

**Finding of No Significant Impact on the  
Environmental Assessment for**

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**STPS 430-1(5)1**

**Canyon Ferry Road**

**Control Number 4480**

Prepared For:  
**Montana  
Department of Transportation**



Prepared By:  
**Robert Peccia & Associates  
Helena, Montana  
March, 2004**

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# FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

ON THE

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND  
"NATIONWIDE" SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION

FOR THE

## CANYON FERRY ROAD PROJECT

STPS 430-1(5) 1; CN 4480

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY, MONTANA

THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION HAS DETERMINED THAT THIS PROJECT WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. THIS **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** IS BASED ON THE ATTACHED SUMMARY OF FINAL COORDINATION, "NATIONWIDE" SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION, AND INPUT FROM PAST PUBLIC MEETINGS HELD TO DISCUSS THE PROJECT. THIS FINDING HAS BEEN INDEPENDENTLY EVALUATED BY THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION AND DETERMINED TO ADEQUATELY AND ACCURATELY DISCUSS THE NEED, ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED "CANYON FERRY ROAD" PROJECT AND APPROPRIATE MITIGATION MEASURES. IT PROVIDES SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS FOR DETERMINING THAT AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT IS NOT REQUIRED. THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION TAKES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCURACY, SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE SUMMARY OF FINAL COORDINATION AND ITS ATTACHMENTS.



Federal Highway Administration

Date: 3-16-2009

# SUMMARY OF FINAL COORDINATION

## Canyon Ferry Road Environmental Assessment and "Nationwide" *Section 4(f)* Evaluation

This document summarizes the final coordination activities undertaken by the MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT) to complete the Canyon Ferry Road Environmental Assessment (EA) and "Nationwide" *Section 4(f)* Evaluation. The EA, which can be found in its entirety in **APPENDIX 1**, describes the potential environmental effects of reconstructing about 13.6 kilometers (8.4 miles) of Montana Secondary Route 430 (also known as Canyon Ferry Road or S-430) in Lewis and Clark County, Montana. The project also involves limited work on Montana Secondary Route 284 (known as Spokane Creek Road or S-284) south of the intersection of these routes. The proposed work is being administered under a project designated by MDT as "Canyon Ferry Road" [Project Number STPS 430-1(5) 1, Control Number 4480]. MDT would implement the proposed highway improvements under one or more construction projects depending on the availability of funding. **APPENDIX 2** summarizes measures MDT will implement to mitigate the anticipated impacts of this proposed project.

This document affords MDT the opportunity to:

- summarize efforts undertaken to make the EA available to the public and interested agencies;
- respond to written comments during the public availability period for the EA and at the public hearing held in July 2003;
- enhance the EA by more clearly describing the proposal and providing current information;
- modify the text of the EA distributed during June 2003; and
- present the FHWA's Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for this project.

## **Public Notice and EA Availability**

The FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA) approved the EA and "Nationwide" *Section 4(f)* Evaluation for the Canyon Ferry Road project for public availability on June 9, 2003. The document was then distributed to local, state, and federal agencies and others who had previously expressed interest in receiving the document. Copies of the EA were mailed or hand-delivered to all agencies and persons shown on the EA Circulation List by June 19, 2003. The EA Circulation List is shown in Part V of the EA.

A notice announcing the availability of the Canyon Ferry Road EA and "Nationwide" *Section*

4(f) Evaluation and the scheduled Public Hearing was published twice in the *Helena Independent Record* on June 22, 2003 and June 29, 2003. A copy of the notice of the EA's availability and Public Hearing as published in the local newspaper is provided as **Attachment 1**.

Additionally, a project newsletter and letter announcing the availability of the Canyon Ferry Road EA and the scheduled Public Hearing were mailed to nearly 200 persons including owners of properties along the project corridor, those who attended previous project meetings or previously submitted comments, and other interested individuals and groups. The letter indicated: where copies of EA could be viewed; how copies of the EA could be obtained; the time, date, and location of the public hearing; and where written comments on the EA should be sent. A copy of the mailing is provided as **Attachment 2**.

MDT's newspaper notices and letters to interested parties advised that comments on the EA were due by July 25, 2003. The notices and letters indicated that copies of the Canyon Ferry Road EA were available for public review beginning June 23, 2003 at the following locations:

Lewis and Clark County Library -120 Last Chance Gulch (Helena)  
City and County Transportation Office -City and County Building, Room 404,  
316 N Park (Helena)  
East Helena City Hall - City Clerk's Office, 7 East Main St, (East Helena)  
Montana State Library - 1515 East Sixth Avenue (Helena)  
MDT Great Falls District Office - 200 Smelter Avenue NE, (Great Falls)  
MDT Environmental Services (Helena) - 2701 Prospect Avenue, Room 111  
Robert Peccia & Associates, Inc. (Helena) - 825 West Custer Avenue

The multiple copies of the EA provided to the Montana State Library allowed for the distribution of the document to other libraries including the Montana Historical Society and libraries affiliated with state universities.

The EA was also made available for viewing or downloading from Robert Peccia & Associates' Internet website at [www.rpa-hln.com](http://www.rpa-hln.com) ("News and Info" link) throughout the entire public availability period.

As a result of the notice and distribution of the EA, MDT received and responded to requests for copies of the document from the following individuals:

Ann Wright, Helena, MT (at the public hearing)  
Terry Zimmerman, Helena, MT (in July 24, 2003 comment letter)

## **EA Omissions, Corrections, and Final Changes**

A Finding of No Significant Impact, a Summary of Final Coordination, and a copy of the EA Notice of Availability have been added to this document. These items (including the following text changes) plus the initial EA made available to the public on June 23, 2003 constitute the Final EA and Nationwide Programmatic *Section 4(f)* Evaluation.

The following changes should be made to the EA previously distributed in June 2003 based on

comments received by MDT and the availability of new project information. Page numbers listed refer to the EA document distributed in June 2003. Deleted text is shown in ~~strikeout~~ font and new text additions are shown in **bold** text.

### Page 29

The last sentence of the second paragraph under **2. Design Speed/Posted Speed Limits** in Part III of the EA was revised to read:

...in the rural section. ~~Lewis and Clark County could ask MDT~~ **would likely** to conduct an engineering investigation of travel speeds after reconstruction ~~project is completed~~ to determine if posted speed limits for Canyon Ferry Road should be revised ~~based on the speeds at which motorists drive on the~~ **new newly constructed** facility. **Substantial changes in the roadway's geometrics and design, continuing development within the project corridor, and the future construction of an I-15 interchange at Custer Avenue are factors that may affect travel characteristics on Canyon Ferry Road.**

### Page 29 - 30

A new paragraph under **2. Design Speed/Posted Speed Limits** in Part III of the EA. The new paragraph, added at the request of Brian Holling (City-County Transportation Coordinator), discusses a speed study recently completed by MDT on Canyon Ferry Road. The new paragraph reads as follows:

**During January 2004, MDT completed a speed study addressing current travel speeds through the entire Canyon Ferry Road project area. The results of the study, completed at the request of Lewis and Clark County, will soon be presented to the Montana Transportation Commission. The County has reviewed recommendations for changes to posted speeds on the route made as a result of the speed study and the Transportation Commission will ultimately decide the need for revisions to posted speed limits at an upcoming meeting.**

### Page 71

The single sentence second paragraph under **Impacts of the Preferred Action** was revised to reflect a decrease in the amount of wetland impact anticipated for the project. The text now reads:

Based on preliminary design plans for this project, the amount of wetlands that would be directly impacted by the proposed reconstruction of Canyon Ferry Road would be about ~~0.60 ha (1.5 acres)~~ **0.26 ha (0.647 acres)**.

### Page 72

The third full paragraph on the page was revised to say:

Based on these considerations, MDT's consulting biologists concluded that wetlands within the project corridor associated with the Helena Valley Canal or its associated

laterals are **not** jurisdictional for *Section 404* purposes because water supplies are annually discontinued and there are no naturally flowing streams that contribute directly to flows in the canal. **However**, wetlands associated with No Name Spring Creek and Spokane Creek are "jurisdictional" wetlands.

