93, what are we getting? All we are going to do is to back the traffic up farther on Hwy 93 to Blue Mountain Road? It solves the real traffic issue for nobody. We need a some kind of a traffic corridor to move people from the neighborhoods to where they are ultimately going, not just getting down to a road where at certain times of the day you can't go anywhere anyway in a reasonable amount of time.

A: (Steve Long) The Transportation Plan is what is built for that process. The people who work for the city, the county, and the lawmakers develop a Transportation Plan to address those concerns. Again we are tied into that Transportation Plan. We also, from a traffic engineering standpoint, are looking at things like is it better to concentrate traffic at one source or is it better to spread it out and get it organized and cue it up in a different way. That is what transportation engineering is about also. So how can all this take place? We also needed to go back to the purpose and need and understand what safety is. Maybe it is not just to provide a safe access for the user but a secondary access, a better access, an improved first access to get emergency vehicles in an out because you are reaching that threshold of what safe is. So that needs to be considered also.

Q: (Mike Shapiro) What is the entire picture? What is the Transportation Plan say about where everybody goes once they get out of Miller Creek besides Hwy 93, Reserve Street, or Russell?

A: (Steve Long) They go to their destination with a certain level of service that is either acceptable or not depending on what was defined in the Transportation Plan.

Q: (Mike Shapiro) I'm curious, has anything been defined in the Transportation Plan?

A: (Steve Long) No, I don't think there were any improvements on Reserve.

A: (Scott Richman) As far as Reserve? Not in terms of the capacity. I think there was only a widening project on a section of Brooks and Reserve.

Q: (Earl Pruyon) I'm interested in some economy. I'm tired of spending huge dollars on malfunction junction, west Broadway, now we are down here. All I hear is talk, I don't see much action and I would like to get something for my money. Now I feel, if we are talking about your planning here, that you don't have one, you will need two of these (referring to graphic). You will need a road here and you still need a bridge there. What we should think about is what everybody in here has been saying – we need to have this as a plan for a highway. You are the man I'm looking at (pointing toward Craig Genzlinger). This is a federal project. This is what we should be looking at. Not this bridge all by itself, but another bridge beyond that and then on up to the airport

interchange. When asked by the airport, John said to them and got answered by the Department of Transportation, they have nothing in our ten-year plan. I can't believe that. Would you like to answer?

A: (Craig Genzlinger) I seem to sound like a broken record here. I hate to keep coming back to the Transportation Plan, but the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Government does not dictate the projects to a local community. The community, the city and county and the transportation planning process, are the ones that identify the range of projects for a community not the federal government. This project was identified in that large range and was funded through a congressional earmark. That is how the Federal Highway Administration got involved in the project. I think one thing that has certainly dogged this project from the very beginning is I don't think any of us disagree that there are shortcomings on Hwy 93. There are improvements needed there. Reserve Street is congested, Reserve Street and Brooks is congested. Absolutely. There are a lot of projects in Missoula that need to be done. Unfortunately for those of you who want to see those improvements done first, this is not that project. This is the project to improve access to Miller Creek. Those projects need to be identified and those things need to be brought forward in the transportation planning process and put into the local Transportation Plan.

Q: (Earl Pruyn) Well, whatever you do here should be only one segment of that Plan.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) Absolutely. This is one project and the full umbrella of projects that they need to look at using the traffic models that Scott talked about and seeing how it is going to impact the whole Missoula area. Then they need to prioritize those projects and figure out which is the first one they need to do. The decision-makers at the local level are the ones who choose which one is the first to get done.

Q: (Unidentified) How do we get them going on speaking to each other and developing something that is sensible?

A: (Craig Genzlinger) Well the Transportation Plan was just updated and I don't know how many of you attended those public meetings that they had and commented there. I guess the only thing I can tell you is that you need to keep talking to your local decision makers that develop the Transportation Plan. Federal Highway Administration participates in the planning process but we are not going to come in and dictate to the local community that this is the project you need to be building first.

Q: (Chris Hopwood) I wanted to know if there was anyone here tonight from the Missoulian. Ok, great. I want us to all address our comments to the gentlemen from the Missoulian because I think that is how our voice is going to get heard. I think what we need to have is something in the Missoulian that talks about this corridor we are talking about. Why

isn't this being the first stage in a plan to make it so we would get a corridor that is mile off of Reserve Street that runs north and south – this would be the very first stage of it. Why don't we start that process? So, just a show of hands, who here would be interested in making that the first step? (Many hands raised) Helping Miller Creek to get out of their neighborhood, the wonderful plan they are trying to come up with, and make it so it helps all of Missoula and not just Miller Creek? It helps all of us get from points south to points north. Did you see how many hands went up? I hope it was everybody hands here.

The other thing I wanted to either say or ask: I know that the impact on Blue Mountain is very small, from 1,000 to 2,200, and that is if it is accurate. But I think the bigger impact that we have to look is the quality of life – why we like living in Missoula. There are three different recreation areas out by Blue Mountain – Maclay Flats, Blue Mountain, and then where they do the golf. Now the thing I'm worried about is if they do this plan and hook up to Blue Mountain, then eventually that road might get widened even further than two lanes. It might be four lanes and that is going to severely impact another recreational area we have for Missoula. They talked about it potentially being a safe interchange. Well I can tell you in the winter when we get the river ice effect and ice comes down on top of that road, it's definitely not safe. You are going to see those accident numbers increase dramatically. In the summer when we have bikers on the road, just wait until the first one gets hit and someone gets killed on that road. I actually think it is going to happen. I would like to know how many people think keeping that corridor a recreation corridor and a wilderness corridor is important? So we have three goals: lets help Miller Creek get out of their area; lets start the next phase to getting another corridor that parallels Reserve Street; and lets try and to maintain our areas that add to our quality of life. That is all I ask.

Q: (Steve Sherick) I want to address a couple of things. One is I want to follow up the comments of Don Peressini and Earl Pruyn. The response to Peressini comment was deafening. So I'm going to ask it another way again. At the last two meetings I talked to somebody with a badge on and also in my written comments I identified that there is a monthly meeting taking place involving the state highway department, the County of Missoula, Ravalli County, and the Federal Highway Administration. Now maybe they are just having coffee, but they are discussing an alternative additional route to expand that east-side highway. I've asked you guys at the last two meetings to talk about that in your presentations because this microscopic review of what is going on doesn't do us any good. Those people in Miller Creek can sure as hell get out of there and those that are on the other side of the creek can get out of there. But we have to know how this tie-in goes from Florence to the airport. What kind of an impact would a decision like that have on your alternative? You see Hwy 93 right now has one bridge at Lolo, and if it was incapacitated so would all the transportation in the valley. That has been discussed at these coffee breaks also. So I would hope that you and this gentlemen up front (Fred), I

would hope that Craig and this planning group would respond to the comments that Earl has made and that Peressini has made and that the gentlemen over there with the cap has made and the ones I'm making – how the hell does the tie-in between Florence and the airport fit in.

Q: (Dick Hines) I'm the State Representative. Craig, I want to point out that if you are not feeling any political pressure I need to sit down and visit with you a little bit. I'm a retired engineer and I would not want to pretend for one minute that I have the transportation planning expertise that our engineers have tonight, but I do know that something is wrong. I may be a little redundant here, but I think it was just pointed out a little while ago: we need to look at a bigger picture. I understand the limits on what you can look at and I don't have any problem with what your current charter gives you, but I think the EIS process for this limited area can state the bigger picture must be considered. That needs to be something that you come to at the end of this thing. It can state what must be done in the short term and it can state what must be considered in the long term. I feel right now, particularly along Highway 93, it will add to congestion. A bridge at Blue Mountain will definitely put traffic in an area of a road that is now marginal. If you go over there and look at the timing thing, I think one of the flaws is that if you put that bridge across there and drive down and look at that quagmire on Hwy 93, the County is going to reach a point eventually in a few years where it is going to stand still. Why would you not drive Blue Mountain Road? It may be longer but it is still going to be faster even if it takes a longer time theoretically. The situation will do nothing but get worse. Ravalli County, the Bitterroot Valley, Hamilton, and Lolo will continue to grow and as they grow, of course, the traffic lines are going to grow. We are looking at the least amount of traffic we have to deal with right now. And it is going to be much more so.

Speaking of Lolo, I don't know if there is anybody here from Lolo tonight. Good, we need more of your folks here. Right down there now, some of the people I've talked to about access of Hwy 93 and the traffic on Hwy 93 are issues those people are pretty concerned about in many cases. They don't seem to be aware of the potential impacts that one of these bridges might have on their town and their lifestyle. I would urge that you consider a public meeting in Lolo to deal with that and give them a chance to be heard directly.

So where am I going with all of this. First I recommend that the Record of Decision make improvements at Miller Creek Road and the junction of Hwy 93 and Brooks, the preferred alternative. Something like 5A or 5C. I say to the lady and I live over where you live, that is a first step not a final step. As the good doctor said, we need other bridges elsewhere. But that is going to have to be done in any case, something along that line. I don't know the extent of that but there is going to have to be something in there to handle traffic because even with the bridge you are still going to have a lot of traffic on

that road. I would also like to see the Record of Decision call for further study of a north south parkway from Miller Creek to I-90. That has been brought up tonight. Make it along the existing power line route. If you drive out on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and stop underneath that power line and look north, you can almost see the off ramp on I-90 out by the airport. If you turn and look south you can almost see Miller Creek. It is pretty much a straight shot through there and I think there's enough room to maneuver around so you don't impact a lot of people's homes. What occurs to me is that is the rest of the story – some kind of a route going north.

I've heard people say, including the County Commissioner that is here tonight, that it is going to be very expensive. That is true, it will be very expensive but it will never be cheaper than it is right now. And it is needed now and will be nothing but needed more in the future. So I would plead with you, please don't recommend spending any money to do what is wrong just because we haven't identified where to get the money to do what is right. Thank you.

Q: (Hal Williams) I'm in Target Range and I couldn't agree with you more. It seems to me, however, that we are taking a band aide correction at the present in the Miller Creek area when we should have traffic moving from the Bitterroot with no impact. There is a lot of impact on everybody with this project. Why don't they just build a super highway from South Highway right over Reserve Street clear up to Mullen Road and out to the airport – straight north. You don't impact anything out at the airport. This conversation came up at the airport. You would just go straight north with an overpass over the top of the highway clear up to the intersection of east/west Hwy 10. You can add a couple of on and off ramps for accessibility. It will move all the traffic out there and not cause any impact on anybody. The Miller Creek situation has to be resolved on a different situation, I think it is two fold. Thank you.

Q: (Sherri Kenyon) I had a question for Scott – when determining the traffic volume increases at Blue Mountain Road, it sounded like when you are describing how those numbers were gotten it was about growth in that area, i.e., houses being built. I was wondering if it could take into account the idea of all the traffic coming from the Bitterroot and possibly using it as a bypass. I don't know how you could fold that into a program, but if you just focus on the number of houses that will be built area, of course the traffic isn't going to increase that much just based on the people living there.

A: (Scott Richman) It is based on more than that. It does take into account the growth on Hwy 93 and that being used as a route. There is not a clear destination from that. It is being used to go possibly to Big Flat Road, to Mullen Road, to South Avenue, etc. Some of that would be growth in this area and in the Miller Creek area, certainly a large diversion from Hwy 93. You look at the Hwy 93 volume and how it is going up

incredibly, and I'm not a magician and don't have a crystal ball, so these are our best forecasts.

A: (Steve Long) We are forecasting that it more than doubles, that's what was said, and that is a lot.

Q: (Sherri Kenyon) Does this forecast include the possible South Avenue Bridge?

A: (Scott Richman) Yes.

Q: (Sherri Kenyon) The other thing the Transportation Plan talks about is where they see job growth happening, and they think a large job growth is going to happen out by the airport. That is one of their predictions. So clearly, there is going to be traffic going from the Bitterroot wanting to get out by the airport to get to their jobs. So we clearly see that being a route of wanting to get out there and any road that continues to improve between here and the airport will enhance the idea of taking Blue Mountain Road to get out by the airport. So I think that needs to be taken into account, the job growth area and the fact that people might use that as a bypass, as Mullen Road improves, and Town and Ranch improves.

A: (Steve Long) Growth is projected for the land use all throughout the city.

Q: (Unidentified) It is impossible to me that anybody would expect that Blue Mountain Road the way it is now, would be anybody's choice as a reasonable way to drive around that if the whole idea was to get from south to somewhere north. That is just a funny little road that winds around and it is no good for moving a vast number of people. We need a transportation corridor not that road.

Q: (Sue Colyer) I am a resident of the Blue Mountain area. I've been to several of these public meetings and there have been a lot of comments addressed to the Federal Highway Administration. As the consultant, you've been hired to specifically solve the Miller Creek problem and so I would like to address my comments to the County Commissioners and the County Planning people. I think this project was conceived as a response to a problem in Miller Creek. But as we've gone through the planning process, we can see that it is a tiny piece and the real problem is how to get from south Missoula to north Missoula. So a lot of people have talked about that, and we've looked at the alternatives. When I look at them I think we should pick where we want the congestion – do we want it in Miller Creek, do we want it at Reserve and Hwy 93, or do we want it at Blue Mountain? It is going to be some place. But nobody has said that maybe we should stop right now trying to solve the Miller Creek problem and try to solve the Missoula north to south transportation problem. And when we feel we have a good solution there, let's come back and see how Miller Creek fits into that.

Q: (Barbara Evans) Missoula County Commissioner. You are right, we did start the Missoula Creek Bridge due to concerns and requests from the people in Miller Creek. I've been to numerous meetings in Miller Creek and there has hardly been a person in the room that didn't want this bridge. So in response to those folks, we have gone to Congress and got the \$5 million to begin the study because you can't build a bridge and do all this stuff without the process we are going through. Something that I think you need to understand is there are many different areas where money is available, first is your pocket, second is state money, then federal money. The developers aren't the ones building this bridge and we are all living in homes likely built by developers. When we say we need all the things that Dr. Pruyne and all of you are saying we need, we know we need them. You know, I hear people tell me every time they get their tax bill if it has gone up they are very upset. I understand that, and I don't want mine to go up either. I said the other day to the County Commissioners, "you know I do not wish to raise folks taxes because there are folks with fixed incomes that if we use their money to raise our capability of doing things, we are eliminating their capability of living." So we know that. So I don't want to raise your taxes in order to build these terribly expensive highways and let me tell you they are not cheap. Hwy 93 is an international highway – it comes from Mexico to Canada, so almost anything that needs to be done on that road would have to be done with the concurrence of the Federal Highways not just Missoula County. When we got the Reserve Street money we, in essence, took money that was 20 years of money that we might get. We were lucky enough to get the state and the feds to agree to let us do Reserve Street without waiting 20 years because our allocations were just taken for 20 years. I have a lot of people say "why didn't you build it wider?" And I would have loved to have built it wider, but you have to have the right-of-way, you have to have money to buy the right-of-way, you have to have the money to buy the asphalt, and you have to have the money to make it wide enough. Then if we get it wide enough or too wide at the time, then people say, "that is too wide, why are you wasting our money?" So I want to tell you that the Transportation Plan is put together by numerous organizations – the city, the county, the state, and the Urban Transit Board and others. It is a large Board and we all look at it and say what we would like. Then we prioritize what we think we can do with the money that will come from various pots. If there aren't enough pots to do what we need to do, it might take years. It might be a plan but it might take years. So folks, I want to tell you, you don't want to pay for the things you are asking for. So we will do what we can for you, as well as we can for you. I don't know where anybody got the idea that this is being planned in order to make it a bypass. It is not! I remember once when we did the Kona Bridge, the people who thought it was being done as a bypass came unglued. There is no way I would recommend a bypass through Blue Mountain. So if people want to take that road, they can do that right now. But this bridge is being suggested because the folks in Miller Creek need out. When there is an emergency, we need the ability to get in and get out.



I'm probably not going to make all of you happy with what I have to say. But I'll tell you that when we're sitting in a room full of Miller Creek residents, they are not happy if we say we can't do anything.

Q: (Unidentified) Question directed to Barbara Evans. I'm curious why the County Commissioners would authorize the development of all the Maloney Ranch and Linda Vista when there was not way out?

A: (Barbara Evans) I would suggest that you folks read the law and I would suggest that you find out what reason the County Commissioner's can use when they say no on subdivisions. We don't have the power to say no because the neighbors don't want it. I don't have that power. The law tells me that if there is a question, we should fall off on the side of the developer. So we don't have the power to say no. We have the developers put in many, many things that you have no idea how much it costs them to put in. We can't make people do everything. We can do what the law and our regulations require. If you want the law changed, I suggest you see Representative Haines.

A: (Unidentified) Barbara, you came up with a very good idea, you say that Hwy 93 is an international highway, well the only part of that international highway that doesn't connect is right where we are at. Ok? So when we talk about a bypass maybe we could interest the feds into making it a bypass that they will consider Hwy 93 north south bypass. In big cities they have beltways, we can't have a bypass beside Reserve Street? We are talking about a real bypass now, we are talking about a highway that is going to bypass the city and not interfere with anybody just go from A to B. Maybe that is the answer. I think what Don is trying to say is that if we start coming across at the Lower Miller Creek deal here, that will be a normal way to go across town where we are not putting a lot of pressure on anybody and maybe we can approach the Highway Department and say: "this makes sense as a bypass." Now you've got Hwy 93 all the way from Kalispell to Missoula all the way down the Bitterroot and you don't have to go through any of the major city.

Q: (Gerard Berens) I'm the president of the Target Range Homeowners Association. What you've just heard is probably the strongest evidence to date that growth is not paying for itself. We are all facing these problems, which are getting greater and greater. Our Commissioners say that there is no money to pay for it, the developers certainly don't want to. So where are we going? We are digging a deep hole.

Regarding the numbers up here that you are talking about, first of all the projections on transportation on traffic flows on Hwy 93 are, in my view, either from Alice in Wonderland or Alice's Restaurant. To say a 6,000-car growth per day average daily traffic over a 20-year period is, in my calculation, is 300 cars per year average increase. That is going both ways so it is really 150 cars. That is one household, one car, coming to

Missoula to get a 150 cars per year increase. That means 150 new houses someplace between here and the Bitterroot. That is a joke. We are building a tremendous number of homes in Missoula, and as the policies of Missoula become less congenial and less neighborhood like, there will be more and more people moving to the Bitterroot Valley. The traffic flows are highly understated; they need to be looked at by your folks not by the local folks, because this number of 6,000 is frankly an embarrassment.

This development, originally the Commissioners certainly knew that this development in Miller Creek area was going to cause a lot of congestion. When this project was first brought to the Transportation Coordinating Committee, there was a discussion that there was suppose to be an RSID, which is local funds. But really where this problem comes, is it should really be a developer's problem. The developer is benefiting directly from having a bridge put in. The next step would have been for the county to pay for this. The next step would have been the state. Instead we have is a Federal project with \$5 million of funds just for an RSID and some accumulation of land. This is a problem that is being misplaced. We have gone to big daddy, which around here is talked about as free money, the federal government. And I haven't found a way yet of not paying federal taxes. I personally like 5A and 5C. I can agree with all the comments of Mr. Haines and others that this ... we are looking at a very small fraction of the major problems in Missoula and we've focused on a minor part of the problem. As we are doing is spending \$5 or maybe \$8 million dollars to speed up and get traffic faster onto Hwy 93 that is already congested. Hwy 93 is like having a five-pound bucket and we are currently trying to put eight gallons into it, and now we are trying to spend more money so we can put 10 gallons into it. It just doesn't make sense. So my solution is that this solution makes the best sense because if you look at the traffic figures, even though I agree they are way understated, this is the only solution that makes 11,000 less cars on Hwy 93 Brooks segment. According to these projection and we all have to take those with a grain of salt. So this has a tremendous lessening of the impact on Brooks and is a positive solution. It increases it here (referring to graphic) but you've created in essence for at least this segment, and that is a positive step. It is short-term step, but we have to look at the bigger picture. Are we going to continue the process of just approving things helter-skelter and lo and behold we have this problem that we don't know about and how are we going to solve it. That solution has to be changed.

Q: (Sandy Kessler) We live on Miller Creek one mile from Hwy 93. When we moved there ... (not audible) ... having to change so dramatically to keep up with the growth that is going on in the new neighborhood. When I walked in I had never heard of a Super Miller Creek Road. I had not heard of Super Miller Creek Highway, which scares me to no end. Where do the lanes start widening, how far up, and how many lanes are you talking about? We were told many years ago that it would be four lanes with shoulders on it so that kids could ride their bikes. Now we are hearing "super something". I don't understand what is going to happen to my road. It was a road not a highway.

A: (Steve Long) We don't know the limits of those improvements. With these alternatives, it appears that it has to meet the demand of the whole Miller Creek area; obviously, it is the only way in. So it would be a long length.

Q: (Sandy Kessler) How many lanes? Are you talking more than four lanes?

A: (Steve Long) You could have a center turn lane, you could have auxiliary lanes. Yes, you could have more than four lanes. I don't know the specific number. It might be two lanes, we don't know.

Q: (Sandy Kessler) It is two lanes now. So we could be talking about more than four lanes going by my house?

A: (Steve Long) It is possible, yes.

Q: (Unidentified) I think you are going about this whole damn thing backwards. I think you ought to try to get that through from Miller Creek or wherever you want it back here across Missoula. Don't worry about Miller Creek right now. Get the traffic from where you go across the bridge or you can make a straight run clear across on 3<sup>rd</sup> and forget about this project for now. You have to get the traffic moving because you are not going to move them this way. These people up Miller Creek are not going to change to go someplace else. They don't stop now for anybody. In fact, if my kids were still going to school, I'd have a baseball bat standing in the middle of the driveway. I live at Miller Creek and Bridge Street and 114 cars every seven minutes go by myself. I've seen 20 cars go by when those little kids try to cross the street to go to school and nobody slows down. Now if my kids were going, I'd have baseball bat and there would be busted windows all over the place. They would either stop or have a head gone.

I still think you are going backwards. I think you ought to make bypass across there like they talked about 30 years ago going from Blue Mountain out across to the airport, to bypass this whole town. Then everybody forgot about it. How much money have they spent on stuff like that? Just like malfunction junction – how many of millions went there and it is still the same damn thing. Broadway is going to be another mess after they made their decision last night and Miller Creek is going to be the same mess. These people can't get out on the street now, now they are going up Briggs Street past the schools. It is just not right. You've got to get these people across town and out of the way and then worry about the other things you want to do. It is not right.

Q: (Bob Cole) I live at the "Y". Of course we will be impacted immensely by those two plans right there (referring to new alternative). We are probably one of the biggest reasons that the widening of Miller Creek didn't go through in the first place because of

needing the bridge as far as I was concerned. With widening Miller Creek, they had a 20-year plan before they would come back in with a bridge. I myself, think the bridge should be closer to Missoula. It seems to me that it would bring more people from the Linda Vista area through that area, plus like they say, it would line up more with a bypass that goes across Missoula in the future. The problem I see with all of this studying is that so much of the right-of-way that you say you can't buy is being developed and built on now with no plan at all to acquire any of this access through Missoula. Right on the other side of Hwy 93 right now it is all open space there. If you were to acquire some of that to go across and go across the Fort and start buying some of this now with a good plan, you might be able to have a project that does this. But if you wait another 10-15 years none of that open space will be available to us. There is just way too much studying. I'm tired of it. We've tried to get this bridge through here for 10 years, and we've spent so much money on it, we could have had it built 5-10 years ago. With all this debate, and everybody going back and forth, nothing will ever get done. I hope you guys will realize that a little help is better than none at all. Hopefully we can get something done.

Q: (Betty Perissini) If the Maloney Ranch crossing is placed at Blue Mountain, and the South Avenue bridge is built as planned, how will upgrading the neighborhood streets such as 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, Spurgin, and South to collector status be funded? Hopefully, not through revenue bonds or property assessment as suggested in the 2004 Urban Transportation Plan. Our daughter and her family live in Target Range and our grandchildren go to Target Range School. This is going to impact them horribly if that bridge goes in at South Avenue.

A: (Steve Long) I can't address that specifically. If you look at the Transportation Plan, it does have the funding mechanisms to fund those projects if it is identified as an improvement. Are the ones you mentioned improvements? You listed a bunch of projects right out of the Transportation Plan, is that correct?

Q: (Betty Perissini) Those streets.

Com: (Unidentified) Those streets are not in the Transportation Plan. Funding of collector streets is mentioned under funding in the Transportation Plan. In response to that, it is private money. In other words, it is RSIDs or bonds. You've got the poor guy that is retired sitting down on 3<sup>rd</sup> street, which is a real narrow street with no sidewalks and no shoulders, and that is going to be a collector street. Once you start funneling that traffic through the neighborhoods, somebody is going to have to pay for all that. I recognize that to be what is referred to as "private funding", in other words they get it from the property owners.

Q: (Al Aman) I live over on the Blue Mountain side of the Bitterroot on the west side. Just for tonight I would to point one thing and we talked about this at the end of the last

meeting we had here in the neighborhood. This is a beautiful plan but I think for right now it goes a little bit too much already into the commercial congestion. I don't know how much of a problem it would be to bring this particular thing over a little further to the west (referring to graphic). But if you take a look here, if I'm not mistaken, I think right about here by the gravel pit. See where this road goes up on the side here. Right about in here just east of that gravel pit out there, is what lines up with that thoroughfare going to the north. If I'm not mistaken, that goes right by the airport just the east or the airport. You can almost see the interchange that comes down to the airport from I-90 right there. So that lines up right there. I'm suggesting to you is rather than come over here and doctor up this Miller Creek thing here, which is what I believe is what they have over there on the blown up map, is maybe you folks from Miller Creek that are still here would consider. I don't think this is developed here, it may end up being this street here (referring to graphic), but the big development is still coming in here. That way you would have a straight shot coming not quite a mile west of Reserve Street, straight up to the east of the airport to I-90, right through town. There is very little commercial that you would have to fight there. You would have to build some bridge over the main streets going east west. This thing here, if I'm not mistaken, if you went straight down on this thing here, you could actually start getting access to land to the east side highway, which would unload all of that requirement for people from the east side of the Bitterroot River to have to come across by Florence and then come up on Hwy 93. It would really take a load of Hwy 93 and it would give you a secondary road for emergency purposes just in case something really catastrophic happens to the main highway on Hwy 93. I haven't seen any 20 or 30 car pile-ups down there, but let me tell you they can make a mess out of your major highways when they do that. This plan here is beautiful but for right now, how about considering putting that in here (referring to graphic), and then extending that access right across there? It would require an extra bridge. But I'm just saying that this would like up a little bit better.

A: (Steve Long) Just so I understand, is that different than what we already have proposed here?

Q: (Al Aman) Yes, it is one shot over.

A: (Steve Long) It is this one?

Q: (Al Aman) No it is the green one. Right there (referring to graphic)

A: (Steve Long) So you are in agreement that this alternative is consistent with what you were saying. You are not talking about a new alternative; you are talking about some subtleties of other connections. Thank you, I just wanted to make sure of that.

Q: (Wally Sept) I live on 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. I certainly wouldn't be in favor of coming across the River and dividing up Fort Missoula in any way shape or form. Once we start that, there wouldn't be any end. Secondly, we are taking in terms of quality of life. I don't know whether a South Avenue bridge will go through, I don't know if you have considered how much traffic will be coming down South Avenue. There would have to be a stop light near the Target Range School, so that would slow traffic. I can visualize another stop light on 31<sup>st</sup> or 33<sup>rd</sup> to beg off the noon and also the morning traffic for the high school students and that would again slow traffic. Right now at noon when the kids are going to their lunch hour, traffic is already backed up to the play field right west of Community Hospital. Can you imagine then with these added stop lights – it wouldn't stimulate traffic, it would hold it up. The idea is to move traffic. The South Avenue Bridge is not a good idea in my estimation.

Also, what is going to happen to the Target Range community? We are an area, we have a homeowners association, we have bylaws, and what happens to what the people want in that area? Are they going to be superseded by big government? What are we going to do with our property? I can tell you another thing that will happen, that area would be in transition meaning it would go from residential to commercial. Before that, it would go into rentals and there are some rentals going in already because the traffic on South Avenue has increased to the point where the noise level keeps you from sleeping. Those are concerns of ours and I wanted to pass those one. Thank you.

Q: (Sue Mathewson) Initially I never came to these meetings because I thought they were more about Miller Creek and the bridge access, but I've found that what you are asking for in your north south bypass really affects a lot of what I do. I mainly work on parks, county parks in particular. What I understand the losses to the community would be if we went on that grand scheme right up north from that green line. We would lose our high school vo-ag buildings, which are brand new. Yes we would! Yes we would! Then right beyond that we would lose the county's largest park, which is a 100-acre equestrian park. I think you should think about that because I don't see where that would go. I know people would lose their homes. I live on Tower Street. My home is the oldest home in that area and the old Missoula dairy. I would hate to see it gone not just for me, but it has been there a long time. My home doesn't mean more to me than what the people on 37<sup>th</sup> Street feel for their homes. I really want you to think about what you are asking for people to save a few minutes and a few miles because it is going to hurt and it is going to cost terrifically with all the wetlands you want to cross.

Q: (Gary Botcher) I live in Target Range. I guess I would like to direct this in Barbara's direction. If the mayor were here, I definitely would line him out. I started watching the City Council meetings and my concern is and what I've heard from the mayor and what I hear from the City Commissioners off and on, and what I hear from the planning departments, is that we are worried about urban sprawl. Urban sprawl is when you do

something in the city that forces everybody out into the urban area. Either one of the projects will create the worst urban sprawl you've ever seen, because if you build it, they will come. I watched Mullen Road, and all of a sudden we've got a brainstorm to go down Tower along with other issues. I guess it is all tied together. Did we try and stop Wal-Mart who created the issue at Reserve Street that is 25% of the problem. I think the only solution is to charter a bus to the Phillipsburg and anybody that wants to get on it, let's go.

A: (Barbara Evans) How much will it cost to take the bus? Would you remind me what your questions was?

Q: (Gary Botcher) I guess the issue is urban sprawl. We are taking major areas, communities, and neighborhoods that are trying to hang together for what they were designed to do. We constantly change zoning, we constantly let entity bonuses. We have eight criteria on subdivisions that say you have all the power in the legal world to stop Maloney Ranch and every other thing that creates issues that come to play prior to solving the problems that come around. It is there. You just have to jump on it.

A: (Barbara Evans) Maloney was turned down by the other two Commissioners. I did not vote no. We got sued and we lost. They got to do their subdivision because the court said the reasons for turning it down were not real. They weren't acceptable legally. You want to talk about urban sprawl, I'm going to tell you something guys, there is a new acronym and it is NIMBIE, it is BANANA = build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything. A fellow reminded me of the word NOTE = not over there either. No one wants anything built anywhere near close to them and I understand that. The law does not give us the right to say no. If we say you can't infill, you can't build in town, you can't have entity bonuses, and you can't fill in the farm land, and you can't build on the hills, now where do you think these people are going to go? The City just passed impact fees. Ok, so you want to know what will happen when people want to build a house? They are not going to want to build it in the City where they pay extra fees for the pleasure of building. They will likely go into the County unless the County passes them, and I will never vote for them because it makes it most difficult for people to get a house. I would never vote for an impact fee. So then if the County passes them, where will they go? They will go to Ravalli County, to Lake County, they will go east. They will go somewhere outside the City where they don't have to pay them. Do I have an answer to all these questions, Gary? No. If I had a crystal ball and a magic wand I would be happy to use them, but I don't have one.

Q: (Gary Botcher) Maybe we could start with zoning. In other words, Target Range doesn't mind expanding at all. Just let them expand the way it has expanded for the last 50 years. Everybody is prepared for it. Every time that happens, and it happens not only there but

every place in the City, the University area, let it be if it functions and works well. We are already trying to break it down for what? For increased density.

A: (Barbara Evans) If you guys don't like what the City does, I suggest you go to the City and tell them.

Q: (Gary Botcher) The City isn't doing Target Range.

A: (Barbara Evans) No but I do want to make you aware of something. There will be a meeting next week, and I hope you've been told about it, so that the City and the County about the City wanting to put the sewer down 3<sup>rd</sup>. Now you need to know they want to do that. If I'm not mistaken it is down 3<sup>rd</sup> clear to Clements Road. Now I'll leave it to you to know what that might accomplish.

A: (Unidentified) Annexation.

Q: (Unidentified) This goes back to Barbara. The issue is when you talk about Target Range needing to worry about a sewer going down 3<sup>rd</sup> and kind of bringing the hype up but yet I see this whole issue about South Avenue bridge for \$5 million, but yet we still keep talking about the traffic load on Blue Mountain Road and on O'Brien Creek being very small and very limited, yet this whole plan to put this bridge in for \$5 million seems incredibly amazing to me.

A: (Barbara Evans) That bridge would not go in for \$5 million. The last time I spoke to Congress about a South Avenue bridge, I will tell you that it is off the stove. It isn't on the back burner, it is off the stove. I don't think there will ever be the money to put a South Avenue bridge in. The process that they are using here today is the one they used to study whether to put in a South Avenue bridge. It would be very nice because the Maelay Bridge is old, it is suffering. We've done what we can to keep it up and over the River but at some point we may not be able to make it last any more. We may have to do something so people can get from A to B. I wish we had the money, but honey I'll tell you there ain't no \$5 million going to cover this bridge.

**Closing of Presentation (Carson Taylor)**

Thank you very much, feel free to stay around and look at the graphics on the wall and to talk to other people.

**VERBAL COMMENTS RECEIVED**

- "114 cars every 7 minutes" go by person's house who lives on Miller Creek Road.

- Need limited access along the new route. (No commercial development)
- Concern with more traffic past high school.
- Need traffic signal or stop signs to provide opportunity to access Miller Creek Road from Briggs Street.
- Consider putting Lower Miller Creek under Upper Miller Creek (grade separate). Grade issues create winter problems.
- Need more lanes on Miller Creek Road South to Briggs.
- We are putting development ahead of infrastructure.
- Will combinations of alternatives be considered?
- Shouldn't preclude the Lolo connection for future alternative route – U.S. 93 as the single route through the Bitterroot is unsafe.
- Need Miller Creek improvements and North Lower Miller Creek Alternative.
- Purpose and Need should be to improve transportation system to relieve congestion on U.S. 93 and Miller Creek area.
- There are a lot of #13 license plated vehicles traveling over Maclay Bridge and south on Blue Mountain Road much of the day and particularly in the afternoons.
- Either Blue Mountain or South Lower Miller Creek will create more traffic on Blue Mountain. Growth slowing down development is desirable.
- Increased capacity of Reserve Street instead of new route that impacts residents in Target Range area.
- Target Range Homeowners Association: maintain "semi-rural condition in first rate" was in by-laws in 1980's.
- Target Range Homeowners Association: maintain Rural Fire District. City should increase urban fire services not rely on rural fire district. Maintain school at present enrollment.
- There should be public involvement at every juncture of government actions.