### Page 73

The text associated with the bullet item titled "Compensation" was revised to read as follows:

- **Compensation.** Compensatory mitigation for the projected wetland loss will be required and developed in compliance with the 1996 MDT Interagency Wetland Group operating procedures. **MDT will implement all prudent and feasible measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate wetland losses associated with the project in accordance with the Corps of Engineers permitting requirements.**

Although no specific wetland mitigation sites have been identified yet at this early stage of the project, wetland creation/restoration opportunities may exist ~~on private lands near~~ **within or adjacent to the existing and proposed highway rights-of-way near No Name Spring Creek and Spokane Creek (Sites 5 and 6).** ~~MDT may also have sufficient wetland "credits" from past mitigation efforts in the watershed that could be applied to this project.~~ **MDT will pursue development of available on-site mitigation to compensate for unavoidable wetland losses. If on-site mitigation opportunities are unavailable, MDT will pursue compensatory mitigation for wetland losses at a future MDT wetland reserve site with agreement from the Corps of Engineers.**

### Page 76

The last bullet item on the page was revised to say:

- Overhead power lines relocated during construction will be raptor-proofed **according to MDT policies** ~~in accordance with "Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines" (Olendorff et al. 1981).~~

### Page 100

A new paragraph was added at the end of **11. Pedestrian and Bicyclist Facilities, Existing Conditions** addressing future updates to several transportation planning documents. The new paragraph reads as follows:

**The City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County will soon be updating the *Helena Area Transportation Plan* in cooperation with MDT. The new Transportation Plan Update will include a document that is presently under final review titled "Helena Non-Motorized Transportation Plan." The Non-Motorized Transportation will include standards for construction of bicycle paths in the Helena area. Although this plan is not currently adopted, it should be available if the Canyon Ferry Road project proceeds to final design. Lewis and Clark County has encouraged MDT to consider pertinent recommendations during the final design of this project.**

## Page 102

The text under the bullet titled "I-15 Corridor EIS" was modified to reflect the current status of the project and new information about the preferred action.

- **I-15 Corridor EIS.** MDT is currently preparing **recently prepared** an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to identify and evaluate potential transportation improvements to the I-15 corridor between the Lincoln Road and Montana City interchanges. The purpose of the EIS is **was** to identify the best alternative that will safely and efficiently accommodate anticipated motorized and non-motorized traffic volumes while simultaneously improving east-west travel crossing the I-15 corridor.

**The Final EIS, issued in November 2003, presented a complete description of the alternatives considered and identified Alternative 1 as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 1 included a new interchange** ~~The EIS will identify potential future interchange locations, one of which may be located~~ at Custer Avenue (the extension of Canyon Ferry Road within the City of Helena). I-15 is located about 4 km (2.5 miles) west of the beginning of the Canyon Ferry Road project.

**The FHWA signed a Record of Decision on January 22, 2004 approving Alternative 1 as the selected alternative for improvements to the I-15 corridor.** ~~If The provision of an interchange were provided at Custer Avenue would~~ **will directly connect** Canyon Ferry Road ~~would have a direct connection~~ to I-15 for the first time. Traffic volumes and travel patterns on Canyon Ferry Road east of Helena and **on** connecting roads could notably change with the provision of a new interchange. ~~The scheduled completion date for the EIS is June 2003. A final The Record of Decision (ROD) for the project will be completed in September 2003.~~ The timing of future improvements to the I-15 corridor, including the ~~possible~~ development of a new interchange at Custer Avenue, is **unknown uncertain** at this time.

## Public Meetings on the EA

### JULY 8, 2003 OPEN HOUSE

An informal open house meeting to discuss the proposed highway project was held from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 8, 2003 at the East Valley Middle School gymnasium in East Helena. About 15 people attended the afternoon open house.

**Attachment 3** includes copies of the sign-in sheets from the Open House and Public Hearing.

Notes compiled from individual discussions at the open house were reviewed and used to identify substantive comments on the proposed project. These comments and related questions are summarized below and appropriate responses provided where necessary.

## **JULY 8, 2003 PUBLIC HEARING**

A Public Hearing to explain the scope of the highway reconstruction project, discuss the findings of the EA, and to take public comments was held on Tuesday, July 8, 2003 in the East Valley Middle School gymnasium (401 Kalispell Avenue) in East Helena. The Public Hearing began at about 7:00 p.m. and concluded by 9:00 p.m. MDT recorded all presentations and comments heard at the meeting.

Approximately 35 persons attended the Public Hearing not including the MDT staff (Michael Johnson-Great Falls District Administrator, Jason Giard-Great Falls District Engineering Services Supervisor, Bob Tholt - Consultant Design Section Project Manager, and John Robinson-Public Affairs), and representatives of consulting engineering firms working on the project (Tom Cavanaugh and Dan Norderud - Robert Peccia & Associates). A copy of the sign-in sheets from the Public Hearing is provided as **Attachment 3**.

The Public Hearing began with introductions by John Robinson (meeting moderator) and a brief discussion of the meetings purpose and procedures for offering comments on the EA. Mr. Robinson then turned the meeting over to Tom Cavanaugh of Robert Peccia & Associates for a presentation summarizing the scope of the proposed project, the reasons why reconstruction is being proposed, estimated project costs, and the project's likely implementation schedule. Mr. Cavanaugh then turned the meeting over to Dan Norderud who summarized the EA process, content, and major findings and conclusions. Following Mr. Norderud's remarks, the meeting was opened up for comments and questions on the EA and general comments.

Following the formal comment period, the meeting reverted to an open house format and allowed for one-on-one discussions with interested parties.

## **TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING**

MDT recorded the presentation summarizing the EA, public comments, questions and general discussions that occurred during the July 8, 2003 Public Hearing. A transcript of the public hearing was produced based on the recorded proceedings. **Attachment 4** of this Summary of Final Coordination includes a copy of the transcript.

## **SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AT THE PUBLIC HEARING**

Notes compiled at the Public Hearing and MDT's transcript of the meeting were reviewed and used to identify the comments most frequently mentioned at the Public Hearing. These comments and related questions are summarized below and appropriate responses provided where necessary.

***COMMENT:*** *(Charles Houk) I'm the Minister of Cross Roads Christian Church and I'm at the beginning of the project on Walter Drive. I'm putting in a 50-car parking lot on Walter Drive. My concern is left-turn ingress and egress into Walter Drive and the apron that would go with it.*

**RESPONSE:** MDT's design consultant completed a traffic study for the project corridor that identified intersections with left turn needs. The intersection of Walter Drive was one of the intersections within the project area considered in the traffic study. The study showed that a left turn lane was not justified at Walter Drive based on the minimum turning vehicle volume guidelines presented in the MDT Road Design Manual. A review of the accident history does not indicate that Walter Drive is a notable accident cluster area.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers *Trip Generation* Manual was also reviewed to estimate typical numbers of turning vehicles that may be expected due to improvements at the church. This information suggests the church's additional traffic generation would likely be minimal, and would not significantly contribute to the left turning vehicles off Canyon Ferry Road onto Walter Drive. We would anticipate that most activities taking place at the church would not coincide to the peak hours of travel on Canyon Ferry Road. Peak traffic volumes on Canyon Ferry Road typically occur during weekday morning and evening commutes. The church's highest use periods generally occur in mid morning and late evening hours and on weekends.

The addition of a 50-vehicle parking lot at the church alone would be unlikely to justify the need for a left turn lane at Walter Drive. Other new developments potentially accessed via Walter Drive would be monitored during the design of the project to determine if the need for a left turn lane at this location changes.

**COMMENT:** *(Don Flammond) I live on Canyon Ferry Road and Dusty Maiden. The project would be good but we've got to really look at is the speed limit down through there. It is a race track already and if you widen it out then it will be a lot better racetrack for them guys. You know, that is all residential area and we've already had one fatality down there and we don't need any more. Thank you.*

**RESPONSE:** An engineering study can be conducted after reconstruction activities on Canyon Ferry Road are completed so it is possible to identify typical travel speeds on the new facility and determine the need for adjustments to posted speed limits. MDT generally accepts requests from local governments (Lewis and Clark County in this case) to perform studies of non-statutory speed limits. Enforcement of established speed limits on Canyon Ferry Road is typically the county's responsibility.

**COMMENT:** *(Bob Leach) I live near the corner of Canyon Ferry and Wylie Drive. I would like to see a reduction in the speed limit to 45 mph beginning just prior to Wylie Drive coming from the west going east and on the east side of the project going west just prior to Lake Helena Drive. Those are intersections we have a lot of trouble with. People need to start slowing down prior to those lights, whether they are 4-way stops or a red and green light they need to be reminded. Also, like they said, the area in between is residential and there is no reason for 55 mph on that. There are just too many people having to turn.*

**RESPONSE:** Please note the response to a similar comment by Mr. Flammond regarding the speed limit. The intersection of Wylie Drive and Canyon Ferry Road would initially be signalized. It is also likely that some time during the next ten years or twenty years, the intersection at Valley Drive will meet warrants for a traffic signal.

Consideration being given to installing advance warning traffic controls, including flashing lights, signing and transverse milled rumble strips across major side road approaches such as Valley Drive and Lake Helena Drive intersections. These additional measures would heighten driver awareness on approaches to stop-controlled intersections. The existing flashing intersection lights at Valley Drive, and those installed at Lake Helena Drive in 2002 will be maintained with this project. In addition, lighting has been recommended for the intersections at Wylie Drive, Valley Drive and Lake Helena Drive to increase nighttime driver awareness.

*The other thing is we need a sidewalk on that road between at least Valley Drive and Wylie Drive either on the north or the south side. I would rather see it on the north side not for my convenience but because that is where most of the pedestrian traffic would be. I think it would get much more use on the north side. There is a big housing development up Dusty Maiden so there is more residential on the north side, but I would also like to see it on the south side for my convenience. I just think it would be much safer if we had some kind of a sidewalk on that.*

**RESPONSE:** Traffic studies and observations of pedestrian use of the corridor identified little existing pedestrian or bicyclist activity within the project area. The demand for sidewalks is currently low because there are few, if any, destinations in the project area that generate pedestrian travel and there are no connections to any other sidewalks or paths to East Helena. Further, the existing highway is "unfriendly" to pedestrians and bicyclists. The existing 7.2 m (24-foot) wide roadway cannot safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists since the paved surface is only wide enough for two travel lanes. The area adjacent to the roadway is not conducive to pedestrian travel due to the presence of relatively steep roadside slopes and ditches.

Nevertheless, public scoping comments asked that the pedestrian needs and accommodations be investigated as part of this project. In response to these comments, three options were identified and considered during the development of this project. These options included:

- constructing a sidewalk directly behind the curb;
- providing a sidewalk separated from the road by a buffer strip (boulevard); and
- building a wide multi-use path along one or both sides of Canyon Ferry Road between Wylie Drive and Lake Helena Drive consistent with Lewis and Clark County's multi-modal transportation goals and objectives.

Public comments both supported and opposed the inclusion of these roadside features. The option of including a sidewalk separated from the highway garnered the most (but not widespread) public support. Although providing a minimal width sidewalk directly behind the curb would be least intrusive to adjacent properties, comments viewed the option as unfavorable because pedestrians would be in close proximity to vehicular traffic. Negative comments were also received about the option of installing a separated multi-use path due to its need for substantially more right-of-way than the other options. However, some bicyclists who commented appreciated the multi-use path concept, but recognized the potential impacts to property owners and acknowledged that the project's new shoulders would accommodate bicycle use.

Although these features would enhance the appearance and use of the roadway corridor for other

transportation modes, a decision was made to not include sidewalks or separated paths with this proposed project. The cost of a new sidewalk on both sides of the highway within the developed portion of the Canyon Ferry Road corridor is estimated to be more than \$300,000. Spending this relatively large amount is difficult to justify given the low existing and projected demand for pedestrian facilities in the project corridor.

Because the overall cost of this project is projected to exceed available funding, finding ways to bring the cost more in line with expected funding is critical to getting the project implemented as soon as possible. Eliminating the sidewalk (or separated path) was one way to help reduce the overall cost of the proposed project.

Another major consideration in the decision to not include pedestrian facilities with this project was the right-of-way needed to accommodate a separated sidewalk or path. A sidewalk separated by a buffer strip from the highway (the option with the most public support) or a separated multi-use path, would likely require more right-of-way than if a sidewalk were built immediately adjacent to the highway. This is due to the wider overall construction "footprint" of the road and its associated features and the additional area required for relocating conflicting utilities. Since most landowners along Canyon Ferry Road listed right-of-way acquisition and associated property impacts as their highest priority concerns, it was important that the width of the new right-of-way corridor for this project be minimized to the extent possible.

Other factors supporting the decision to not include sidewalks or paths with this project were the low projected future demand for such facilities; future maintenance obligations and costs, resident concerns over snow removal, and the loss of the semi-rural appearance of the area.

The proposed Canyon Ferry Road project will provide a wider highway facility with flatter roadside slopes. For the first time, the proposed 1.8 m (6-foot) wide paved shoulder will provide bicyclists with a place to ride on the paved road surface. Pedestrians could also choose to walk on the shoulder or on the newly graded roadside.

If pedestrian or bicyclist demands dictate or if new destinations and interconnecting paths become developed in the area, the construction of sidewalks or multi-use paths in the Canyon Ferry Road corridor could be proposed under a future project.

***COMMENT:*** (John Denherder): 3333 Canyon Ferry Road. I would like to speak of, basically again, traffic control. My concern is picking up my paper or picking up my mail and watching the school kids. Are they going to do anything to have a pull-off or centralize the mailbox system, etc?

***RESPONSE:*** MDT's consultant is coordinating this project with the Postmasters in East Helena and Helena to see if mail delivery can be provided along both sides of the new road to reduce the need for pedestrian crossings. There may also be opportunities within the corridor to group several mailboxes or establish mailbox banks at convenient and safe locations.

*Another consideration I have, I have been out there 33 years when it was a dirt road and the deer came up to the fence. The road noise is terrible. I sit a couple of hundred feet back from the road and it is almost like they are in the living room. I don't know*

*what can be done. A couple of things were mentioned but whether the composition of the macadam can be changed or something. It is this last topping that really made the road noise.*

**RESPONSE:** The noise study prepared for this project predicts that noise levels twenty years in the future with this project would result in noise impacts (noise levels exceeding 66 dBA) at 9 locations along the route. However, the study also showed that noise impacts would be likely at 6 of these 9 noise-impacted locations even if nothing is done to Canyon Ferry Road. This is due to the anticipated growth in traffic volumes on the route in the foreseeable future. Noise abatement measures like modifying the road's design, constructing noise barriers or berms, reducing the speed limit, or restricting the access of certain vehicle types were not reasonable or feasible.

The reconstructed road would be expected to have a uniform and smooth surface that may offer some relief from the noise presently experienced by some residents.

*The V ditches that are to be placed in, I'm asking again are you going to leave us with cobblestone and sand or are you going to sit there and grass it for us? That basically covers my concerns that were mentioned with other people. Thank you.*

**RESPONSE:** Roadside slopes will be revegetated as soon as practicable to stabilize slopes and to minimize the visual effects of highway reconstruction. A revegetation plan will be developed that specifies seeding methods, seeding dates, types and amounts of mulch and fertilizer, and seed mix components. MDT's standard procedure is to remove reasonably-sized large cobbles and rocks prior to reseeded.

**COMMENT:** *(Dennis Ogle) I live right on the corner of Spokane Creek Road and Canyon Ferry Road. I have two questions. First, I'm in a unique position like a lot of the property owners here that are going to lose property, I have a position here – what is going to happen with the property the highway currently sits on if they remove that highway, is that going to be made available to the landowner; the adjacent landowner?*

**RESPONSE:** Once the new roadway is built, abandoned sections of the old roadway would be obliterated. Portions of the old right-of-way that were acquired by the MDT in fee and are no longer needed for highway use or maintenance can be offered for public sale or auction. As Michael Johnson (Great Falls District Administrator) noted, landowners may send a letter requesting the sale of abandoned property. According to state law, if it really is excess right-of-way, MDT would be obligated to offer it for public sale or auction. However, if federal-aid funding were used to build the original highway or acquire its right-of-way, the sale of excess land would first need to be approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

**COMMENT:** *(Dennis Ogle) Second, we're on that corner on that road and it is my fault for not making the previous meetings, but I was under the assumption that our driveway would turn down to Spokane Creek Road and I see tonight that our driveway would go up and take that sharp corner that is one of the bad areas of that road right now. I realize there will not be near as much traffic but in the wintertime if this is the route we are going to have to use, is that particular part of the road going to be maintained by the highway department for snow removal or will that be left up to the*

*landowners? That can be a treacherous piece of highway because of the angle. When you pull out on it, it is not flat – it is at quite an angle and if it is not maintained it can be difficult to get up that stretch of road.*

**RESPONSE:** Maintaining the portion of the old road you reference would be the responsibility of you and adjoining property owners since the road would no longer link state-maintained Secondary highways.

The proposed project would not affect your private driveway but it would change how you access your property because the paved road connection between Canyon Ferry and Spokane Creek Roads would be severed. Additional work must be done before we can detail specific design changes to be made in the vicinity of your property. However, we believe the project would provide acceptable and reasonable access to your property.

As currently proposed, you and several of your neighbors would access your properties from a new "frontage" road paralleling the reconstructed Canyon Ferry Road. To the extent possible, the frontage road would be built within the present right-of-way corridor and have grades substantially improved over those associated with the existing highway. The frontage road would join Spokane Creek Road just south of its new intersection with Canyon Ferry Road. A figure illustrating these proposed changes is provided below.