- Target Range Homeowners Association wants to maintain the existing area zoning.
- I'm confused. Now people are voicing support for a west side bypass?
- May be need for additional signals on South Avenue with South Avenue bridge.
- Traffic on South Avenue has gotten so bad the noise levels keep people from sleeping.
- There would be significant impacts of new N-S extending north from NLMC (Alt. 2). Open space, cultural, floodplains, neighborhoods.
- This project supports urban sprawl.
- B. Evans claims that County could not reject Maloney Ranch development by court decision. Note to consultants: look up this decision.
- B. Evans: funding is not available for South Avenue bridge. It is in Transportation Plan.
- Chemical truck tipped over at N. Y intersection a couple years ago.
- Plum Creek land is being logged now. There are logging trucks going on MCR now.
- No-Build traffic analysis assumes (1) a signal at south Y intersection, (2) additional NB lane beginning south of S. Y to US 93 to double RT lanes, (3) bike signal at MCR/Briggs, (4) lanes and sidewalk.
- None of alternatives serves as a transportation solution for accommodating traffic growth. Plans need to solve problems on US 93 Brooks and Reserve.
- Expand map of No Build Alternative to note that South Avenue Bridge would be built.
- South Avenue Bridge will funnel traffic onto neighborhood streets, and so will Blue Mountain Road Bridge.
- Transportation plan concludes that it is "mgt tool" that does not solve transportation problems.
- FHWA should be responsible for taking traffic off of US 93 – addressing congestion on US 93.

- Address impacts to neighborhoods outside of Miller Creek area – be specific for individual neighborhoods and effects of different alternatives.
- Is it possible to have an objective EIS with political pressure to build a new bridge?
- Hasn't money been appropriate thru Forest Service for connection between two areas of Lolo National Forest?
- Reed Smith: He asked Forest Service how many timber sales have been in lat 10 years and answer was none.
- Reed Smith: He asked Forest Service how much timber sale activity is expected in next 10 years and answer was none.
- Travel time comparison needs to account for out of direction travel and travel over Maclay Bridge compared to South Avenue bridge.
- Miller Creek area resident is not sure a lot of her neighbors are aware of options being considered for MCR.
- What are we solving if we improve Miller Creek Road or other 2<sup>nd</sup> connection just ends up on congested gridlock of US 93.
- Tired of spending huge dollars on planning. He wants to see action. He thinks that this needs to be a plan for the highway.
- Most support maintaining Blue Mountain Road as rural, wilderness, and recreation corridor.
- What is tie-in between Florence and airport, and how does this project fit in?
- New bridge will make US 93 congestion worse.
- Rep. Dick Haines provided testimony and written comments.
- Ridiculous to think that Blue Mountain Road is a viable alternate route to US 93.
- Woman feels like we have choice to "pick where we want the congestion" instead of resolving N-S mobility problems and fitting this project into larger, longer-term system solution.

- Traffic projections are highly understated. Developer is benefitting directly from a bridge being put in. Problem is being misplaced.
- If there is an emergency, there are now multi. Ways out. This should not be a primary reason (emergency egress) for 2<sup>nd</sup> connection, because it is not accurate.
- Blue Mountain Road resident is supportive of Miller Creek Road improvements.
- Missoula Urban Transportation Plan Update has LOS D as acceptable as long as bike lanes and/or separated trail.

**WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED**

I do not support a bridge. Connecting Miller Creek to Blue Mountain Road – Fix Reserve Street. A Tower Street Highway cuts by the high school, ball fields.

Unidentified

Upper Miller Creek Road is currently a deathtrap. I put my life in jeopardy whenever I retrieve the morning paper, the mail, or urge my dogs into the car and away from the road. The worsening of the problem is dramatic. Traffic is aggressive and law-breaking in terms of speeding. I'm amazed that fatalities don't occur on a regular basis. And bicyclists use the road more than ever. A solution must be found soon.

B. Koosira  
5326 Upper Miller Creek Road  
Missoula, MT  
406-251-4374

No Blue Mountain Interchange. Target Range isn't broke and we don't need to fix someone else's problem.

Larry Hoffland  
4319 North Avenue West  
Missoula, MT 59804  
406-728-2467

The only alternative to the Miller Creek area is to widen the present road and keep it across the Bitterroot River. This should have been accomplished prior to the subdivisions allowed by Twite and certainly since the Maloney Ranch is being developed.

Established residents whom have long since paid their dues for property ownership should not be infringed on by newcomers expecting the emeritus paid by State or Federal tax money. They chose their location and should bear the inconvenience, or cost involved, in living there. Do not

allow them to ruin the beautiful Bitterroot River and valley, as there is no justification for such.

Keith & Marie Swinger  
6055 Highway 93 South  
Missoula, MT 59804  
406-549-0871

What if we choose the no-build alternative, and back up to build the west-side bypass/overpass first? We could make it a toll road.

Patricia A. Hogan  
4650 S 12<sup>th</sup>  
Missoula, MT  
406-543-5509  
[phogan@state.mt.us](mailto:phogan@state.mt.us)

It seems implausible that a bridge at Blue Mountain Road combined with the new South Avenue bridge, will not substantially increase traffic in Blue Mountain Road, South Avenue, and Big Flat Road. Travel time study does not account for new South Avenue bridge. With or without a new Miller Creek bridge, traffic on Hwy 93 will get slower and force traffic north through Blue Mountain.

It seems unfair that federal, state, and local taxpayers have to pay for infrastructure required by a new subdivision. The developer and new residents here should pay.

Jonathan Weber  
640 Big Flat Road  
Missoula, MT  
406-829-3611  
[JonathanWeber@earthlink.net](mailto:JonathanWeber@earthlink.net)

As Miller Creek growth continues, as inevitably it will, more traffic spreads to the south. A bridge over the Bitterroot should channel traffic to Hwy 93 further south, towards Lolo.

Unidentified

I am opposed to a major intersection/outlet for Upper Miller Creek at Blue Mountain Road for the following reasons:

- a) Increased traffic volume on Blue Mountain Road – projected increases (#) on traffic flow are understated – perhaps intentionally.
- b) Solving Miller Creek traffic problem is a direct subsidy to developers and realtors who are making huge profits and windfall gains at taxpayer's expense.

Steve Seninger  
9975 O'Brien Creek  
Missoula, MT 59804  
406-721-1422

Do we really need a bridge? What happened to Twites commitment to repave/rebuild Upper Miller Creek up to his new road where Linda Vista comes out at the top? Why not just expand/improve Upper Miller Creek to bear the traffic instead of building a bridge?

Ron Erickson  
2835 Lorraine Drive  
Missoula, MT  
406-251-5921

My concern has to do with the expanding of Blue Mountain Road. The environmental impact on the river will be detrimental to the flora and fauna surrounding the river, which, I turn, will impact the water quality of the river. Increased fumes, gasoline and oil run off into the river is a concern. In addition the wildlife will be impacted. We have deer, elk, bear, and lion in the area. Pollution from increased vehicle use will hurt the wildlife and the surrounding forest.

Many Cannon  
2705 Lyon Creek  
Missoula, MT  
406-543-6429  
[mncannon@hmo.com](mailto:mncannon@hmo.com)

We don't want another intersection like Mullan and Reserve.

Unidentified

No Blue Mountain Road Bridge. Widen Miller Creek – onto Old Highway 10 via light, a coordinated two-light system on Reserve.

Terry M. Toppins  
1210 Tower  
Missoula, MT 59804

Concerned about increased traffic on Blue Mountain Road should the new intersection not located north of this road. Should delay any increased traffic to this country road and rural area.

Cut through traffic will likely increased in a faster time line and the velocity of cars will often be dangerous on this narrow two-lane road.

Appreciate that Linda Vista needs improved access but hope the greater impact to Blue Mountain is considered.

L.K. Alexander  
248 No. Higgins #244  
Missoula, MT 59802  
[Ceb992@gco.com](mailto:Ceb992@gco.com)

See attached photo, amateur, not digital, bald eagle pair in cottonwood, south of river, at Blue Mountain crossing. (See road sign in lower left corner) Bald eagles are present year-round. More photos available.

Kathleen Johnson  
62165 Lower Miller Creek Road  
Missoula, MT 59806  
406-251-2356  
[kl@montana.com](mailto:kl@montana.com)

**Typed comment attached**

Ed and Shari Linjala  
4900 Blue Mountain Road  
Missoula, MT 59804

**Typed comment attached.**

Susan Campbell Renuu  
54525 Skyway Drive  
Missoula, MT 59804  
406-251-3372  
[bluemountain@montana.com](mailto:bluemountain@montana.com)

We live on the corner of Rio Vista and Miller Creek to the north of the “Y.” We watch everyone who lives in the Miller Creek area go by our house at least twice a day – but worse, we hear the cars continually. There are times of the day when we wait 10-15 min. to get onto Miller Creek going north. We all know the traffic problem is a big one, and we commend you for all your hard work. My request is a simple one: would you please consider the homeowners who live along Miller Creek, no matter which alternative is chosen, and give us the opportunity to use berms (from the planned road construction) or other aesthetic devices that will help shield us from traffic noises and pollution. With the increase in houses and other improvements which are inevitable in the Miller Creek area, we, or at least I, feel that our needs could easily be overlooked. Thank you for including my comments.

Harrict and Jim Calenterra  
4535 Rio Vista Dr  
Missoula, MT 59803  
251-5947  
[jcalenterra@centric.net](mailto:jcalenterra@centric.net)

We attended the June 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, and write our comments prior to the public comments. We were impressed by the alternate to widen Miller Creek Road and build an overpass over 93 to connect to the Old Highway 93 and Reserve Street. Miller Creek and Maloney Ranch are country areas where subdivision was inevitable, but there is no reason or justification to build a bridge across the Bitterroot River to enter the amount of traffic already apparent. Neither do we

feel it is necessary to have this road more than three lanes wide – with center for turning – and having a pedestrian/bicycle lane on each side for school children, which would only necessitate a stop signal at one location.

We naturally assumed the 5 million dollars would cover the cost of the originally contemplated bridge, and surprised the Msln reported that the engineers fees would amount to that much. We refuse to believe that grant only covered feasibility engineering and do not believe the citizens will accept another fiasco such as that at Malfunction Junction.

Keith & Marie Swinger  
6055 Bitterroot Road S.  
Missoula, MT 59804  
549-0971

I had to leave just as comments started for another meeting. The Blue Mountain makes the most sense to me because it gives us another way out of the area if Linda Vista is blocked for some reason and it spreads the traffic. It also gives a longer reservoir for queuing from the Miller Creek light on 93. It takes advantage of an existing signal and takes southbound traffic out of the lower Miller Creek traffic flow. I like the overpass concept best as it will minimize delays. The city anxiously awaits a decision so we can begin work on a much needed new fire station to serve this area. I don't think the impacts on Blue Mountain will be significant.

Bob Lovegrove  
4343 Nicole Ct.  
Missoula, MT 59803  
251-0388  
[frboblovegrove@montana.com](mailto:frboblovegrove@montana.com)

I am very concerned that the Blue Mountain interchange will lock in place that location for a corridor to the airport area. As Reserve Street gets more and more congested big trucks will try to bypass it by going out to Mullen Road via Blue Mountain and Big Flat Roads. These roads are not built for large trucks and have sub-standard widths and radius.

Relief for Miller Creek should be a combination of existing Miller Creek Road widening and a bridge further south where the projected growth is.

Roger Austin  
11355 Windemere Dr.  
Missoula, MT  
721-5632  
[raustin@landandwater.net](mailto:raustin@landandwater.net)





Public Workshop #6

March 23, 2006





**TRANSCRIPT  
MILLER CREEK ROAD  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
SIXTH PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

**Thursday, March 23, 2006  
4:30 - 7:30 p.m.**

**Quality Inn Convention Center  
3803 Brooks Street  
Missoula, MT**

The Sixth Public Workshop for the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement was held March 23, 2006, at the Quality Inn Conference Center, Missoula, MT. One Hundred Sixty Eight (168) people attended the sixth public meeting (sign in sheets attached). The meeting was an open house format from 4:30 to 5:30 pm with a formal presentation given by Craig Genzlinger (FHWA), and Steve Long (David Evans and Associates) from 5:30 to 6:00 pm followed by a question/answer period from 6:00 to 7:30 pm facilitated by Carson Taylor (The Settlement Center). Comments were received from the public in a number of ways: 1) personal comments given to project officials on 5 x 8 cards and immediately displayed for public review, and/or 2) written comments placed in a comment box located at the comment table, and 3) comments were received during the question/answer period of the public meeting. Project officials were available throughout the evening to answer questions or concerns and to receive comment on the project.

**Project officials present:**

Craig Genzlinger, Federal Highway Administration  
Steve Long, David Evans and Associates  
Mike Odom, David Evans and Associates  
Ryan LeProwse, David Evans and Associates  
Jeanette Lostracco, Carter & Burgess, Inc.  
Diana Bell, Carter & Burgess, Inc.  
Misty McCoy, Carter & Burgess Inc.  
Carson Taylor, The Settlement Center

**ROOM ARRANGEMENT**

**Sign In Table**

The following handouts were available to the public at the sign-in table:

- 1) Agenda and Explanation for the meeting and room organization
- 2) Comment Sheets

**Wall Displays**

Four (4) wall display areas explaining the project were available for public viewing as follows:

- 1) Project Background Information
  - a. Purpose of Tonight's Workshop
  - b. Graphic of EIS Process
  - c. Aerial Map of Study Area
  - d. Summary of Public Meetings
  - e. Graphic of Original Purpose and Need / Revised Purpose and Need
- 2) Traffic Information
  - a. Traffic Issues
  - b. Graphic of Updated Traffic Volumes
  - c. Aerial Map – No-Action Alternative
  - d. Aerial Map – Build Alternatives Dismissed & Advanced
  - e. Graphic of Alternative 1 – No-Action
  - f. Graphic of Alternative 2B+ – North Lower Miller Creek
  - g. Graphic of Alternative 3B+ – Blue Mountain Road
  - h. Graphic of Alternative 4C+ – South Lower Miller Creek
  - i. Graphic of Alternative 5A – Miller Creek Road
- 3) Alternatives
  - a. Graphic of No-Action Alternative
  - b. Graphic of Build Alternatives Dismissed and Advanced
    - Typical Section
  - c. Graphic 2B+ – North Lower Miller Creek Alignment
    - Typical Section
    - Miller Creek Road – Limited Improvements 2B, 3B, 4C
  - d. Graphic Alternative 3B+ – Blue Mountain Road Alignment
    - Typical Section
  - e. Graphic 4C+ – South Lower Miller Creek Interchange
    - Typical Section “y” to Bridges Street Rural Section
    - Miller Creek Road Limited Improvements 2B, 3B, 4C
  - f. Graphic – Miller Creek Road Limited Improvements at Grade Intersection
    - Typical Section
  - g. Graphic 5A Miller Creek Road at Grade Intersection
- 4) Comments
  - a. Upcoming Steps graphic
  - b. Comment Sheets available on table
  - c. Comment Box to receive comments
  - d. Cards with comments displayed

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION**

**Carson Taylor (The Settlement Center)**

My name is Carson Taylor. My job tonight is to facilitate the public input and presentation on Public Workshop No. 6 regarding the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement. Let me briefly introduce the people here that you might want to talk to after this session if you have specific questions and then we will get right into the presentation. Following the presentation we will have a question and

answer period. You will get the microphone and everybody will have an opportunity to ask any questions they want to before they leave here tonight. There will be some sort of a time limit so that everybody gets an opportunity to say whatever they want to.

From David Evans and Associates, who are the Engineers on the project, the Consultant Project Manager is Steve Long. In the back Mike Odom, also an Engineer and Ryan LaProwse. From Carter and Burgess who are heading up the environmental document process, Jeanette Lostracco, Misty McCoy, Diana Bell. In the front Anneil Fillingier, AM Tech Services, who is recording this meeting. If you haven't signed in yet, please do so because that will put you on the list to get any mailings or future notices that come out, and it is important for us to know that you were here because the numbers matter. From Montana Department of Transportation, Shane Stack. From Federal Highway Administration, Craig Genzlinger, who is the Project Manager. He is going to start off the presentation portion.

#### **Craig Genzlinger (Federal Highway Administration).**

First, on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration, I want to thank you all for coming tonight. This is a really nice turnout and it is good to see people interested in the project. I just want to quickly go through a little bit of background of why we are here tonight. This isn't the public hearing yet, so we don't have alternatives or the draft document out. We are going to be going through the updated analysis we've done. The other thing is that the Montana Department of Transportation certainly has an interest in this project and that is why Shane is here tonight. They have a couple of corridor studies going on U.S. 93. I know that is a little confusing for people – you have an access study that is going through the same section and then a corridor study going from this farther south. But this meeting is for Miller Creek Road – for access into the Miller Creek area.