You and the other property owners that would use the proposed frontage road will have additional opportunities to discuss access issues with the project's design team. Road designers will also continue to look at alternative access provisions in this area. The overriding goal is to afford reasonable access to all properties serviced by this road.

**COMMENT:** *(Bob Glass) I own the Glass Slipper. I just listened to Dennis' comments and I think Dennis is right. I was just talking to Jason about that. The old existing road that goes up that hill from the Glass Slipper is very dangerous and is awful steep and when it gets slick, they go off it. I feel that maybe you should take what Dennis says and come down to Spokane Creek Road instead of going up and then around and down by the Glass Slipper.*

**RESPONSE:** Please note the above response to a similar comment by Mr. Ogle.

**COMMENT:** *(Jim Maxwell) Corner of Canyon Ferry and Lake Helena. From Wylie and Canyon Ferry out to Lake Helena, is the base going to come down and be rebuilt? Because it was laid down for traffic way back when and with the heavy trucks coming across there and the traffic, you can see how weak, how it goes up and down, and in the Spring it sinks and goes up. I'm just kind of wondering – if you put all that money into a road and then have the same thing happening that is happening at the present time.*

**RESPONSE:** The new pavement of Canyon Ferry Road would be designed to accommodate projected traffic volumes and loadings. The existing base material for the road would be removed and replaced with a uniform layer of new gravel base material. The existing road base

is variable and ranges from a minimal layer of plant mix oil to a several of inches of gravel. The new road would have a much thicker pavement section than the existing road.

**COMMENT:** *(Jim Maxwell) May I approach the picture on the little drawing board – I want to show you something. As you can see, this passing lane here is great but my corner sits right up here and waste water treatment brings fertilizer out and at least twice a day this big truck has to lock up his 18-wheeler because we’ve got a beautiful blinking light there but people think they can break out in front of him. It is the same with Helena Sand and Gravel, Big Sky, or whoever. At Custer and Washington Street there is a pressure stop light. You can talk with the Highway Patrol because we have. For instance, Lake Helena, Valley, and Wylie if you have a pressure stop light it is going to slow a lot of traffic down because coming down, like on Sunday all the traffic is bad, but on the day when everybody is going home you can count a couple of thousand people going by here. They don’t slow down when somebody pulls out. You’ve got to come out going as fast as you can push the gas on.*

*Right here when you are coming down the hill, for instance, when I turned in my driveway Saturday morning, we got passed on the left side on a solid yellow line. A lot of people are kind of concerned about this. The Highway Patrol calls it a suicide lane. If you, the Highway Department, put a pressure stop light at these three intersections, I think we are going to eliminate a lot of accidents.... I think a stop light there might slow people down. 45 mph from that corner all the way into Power Townsend ... the Highway Patrol has presented this to the Highway Department and the Legislature and they just slough it off. They say it’s a highway but how many people is it going to take to bury before someone takes an interest in this. We’ve confronted the Director of the Highway Department and Dave doesn’t have much comment on it. These guys are working great at designing it and taking our comments, but we need everybody’s help in this. This is great, helping everybody out for a turn lane and widening it but we have a lot more safety than what we have. The Highway Patrolman on TV said about the last one at Valley Drive ... you know they prepped Valley Drive, Wylie and Lake Helena for accidents.*

**RESPONSE:** The warrants used to analyze intersections in this state for signalization on state maintained facilities are the same warrants recognized and used nationally. These warrants define the minimum conditions under which installing traffic control signals might be justified. If at least one of the warrants is not met, then installation of a signal is not recommendable. The intersection of Wylie Drive and Canyon Ferry Road would initially be signalized. It is also likely that some time during the next ten years or twenty years, the intersection at Valley Drive will meet warrants for a traffic signal. The intersection of Lake Helena Drive and Canyon Ferry Road is not expected to warrant a traffic signal during the next twenty years.

As indicated earlier, an engineering study could be conducted after reconstruction activities on Canyon Ferry Road are completed so it is possible to identify typical travel speeds and characteristics on the new facility and determine if there is the need for adjustments to posted speed limits.

**COMMENT:** *(Jim Maxwell) One more question then. If you are not going to put in a pressure stop light at Valley and Lake Helena, in some instances at those corners we have a stop light, caution light at both those intersections, on the east and south how about putting a flashing yellow light 100 or 150 feet back cautioning that there is a stop light ahead because people blow right through the intersection? Thanks to Commissioner Anita Varone, one of the gravel trucks in town blew out a stop sign there and some people from out-of-state went driving through it and five went to the hospital. It's an ugly corner. The Highway Patrol says that. I just want to make everything that's happening known.*

**RESPONSE:** The installation of advance flashing lights, warning signs and transverse milled rumble strips is being considered across the side road approaches at the Valley Drive and Lake Helena Drive intersections. Accident trends suggest that the provision of dedicated left turn lanes on Canyon Ferry Road at these and other major intersections will help eliminate conflicts between through and turning traffic. The major intersections (Wylie Drive, Valley Drive, Lake Helena Drive, Spokane Creek Road, and perhaps Keir Lane) are currently being recommended for lighting.

**COMMENT:** *(Dennis Ogle) Will the road be obliterated with the project or at some other later time?*

**RESPONSE:** The areas of the roadway that would not be used will be obliterated with the project.

**COMMENT:** *(Sue Garber) I live on Canyon Ferry Road. Recommending maybe along with the caution lights, rumble strips. I've driven Lake Helena Drive recently going north to south, rumble strips really get your attention when you hit them and it is a blind corner when you reach Lake Helena Drive and Canyon Ferry Road. I can see how that girl got killed there because the trees there and the cross street there, and you can't see that it is suppose to be an intersection. It's very deceiving and I believe rumble strips both on Lake Helena Drive and Valley would be very necessary.*

**RESPONSE:** The installation of advance flashing lights and transverse milled rumble strips across side road approaches are being considered with improvements at the Valley Drive and Lake Helena Drive intersections. Lighting at these intersections should also help increase safety and driver awareness.

**COMMENT:** *(Gene Ransier) 5719 Canyon Ferry Road. I've got two questions: this project that you have proposed here tonight, is that the final definitely where the road is going to go if and when they put it in? Or are they going to change their mind again and put it someplace else?*

**RESPONSE:** The EA presents the scope of the project MDT intends to advance into the final design stage. The proposed location for the reconstructed Canyon Ferry Road was established based on an alignment and grade review meeting attended by the project's design team held during Fall 2002. This meeting allowed MDT and its design consultant to establish the location for the reconstructed road and agree upon the proposed reconfiguration of the Canyon Ferry Road/Spokane Creek Road intersection.

If the FHWA reaches a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), the project can proceed into final design and right-of-way acquisition stages. Although minor adjustments or changes may be made during final design stages, the overall reconstruction concept for the Canyon Ferry Road project will change little from that presented in the EA.

**COMMENT:** *(Gene Ransier) One more question. I've been out there on my corner and I've had my home for about 35 years. I moved out there in 1969 before the highway was even paved. I'm not overly anxious or happy about having to move but I'm going to have to move because you've got the highway designed right through my house, my garages and my son's mobile home, along with three or four other families out there. If I'm going to have to move, when is the state going to start acting on this? Am I going to be there six months or am I going to be there for the next three years?*

**RESPONSE:** If a FONSI determination is made by the FHWA, MDT will be able to proceed with developing final design plans to secure new right-of-way. You should be contacted regarding right-of-way needs beginning in 2004. MDT is committed to begin working as soon as possible with the owners of the properties where residential relocations or other notable right-of-way impacts are anticipated.

**COMMENT:** *(Gene Ransier) You say four people have to be relocated. I say five. There are five families living out there. That mobile home that is on my property is my sons. That is his permanent home.*

**RESPONSE:** Thank you for the information about the mobile home on your property. Our EA had identified four residences for relocation and mentioned that another residence (a mobile home) may need to be relocated. The mobile home referred to in the document is the one located on your property. Preliminary design work for this project shows that the new road may affect this mobile home. Five residential relocations would occur if the project requires the mobile home to be moved.

**COMMENT:** *(Gene Ransier) Another thing, what you have told me tonight such as you're probably looking at six months before the state starts buying the right-of-way and I have to move out, well that is just about what I was told a year ago. According to what some of the people told me last fall, I'd been moved out of there along about April or May and they are not doing anything about it. I mean, I don't know if I want to put in new carpet or do any maintenance on the house. I just want to know how long you figure I'm going to be there before I have to move so I know what I'm going to do and what I'm not going to do.*

**RESPONSE:** Right-of-way acquisition for this project will begin in earnest after the environmental document has been completed and plans become more finalized. The FHWA is expected to make a decision on the Finding of No Significant Impact for this EA in March 2004.