**Purpose of Meeting.** The purpose of the meeting is that we have updated traffic forecasts to be used in the analysis and we want to display those changes in numbers. Basically what happened is the traffic forecasts for twenty years out on Hwy 93 changed. So we wanted to show you how those changed and why those changed and basically show you the impact on the alternatives that we have for our build alternatives.

**Background.** Just a little bit of background for some of you that have been involved in the project and if you attended some of our past public meetings you know that we did change our purpose and need statement part way through this process. Originally our purpose and need stated the purpose of this project was a second access into the Miller Creek area but we did get some questions back in 2004 as far as why we weren't looking at upgrading the existing access. So we stepped back and decided that those were pretty good questions and looked into that and did add an upgrade to the existing Miller Creek Road. We decided to change our purpose and need statement at that time to talk about improved access in Miller Creek versus a second access in Miller Creek specifically.

**Where we are at in the process.** We've gone through the project scoping. I mentioned the purpose and need. We've analyzed and developed alternatives. We are here in the process – additional alternatives analysis, with updated traffic forecasts. One of the important things I want to mention is that we hope to have the Draft EIS soon so that you will have a full document to look at. We are hoping to have that out this summer. So hopefully this summer we will have a document out and will have a Public Hearing where you can come and specifically tell us which alternative you prefer. Certainly tell us which alternative you prefer tonight, but at the Public Hearing we take more formalized comments as far as hearing which alternative you prefer.

**Summary of Public Meetings.** I just want to summarize very briefly the public meetings we've had. We had the first one back in March of 2003 – that was a public scoping meeting just to get the process started. In May 2003 we had a meeting to start talking about alignment alternatives. Again in July 2003 we had a third meeting showing some of the alignment alternatives that we had developed and were in a real rough stage. Then we had an additional public meeting up in Blue Mountain/Hayes Creek area that was requested by some of the citizens up there. We went up and talked about some of their concerns with additional traffic being on Blue Mountain Road. We had another workshop in November 2003. At that time we had a preliminary preferred alternative but again we had some concern with people not just in Blue Mountain but in Target Range and South Avenue. The citizens had their own meeting out at Target Range and we went up and participated in that and answered some questions. We had a fifth meeting in June 2004 where we revised our purpose and need statement based on all the comments we received and showed some of the new alternatives. So this is actually our sixth public workshop. Our intent is that this will be the last public meeting prior to the Public Hearing on the document.

**Public Hearing.** The Public Hearing date is yet to be determined, hopefully this summer.

I'm going to turn this over to Steve Long in just a second to talk to you about the actual specifics of the analysis that has taken place and he will talk about some of the traffic forecasts. One thing I wanted to mention – we will have a question and answer session after the presentation but if you do have a question about a specific piece of property or parcel or an approach or something, we are going to go back into an open house format afterwards and it will be much easier for us to talk to you one-on-one and look at a map versus trying to answer that here in front of the group. So with that, I'll turn it over to Steve and he can go through some of the analysis.

#### **Steve Long (David Evans and Associates)**

Thank you very much. Let me first get a show of hands of people who have been part of this process and have come to at least one public meeting before this (2/3 of audience raised their hands). Great! Thank you very much for helping us with the project.

**Updated Traffic Volumes.** The reason why we are here today is because we needed to come back with more information for you. This meeting was not initially planned as part of this project but after we determined that some of the traffic numbers, the projections for 20 years, seemed a little bit low based on your input and based on some of the other studies that have been initiated, we thought we'd better go back and start looking at these numbers and then retesting them against our alternatives. So about eight months ago we started through a process of going through some fairly detailed evaluation of the alternatives you see up here on the wall. Concurrently there were two studies that were starting on Hwy 93 – an access study and a corridor study. The access study begins down in Lolo and it comes all the way to the Buckhouse Bridge. That is where we really started to question some of the numbers that were in the 2004 Transportation Plan saying, "are these realistic?" and "are we sure that we want to be able to evaluate this caliber of a project based on those numbers?" So we re-forecasted those numbers based on some new information and we did a little bit of a sensitivity analysis to understand how growth rates would change our alternatives. This is a very quick fast growing area and I want people to understand that what we were changing in these growth rates were not for the Miller Creek area specifically because that is a very constrained area. That area at build-out is going to hold so many houses and generate so many trips. Where we were seeing some conflict was along Hwy 93 itself where

we were tying in or where we were dumping the traffic to. We are seeing those growth rates exceeding where we are today.

**Traffic Volumes.** So we have the existing traffic volumes (approx 20K – 25K). This middle column is where we had originally forecasted the growth volumes for twenty years (approx 30K) and the last column is the updated forecasts for year 2025 (approx 39K). So you can see this difference is fairly significant. We wanted to make sure that when you were looking at these alternatives that we were looking at something in this range and now trying to be working down here (referring to graphic).

**Access.** I think we are all familiar with the study area, but basically what we've come up with for alternatives over the past couple of years really reflects how to access the highway. At first, like Craig said, we were looking at a secondary access that was too defining of a purpose and need for some of the regulatory agencies, so we said "how can we better improve access to the area in general?"

**No-Action Alternative.** The very first thing we do is define what our "No-Action" is. We need a base to be able to weigh our alternatives against. "No-Action" doesn't necessarily mean that nothing is going to happen. The "No-Action" means the assumed improvements that will happen that are already funded or are highly likely to be funded in the future. So as determined the "No-Action" includes these improvements (referring to graphic). Most of them are very well described over here, which basically improves Miller Creek Road. It has a through turn lane and basically improves some of the geometrics and improves the "Y" intersection and makes improvements to the intersection at Hwy 93. That is the "No Action Alt." That is what we compare all of our build alternatives against.

**Build Alternatives (Dismissed/Advanced).** I think a lot of you have seen this many times. These are the alternatives we originally came up with. You helped us develop these alternatives. We went back and screened some of these alternatives based on some third preliminary screening evaluation criteria and a few of them fell out. The red ones fell out (referring to graphic). Either they were too close in proximity to another alternative or it was just not reasonable to have an alternative because of either terrain or environmental impacts. So this is what we have had now for about two years as alternatives.

**Alternative 1 – No-Action.** Our first alternative is the No-Action Alternative. We built two different sets of traffic numbers – the old numbers, the initial forecasted numbers, and the new traffic numbers. The new traffic numbers are in bold and the previous traffic numbers that we had forecasted are in parenthesis and grayed out (referring to graphic). We are talking about a 20 to 30 percent change in volumes. So we were really concerned that would have quite a bit of impact on our analysis of our alternatives and how traffic would flow.

**Alternative 2B – North Lower Miller Creek.** The first alternative we looked at after the "No-Action" was how things were going to change if we build a North Lower Miller Creek bridge, how would that affect traffic volumes with the new traffic numbers. When we were here last time we said that there was an alternative and that it would affect the traffic numbers and that the network would work in a certain way. What we found out when we put the new traffic numbers in was that no matter where we put a bridge crossing on this project, there was still going to be a bottleneck at Miller Creek Road and US 93 intersection (referring to graphic). So the new traffic numbers really created a threshold, if you will, that started cycling all the alternatives. We could put two or three bridges across there and we were finding that the Miller Creek/US 93 intersection was really the pinch point of what was happening. So the red is more than a 30 percent increase on the roadway network (referring to graphic). To address some of the concerns once we built this new bridge crossing, for instance on North Lower Miller Creek we had to

better distribute and improve the access north of US 93 so the bridge would actually work. We found we had to make quite a few improvements in Miller Creek Road. That is what this graphic over here is (referring to wall graphic). We actually have to do a lot of work on Miller Creek Road above and beyond the "no build" in order to make any bridge crossing work. The biggest feature of this, and we explained this at our last public meeting, was to create a couplet, if you will, with Old 93 Road in front of the Golf Course. This splits the phases of the signal here and it splits the phases of these signals up here so it offers more through time or through put if you will, for the traffic. It is a very unique opportunity – there are not a lot of places out there that exist where this situation is created where you almost have these parallel routes and you can split the signals.

So I want to be very clear that the biggest change on these alternatives since I last talked to everybody is that they still work the same way they did before but you've got to do improvements to Miller Creek Road, quite a bit above and beyond the "no build". The Miller Creek Road improvements that are required with all the bridge crossing alternatives is referred to as the Miller Creek Road Limited Improvements.

**Miller Creek Road Limited Improvements.** There are also possible access controls along US 93 between Miller Creek Road and Reserve St. (referring to graphic). Now I wouldn't expect any build type improvements in this area but there might be some access control that we are looking at – right-ins/right-outs, to make this really operate at a better level of service. We haven't defined what those are yet so we made the whole thing yellow, but it wouldn't get any wider in through there.

**Traffic Volumes.** The traffic volumes would increase over 30 percent on Old U.S. 93. That is something you would expect if all of a sudden we were opening up a whole phase and moving traffic a different way than it does today. Likewise, on the Blue Mountain Alternative you will see that these colors really don't change over here (referring to graphic). Basically the increased volume through this area is pretty much consistent with all the different alternatives that we are looking at.

**Alternative 5A – Miller Creek Road.** The next thing we found was that because that pinch point was so intense, that to actually make a stand alone Miller Creek Road, no bridge at all but to do a stand alone Miller Creek Road Alternative, really only required one additional south bound lane in this area (referring to graphic) to meet our level of service requirements for this job. So that explains just how big of a pinch point that really is that those types of improvements have to be made. Here is what we are calling the Miller Creek Road Alternative (Stand Alone), which means no other bridge crossing. We are finding that it can handle the volumes to get the people out of Miller Creek Road because it is improving that node so much. So there is some value to dispersion of the traffic earlier on U.S. 93 that we are finding here but it is not as significant as a lot of people might think. It wasn't as significant as I would have thought as an engineer who has studied these things for many years.

**Upcoming Step.** So where do we go from here and what are the upcoming steps? We really want to get this draft out on the street. I think that we've done pretty much all the analysis that we need from a traffic standpoint. We trusted the new traffic numbers back to say how they affected the alternatives and we also took a quick look to see if those traffic numbers actually spawned any new alternatives and they didn't. So we are ready to start assembling this information into the Draft EIS. We want to hear from you tonight what your thoughts are on these concepts, and your thoughts about our new traffic forecasts. Then we move forward, after the draft is out, we have a public hearing and hear your input on what we finally are bringing to you as our analysis. Then lastly we prepare the Final EIS, and look for a

Record of Decision. The Record of Decision is what finalizes the preferred alternative. Now there is a long way to go between the Final EIS and the Record of Decision sometimes because there are questions of funding and does funding have to be accounted for. We are going to work through that. Our real goal is to get through these alternatives and make sure we have a preferred alternative as we go into the Final EIS and everybody understands what the impacts are that we are talking about.

With that, I'd like to open it up to questions. Did I miss anything major? I deliberately didn't go through these individually. Is everybody ok that I didn't walk through the specifics of these? If people want to see the actual traffic volumes, those same displays are up here on the front wall so you can actually see the traffic numbers on a specific road.

#### QUESTIONS/ANSWERS/COMMENTS

##### Carson Taylor (The Settlement Center)

The way I think we should do this is that this microphone will circulate. The rules are when you have this in your hand you can talk and no one else can. It is kind of like a talking stick. When you don't have it in your hand, please wait. I will get to everybody that wants to say anything. You don't have to say anything; there is no rule that you have to stand up and say anything, but your comments and questions will be appreciated and will serve this process very well. There are places to write comments in the back and you can also take the comment sheets and mail them in or leave the comment sheets with us. I've heard a few comments as I've circulated around talking to you all that really should go on comment sheets because it will make a difference. I've talked to people about how long you wanted to listen to one another so that everybody got a chance to speak, so I'm going to suggest three minutes. I have a little timer that will start buzzing at three minutes – once you start talking it goes on, I'm going to sit down and at 2½ minutes I'll stand up so that you will know you are running out of time. If we get through and people are done talking, and you have something else to say, you can talk at that time. Misty is going to hand this around.

Q: (Unidentified) You are talking about traffic increases over a 20 year time frame, is that the normal kind of time frame or would you expect something to happen that after 20 years it is likely to keep growing, so does that have an influence? The second question – are you coordinating your numbers with the corridor study and the other study that is going on?

A: (Steve Long) Yes we are coordinating those numbers and they are the same numbers as of right now. The other question was about the 20-year forecast – that is pretty much the standard used. When you are looking at capital improvements and the life-cycle of the capital improvements of a highway you're looking 20 years out and accepting the fact that as you're getting into that 20-year timeframe the next steps are being looked at. We want to make sure that we look a little bit past that and not preclude anything in the future. I know there has been a lot of talk about the rail line and what could possibly happen with that and how growth happens in Miller Creek on the corridor study. So we are trying to be really conscientious to make sure that our alternatives are flexible for the future. We are not guaranteeing it, but we are just kind of keeping our eye on it.

Q: (Jerry Ballas) I sit on the Missoula City Council and our biggest concern is community and city planning for space reasons. We've found that a lot of our areas that ago up when they don't have two ways out of them, they can become hazardous for safety things. We've just started

construction on a Fire Station out in the Lower Miller Creek area. The whole intent of that Fire Station is to provide emergency response access for both sides of the river. Doing Alternative 5 I think jeopardizes that and probably wastes about \$2 million in city funds. Towards that aspect, the City Council has passed Resolution No. 7038 and I'd like to read the resolve and this is an expression of the entire local city government:

"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 Mockingbird Way on Upper Miller Creek to Briggs Streets in conformance with the Missoula Transportation Plan and pre-existing developer agreements. Also supports the Federal Highway Administration's completion of the Miller Creek Road Environmental Impact Statement identifying a preferred alternative which includes construction of a secondary access in the Miller Creek area via a new bridge across the Bitterroot River to U.S. Highway 93."

That expresses the intent and the desire of your local government. My question is in your transportation planning have you taken into account good community planning because we've found on Reserve Street that the five-lane highway has divided the neighborhood and made it very difficult for local neighbors to get across the highway. So we don't want a five-lane highway on Lower Miller Creek.

A: (Steve Long) Have we taken that into account? We have not evaluated that as a criteria element yet. One of our criteria we will be weighing it against that very thing when we are looking at weighing these out. I believe the classification we are calling it is "community interface." But we will be looking at what that does for the community.

The second question you asked was about safety. Are we looking at safety? We are looking at safety at both a macro- and a micro-level and the macro-level of safety does include that as a second access. That is one of the considerations we need to be making. Just to be clear, building the Fire Station in Miller Creek Road can provide access quickly to somebody's house that is burning but if somebody needs to come out that is going to the hospital; it doesn't do anything for that necessarily. So we are looking at that at the macro-level. The micro-level we are looking at is how the intersections function – the turn lanes, do the weeds all work, and that sort of thing. Does that answer your questions?

Q: (Jerry Ballas) For the most part yes. That is why we have helicopters thought to get around traffic.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) Could you be sure to provide us a copy of the Council's Resolution? That would help us. To add to that, we have heard in writing from the Fire Department of their desire for a second access as well.

Q: (Unidentified) On Miller Creek, how many lanes is this representing – on the yellow?

A: (Steve Long) There are four total lanes there – two northbound lanes, a continuous left-turn lane through there, and one southbound lane.

Q: (Unidentified) What does that do for Gharrett Street? It just feeds in without any extra widening of it?

- A: (Steve Long) That's correct.
- A: (Craig Genzlinger) That's a five-lane section actually Steve. On the Miller Creek Alternative this would be a five-lane section – two lanes in each direction and two-way left turns.
- Q: (Unidentified) How is any of this going to be paid for? Has there been any consideration given for toll roads or toll bridges and assessment to developers who keep building lots and lots of houses with no road improvements coming with it?
- A: (Steve Long) As far as toll roads, there has been no consideration at this point with toll roads or toll bridges that I can remember. It is my understanding that there is money there that has been assessed for each house built in the area – \$1700. That mostly has been conceived for the “no build” but I can't state that for a fact. It was for the infrastructure of the roadway system.
- Q: (Unidentified) Does that cover how much it is going to cost to build a bridge and all the road improvements necessary?
- A: (Steve Long) I don't know how much money has been collected on that and I don't know what that forecast would be.
- A: (Craig Genzlinger) As far as the construction funding, from a federal perspective no money has been established for construction funds to build an alternative. In some ways that is not all together bad because we don't have a preferred alternative that has been selected and moving forward. As you've seen if you've been up here, the cost of these does vary quite a bit. So funding for construction would still have to be identified further on in the process.
- Q: (Unidentified) First I want to talk to the guy from the highway department – why don't you change that 93 and put a turn lane off Miller Creek and make a solid lane there down 93 past the Wal-Mart turn so there will be one lane that continues off Miller and goes onto 93? If you take a lane off 93 and make it wider right there. So one lane out of Miller Creek will turn right continuous and add a lane onto 93 if the highway will let you. Also is Rail Link going to let you build more stuff? Have you checked that out? Another thing, is Wal-Mart going to let you have their land?
- A: (Craig Genzlinger) Let me start with the last two questions. We have been coordinating both with Montana Rail Link and with Wal-Mart and their consultant. We've talked with them about these alternatives to make sure they are consistent with their plans. I don't believe we have any deal breakers with either one of those at this point. Certainly if we acquire right-of-way from Wal-Mart, we have to purchase it.
- As far as the free right onto 93, our projections show that would not suffice for the 20-year design traffic. That may be something that needs to be done in the short term, and I don't know if Shane wants to talk about it from MDT's standpoint of any desire to add a right turn lane on 93?
- A: (Shane Stack) We haven't considered that. This is the first time I've ever heard that but we haven't considered that. Are you guys considering that as an option?

- A: (Craig Genzlinger) Not as a stand alone option. Shane would that be something they could consider in that corridor study you are doing from Reserve Street all the way down to Lolo?
- A: (Shane Stack) Yes we can. Actually if you want to come and talk to me after the meeting we could be in contact with you.
- Q: (Unidentified) One other thing, the road from Briggs Street up to the “Y” was supposed to have been redone possibly seven or eight years ago. Now I want to know why that wasn't done, and where is all the money off those houses on the hill that was supposed to go toward the bridge and the road? I want an accounting of that.
- A: (Craig Genzlinger) Well I'm afraid I'm not the right person to answer that question as far as the timeframe or when that was supposed to be developed. I know that's why we are showing some of those improvements under our “no build” option because I do know those were planned. As far as the status of the money, I don't know if somebody from the County or if Lloyd is here, if they want to comment on the status of that? We certainly don't manage that money or collect those fees so Federal Highways can't speak to that at all. Barbara did you want to take that one?
- A: (Barbara Evans, Missoula County Commissioner) We have been charging \$1800 for every new house. Dr. McCarthy put in \$250,000 that could be used for fixing the roads and for the bridge and not be used for purchase of right-of-way. We have commitments from the two developers which are I write and Mr. Norris who represents the Maloney Ranch. We can not use the federal money that we have left over from the EIS study or this study unless we get special permission from Congress if there is any left over. We do want to see a third lane, which would be to the east of the current Miller Creek Road. We hope to see that started this year. There is some right-of-way consideration that we are still working on and that would be from Mockingbird on the top to Briggs at the north. Don't worry that the money has disappeared and it won't be there, because it will. Ok, that's the answer.
- Q: (Unidentified) Well there is no doubt that the improvements are needed on Miller Creek Road and on the intersection of Brooks and Miller Creek Road. I think, though, that there has to be a parallel project to put that bridge in right now because of the capacity limits that we are going to see on the roads. You haven't described, that I've heard, equivalent roads so that we as citizens can compare what the volumes are going to be on the roads like Lower Miller Creek Road and Miller Creek Road to other roads in the community. My estimation, Lower Miller Creek Road from Linda Vista Blvd. to the “Y” is probably going to carry equivalent traffic to what we see today on Russell Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Broadway – certainly more traffic than we have now on Broadway where we're experimenting with road riot of the three lanes. The capacity manual everyone uses as the bible for establishing how much roadway you need to carry a certain amount of volume says that 10,000 cars per day are about the limit for a two-lane roadway, which is what Lower Miller Creek Road would be. Even if they put a turn lane in there that is still only one lane in each direction which I think is overloading that roadway and putting too much of a social and lifestyle impact on the people who live in Lower Miller Creek Road. Miller Creek Road from the “Y” down to Brooks Street is probably going to carry about as much traffic as we see on Brooks Street today. That again is going to be an undersized road facility. The improvements at the intersection that they put in there won't carry, in my opinion, that much traffic.

The installation of a signal up at Old 93 and Brooks Street may help, but the other thing is that is going to create one big signal at Brooks Street and Old 93. We might be able to look at what is happening up at the situation at Grant Creek Road and I-90 and Reserve Street with that signal with that big wide area underneath where there is so much dead time. It doesn't move very well. I'm not very optimistic that the signal configuration is really going to serve the Miller Creek people or the people who are on 93 and Reserve Street. So I think we are being very, very short sighted if we settle for this improvement on Lower Miller Creek Road/Miller Creek Road and the old 93 improvement. I think it is absolutely necessary that the second access be developed so there is another ingress and egress to the development and we can keep moving forward. We see in all of our drainages – the Rattlesnake, Grant Creek in particular, and now Miller Creek Road that there is just not the ability for people to get in and out of those drainages with one single road. We need that second access and we can't really live with the proposal for just the road improvements and those are relatively minor road improvements.

- A: (Steve Long) I want to be real clear. You were mentioning that it was two lanes that would handle those traffic volumes. Our stand alone alternative is a five-lane section.
- Q: (Carl Thompson) That is the five-lane on Lower Miller Creek Road—Miller Creek Road from the Y to Brooks Street, but on Lower Miller Creek Road from the “Y” to Linda Vista or back into Maloney Ranch you are still only talking about two lanes of traffic carrying the through traffic.
- A: (Craig Genzlinger) You have a lot of places and a lot of comments and I appreciate them. Just to give people a sense, and I'm not going to go through every number, but on Lower Miller Creek Road for the “No-Action” and for the various build alternatives, we are showing traffic volumes that vary between about 5,000 and 7,000 cars a day on Lower Miller Creek Road.
- Q: (Carl Thompson) That is what it is carrying today.
- A: (Craig Genzlinger) No those are our projections Carl.
- Q: (Carl Thompson) No way.
- A: (Craig Genzlinger) Traffic we show today on Miller Creek Road from the counts varies between 4,000 to 5,000 per day depending on what section you are on.
- Q: (Carl Thompson) Those counts are wrong.
- A: (Craig Genzlinger) We'll double check them, Carl, and go through them. We have taken the traffic counts.
- Q: (Carl Thompson) Another thing you take is just the planning numbers. If you compute it out at ten trucks per day per household, which is a standard planning tool, and you have 2,000 houses, that is 20,000 trips per day.
- A: (Craig Genzlinger) Maybe, Carl, afterwards we can get with Ryan and he can talk specifics about some of the assumptions that were made in the traffic analysis versus going through a

bunch of that here. But those are the numbers we are showing. If you have some questions on the numbers we appreciate those comments.

- Q: (Carl Thompson) We'll I'll tell you, I know that 5,000 to 7,000 cars a day on Lower Miller Creek Road is absolutely off. You are probably off by half right now.
- A: (Craig Genzlinger) We'll take your comment, Carl, and take a look.
- Q: (Unidentified) I think it would be important if Carl told us who he is so that there is more believability to the facts and figures he is citing. I've worked with Carl for many years and on traffic issues in the Linda Vista and the Miller Creek area. He works for the City. Carl can you tell us your position title?
- A: (Carl Thompson) I no longer work for the City, I retired from the City last year. For about 28 years I was involved with the Traffic Department for the City.
- Q: (Unidentified) When we went through this all before, we weren't allowed to talk about Miller Creek Road, the “Y,” Upper Miller Creek, and widening that road. That was a no, no. This project was only about the bridge. Now all of a sudden somebody sees that you can't have one without the other. Where did that light bulb get turned on?
- A: (Steve Long) Well originally the money for this project was earmarked and the purpose and need was developed from that to provide a secondary access. The resource agencies said that was too limiting of a purpose and need and we needed to be looking at how to move people and goods and not come out and right away say that it is a second access. So it was June 1, 2004 when the light bulb came on because of that regulation that we were being regulated against. You really need to stand back – when we say that we need to do just improvements to Miller Creek Road and that is an alternative, that is just one of the many alternatives we are showing up here. I just want to make sure that the point being tonight is that the new volumes we are showing is in response to making sure that we are being pro-active in addressing these needs. We could have just turned our heads and said no that is what is in the Transportation Plan and that is all we are using right or wrong. That is not the right thing to do. So that is why we needed to go back and re-evaluate those against the new traffic numbers.
- Q: (Unidentified) I'm just wondering if there is any new consideration of a bypass from Hwy 93 to the Interstate south of the Miller Creek access. That would take a lot of the traffic that comes down that is heading for I-90 off of Reserve and off the access to Upper Miller Creek.
- A: (Steve Long) We've heard a lot about a bypass. We've heard a lot about two different bypasses – one to the south of this area and one that connects I believe that you are talking about. In the Transportation Plan that was adopted in 2004, there is no mention of that bypass. That is what we start building our models around and that is what the vision was in 2004 and moving forward. Is that updated every four or five years? But that vision did not include any bypass. So has it been considered? It was brought up through the transportation planning process that got the Transportation Plan adopted. That is all I can respond to because I wasn't part of that process.



Q: (Bob Giardino) I run a small non-profit here called “Missoula Institute for Sustainable Transportation.” We’ve been looking at some of the volumes here and when you referenced the Long Range Plan that does say that this community is going to emphasize non-motorized transportation and transit and try to minimize the effects of our transportation system on our built natural environment. So there is a concern that we just keep building bigger wider roads and adding more stop lights; that we really don’t have to go down that path. We really can create great places in this community if we combine transit, good driving facilities, good walkways and bikeways. Now there is talk of the rail coming in on 93 as an alternative instead of having to build more lanes on Hwy 93. So I’m just challenging you, in a friendly way, to come up with things that help everyone move around and doesn’t just keep adding to the spiral of 30,000 cars a day, then 40,000 cars day – more and more. Gas prices are going up and we have other world issues, and granted we are just here in Missoula, but we have community issues like safety. Small things like stop lights, there tends to be severe crashes – three of the most dangerous crashes in the state are on Reserve Street. Our Legislature last year passed a bill saying look at modern single roundabouts. I think we could do a modern single-lane roundabout at the “Y,” have three lane sections, and they can carry up to about 25,000 cars a day, if you do three-lane section, one lane in each direction with a center turn pocket. So our children can grow up in a nicer environment and meet the long range plan, can you and are you looking at a more holistic view of this area and how it ties into the whole Missoula community and possibly mixed use and how the neighborhoods and places develop?

A: (Steve Long) We are not regulating how the neighborhoods develop. We are saying we are using the same model that you are – the Transportation Plan and the Community Plan that say this is what our vision is. We are not here to change that vision, but we are trying to make sure that the things that are in there, the transit and the walkable communities and all those things are being accommodated. That is why you see bike paths and things that take a lot of money to build are being considered in these improvements.

With respect to roundabouts, that is something that is becoming more and more common and you will see them on a lot of our alternatives we have circles. We are not saying those are going to be roundabouts, we are saying we are providing a node there that keeps flexibility for the future. The reason you don’t see it over here (referring to graphic) is because we are just concerned that if we showed it there that it is not likely because of the grade and the constraints there. So we are trying to design our alternatives around something that is minimizing the impact and still meets that level of service. So we are doing the best we can with that comment. But the ones where we have room, we think that is a good alternative and an option to move traffic.

Q: (Bob Giardino) Just a follow up. Just like you’re doing the roadway models and the projections, are you looking at transit and what the potential is? I get a lot of calls from people in this area, asking if there are any plans for transit. I think people would like to look at that as an option.

A: (Steve Long) We will, I’m not going to say remodel the transit affect into this, the most we would probably expect out of an area like this is two to five percent and that is high and it is not going to affect the alternatives necessarily, but what we are doing is making sure we are providing alternatives that are conducive for good transit movement. In other words, we wouldn’t want to create a one-lane section, we wouldn’t want to create areas that buses wouldn’t operate well in and left-turn lanes, entrance and exits for instance on Lower Miller Creek Road, and things like that. Those are not necessarily capacity improvements, they are

either safety improvements or they are enhancing some of these other uses to make the roadway safer. So we think about that as engineers and designers. We will take your challenge and move those forward and it’s likely been in our visioning sessions and making sure we are holding true to that.

Q: (Unidentified) If we postulate that your guess is right and the EIS survey is done this summer some time, what is the rest of the timeline? When would the process be ready to select an option and start digging and all that?

A: (Craig Genzlinger) If we can get the Draft EIS out this summer like we planned and we go through the public hearing process, we still have to go through the Final EIS process and to a ROD, which would take between nine and twelve months depending on how much comment we get. So we would be about a year away from our Record of Decision beyond that. After that, there certainly has to be final design because these are just preliminary layouts. So final design has to take place, final right-of-way acquisition, and again someone asked about the funding. Since there hasn’t been funding established beyond the EIS and preliminary design at this point, it is kind of hard to answer your question. I would say you are not going to see dirt being moved in the real short term and certainly not as part of our project. I think as Barbara mentioned, they are looking at doing some improvements to Miller Creek Road this summer. If we had the funding sitting here today, we would still be three to four years away from any actual construction going on.

Q: (Unidentified) Does funding have to be earmarked in the Federal Highway Transportation Bill?

A: (Craig Genzlinger) You know that is one option with an earmark, and again that is how this money came for the EIS. That is certainly one option. There are potentially other revenue sources that can be explored but at this point, until an earmark is actually done through Federal Highways, that would be our only funding source.

Q: (Barbara Evans, Missoula County Commissioner). I think I need to explain something so that Amy understands what the entire plan was. When the sentence that has been crossed out was crossed out, we didn’t cross that out. When we went to Congress and got the \$5 million to study this, it was because we wanted a second access in and out of Miller Creek. We also included the roads. We knew the roads were not going to be satisfactory but we also felt that a bridge was critical. So the roads were part and parcel of the request when we went to Congress and I’m telling you, with these proposals, and I’m not fussing about them – they’ve done a tremendous amount of work to come up with them. It makes no difference which one we pick other than the Alternative 5A which is the third lane to the east of the turn road; we are talking millions and millions of dollars. Now will Congress ever have those millions of dollars and I’m not going to tell you a number because I don’t have a number, I couldn’t give you an accurate number. We were assuming at the beginning somewhere between \$17 and \$20 million. Well I’m telling you these proposals aren’t going to be \$17 to \$20 million. Now whether Congress will ever have the money or we will be lucky enough to get it, I can’t tell you that. We can try but if there is no money we can’t get blood from a turnip, as they say. So I want you to know that we considered the roads when we went to Congress. We were very lucky to get the support of the Congressional folks to get the first \$5 million. I’m assuming, and maybe that’s a wrong assumption, that there may be \$2 million or so left over when David Evans and Associates and FHWA get finished with this process. If so, we will have to get Congressional approval to use

any of that money for anything other than what they are doing now. So to tell you that we were short-sighted enough to just say all we want is a bridge and nothing else needs upgrading that isn't the case. We know we need those roads fixed. We are doing our best to get it done on a short term. I shouldn't say this but I will never as long as I'm in this office agree to a five-lane road through Miller Creek. The reason for that is when I see drawings of that and people's reaction when they see the drawings, they had a cow. That would be like a highway through a rural area. There is right-of-way that would have to be purchased and maybe through condemnation and I will never agree to condemn anyone's land in order to put a five-lane highway in. Now part of that road is city road and maybe the city will think they should condemn but you've got a hillside on one side and a drop-off on the other side, we've got houses, and I will never agree to a five-lane road, which means, if we don't do what the FHWA and this study says we need to do, we may never get federal money, so we've got kind of a dilemma there.

Q: (Unidentified) I live on Lower Miller Creek Road. Just off the cuff I haven't been to all these, but the bridge scares me a little bit. I would kind of like to see this roadway that you have here, not necessarily a five-lane, but I just know that when I'm sitting at Upper Miller Creek Road and I look left up Highway 93, all I see is headlights all the way back to Blue Mountain Road. So this has got some validity. Being on Lower Miller Creek Road you take a left-turn every morning and the five-lane road scares me a little bit because it does sound like Reserve Street and taking a left-turn is going to be hard. Sometimes it is hard as it is. Thanks to all you Upper Miller Creek people who let me in every morning. If you just take a look, a stop light there sounds tough with the grades you've got coming down Upper Miller Creek Road. I haven't had a chance to look at that up close but I just wanted to make a point that the left-turning movement could be hard.

Q: (Sherri Kenyon) I live on Blue Mountain Road so I'm on the counter side of that. I don't have a question but I just would like to say that it is a little frustrating because this is a huge amount of money that is being considered to put into a bridge for an isolated area. Every time it is brought up – have you thought about a bypass or is there going to be a bypass or long range plans, no that is not the boundaries of the EIS, and no that isn't in the Transportation Plan. However, if we are talking \$20 million for one area of the city and not taking into account anything bigger, that seems kind of foolish to me. I also feel like Miller Creek Road, the few times I've been up on it, I don't see two people crossing it now or riding a bike down it. You talk about it being a five-lane highway and all that is going to be prohibitive. Are there a lot of people using that road and walking down it and crossing the street now? I don't know. Barbara Evans comment about “who knows if we will get this money” I feel like she is trying to make this point like “who knows what is going to happen, we are just talking about this now”, but I feel like when a decision gets made now, maybe we won't get the money in five years but if there is money available in ten years, we will go back to this Record of Decision to make a choice. So making it sound like “it may not happen because it is a long ways off so don't worry about it” kind of attitude is deceptive to all of us here to look at it that way.

I also don't think there is that much money. Barbara Evans gave us bits and pieces of how much money is there by the current housing development and the developers – \$1800 per house but we don't even have a total amount. I really don't think it is that much money that will be contributed by developers and current housing projects. We don't have a total sum from them but it doesn't seem like it is going to be that much.

I do think there are times ... the one lady that made a comment that the Blue Mountain Bridge possibly will go through her property and there was an article where Barbara Evans said that she doesn't want to use eminent domain but she will. So she clearly will use those tools when she thinks it is necessary. I think it needs to be looked at in a bigger picture and I know I can't change the boundary lines but that is a concern to me.

A: (Steve Long) Let me talk about that boundary line real quick. Your planning process builds on itself and that is why you adopted a Transportation Plan. So when there are isolated projects like this they can fit into that and not continually unravel. So the Transportation Plan was the first building block that lets you plug in the individual projects. So I don't know if you can really say that it hasn't been looked at or that we are keeping those limits too isolated. It is within that other process that had a public process that went with it.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) I second that. I don't think we are saying that shouldn't be considered or shouldn't be looked at, we are saying that it isn't appropriate with this project. It needs to be incorporated when they update the Transportation Plan and those comments provided to local governments and appealed then.