MDT's Surface Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for 2004-2006 (Final Version, September 2003) does not include the right-of-way acquisition phase for the Canyon Ferry Road project. However, MDT's first quarterly STIP amendment for 2004 will identify right-of-way acquisition as a "programmed" highway project. FHWA will be able to approve right-of-way

acquisition for the project after the STIP is updated.

Right-of-way appraisals for all needed properties within the project area should begin in early 2004 and negotiations with affected property owners should begin later in 2004. MDT intends to have all necessary right-of-way purchased by the end of 2005, clearing the way for construction to begin in the spring of 2006. Please note that reconstruction of the Canyon Ferry Road corridor may occur under one or more projects depending on the availability of funding. At this time, the eastern segment of the project where you reside would be constructed last, perhaps several years after the western segment is finished.

MDT is willing work with you or other residents that need to be relocated in order to accelerate the right-of- way acquisition process and minimize inconveniences to you. For example, it may be possible for MDT to purchase the property and allow the landowner to remain in the home until an agreed upon future date. Alternately, if some residents wish move as soon as possible, MDT will attempt to accommodate these wishes.

***COMMENT: (Ann Wright) What are they going to do with the drainage system at Spokane Creek and Canyon Ferry Road. If we decide to build back on our property, I don't want that drainage area coming right through the property. Are you going to drain it across the road to the Glass Slipper? There is quite a drainage system that comes down from up above there that goes around ... from Keir Lane, it comes around that little point there on the north side of the highway. That is why we have a ditch around that corner of the point. It drains out now through a field but if we decide to build back there, where are you going to put the water?***

**RESPONSE:** Drainage improvements and maintenance associated with the highway would be designed to adequately handle anticipated runoff events without making the situation more adverse for adjoining landowners. Preliminary hydraulic studies of Spokane Creek, No Name Spring Creek and other minor drainages throughout the project have been conducted and will continue to be reviewed to establish appropriate drainage provisions for the new highway.

MDT typically limits its work to crossings and areas within the existing or new right-of-way corridor where streams or drainages are likely to contact the highway facility. Should the highway affect the drainage pattern, then the effects will be mitigated. In your area, we would expect to direct flows along the construction limits of the highway and with drainage flows ultimately directed toward Spokane Creek on the north side of the highway within the newly acquired right-of-way. At this time, it is believed not to be feasible to re-direct the flows under the highway towards the Glass Slipper to enter Spokane Creek south of the highway.

***COMMENT: (Melvin Hamilton) I lease Ann's place. What she is talking about comes out right on the highway right now and it's pushed water up onto the road before this flood and it will go exactly where she wants to put her house. It won't be back no quarter of a mile, it will be right there. Another thing, you talk about moving these culverts down the creek, have you been out there and looked at the hole it washed on the north side of those culverts lately? The water's dropped about six feet since then and you ought to come out and look at it now. There is a hole there probably 20 to 30 feet deep. (Melvin Hamilton) There is going to be a lot of fill and you're going to put***

*rock and everything else in there to make a bed for them culverts, and what's going to stop that? Next time there is another flood it is going to wash down into my property further.*

**RESPONSE:** Hydraulic conditions at the Spokane Creek crossing are complex. Preliminary design work for this crossing suggest large-size double culverts, similar to the existing pipes, would be sufficient for anticipated flows. However, since the preliminary design for the crossing was done, major flooding occurred in this area during March 2003. This recent flood event (associated with rapid snowmelt and runoff) provides additional information about runoff patterns, quantities and problem areas for consideration by road designers. This new information and observations will help designers identify and size the drainage structures at this crossing. Design work for this crossing is ongoing.

**COMMENT:** *(John Denherder) I don't know if this is appropriate to the Environmental Assessment, but I would be interested in knowing how the fair market value is assessed and if a landowner objects, what is the process?*

**RESPONSE:** The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and the associated "Uniform Relocation Act Amendments of 1987," provide protection and assistance for people affected by Federally funded projects like the proposed highway improvements. The laws ensure that people whose real property is acquired, or who have to move as a result of projects receiving Federal funds, will be treated fairly and equitably and will receive assistance in moving from the property they occupy.

MDT would use an appraisal process to establish the fair market value for properties that must be acquired for the reconstruction of Canyon Ferry Road. If an agreement to purchase right-of-way cannot be reached through negotiations with the landowner based on the fair market value for the affected property, MDT may choose to proceed with a condemnation. In condemnation actions, the court determines a fair assessment of property value. Condemnation is usually not used unless all attempts to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement through negotiations have failed.

**COMMENT:** *(Nate Nelson) The one question that isn't answered are well heads that will be in the right-of-way, will they drill new wells for those people?*

**RESPONSE:** Based on preliminary design work performed to date, it is not certain that any well heads will be within the necessary right-of-way needed or impacted by the proposed project. If it is determined that impacts to a well cannot be avoided, then MDT can either compensate the landowner directly for having a replacement well drilled or MDT may provide the replacement well if the landowner does not wish to assume the risk of establishing the new well. In either case, a determination has to first be made that impacts to the well cannot be avoided, and that replacing the well is necessary.

**COMMENT:** *(Melvin Hamilton) I've got another question on Spokane Creek. I've got agricultural access on the east side of the bridge and it doesn't show it going back in on your pictures, but I've got a small bridge down below that won't hold the weight of*

***large loads of hay we bring out onto the main road. Do you have any idea what you are going to do about that?***

**RESPONSE:** The Canyon Ferry Road project will include an Access Management Plan. The Access Management Plan would show the specific location, configuration, ownership, land use type and level of use (volume) for each individual property access within the corridor. The intent of the Access Management Plan and the implementation of limited access control would be to identify and perpetuate necessary existing access points; shift or combine approaches where practical; and eliminate unneeded approaches.

During the development of right-of-way and access control plans for this project, MDT's design consultant will be available to meet with each landowner to review existing accesses and to identify future access needs. Access to individual properties will be reviewed with each affected landowner during such meetings, and again later during the right-of-way phase of the project.

**COMMENT:** *(Bob Leach) I live 3043 Canyon Ferry Road. I proposed or mentioned sidewalks on the north side. If we can't do concrete and if that is too expensive, you are already there with blacktop, can we put in a bike trail? If you would consider that I'd appreciate it. Also, on your map, is that blue line the edge of the easement or the edge of the highway?*

**RESPONSE:** Construction cost was not the sole reason MDT chose to eliminate sidewalks from the project. As indicated in our earlier response to your comments on page FC-8, other reasons for not including sidewalks or separated paths were:

- the low existing and projected demand for sidewalks;
- the lack of public consensus over the need for such features;
- maintenance costs and obligations;
- concerns over placing pedestrians in close proximity to fast-moving traffic (with sidewalks immediately behind the curb); and
- the potential impacts (and substantially higher costs) of expanding the right-of-way to accommodate sidewalks or multi-use paths separated from the new highway.

The blue lines referenced in the comment referred to the aerial photo exhibits used at the public hearing. One line highlighted the edge of the existing pavement and the other showed the approximate location of the proposed right-of-way.

**COMMENT:** *(Bob Leach) How far in the old right-of-way are you coming? I'm concerned about the church.*

**RESPONSE:** The amount of right-of-way required for this project depends on the location within the project area. Right-of-way needs will vary due to the required amount of cuts and fills and the road width and the existing elevation of adjoining lands. Between Wylie and Lake Helena Drives (where the church is located), the new highway would typically require about 15 feet of additional right-of-way on each side of the existing 60-foot-wide overall highway

easement. Please note this required width is based only on the preliminary design plans prepared to date and could change slightly as the project proceeds towards final design.

***COMMENT:*** (Jim Maxwell) *When you say 14 to 15 feet on the existing easement, when I talked to you last I thought we were talking about the centerline of the road towards my fence.*

**RESPONSE:** Research indicates the existing right-of-way for Canyon Ferry Road has never been recorded by deed over the project's length. Therefore, the assumption was made the existing road was developed within a 60-foot- wide right-of-way easement over the length of the project as provided for by Montana statute (7-14-2112, M.C.A.). Based on this assumption, when references are made to 15 feet beyond the existing easement line, it means that the proposed right-of-way line is estimated to be 45 feet from road's centerline in the area of interest to Mr. Maxwell. It is important to note the proposed right-of-way will vary in width throughout the corridor. The right-of-way corridor would be notably wider in rural sections of the project than in the residential/commercial section.

***COMMENT:*** (B.G. Stumberg) *4992 Canyon Ferry Road. I'm the pastor at Canyon Ferry Road Church. In your booklet it says that if your buildings or other improvements such as fences are in the new right-of-way, the state must purchase the improvements at the appraised value. If you're interested it is possible to buy back these improvements for their approved salvage value and move them to another location. Does that mean we have to put up our own fences?*

**RESPONSE:** In general, any fences that would have to be removed would be replaced as part of the project at no cost to the landowner. If property improvements such as buildings are in the new right-of-way area, MDT must purchase the improvements at the appraised value. It is possible for landowners to buy back the improvements (for their appraised salvage value) and move them to another location. However, if improvements were put on the existing highway right-of-way, they are considered an encroachment. MDT does not necessarily pay to replace such improvements.

***COMMENT:*** (B.G. Stumberg) *What about the sign at the church? It is going to be right on the edge there.*

**RESPONSE:** The sign you reference would have to be relocated outside the right-of-way at MDT's expense.

## **Written Comments Received on the EA and MDT's Responses**

MDT received eight written comments on the Canyon Ferry Road EA and Nationwide Programmatic *Section 4(f)* Evaluation during the public availability and review period. The following comments were submitted to MDT between June 23, 2003 and July 25, 2003 (the conclusion of the EA comment period).

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Comments (letter dated June 24, 2003)
- EA Comment form - Charles G. Houk
- EA Comment form - Robert Garber
- EA Comment form - Jim Shaw
- Mike and Marla Ducello's Comments (letter dated July 4, 2003)
- Brian K. Holling, P.E., City-County Transportation Coordinator's Comments (letter dated July 11, 2003)
- Geraldine Coplin's Comments (letter dated July 17, 2003)
- Terry Zimmerman's Comments (letter dated July 24, 2003)

Key comments from the above comment forms and letters are presented on the following pages and are shown in ***bold and italicized text***. Where appropriate, MDT's responses follow each italicized comment. Copies of the original written comments received by MDT are provided in **Attachment 5**.

### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers June 24, 2003 Comment Letter**

On June 24, 2003, Todd N. Tillinger, P.E. of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Helena Regulatory Office submitted the following comments in a letter to Jean Riley:

*This letter provides comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the subject project, which was received by this office on June 24, 2003. This highway construction project is located on Canyon Ferry Road between Helena and Canyon Ferry Lake in southern Lewis and Clark County, Montana.*

*Under the authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, Department of the Army permits are required for the discharge of fill material below the ordinary high water mark of our nation's rivers, streams, lakes or wetlands. Based on the information provided in the EA, there will be work that requires a Department of Army authorization.*

**RESPONSE:** We acknowledge the need for a Section 404 permit since the proposed project would require work within No Name Spring Creek, Spokane Creek, and delineated wetlands associated with these streams.

*As specific design details are developed, the Montana Department of Transportation is reminded that all new culvert or bridge crossings of Waters of the United States (WUS) must have no more than minimal effect on the hydraulic flow characteristics of the*

*natural stream. All new stream crossings must also allow for unimpeded migration of all aquatic life indigenous to the waterway.*

**RESPONSE:** MDT's designs for the proposed new crossings of No Name Spring Creek and Spokane Creek would be developed on the basis of detailed hydraulic studies to ensure minimal effects on flow characteristics of the streams. Perpetuating the use of these streams by fish and other aquatic life will be a design consideration for the new crossings.

*All impacts to WUS, including impacts to streams as well as wetlands, must be avoided if practicable. Unavoidable impacts must be minimized. Compensatory mitigation for all unavoidable impacts to WUS will be a Section 404 permit requirement. Feel free to solicit additional comments from this office as the design develops or if new site information becomes available. Please call me at (406) 441-1375 if you have any questions or would like to discuss these matters further, and reference Corps File Number 2001-90-525.*

**RESPONSE:** Due to the local topography and drainage patterns, reconstruction of Canyon Ferry Road will require crossing both No Name Spring Creek and Spokane Creek and result in unavoidable impacts to the streams and their associated wetland areas.

To the extent possible, the proposed alignment for this reconstruction project has been developed to avoid impacts on wetland sites and streams. The use of steepened slopes for the new highway will be considered and incorporated into the project where possible to reduce impacts to wetlands and streams. Although no specific wetland mitigation sites have been identified within the project corridor at this early stage of the project, on-site wetland creation/restoration opportunities may exist within or adjacent to the existing highway right-of-way near No Name Spring Creek and Spokane Creek. Compensatory mitigation will be developed and refined as the project progresses into final design stages.

### **Charles G. Houk's EA Comment Form**

On July 8, 2003, Charles G. Houk, P.O. Box 718, East Helena provided the following comments on the EA Comment form provided at the Open House Meeting and Public Hearing. Mr. Houk, associated with the Crossroads Christian Church on Walter Drive, offered the following comments:

*Phase One of Crossroads C.C. is about 90% completed - a multipurpose building-intended for use is 7 days/week. We are installing a 50 vehicle parking area. My concern is ingress and egress from Walter Drive -- Needed is a left turn lane at Walter Drive and apron.*

*We have built and planned for the widening of Canyon Ferry Road.*

Mr. Houk made similar comments during the public hearing.

**RESPONSE:** MDT's design consultant completed a traffic study for the project corridor that identified intersections with left turn needs. The intersection of Walter Drive was one of the

intersections within the project area considered in the traffic study. The study showed that a left turn lane was not justified at Walter Drive based on the guidelines presented in the MDT Road Design Manual. A review of the accident history does not indicate that Walter Drive is a notable accident cluster area.

The addition of a 50-vehicle parking lot at the church alone would be unlikely to justify the need for a left turn lane at Walter Drive. We would anticipate that most activities taking place at the church would not always correspond to the peak hours of travel on Canyon Ferry Road. Other new developments potentially accessed via Walter Drive would be monitored during the design of the project to determine if the need for a left turn lane at this location changes.

### **Robert Garber's EA Comment Form**

On July 8, 2003, Robert Garber, 4360 Canyon Ferry Road, East Helena provided the following comments on the EA Comment form provided at the Open House Meeting and Public Hearing. Mr. Garber's comments are as follows:

*South to north drainage for a large area south of Canyon Ferry Rd. needs further attention. By a NCRS study, about 14 sq. miles drains through my place east of Lake Helena Drive (about 1.4 mile east). Lake Helena Drive south of Helena Valley Irrigation was flooded to a depth of 12-14" with water overrunning the south canal bank for long distances on my place (greater than 1/2 mile), this year in March. I experienced heavy damage to the drain/dry creek bottom, with flooding over Canyon Ferry Rd., in spite of large culverts. Large volumes of water traversed the ditches on both sides of Lake Helena Drive up to Eastgate Subdivision. A flood carrying structure over Canal adjacent to Lake Helena Drive needs to be constructed. This concern should be coordinated with L & C County and Helena Valley Irr. District.*

**RESPONSE:** The drainage basin you describe is complex and traverses through fairly level terrain when it reaches the crossing at Canyon Ferry Road. The level terrain compounds the difficulty in providing corrective measures for damaging flood effects. Historically, development and other construction has outpaced measures taken to control its runoff within this drainage basin. Coordination will continue with the Helena Valley Irrigation District, Bureau of Land Management and Lewis and Clark County to ascertain whether additional flood control structures can be implemented by these agencies to manage affects to the basin and its crossing at Canyon Ferry Road east of Lake Helena Drive. This project will continue to analyze the highway crossings within this basin in attempt to improve upon the hydraulic capacity.

### **Jim Shaw's EA Comment Form**

On July 8, 2003, Jim Shaw, 6810 Canyon Ferry Road, Helena provided the following comments on the EA Comment form provided at the Open House Meeting and Public Hearing:

*DO NOT change any speed limits in the project area. Lowering them would invite disobedience. Good Design.*

**RESPONSE:** An engineering study could be conducted after reconstruction so it is possible to identify typical travel speeds on the new facility and determine whether the posted speed limits are appropriate for the new road.