Q: (Sherri Kenyon) But once agreed upon then it builds on itself. You use that one agreement and then say “ok we haven't considered that but we think this is the best thing” so the Transportation Plan says “oh, ok they've said this and we are agreeing with it.” So it is kind of like the self-fulfilling prophecy because you've made one decision and then say “I haven't been thinking about them” then they say “well we see you made that decision.”

A: (Craig Genzlinger) Again all I can say is that Transportation Plan is supposed to be the overall vision for the whole Missoula community on how those projects fit together. So that should be being considered on a global scale when they update the Transportation Plan. I think they are starting another cycle here shortly to do that update.

Q: (Jean Belangie-Nye) I'm from Lolo. My concern is that as this whole area develops throughout the community, and I got here late so I don't know if you discussed this or not, with the development of the bike/ped path going south from Lolo to Hamilton, how does this intersection incorporate a bike/ped path? Not a bike route along the side of the highway because children die on those things. But if we had a bike/pedestrian path is that incorporated into any of these designs? If not will it be considered being incorporated into any of these designs?

A: (Steve Long) This project has looked at the need in a very general sense and we've heard your comments before. The type of improvement that we are looking at is very linear and for us to put a bike path all the way to Lolo for this project is not reasonable. But we have designed all these improvements to not preclude that bike/ped path. I'll even go one step further, there is a big difference in “not to preclude” versus “to accommodate,” and we've accommodated a future bike path for this.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) I'll say a little more specifically, the way we have accommodated it is that we have lengthened the bridge to make sure we have enough height so a bike path could be put down along the river underneath our structure and not immediately adjacent to the roadway.

Q: (Unidentified) Just to make a general comment. Having grown up in Missoula Miller Creek was always what I considered a rural area for so many years and now of course you could call it a suburban area and with some of this planning we are going to become an urban area and that is disturbing to me. One of the problems I have with some of the comments that this woman from Blue Mountain made having to do with the cost of this and our area. Yes we are talking about a limited area, a limited number of people that the area can accommodate in terms of land. Growth is something that Missoula has had a perennial problem with over the last 20 years. My question is why we can't have a moratorium on growth in this specific area until we see funding for alternative access?

A: (Steve Long) I don't know how to answer that. Would the gentleman from the City Council like to answer that? I'm serious, that is one way to limit improvements that a lot of cities use – you stop building until you can afford infrastructure to support it.

Q: (Unidentified) It was in the paper a while ago that the Wal-Mart on Miller Creek is hoping to become a Super Wal-Mart. That will bring people to that intersection in that area. Not just people trying to get out but people trying to come back to get to Super Wal-Mart. Has that been taken into account on that intersection improvement on Miller Creek and 93 and Briggs and all the rest of the intersections?

A: (Steve Long) Yes. We've taken their projections and incorporated them into these models.

Q: (Gary Wipplinger) I live up on Linda Vista. There are several comments I have. One on the moratorium – I lived in Colorado in 1970 and they did essentially the same thing. Colorado Springs went from a growth rate of 10% to zero. It created a recession. It created five years before they finally came out of that. So you talk about a moratorium, it is alright as long as it isn't your property they are placing a moratorium on. If you do this one, you do others. The thing is that this area is large. It is just like down the Bitterroot. There is land there and people are willing to sell it. You can't control everybody's property rights. Moratorium – that is a very careful word you should use.

Q: (Bill Adams) I'm a 30-year resident of Upper Miller Creek. I was up there when you could ride a horse everywhere and now you can hardly walk. You come down Miller Creek, it is dangerous. Kids on bicycles are really something you have to watch. I look at this here, they are coming into the "Y" here (referring to graphic), you can see what is going to happen. How many lanes you have doesn't really make any difference. If there is more than one lane, what we've got right now, if you have two lanes, one guy on the left side wants to go to the right and the next guy on the right wants to go to the left. You are going to have a bottleneck. I'm not a Blue Mountain resident; I don't live up there, but I agree with Jerry Ballas, we need an exit to 93 somewhere.

Q: (Unidentified) Ok, I'm pretty young, so you guys don't really have to take my word for anything, but I just wanted to say that when Bob Giardano was taking about the roundabout ... I am a student at the University of Montana and he demonstrated it to us and I think it is a really, really good idea. I'm not sure how you would apply it here, but I know with stoplights with the stop and go of cars, for one there are the fumes and the harshness on your car, the fact that you don't watch if people are going in front of you. Roundabouts are such a good idea. I don't know how

you would implement it here, but it is a really good idea. People look at people passing by instead of looking at a light and waiting for it change.

Q: (Unidentified) From one extreme to the other. I've lived on Lower Miller Creek Road, Upper Miller Creek Road, Miller Creek Road since 1949. I've seen a lot of changes and I hope to see a lot more. But in the same breath I would like to know if you are recording all of these comments? You do not have a recording machine.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) Yes. We have a recording machine and Amnell – so we have hard copy and electronics.

Q: (Unidentified) All I wanted is an assurance that – I've heard a lot of comments and damn good ones – that they are being utilized. Whichever program they go with is going to be fine with me, for lack of a better term. But in the same breath, I'd like to see something happen before I'm gone. You are talking about all these estimates of 20 years, I want you to get started on these roads to widen them and lengthen them, and all of this other stuff. It is going to go and this is fine. But what is going to happen in another five years that has been projected is that these instruments that you are using, we are going to have to turn around and re-evaluate this. Is it a matter of the money, hey the money is gone, let's get at it. Well, let's get at it now!

Q: (George Reynolds) I live right in the middle of traffic. I can shake hands with every one of them when I go out to get the paper in the morning. You can look around and in 20 years most of us won't be here to worry about it. But I would have to say from the stop sign up to the highway needs to be done and done quick-like because they back clear up to the Club House. Every time there is a slick road they are backed up clear to the Club House and I can prove that. I don't have to take a count I can look out and see it. That is what I have to say. We do need another bridge out there too – another exit to let some of that load off of it. I think when you say go over 93, that would be great. It could go right straight across and go over 93 and hit the light on Reserve Street. We would have to have more lanes going out from the stop sign out. I don't want more lanes going in because you would be on my doorstep then and I lost about 30 feet the last time you went through there. I would have to go along 100% from the stop sign out with at least one more lane anyway.

Q: (Joanne Robbins) We live on the Blue Mountain side. As long as we are addressing the Super Wal-Mart possibility, I'm wondering what about the possibility of commercial development between the Fitness Center and the intersection down near the County Club?

A: (Steve Long) Yes, we addressed that and used the Comprehensive Plan for the build out here. So whatever the City, within the urban boundary, said will be there in the next 20 years, that is what we included. Then some of the specific stuff that is new, like the Wal-Mart, we have included. I can't tell you specifically what the density of those were but we did use the language out of the Comprehensive Plan for that and it does show development in there.

Q: (Judith B. Smith) We live on upper Miller Creek Road. Let me just say to you that the enlargement or the Super Wal-Mart is not a foregone conclusion. That is not part of the Master Plan. We've been able to stop them from doing that once before so we can certainly do that again. But I would like to say, and I know we just came in, but instead of highways I would like to see trains, rapid transit coming up the Bitterroot or down the Bitterroot into Missoula. We

have just come from several showings of what this place is going to look like population-wise and it is humongous. So we must be ready and we must be ready to tackle the pollution that comes from cars. So please, please, we just have to demand that we are going to have rapid transit. We have to demand that.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) To answer your first comment. We know that the Wal-Mart expansion is not a foregone conclusion. We just included their data as a worst-case scenario because if we didn't assume that and it was approved, then our traffic volumes would be low. We figured we are better off overestimating a little high than being low when we do our 20-year analysis.

Q: (Unidentified) I've only been in Missoula for about 15 years and I've lived up in the Linda Vista area for about nine years. I guess the first thing I'd say is for all the folks who have been here for quite some time for 50 or 60 years, who grew up here and whose kids grew up here. Guess what, I hear all the time, "I was in another place and then I moved back to Missoula – my whole life I've been waiting to come back to Missoula." "I'm so happy because my kids are back in Missoula." Sure they are, and everybody loves that. But guess what? That means growth. So until we are going to say "no more growth" or we are going to say, "close the gate I'm here, we are not going to build any more" we have to do something. If we just do the road and that doesn't sound like that is going to happen. This five, six, seven, eight, or who knows how many lanes it is going to be when it is finally said and done because all of the demographics are going to change. Then the other thing that we need to think about that I haven't heard mentioned yet is the cost of construction. The cost of construction is going up 10 to 15 percent a year. Every year that we just sit here and talk about it, it is costing us \$4 to \$6 million. That is a lot of money. We have to do something and my suggestion is "let's do it fast."

A: (Susan Reneau) I live in the Hayes Creek drainage. I go along with his comment, I agree with him. I think talk is really expensive now. A consultant costs \$300,000 to \$400,000, and they are not even from Montana. We also have an issue of not thinking of creative funding before we start talking about these grandiose plans. Again I challenge you, instead of just coming up with grandiose plans, come up with logical ways to get money immediately. It doesn't always have to come from the backs of taxpayers – individual taxpayers. Please come up with ... while you are planning roads come up with the dollars and cents of how much these roads are going to cost. Don't just give us these grandiose plans with no dollars connected to them and then tell us how you think we can pay for them.

A: (Steve Long) We actually are trying to put them in context with the dollars you see here. I think Barbara Evans was mentioning it, but that is what gets you to what is realistic. So if you have those alternatives over there that are at \$15 million and these are \$40 to \$50 million, you can start judging not just what an alternative costs but what benefit you are weighing that cost against.

Q: (Susan Reneau) We are not collecting enough money. There isn't enough money coming off of \$1800 per house – it is not enough.

Q: (Mark Hopwood) No matter which plan I'm looking at here, the thing that concerns me most about trying to get the traffic out of Upper and Lower Miller Creek it seems to me that we are just pushing the problem back down the road so eventually we are going to be having the same conversation about how to manage the traffic through Missoula in some way, shape or form. I

have a lot of friends who live in Upper and Lower Miller Creek and I understand your problems. I live in Blue Mountain side. As I'm looking at this and what it might look like 10, 15, or 20 years down the road, I think we will be looking at the same problem because we are not going to be talking about traffic that is going up Lower Miller Creek Road, we are going to be talking about how that traffic is starting on Reserve and backing up to Lower Miller Creek Road no matter how wide we make it. I think we need to be looking at the long-term solution about how we get the people that are down in the Bitterroot, in the Upper and Lower Miller Creek area, and all the people wanting to go through the city, and look at the bypass, because quite honestly that is what we are going to be looking at long-term. Whether we are talking about \$42 million and all the alternatives, that dollar figure is probably low to be able to handle the amount of traffic that we are talking long term through the city.

Q: (Chris Hopwood) I missed the presentation so I apologize if my question is redundant. In the plans you came up with for the alternatives, how much did the idea of a byway that connects I-90 to Hwy 93 affect how much weight you gave to what plan and the planning done?

A: (Steve Long) We haven't weighed any of these yet. We've just come up with the facts, if you will. We really aren't weighing them at this time. We are going to be weighing these. We are using the 2004 Missoula Transportation Plan to pick the evaluation criteria for that. So when you said how much stock did we put into it and how much emphasis did we use to weigh a bypass? I would have to say none at this time.

Q: (Bob Maxwell) On these estimated dollars that you show, is that today's dollars?

A: (Steve Long) That is today's dollars.

Q: (Bob Maxwell) So when you look at how long it is going to take to do this, these are way under what it is going to take.

A: (Steve Long) Yes.

Q: (Bob Maxwell) Why does it take so long to do an Environmental Impact Statement?

A: (Steve Long) What takes the longest time in the Environmental Impact Statement is exactly what we are doing here and that is getting everybody's input so we have enough of the alternatives developed so we can secure from you how those things will end up getting weighed. Until we can have that information and the right information at the right time and when it is, it just takes that much time. I can show you a typical schedule of what it is but that is the best answer I have.

Q: (Unidentified) It seems like the traffic on Miller Creek gets worse every year and I think we do need another access out. But in my opinion, we don't need another front door, what we need is a back door. All the growth in Miller Creek is going to the south.

A: (Steve Long) What we found is that the further south we move the alternative, the less used it will be and therefore the less cost benefit you will get and also the more costly they are as you move the alternatives south. So you are weighing cost/benefit, if there are less people using it, it costs more and your ratio isn't as much. I don't know how far south you are talking about, are you talking Lolo?

- A: (Unidentified) The 4 C's.
- Q: (Unidentified) I haven't heard anything about an overpass. I came here when malfunction junction was ... everybody was arguing about which way the traffic will go. Well now I get in that area and if I don't make the right turn, boy I'm lost. I'm wondering if an overpass was considered.
- A: (Steve Long) Actually these three build alternatives are overpasses. The one at Miller Creek Road is not an overpass, it is an intersection.
- Q: (Unidentified) I got here late because a policeman had stopped someone on the road and there was no way to get by it and traffic was practically backed up to what I thought was Salmon, Idaho. I live in Upper Miller Creek and I'd like to know what the numbers are up there, I agree that there has to be some kind of alternative made but there has to be something done now about Upper Miller Creek Road because we have a constant stream of county gravel trucks coming down that road. The Legislature in Helena passed a law that says we can't put up signs anymore saying they can't use Jake brakes and that kind of thing. The noise is unbelievable. We cannot even have dinner on our patio during the summer. It starts at 4:30 and ends about 10:00. If we could even have another road that would direct that truck traffic out of Christian Drive and Upper Miller Creek Road so that the logging trucks and the county gravel trucks – there are two gravel pits up there. Don't we have a law in Montana about ... I was told there was a law that we have a right to pure air and a peaceful environment? Are you concerned about having for one thing the air pollution? Are you concerned about having a lawsuit at any time especially by those people who are going to be looking at three stop lights down at the bottom? Has there been any study about what the air is like? Is there any concern about that? I was also told by someone at the County that there would be work done on the Upper Miller Creek Road this summer – that there would be a bike path, and possibly even curbs. Like Twite was saying that he can't go on building until he gets that part done? That is what I was told, is that true?
- A: (Steve Long) There were a lot of questions in there. Let me do the last one first. You bring up a lot of good points. I have no idea about Lloyd being able to develop more before the bike path goes in. Does anybody here know?
- A: (Unidentified) There is approval even now for a few hundred more homes up in the Twite property that have already been approved. There is also some vacant land that is going through the process now for additional approvals. There are shortages of all three infrastructures – water, sewer, and streets. All three of those have to be addressed. There are plans to move ahead as soon as we have some direction here. There is funding available, as you've heard from the county, that the "no build" with three lanes could be done and coordinated with the water and sewer. What has held things up is that there is not a lot of desire to put in water and sewer and tear everything up until we know what needs to be built above it.
- Q: (Unidentified) Don't the folks get notice when these houses are approved?
- A: (Steve Long) Back to the other questions you had about air pollution and noise. We do an air quality analysis. We have to show that we are conforming to air quality regulations. We also do a noise analysis in the project area as part of the environmental study. So when the document

- does come out, it will show what the air quality effects of each of the build alternatives will be. It would be any place where we consider we are having an impact but certainly most of the air quality analysis would be showing the intersections and the hot spot analysis of those, and not way up Miller Creek as part of this project.
- Q: (Wally Sept) I live out here by the Big Sky area in Target Range. It's been said that if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. So my recommendation to those of you who are doing planning is to take into consideration that what has been planned isn't an improvement. I'm referring to all the building that is taking place east of Reserve Street and is now contemplated for the Target Range area – 268 homes will be crowded in around McCauley Butte very shortly, within the next 10-12 years. That is not an improvement to the area. Infill is not the answer. People need space the same way rats need space in a maze. You crowd too many people into a small area and what happens? You are going to create more crime, more pollution, and all those other anti-social attributes. Not all planning is favorable in my judgment and you need to rethink some of these things that are taking place – infill is not the answer.
- Q: (Chris Wolstad) What is the impact to the area ... how do you weigh the cost versus the impact?
- A: (Steve Long) There has been a wide variety. We look at the environmental impact and we look at things like how many wetlands are being disturbed, and we look at the effects to the economics of that area, we look at what the infrastructure does to the noise and air, we also look at the cost and what the benefit is – how much traffic is going to use it and how much value are we getting out of it. The point being that cost is just one of many factors and it isn't any more important than others. There are over 40 criteria that we typically have to check off that we go through, but we find ones that are most applicable to this project and really focus in on and group those types of impacts and say "how do these weigh against one another." But the weighing is also part of this process. So it is not that there is an engineer and a planner that sit in a room and figure this out. We will come up with these; we will show you how we weighed them, and then you get to comment on our weighing of them, and what we used to weigh those.
- Q: (Allen Koessler) I live in the Miller Creek area. In your prioritizing in your decision-making process, do you add all those numbers up so when you arrive at some conclusion, i.e., if you go with the "x" one, which is the minimum improvement from the fork of Miller Creek Road on down, since that one seems to be the most favored at this point in time from just looking at the presentation so far, is it because it comes up with the lowest total?
- A: (Steve Long) No. These are not weighted. We don't typically say that one criterion is more important than the other. We do have to abide by the resource agencies that regulate some of this land. I'm not saying that they have a stronger vote but they can actually regulate what we do or don't do. We actually have a socioeconomic and environmental team for this project that we have been working with throughout the project. There are no surprises in where we are on this project with them and they have helped us evaluate our alternatives – not specific evaluations but the development of them and the criteria that we will use to weigh those against. That is really what got the purpose and need changed. Rather than waiting until the end and it was really EPA that said it was too limiting. Can you imagine how devastating that would be after three years worth of work for them to say something like that? So that is why we are engaging them through the process so we understand some of the priorities a little bit, if you will, but there is not a numerical adding that we put to this.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) I just wanted to follow up on what Steve said. I think his statement on the change in the purpose and need with EPA was a little bit of an over statement of what actually took place. I think the purpose and need statement was changed because initially we received comment from the public who asked us to look at other alternatives that didn't meet our purpose and need statement. Then in conjunction with other resource agencies, Federal Highways made the decision based on our own regulations as well as EPA's regulations that we were too constrained in our purpose and need statement. So it was a combination. It wasn't that EPA came to us and said they would like this to be changed. It started out based on public comment at public meetings like this.

Q: (Paul Engelman) I live in Upper Miller Creek. There has been some discussion about mass transit in the area; I'm assuming that the mass transit you factored into these plans was the mass transit found in the Master Plan? I'm just curious about what the mass transit plan is for this area?

A: (Steve Long) There are no Park-n-Ride facilities, there was local service that would be supplied through there if funding was available.

Q: (Paul Engelman) Bus service or anything like that?

A: (Steve Long) We were using what was in the plan; it was local services as I remember it. There was no Park-n-Ride facility or anything like that.

Q: (Don Peressini) As far as I'm concerned Alternative 2B is a good decision. I think it's got the future to carry traffic across the valley parallel with Reserve Street. I think the potential is there. I don't see a lot of environmental impacts on either end of that other than the river crossing and you've got that on all three of the alternatives. Regarding the Blue Mountain crossing, my question would be when you consider the environmental impacts, where do you cut them off when you are talking about Blue Mountain? Do you consider the Target Range neighborhood? Do you consider the 2½ miles that it takes to get there along the river? When you are comparing those three alternatives, how far do you go with Alternative 3B on the environmental impact part of it?

A: (Steve Long) There is the direct impact that you are seeing right there (referring to graphic). You are seeing a line over a building and those kinds of things. We look at the water resources, not just specifically is it shading the river, but what are the total affects of the river, not just kind of a point source. Then we look at what we consider secondary impacts, how does it affect the system around it, how does it affect the travel and the patterns around that in fairly broad terms. We are not going to be twenty miles away, but we are saying how does it affect the Blue Mountain area, what is the percentage increase of cut-through traffic, and those kind of things.

Q: (Don Peressini) Well the way I see it is that you've got three alternatives across the river, two of them are fairly well closed in as far as environmental impacts are concerned, that being 4C and 2B. 3B takes a whole new system of traffic along a route that probably nobody really wants to go into town on but they are doing it right now. That is my comment, if you focus on Blue Mountain I would hope that you would consider the impacts to the Target Range neighborhood as probably the biggest one.

A: (Steve Long) We might look at that from a qualitative standpoint and the only quantitative measures we would probably make to Target Range would be the change of traffic cut-through volume in that area. But that is pretty much it. When we develop a project like this we have to be as specific as we possibly can with primary impacts and the secondary impacts. I'm not saying that secondary impacts are not important. I'm just saying that we kind of evaluate them on a different scale or a different level of analysis.

Q: (Don Peressini) Well anyway, I like 2B – you can put it up for bid.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) To follow up on what Steve said, for example if in the cut-through traffic we saw some huge escalations that we thought would cause some other social or environmental impacts, we would certainly analyze those as part of the EIS as well.

A: (Steve Long) We will stick around for an open house session afterwards if you have specific questions. If you want to talk to us individually with some of the maps, we will do that afterwards too.

Q: (Unidentified) People are hollering about Wal-Mart, have they ever been to any of the Wal-Mart meetings and do you know what Wal-Mart does for this city? They've done a lot more than any of the rest of them down town have done. Besides that it will take about 30 percent of the traffic off Reserve Street. Now my next comment is the Planning Board that we have in this town and the people that run this city. They put 900 or 1,200 houses up on the hill, why didn't they plan for this stuff a long time ago because they knew it was coming? I think that is a bad part of the city and the people that run this thing.

Q: (Unidentified) Why do the improvements as they go south on Miller Creek Road stop at Rocky Bird Lane and not extend up to Gharrett and then the ever illusive Road C that is going to connect some of Lloyd's new houses once he gets the infrastructure in for those? That is where the density is and you stop short of that.

I have just a general soap box comment – what I'm hearing here is two different sides. We have growth, some people realize we have growth and there is nothing we can do about it. There is going to be growth so we have to plan appropriately for that growth. Then we have the other people that say, no growth, no growth, no growth. We have to look at the good of the whole versus the right of the individual. We have to look at the good of the whole. We've got a whole lot of people in Miller Creek that have one way of getting out. One grass fire comes down that hill and how many houses are going to get wiped out? We've got a new Fire Department going in, how are those fire trucks going to get anywhere at 7:15 a.m.?

The last thing I'd like to comment on is what Barbara Evans said. I know in Montana law it is illegal to put a moratorium on commerce. You can't just say no more building homes until such and such is met. That is illegal. One of the Legislative Sessions in the 1960's and I remember studying it in college when I was getting my Journalism Degree, you can't just tell people "you just can't do that with your land." So we've got what we've got, we have to make the best of it for the good of the whole.

A: (Steve Long) How that gets funneled and how the traffic lanes work in progression with the signal is how we are projecting traffic can move through there.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) I think the answer to your questions comes back to the purpose and need for this project. Certainly we recognize other improvements need to be made within Miller Creek but the purpose of this project is access in and out of Miller Creek not to make all the improvements in the Miller Creek area. I know Barbara had some different ideas when they went to Congress and got the money.

Q: (Unidentified) It is an unfortunate fact that in Missoula that we are always behind the curve in the infrastructure particular transportation infrastructure. Our growth has always outstripped our ability to accommodate transportation needs and there are a number of things to kind of mitigate that but all those mitigations combined are not going to be enough to really reduce what's needed for the infrastructure you see up here. I think it is imperative that we plan right now, no matter what it is projected to cost, to put in that second access because we've all seen how long it takes to develop a project and get something like this on line and if we have to come back and re-visit this issue after we've been gridlocked in the Miller Creek valley it is going to be that much longer before things can be done.

I think it is just a matter of sound planning in trying to not continue the mistake of single access in and out of our drainages if we today go in and put in those options to allow us to get in and out in a regular manner. Unfortunately anything we do is going to impact Hwy 93. I know that MDT people have heard this from me before but a lot of times we can't maintain the integrity of a highway once it becomes overwhelmed with the city function. So I think that part of the philosophy needs to kind of kick back and recognize that Brooks Street and Reserve Street aren't going to be highways, they are going to be city streets and they might carry traffic in that manner rather than trying to maintain them as a 65 or 70 mph facility. The fellow over here made a good comment about Wal-Mart's improvements. If Wal-Mart should get the Super Store at the Brooks and Miller Creek intersection, that would have a significant impact on the traffic on Reserve Street which could be a big benefit for the whole community to reduce that. There are a lot of little things that can come together that are going to help the transportation system throughout town, but the fact of the matter is that we still need infrastructure. You can say that people are going to ride bikes, and ride busses, but that is a small, small percentage of what is really going to happen on the roadway. No matter how enthusiastic we might be on bicycling, there are still five or six months of the year that most people who might ride bikes won't ride bikes just because of the weather. So I would again reaffirm the necessity to have that second access as any component for a plan that we develop now.

Q: (Unidentified) We are members of the Ravenhood Homeowner's Association and that Association says that no one builds in there property less than the size of the lot. Some of those lots are three acres. So we are providing open space and of course it is self-centered but we are contributing a positive side to Miller Creek.

Q: (Unidentified) This is an answer to one of the questions about why Mockingbird. From Mockingbird on up there is already a condition on the Twie family that they are required to pay 100% of the cost to do Miller Creek Road from Mockingbird to the top of the hill? As soon as we have an answer as to what is going to happen below, the Twie family is prepared to do that improvement and tie it in. On that portion, there is no additional right-of-way needed so we can

do that as a private project through the developers. The problem we have below Mockingbird, between Briggs and Mockingbird, is that if additional right-of-way is required and if we have to expand, as private developers we have no mechanism to cause that to happen. So Mockingbird will be done. We will have sidewalk, curbs, and bike lanes. That was set by the County Commissioners as a requirement for Miller Creek new addition. We've been ready for about seven years now to build.

Q: (Karen Majerus) Are these two-lane bridges? All of them?

A: (Steve Long) Yes.

Q: (Karen Majerus) Have you given any thought to four-lane bridges while you're at it like should have been done on Reserve Street? Is it allowable? Because if you build it, they will come.

A: (Steve Long) We were taking our traffic volumes to see and tested them against that. That is how we came up with the two-lane section, one lane in each direction to determine that. The answer is yes we did consider it.

Q: (Karen Majerus) It just feels like it is going to be obsolete real quickly.

A: (Craig Genzlinger) We certainly have heard through this process a lot about the traffic projections on Reserve Street and how they were underestimated. I think Miller Creek is a little bit unique in that it is a very constrained area for growth. Once we figure the whole build out between the river and the mountains, we don't anticipate seeing the big jumps in traffic that occurred on Reserve Street at Miller Creek.

#### Close of Presentation (Carson Taylor)

Are we ready to go back into open session and ask questions of all the people that are around? If so, I get the last comment. And the last comment is thank you very much for being so polite and listening to everyone.

#### VERBAL COMMENTS RECEIVED

- 5 lanes with stop lights are dangerous for walkers, bikers, and drivers. Go with three lanes, single lane roundabouts, bus and rail service, walkways, bikeways.
- It is dangerous to walk, ride bikes, etc. on Miller Creek Road because there are no shoulders and no sidewalks.
- People do walk their dogs, jog, and ride bikes along Upper Miller Creek Road currently.
- Prefer Alternative 2B+. It has least impacts to businesses (relocations). Sweeping curve better than straight line because it slows driving down.
- On 3B, shows 80' wide storm drainage easement that would empty into the Bitterroot River.

Is this approved (to empty into river)?

- Are bike lanes included in 5A?
- Hedge removal at golf course is an aesthetic concern. Hedge is 10 feet tall = visual barrier to the road = privacy. Can hedge removal mitigation be incorporated into project? Maybe create a berm or other visual/noise barrier?
- Is golf course a sensitive noise receptor? Private course. Concern about noise increase at golf course.
- Like proposed lane configuration at Reserve and Miller Creek Road intersection with 5A Alternative.
- We are going to have a bypass.
- Concern traffic will back up on Reserve between two traffic signals with Alternative 5A.
- Are you proposing sidewalks for 5A? Concern for school children safety.
- When would the No-Action Alternative be constructed?
- When will you finish studying it and start building it?

**WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED (attached)**

1. Who is responsible for the erroneous traffic projection?
2. What is the dollar cost of this error?
3. Who is paying this cost?
4. The error that was made is of fundamental importance to road planning.
5. Why should we not seek another planning group who will assume responsibility for this work?
6. What provision is being made for a regional plan?

John Brown, M.D.  
Missoula, MT

Alternative 3B+ seems best, followed by 2B+. 4C+ seems too little usage until the south slopes along Miller Creek develop.

Don Lorenzen  
Missoula, MT

2B looks good to me. Glad to see lights planned at Y and Briggs. We need two ways into and out of Miller Creek area. I don't think use of Old 93 by the Country Club will improve things much.

Jim Hogan  
Missoula, MT

It is critical to have second access out of Miller Creek to provide alternate emergency access. The city is building a fire station on the west end of Lower Miller Creek Road to serve both sides of the river. Five and six-lane highways through neighborhoods destroy the neighborhood. Traffic planning must accommodate good community planning. Area plans need to include all planned subdivisions and recognize local government approved plans.

Jerry Ballis  
Missoula City Council  
Missoula, MT 59801

Please make provisions for pedestrian and bike traffic.

Becky Anderson  
Missoula, MT

Should develop plan for Lower Miller Creek Road Bridge area to go towards Blue Mountain. Don't disturb people's farm land. Go around farther south. Have developers pay for a lot of this not tax payers.

Pat Culver  
Missoula, MT

I have serious concern about the relationship of bike path to the Miller Creek access study. Other issues related: bike path from Bitterroot South of Buckhouse Bridge merging into Miller Creek – 93 interchange. Bike lanes are great for adults but not for children and pedestrians. What about sidewalks and pathway out of Miller Creek? Along the road on other side streets? Remember a child hit on a bike with a TBI (brain injury severe) cost \$1 million in the first year is not unusual. Good job! I'm just a broken record on pathway!

Jan Belangi-Nye  
Lolo, MT

First get city and county to stop growth! Have a time out on new housing starts until whatever project is chosen, is completed, and the ribbon is cut. Alternative 3B+ seems to be a reasonable plan although costly. I guess they all are costly. Just get it done.

Julie Uchida  
Missoula, MT

Miller Creek Road needs improvement; not just to Briggs. Need another way out – bridge! 5A is not going to solve congestion or give Miller Creek residents another way out (like through lights and extra lanes only). 4C is a nice way out, not sure of turnouts, etc. Need to look at pictures closer. 2B may be another option. Need to look at pictures closer. 3B don't like. What about railroad crossing? Increases costs substantially. Y intersection needs to be fixed and the road needs to be widened to include bike/walk lane; too much traffic; wearing out (would be nice if someday the widened road – walkways and turning lanes could go up as far as Linda Vista Blvd. and Upper Miller Creek intersection). No light! Can't see it coming down. Barbara and Jerry were an asset to the meeting. Whatever you do, make sure it works! Malfunction Junction redesign and Broadway are a perfect example of what doesn't work. Waste of money. This is not a cheap project.

Colleen McChesney  
Missoula, MT

There isn't any money to do the necessary road improvements. Only the residents living along or around Miller Creek, Linda Vista and Maloney Ranch will use the road improvements so I propose that all new and improved roads have a toll to pay for the work. Additionally, the developers must be forced to pay millions of dollars before any further residential housing is approved and constructed. I served on the Miller Creek Citizens Committee in 1994 and 1995 and we told county officials and Montana Department of Transportation to demand up front road improvements and/or money donations before any housing approvals. This was ignored and thousands of houses, apartments, and town homes have been constructed with no road improvements. We need to play catch up with money. Where are you with funding? I'm sick of studies. All of these studies are a waste of money. We need action and make current and future residents and current developers pay for it not the general taxpayers. That won't use



the roads and improvements or financially benefit from the sale of houses and lots. We all know the improvements on roads and the construction of a bridge but there isn't money to do any of it.

You didn't listen to the citizens in 1994 so why waste our time now and our tax money by talking? You waste money by talking. No talk. Do something and quit approving huge developments until the roads are fixed and you have the money. \$1800 per house isn't enough. Do the math! And you aren't thinking about all the traffic coming from the Bitterroot Valley.

Susan Reneau  
Missoula, MT

Thanks for the public meeting. I favor an alternative access other than Miller Creek Road. Ideally this new access would tie into a bypass route at a future time. Non-term easements for the bypass (Hwy 90 to Hwy 93) should be obtained. In any case, I favor a new bridge route, and the route should provide pedestrian and bicycle safe access to Blue Mountain recreation area. Using only Miller Creek Drive seems it turns a residential area into a high traffic urban corridor.

Art Gidel  
Missoula, MT

Alternative 5A and other Miller Creek Road improvements – need to have sidewalks for school children to use to get to the school on Burgess, i.e., it needs to be an URBAN road from the Y to U.S. 93.

Alternative 4C is a bad idea: (1) less used since most folks tend to go towards Missoula, not Lolo; and (2) too much destruction of existing business on the east side of U.S.S. 93.

Tom Russell  
Missoula, MT

My main concern about all alternatives is the fact that the scope of EIS is too small. The problem of traffic in the next 20 years will not be solved by the three bridge alternatives. It would be appropriate to approve the alternative that would best fit into a future 2B bypass from 93 to I-90 that is limited access to get the traffic moving across the valley.

Charles Stevenson  
Missoula, MT

I support both Lower Miller Creek Road improvements which move onto Old 93 by the golf course. I strongly oppose any bridge or intersection which connects to Blue Mountain Road.

Don Schmidt  
Missoula, MT

The last meeting in 2004 I was told a noise study would be done on our property (our property borders Miller Creek). Now, seeing a light at the Y of Lower and Upper Miller Creek, I am concerned about noise and air pollution increase. As of this date we have not been contacted or seen where this study was done in the last two years. Will this be finally done and will I be notified or know the results?

Randy Hutcherson  
Missoula, MT

Bus service to Upper Miller Creek.

Mass transit out of the Bitterroot.

A bypass from 93 to the interstate exiting south of Miller Creek.

Multi-passenger lanes out of the Bitterroot.

Dan Conway  
Missoula, MT

I like 3B+ for the best of alternatives presented. I would have liked to see the alternative going north

from Linda Vista Blvd. crossing the river and tying in with a north/south bypass on west side of Missoula through to I-90. The growth is not showing signs of letting up or stopping. All of these would make sense if a light rail system using the presents RR tracks could alleviate expected traffic increases from Bitterroot Valley.