### **Mike and Marla Ducello's July 4, 2003 Comment Letter**

On July 4, 2003, Mike and Marla Ducello of 3265 Wheatland Drive, Helena submitted the following comments in a letter to Jean Riley:

*We are very much in favor of the proposed action regarding the Canyon Ferry Road (CF Road) Reconstruction. We have several questions/concerns, however, as our subdivision entrance intersects CF Road about 3/4 mile west of Hart Lane- in the area where the highway will be relocated north of existing center.*

*First, who will be responsible for rebuilding/extending the private drive approaches where CF Road will be moved south of the existing centerline? Wheatland Drive presently needs a new culvert and approach installed, but we have been putting it off due to the expectations that this project may change the location and or elevations of the approach. The current ditch at this intersection is very shallow causing water and silt to pool at Wheatland Drive which has completely filled the existing culvert.*

**RESPONSE:** Public and private road approaches will be rebuilt as part of the project at no cost to adjoining landowners. The extent to which approaches would be rebuilt depends on what's necessary to provide reasonable access and a connection to the reconstructed highway. Typically, private side road approaches would be reconstructed at least to the new right-of-way line or as needed beyond the right-of-way line to match the grades on the existing approach. The approach at Wheatland Drive would be designed to ensure it makes a safe connection to Canyon Ferry Road and to reduce or eliminate the identified drainage problems.

Based on MDT's current and anticipated future funding, only the portion of Canyon Ferry Road between the beginning of the project and the Helena Valley Canal crossing (located at MilePost 4.77) would be included in the initial reconstruction project on this route. This portion of the corridor is currently proposed for reconstruction during 2006 and 2007. Reconstruction of the remainder of Canyon Ferry Road east of the Helena Valley Canal crossing (where Wheatland Drive is located) would be unlikely until at least several years after the first project is completed.

*Second, will mailboxes still be allowed on CF Road, or will they be required to be moved? If they have to be moved will there be criteria specified for mailbox access and turn around space which may necessitate widening the intersecting driveways.*

**RESPONSE:** MDT's consultant is coordinating this project with the Postmasters in East Helena and Helena to determine if mail delivery can be provided along both sides of the new road to eliminate the need for pedestrian crossings of the highway. There may also be opportunities within the corridor to group several mailboxes or establish mailbox banks at convenient and safe locations. The proposed highway would include much wider shoulders in the rural areas suitable for continued roadside mail delivery and pickup. However, if there is a location(s) where mailboxes are currently grouped along the highway with an adjacent approach that serves several

residences, then consideration may be given to relocating the group of mailboxes from the shoulder of the highway to the approach for additional safety. In such instances, widening the pullout to access the grouped mailboxes would also be considered.

*Third, will school bus stops remain the same after the project is complete?*

**RESPONSE:** Currently, there are no plans to change school bus stops or service within the project area.

*Our final concern at this time is whether the speed limit will change. It is our opinion that 60 MPH is adequate given that this is a rural area with numerous private drive approaches, farm equipment access points, school bus stops, and rural mail stops.*

**RESPONSE:** Your comments regarding the appropriate speed limit for Canyon Ferry Road are appreciated. An engineering study could be conducted after reconstruction activities on Canyon Ferry Road are completed so it is possible to identify typical travel speeds and motorist characteristics on the new facility and determine whether the need for adjustments to posted speed limits is necessary.

*This project has been a long time coming - kudos to DOT and Robert Peccia and Associates for finally making it happen. Last year's improvements at the York Road-Canyon Ferry intersection has really increased safety and improved traffic flow. The proposed improvements for the rest of Canyon Ferry Road should make the overall access to the East valley and lake area that much better.*

**RESPONSE:** Your comments are noted.

### **Brian K. Holling's July 11, 2003 Comment Letter**

On July 11, 2003, Brian K. Holling, P.E., City- County Transportation Coordinator submitted the following comments in a letter to Jean Riley:

*Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Environmental Assessment for Canyon Ferry Road. Lewis and Clark County continues to support this project and we are offering the following comments on the EA document.*

*Section III, C, 2 (page 29): This section refers to a future engineering investigation of travel speeds after the reconstruction is complete. However, at the recent request of Lewis and Clark County, MDT has prepared a speed limit investigation in May 2003. This investigation included an area that is within the Canyon Ferry Road project limits. The EA should be revised to include this information.*

**RESPONSE:** A future engineering study of travel speeds after Canyon Ferry Road is rebuilt may be warranted due to substantial changes in the geometrics and design of the route. Continuing development within the project corridor and the possibility of an I-15 interchange being built at Custer Avenue are other factors that may change traffic volumes and travel characteristics on Canyon Ferry Road.

In response to your comment, the status of the referenced speed study was reviewed. The speed study for the project corridor was completed in January 2004. Data collected for the study and findings and recommendations from the study are currently under review by the Montana Transportation Commission. The Transportation Commission will ultimately decide the need for revisions to posted speed limits at an upcoming meeting.

References to the speed study for Canyon Ferry Road will be added to the text of the EA. Please review the "EA Omissions, Corrections, and Final Changes" section of this Summary of Final Coordination document for the new text.

***Section IV, C, 11 (page 99): The City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County will soon be updating the Helena Area Transportation plan in cooperation with MDT. Part of that plan will include a document that is under final review titled "Helena Non-Motorized Transportation Plan." This plan will include standards for construction of bicycle paths in the Helena area. Although this plan is not currently adopted and not available for use in this EA, Lewis and Clark County encourages its use during final design.***

**RESPONSE:** We appreciate the information regarding the status of the transportation planning efforts within the greater Helena area. We will add a new text to this section of the EA describing the future availability of these local transportation planning documents.

As indicated earlier in this document, MDT's initial plans for the commercial/residential section of the project area was to include paved pedestrian facilities. However, the current plan for this project does not include such facilities due to cost considerations and the apparent lack of widespread public support. The future project corridor will include paved shoulders ranging from 6 to 8 feet wide to accommodate bicycle use. This will be a substantial improvement over the present roadway which has little if any usable shoulder for bicyclists or pedestrians.

***Section IV, C, 14 (page 106): Lewis and Clark County is concerned about the potential construction related traffic impacts. We strongly encourage the use of detours and work zones that can accommodate two-way traffic during the construction of the project. While some inconvenience is inevitable, we would like to see this minimized or mitigated to the fullest extent that is practical.***

**RESPONSE:** Rebuilding Canyon Ferry Road following its current alignment in the commercial residential section presents a challenge for designers since traffic cannot be easily shifted off this route due to adjacent development and limited right-of-way. Parallel detour routes do not exist in close proximity to Canyon Ferry Road.

With the exception of the Canyon Ferry Road/Spokane Creek Road intersection area, traffic control within the rural portion of the project should be relatively simple because the location of Canyon Ferry Road will be shifted. Although work zone cross-overs may be needed, two-way traffic can be maintained on the existing highway through much of the area east of Lake Helena

Drive.

MDT will require the construction contractor to prepare a Traffic Control Plan to guide the sequencing of construction, maintain local and through traffic, and minimize disruptions and inconveniences during the project. The Traffic Control Plan will incorporate detours and accommodate two-way traffic to the extent possible given conditions within the project area. MDT is also considering including incentives and penalties to ensure the contractor building the project proceeds in an expeditious manner. MDT will provide the County with opportunities to review and comment on road design plans and traffic control plans as they develop.

### **Geraldine Coplin's July 17, 2003 Comment Letter**

On July 17, 2003, Geraldine Coplin of 3540 Canyon Ferry Road, East Helena submitted the following comments in a letter to Jean Riley:

*I have contacted Tom Cavanaugh, consultant project manager of Robert Peccia & Assoc. regarding the Canyon Ferry Road Environmental Assessment & he referred me to you - to address our concerns to you in writing.*

*Our concerns are as follows:*

*The shoulders of the road should be sufficient for bikers and walkers. There isn't that much walking along the road nor bicycling in this area (Its not like in town where sidewalks are needed.) WE DO NEED THE SHOULDERS.*

**RESPONSE:** The reconstructed roadway would include shoulders over the entire length of the project.

*I was informed that in our area (Wylie Drive to Lake Helena Drive) there will be a 3 lane roadway including a turning lane instead of the existing 2 lane, which would require 15' of our property from the property line. Being that they are taking 15' of our property to extend this roadway from the sides, are we going to be compensated for the 15' that they're using from our property? Also will our existing fence be replaced? What happens to our mailbox, small tree & our approach to the new road?*

**RESPONSE:** MDT is obligated to compensate landowners not only for the value of the property required for the project, but also for the damage to the remaining property. If your mailbox and fence have to be removed, they would be replaced as part of the project at no cost to you. Likewise, any necessary work to your approach would be done as part of the project. The replacement of your fence, mailbox, tree, and approach will be negotiated with you during the right-of-way acquisition stage of this project and included in a written agreement between you and MDT.