George Leighton  
Missoula, MT

I see the project as two-fold. First Miller Creek Road needs to be widened and a light put in at the Y. Once that is completed, then a secondary exit is needed. Of the options I prefer 2B, which has a possibility of the beginning of a western bypass.

Vicky Eaton  
Missoula, MT

In order to meet the purpose of this project, another access must be provided. For public safety reasons it is imperative to include one of the bridge alternatives. An alternative that plans for a future bypass along Blue Mountain Road is the best alternative since the by-pass is a true alternative and solution to Missoula's traffic problems. Another crossing over the river at Blue Mountain Road, a Blue Mountain Road bypass, an improved Russell Street, an I-90 interchange at Russell Street, and extending Stephens Avenue to 39<sup>th</sup> are all pieces that must fall into place to fix Missoula's broken transportation system and handle future growth. For the safety of residents of South Missoula a bridge crossing must be the preferred alternative. Five lanes on Lower Miller Creek Road is a band-aid in the wrong place. Missoula has enough band-aids. Thank you.

Todd Cass  
Missoula, MT

I would like the ideal to have the 2B Bridge.

Delmet Vietz  
Missoula, MT

First thing is that Alt. 5A must be completed. Next step is to complete Alt. 2B. Next step would be to extend the road from 2B all the way to I-90 for a north south bypass. Blue Mountain Bridge alternative does not work. Throw out this alternative.

Ed Linjala  
Missoula, MT

Widening existing roads, or streets and adding more traffic lanes might prove helpful but not an adequate solution for the needs of the Miller Creek Road project. Your aerial photo posters clearly display what would best change and resolve with lesser impact and possible expense. No matter how much improvement is made to existing roadways, the bottlenecks still remain...and maybe even amplify the problem. Those bottlenecks are: #1) The intersection of Highway 93 and Miller Creek Road and #2) Highway 93 and Reserve St. The solution – KEEP TRAFFIC MOVING! and eliminate long-standing traffic lines. I offer the following: Provide an interstate type overpass over the railroad track and Highway 93 to connect with Old Highway 93 to Reserve Street. At that junction provide another overpass to connect to the North/South Reserve St. traffic. These overpasses would provide continual traffic movement at these intersections. There need to be no changes to the existing east/west traffic. It might be necessary to widen Miller Creek Road from the “Y” to Highway 93 to 3-lane (single lane outside with center turning lane.) I also maintain that a bridge across the Bitterroot River is vital to reduce traffic on Lower Miller Creek Road and the Highway 93-Miller Creek Road intersection.

Norm & Doris Balko  
Missoula, MT

I live off Upper Miller Creek Road and Meadowood. Upper Miller, from way above me, has become a highway, no longer a road. At peak work hours – 7am-9am and 4:30pm-6pm, it is a nightmare. If a fire, accident, or some other debilitating function happened, I (coming off Meadowood) would be unable to get onto Upper Miller, let alone get down it to Highway 93. You are talking of widening the road from Briggs to Mockingbird Way. That is like putting a band-aid on a major surgery. I was told at the meeting that actually plans really did not address or benefit areas beyond Mockingbird. Why not?? With the exorbitant cost of improvements and Twite's greed, traffic and expenses will only rise. The same problems will still be in existence a few years from now; access will have to be addressed again only further up the road. The traffic now and in the future will only funnel into the partially widened lower area. We need an additional access to Highway 93 and across, other than Reserve. People from Upper, Upper Miller (Garrett and beyond) come down Upper Miller, join the heavy traffic from Lower Miller, and a bottleneck will still occur. A five-lane highway is ridiculous!! Plan us an access in and out that will relieve the congested Upper/Lower Miller – not add to it.

Vee Truax  
Missoula, MT

Many of us in the neighborhoods to the north of the Miller Creek developments are pleased with the current emphasis being placed on upgrading the existing access from the Miller Creek "Y" to Highway 93. This should have been a priority many years ago. We are also pleased to see Alternative 2B (North Miller Creek river crossing) is being seriously considered, as we believe this alternative has the greatest potential to accommodate future traffic growth. The north end of Alt. 2B is in open field undeveloped land with no existing commercial establishments as is the case with 3B (Blue Mtn.), thus future interchange expansion would be possible at much less acquisition expense. We believe that final decisions on the Miller Creek EIS should coincide with the traffic study by state and federal forces on Highway 93 south of Missoula. It would be a colossal mistake to spend \$50 mil on a river crossing that wound up in the wrong place.

Don Peressini  
Missoula, MT

Miller Creek definitely needs another access road to get in and out of the area. Old Highway 93 could still be used as another access to Reserve with a light at that corner. It would help alleviate the problem of trying to make a left turn from 93 to Reserve. Traffic is really stacked in the mornings. Reserve Street is truly truly an over-crowded street. Why put a band aid on this problem when it could be fixed by providing another access to get in and out of the Miller Creek area and also another access to I-90. Reserve Street really needs help funneling the traffic elsewhere. (The two accesses could be combined into one road.)

Joan Adams  
Missoula, MT

1. If the 2004 Missoula Traffic Study included traffic projections that were in error [-40%] – won't the design of streets entering the EIS study area be similarly flawed?
2. I do not understand how the parallel access (old '93' and Brooks at Reserve Street) would work, but would it not ultimately require an overpass for Miller Creek at Brooks?
3. The traffic signal proposed for Briggs and Miller Creek will make it very easy for traffic to utilize Briggs and Garrett to access 39<sup>th</sup> St. Won't the increased traffic be a detriment to Cold Springs School?

I applaud your integrity in determining that a bridge would provide a needed alternate access to the Miller Creek complex, but does not address the challenge of handling the projected traffic at Miller Creek and Brooks. Hopefully, you can ignore the micro management and flawed recommendations being presented by the Missoula City Council and at least one of the County Commissioners.

The City Council worries more about the location of a fire station than good traffic planning. One would think that after the poor results obtained at Mullen/Reserve; the 39<sup>th</sup> redesign; the Malfunction junction redesign, and East Broadway solution that they would be interested in improving their track record.

Hopefully, you understand the narrow and seemingly illogical views presented by the County Commissioner with respect to your recommendation for five (5) lanes between the Y and Brooks. Her views about maintaining the rural environment and prohibiting anything but a three (3) lane is a mystery to me. Every person attending the meeting realizes that Miller Creek has advanced from being rural to being suburban and is rapidly approaching being urban. Being next to a Super Wal Mart will be the final step.

Barbara has long seemingly been supportive of unlimited development. This seems to be out of context with her pride in the County never having to acquire additional right of way for roads. The roads that were adequate for a rural area simply cannot handle the addition of thousands of homes.

Please stick to your guns and propose the most desirable and practical alternative solutions to this complex problem. I believe the priority should be the Brooks – Miller Creek problem and the addition of a bridge over the Bitterroot to follow. If you present the best alternatives, those making the final solution will have to start out correctly regardless of their own agendas.

William Ditch  
Montana

- \$1,800 assessment/new home is peanuts and is not cost indexed annually.
- Why 21 months since the last public forum? (June 04).
- Federal Highway planners didn't seem to know the details for having been involved in this project so long.
- The Bitterroot Valley is evolving and developing faster than the study. To say there will only be 15,000 more vehicles by 2025 is very unrealistic. There will be that many more inside the Missoula city limits.
- All alternatives must tie into the overall traffic planning in the region. It is piecemeal now. Hire Carl as a consultant – who used to be a Missoula City traffic planner. He knows more than outsiders can ever learn.
- Move fast. Every year delayed the budget grows by the millions and the problem exacerbates. This means the dynamics for solution diminish almost exponentially.
- Quick-fix a right turn lane from Miller Creek onto 93 that will permit cars to turn right and merge into traffic.

Gary Stubblefield  
Montana

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# Public Hearing

October 17, 2006

**Note:**

This appendix contains a transcript of the public hearing presentation only. Comments received at the public hearing, and responses to those comments, can be found in Appendix E: Comments and Responses.





**TRANSCRIPT  
MILLER CREEK ROAD  
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
PUBLIC HEARING**

**Thursday, October 17, 2006  
3:00 - 9:00 p.m.  
Best Inn Convention Center  
3803 Brooks Street  
Missoula, MT**

The Public Hearing for the Miller Creek Road Draft Environmental Impact Statement was held March 23, 2006, at the Quality Inn and Conference Center, Missoula, MT. One Hundred Ninety (190) people attended the public hearing (sign in sheets attached). The public hearing was an open house format from 3:00 to 7:00 pm to receive written comments and verbal comments to the transcriber. Project officials were available throughout this portion of the hearing to answer questions. At 7:00 p.m. a brief introduction was given by Craig Genzlinger (FHWA) and verbal comments were received at the microphone from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. This portion was facilitated by Carson Taylor (The Settlement Center). Written comments were also received from the public and placed in a comment box located at the comment table.

**Project officials present:**

Craig Genzlinger, Federal Highway Administration  
Janice Brown, Federal Highway Administration  
Greg Gifford, Federal Highway Administration  
Mike Duman, Federal Highway Administration  
Ted Burch, Federal Highway Administration  
Steve Long, David Evans and Associates  
Mike Odom, David Evans and Associates  
Scott Richman, David Evans and Associates  
Jeanette Lostracco, Carter & Burgess, Inc.  
Diana Bell, Carter & Burgess, Inc.  
Misty McCoy, Carter & Burgess Inc.  
Carson Taylor, The Settlement Center

**ROOM ARRANGEMENT**

**Sign In Table**

The following handouts were available to the public at the sign-in table:

- 1) Sign-in Sheets (attached)
- 2) Agenda for the hearing and explanation of room organization (attached)
- 3) Handout of Preferred Alternative & Preliminary Assumption of Costs (attached)
- 4) Comments Sheets (attached)
- 5) Extra Newsletters (attached)

**Stations**

Seven (7) stations with wall displays explaining the project were available for public viewing as follows:

- 1) Welcome
  - a. Purpose of Public Hearing
- 2) Introduction
  - a. Purpose and Need Statement
  - b. Project Goals
- 3) Alternatives
  - a. Alternatives Map
  - b. No-Action Alternative Cross Sections
  - c. Maps of Each Build Alternative Showing Alignments, Cross-Sections, and Cost Estimates
  - d. 2025 Average Daily Traffic Volumes for the Build Alternatives
  - e. Preliminary Assumption of Costs Table
- 4) Summary of Impacts and Mitigation
  - a. Summary of Impacts and Mitigation for the Alternatives
  - b. Handout of Summary of Impacts and Mitigation for Alternatives (attached)
- 5) What's Next
  - a. Where We Are in the Environmental Impacts Statement (EIS) Process
- 6) Comments
  - a. Comment Sheets and Comment Box
- 7) Transcriber
  - a. An additional transcriber station was available for the public to give private testimony throughout the hearing.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION**

**Carson Taylor (The Settlement Center)**

My name is Carson Taylor. My job tonight is to facilitate the public comment for all of you who would like to speak tonight. I have a list of people who have signed up and we will go through that first and then see if anyone else would like to speak. There are other options available for input: you can give written comments, there is also a recording room where you can give input directly to a tape recorder if you want to say something that is longer than the time limit allowed tonight. In light of the numbers I'm going to suggest that we limit each person to three minutes and we will go until 9:00 p.m. If we have more time and you want to make additional comments, you are more than welcome to do so. We will go through the list first and everyone who

wants to speak for the first time can speak and then we will go back for another round. I will read the names off the list and when it gets close to your time come up to the front row so you can get right up to the microphone and speak. The only other rule required by law is that you need to state your name and your address. I will remind you of that. I have a timer that will go off at the end of three minutes when your time is up. Before we get started I would like to introduce Craig Genzlinger who is going to speak to you for a little bit and introduce some other people.

#### **Craig Genzlinger (Federal Highway Administration)**

I want to thank you all for coming tonight. As with all our public meetings on Miller Creek, we seem to have a really good turnout. I'm not sure if that is a good sign or a bad sign, but I'm glad you all could make it tonight. My name is Craig Genzlinger with the Federal Highway Administration and I'm the Project Manager for the Miller Creek EIS.

I would like to make a few introductions of some of the other federal officials who are here tonight. Janice Brown, the Division Administrator for Montana is in the back. I've had a number of people ask who is the decision-making body for this project and it is the Federal Highway Administration. When we get to the Record of Decision, Janice will be the one signing that document. She is the ultimate authority. Sitting next to her is Mike Duman, our Assistant Division Administrator. Up front is Ted Birch, who is our Project Development Engineer and he oversees the environmental process for our office.

We are here for the public hearing tonight. We have a lot of people here tonight and we want to get through a lot of comments so we are going to do very little talking. This is a little different format than we've done for the open houses where we had the question/answer session. Our intent here tonight is to not answer questions; it is to take your comments, take your questions, and all of them will be responded to in writing in the Final EIS. We want to hear from you tonight. We want to hear what alternatives you like, what you don't like, if there are impacts or assessments you think we've missed, by all means we want to know that and make sure we get it right.

We have a number of consultant teams here. Steve Long is here from David Evans and Associates. They are the prime contractor on this project. Also with David Evans and Associates is Mike Odom and Scott Richman. Scott did the traffic analysis. He is our traffic expert. From Carter Burgess we have Jeanette Lostracco, who has done the public involvement process. Also with Carter Burgess is Diana Bell. You guys can all appreciate the look of the document; Diana is responsible for writing the document. She pulled together a lot of that work in drafting the document so you can appreciate how much work that was.

I want to reiterate what Carson said, we really do need your name and address so make sure you say those nice and loud so we can get that information. With that I have a very brief presentation I want to go over outlining the alternatives. We are not going to go through all the impact assessments that are in the document. I hope everybody had a chance to look at it before tonight. If we went through all the impacts, we would be here a long time before we had a chance to hear from you.

#### **Craig Genzlinger – Power Point Presentation on Alternatives**

**Purpose and Need.** The purpose and need of the project is to provide a safe and improved access between US 93 and the Miller Creek area.

**Initial Alternatives.** This diagram shows the initial alternatives that were identified in the scoping process. The green ones are the ones that were advanced and are shown in the Draft EIS and were fully analyzed. The red ones are ones that were screened out early in the process as not being reasonable or feasible in meeting purpose and need at that point so they were dropped.

**No-Action Alternative.** This project is a little bit different than most that I've been involved with in that our No-Action Alternative actually shows road widening on Miller Creek Road. That is because there is a locally committed project for the local agencies to widen that road regardless of what the federal government does. So if we come up with the No-Build and say we are not expanding any federal funds here, then they do have intentions of widening the road to this typical section. So this is a committed project.

**Alternative 2B.** As far as the alternatives that were analyzed, the first one is Alternative 2B. This is a secondary connection with the bridge over the river. We actually go across the river on a bridge structure and across the railroad tracks then go over US 93 and tie back into a signal. This alternative would add a new signal onto US 93 but all movements would be off the north side of the highway.

**Alternative 3B.** Alternative 3B or the Blue Mountain Alternative as we've called it all along. This would come out of the subdivision of the Miller Creek area. Again it would be on a bridge over the river and over the railroad tracks and over US 93. The difference is that instead of a signal we have two access roads down each side and every movement would be a right turn. So it would be right-on and right-off of the highway. This one would remove the signal that currently exists at Blue Mountain Road today.

**Alternative 4C.** The third bridge alternative is Alternative 4C called South Lower Miller Creek in the area up here (referring to graphic) and it would come off that bluff on a structure and over the railroad tracks and would have more of an interchange type design with a connection to US 93.

**Limited Improvements.** These are called the Limited Improvements. These go along with all of the bridge connection options to make the traffic flow work. We would also be making some improvements to Old US 93 and some improvements at the Brooks-Reserve Street intersection, basically fairly similar to the No-Action Improvements on Miller Creek Road itself. The limited improvements would also add a signal to Reserve Street where Old US 93 ties in.

**Alternative 5A.** The final alternative we looked at was Alternative 5A. This would upgrade the existing Miller Creek access to a wider cross section – it would be a four-lane cross section rather than the three-lane that the county is doing with the No-Build. It would also have these improvements on Old US 93 and at Brooks and Reserve and would add a signal to Reserve Street.

**Cost Comparison:** I just put this up for cost comparisons. Cost isn't the only thing we consider. It is certainly not the over-riding factor for this. People ask how much the alternatives cost so this is to give you a range of ideas. Most of the bridge connection options, there are some contingencies built in here and are in the neighborhood of about \$40 million. The upgrade to the Miller Creek Road access is about \$13 million as displayed in the document.

That is all I intended to say. This was a brief overview of the alternatives. We are here to listen to you tonight and we want to hear your comments and concerns. So I'll turn it back over to Carson so we can get started on the comments. I do want to reiterate that just because you come to the microphone that comment is not considered any differently than a written comment or an email comment. You have until November 6<sup>th</sup> to get us your comments. I don't want to discourage anyone from coming to the microphone but I do appreciate the written comments because then we are not interpreting what you said. You actually have a chance to sit down and make sure you write out what you meant rather than us trying to interpret it. So even if you come to the microphone it might be useful to provide us a written comment as well.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Sixty-five comments were received at the public hearing. To view those comments, and responses to those comments, please see **Appendix E**, Comment numbers 1 through 65.