*We would greatly appreciate a reply to these concerns. (written would be great).*

**RESPONSE:** Jean Riley provided a written reply to Ms. Coplin on July 24, 2003.

## **Terry Zimmerman's July 24, 2003 Comment Letter**

On July 24, 2003, Terry Zimmerman submitted the following comments in a letter to Jean Riley:

*Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Canyon Ferry Road reconstruction. I believe that you have done a good job on keeping the people informed and on the design of the new road.*

*I am making a comment on the Keir Lane reconstruction end of the project. It appears that the Keir Lane road will come directly into Canyon Ferry Road at a "T" intersection. I am concerned that the Keir Lane road hill will be cut down and the base filled near the Canyon Ferry Road intersection. The purpose is to remove the "Roller Coaster" effect of the Keir Lane road into an immediate "T" intersection. As Keir Lane is presently designed, Keir Lane has several large dips that cars are allowed to drop out of sight on despite the fact that the road is straight. It is possible with Keir's design that a car traveling down Keir toward Canyon Ferry Road (redesigned) could actually travel too fast and not know that an intersection is coming up and have an accident. It is also possible that a car coming down the hill will not be able to stop if ice is on the road causing them to slip into Canyon Ferry Road "T".*

*Three young people have been killed at this site. My son was one of them. I would appreciate if you would cut the hill portion off Keir Lane as much as possible and fill the base to bring the road into a more flat and less roller coaster road. I believe that it will save lives.*

**RESPONSE:** Thank you for your suggestions concerning the redesign of Keir Lane near its proposed new "T" intersection with Canyon Ferry Road. The proposed design configuration for the future Keir Lane and Canyon Ferry Road intersection has been developed in accordance with the geometric design guidelines in MDT's *Road Design Manual*. The design guidelines provide a means of developing uniformity and safety in the design of all Montana highways. The guidelines help define the appropriate design for intersecting roads based on the type of highway (interstate, primary, secondary, urban and local); the amount of vehicular traffic; the surrounding terrain; etc. economics; funding; safety; environmental considerations; level of risk; and driver expectations. For intersections, these guidelines address lane and shoulder widths, roadside slopes, maximum and minimum grades, intersection alignment, sight distance requirements, and traffic controls.

Typically, reconstruction of side road approaches extends only to the new right-of-way line or to a location where the new connection can be adequately tied into the existing approach roadway. In the case of Keir Lane, reconstruction of the approach would extend substantially beyond the new right-of-way line. Rebuilding Keir Lane beyond the proposed construction limits can't be justified based on the scope and budget for the Canyon Ferry Road project. Significant cuts or fills on the Keir Lane approach to Canyon Ferry Road would likely require the acquisition of additional right-of-way that could result in unanticipated adverse impacts to adjoining properties.

The "roller coaster" section of Keir Lane you describe and show in your attached diagram is well beyond where work would occur for the Canyon Ferry Road project and cannot be done as part

of this project. The funding for this project is applicable only to improvements to Canyon Ferry Road (a State Secondary Route) and associated adjustments to intersecting approaches caused by the proposed highway modifications.

Conforming traffic control devices would be installed on Keir Lane to warn motorists of the approaching intersection.

*I was not able to make your meeting and I would appreciate it if you could send me a copy of the EA for the July 8 meeting. If there is an expense let me know how much and I will send you a check.*

**RESPONSE:** A copy of the EA was sent to Mr. Zimmerman by Robert Peccia & Associates on August 6, 2003.

## **Attachments**

The following items are provided as attachments to this Summary of Final Coordination.

- Attachment 1**      MDT's Notice of Availability for the EA and Public Hearing Advertisement as published in area newspapers.
  
- Attachment 2**      Copy of EA Notification Letter and Newsletter sent to those on Mailing List
  
- Attachment 3**      Copy of sign-in sheets from the July 8, 2003 Open House and Public Hearing
  
- Attachment 4**      Copy of Transcript from the July 8, 2003 Public Hearing
  
- Attachment 5**      Written Comments Received on the EA



# ATTACHMENT 1

**MDT's Notice of Availability for the EA and Public Hearing Advertisement as Published in the *Helena Independent Record***

**Copy of EA Availability and Public Hearing Notice from MDT's Website**

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY**  
**Canyon Ferry Road Environmental Assessment**  
**PUBLIC HEARING/OPEN HOUSE**

The MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT), in cooperation with Lewis and Clark County, recently prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) addressing the future reconstruction of 8.4 miles of Canyon Ferry Road (Secondary Highway 430). The proposed project begins near the City of Helena's Missouri River Water Treatment Plant and ends just east of the route's junction with Spokane Creek Road (Secondary Highway 284).

The EA discusses the actions and environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. If advanced, MDT would implement the proposed highway improvements under one or more construction projects depending on the availability of funding.

An informal open house meeting to discuss the proposed highway project will be held from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 8, 2003 at the East Valley Middle School gymnasium, 401 Kalispell Ave. in East Helena. A Public Hearing to explain the scope of the proposed highway reconstruction project, discuss the findings of the EA, and to take public comments will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 8, 2003 at the same location.

The EA can be viewed during normal working hours at the following locations in the area.

**Lewis and Clark County Library** - 120 S. Last Chance Gulch (Helena)  
**City and County Transportation Office**, City and County Building, Room 404, 316 North Park - (Helena)  
**East Helena City Hall**, City Clerk's Office - 7 E. Main Street  
**Montana State Library** - 1515 East Sixth Avenue (Helena)  
**MDT Great Falls District Office** - 200 Smelter Avenue NE (Great Falls)  
**MDT Environmental Services** - 2701 Prospect Avenue, Room 111 (Helena)  
**Robert Peccia & Associates** - 825 West Custer Avenue (Helena)

The EA is also available for viewing on Robert Peccia & Associates' website at [www.rpa-hln.com](http://www.rpa-hln.com) ("News and Info" link).

To arrange special accommodations for disabilities call MDT at (888) 730-0898. For TTY call (406) 444-7696 or (800) 335-7592.

You may request copies of the EA from Environmental Services at (406) 444-7228. To make comments on the EA you must submit written comments to: Jean Riley, Montana Department of Transportation, Environmental Services, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001.

**Written Comments must be submitted by July 25, 2003.**

The Open House and the Public Hearing on the EA will be held on:

**Tuesday, July 8, 2003**  
**Open House 4-6 pm**  
**Public Hearing 7-9 pm**  
**East Valley Middle School Gymnasium**  
**401 Kalispell Avenue**  
**East Helena, Montana**



## Open House For Comments On Canyon Ferry Road EA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE June 19, 2003

For further information, contact:  
Michael Johnson, (406) 454-5887 or  
Jason Giard, (406) 454-5897  
Bob Tholt, (406) 444-6256  
John Robinson, (406) 444-9415

The Montana Department of Transportation is planning to conduct a Public Hearing and Open House to take comments on the Canyon Ferry Road Environmental Assessment on Tuesday, July 8, 2003.

The MDT, in cooperation with Lewis and Clark County, recently prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) addressing the future reconstruction of 8.4 miles of Canyon Ferry Road (Secondary Highway 430). The proposed project begins near the City of Helena's Missouri River Water Treatment Plant and ends just east of the route's junction with Spokane Creek Road (Secondary Highway 284).

The EA discusses the actions and environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. If advanced, MDT would implement the proposed highway improvements under one or more construction projects depending on the availability of funding.

An informal "Open House" meeting to discuss the proposed highway project will be held from 4-6 pm on Tuesday, July 8, 2003 at the East Valley Middle School Gymnasium, 401 Kalispell Avenue, in East Helena. The "Public Hearing" to explain the scope of the project, discuss the findings of the EA, and to take public comments on the EA will be held from 7-9 pm on Tuesday, July 8, 2003 at the same location.

The EA can be viewed during normal working hours at the following locations in the area:

- Lewis and Clark County Library -120 Last Chance Gulch (Helena)
- City and County Transportation Office -City and County Building, Room 404, 316 N Park (Helena)
- East Helena City Hall - City Clerk's Office, 7 East Main St, (East Helena)
- Montana State Library - 1515 East 6th Avenue (Helena)
- MDT Great Falls District Office - 200 Smelter Avenue NE, (Great Falls)
- MDT Environmental Services - 2701 Prospect Avenue, Room 111 (Helena)

**Robert Peccia & Associates - 825 West Custer Avenue (Helena)**

The EA is also available for viewing on Robert Peccia & Associates website at [www.rpa-hln.com](http://www.rpa-hln.com) ("News & Info Link").

To arrange special accommodations for disabilities call MDT at (888) 730-0898. For TTY call (406) 444-7696 or (800) 335-7592.

To make comments on the EA you must submit written comments to: Jean Riley, Montana Department of Transportation, Environmental Services, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001.

Written Comments must be submitted by July 25, 2003.

The Open House and Public Hearing will be held on:

Tuesday, July 8, 2003

Open House 4-6 PM

Public Hearing 7-9 PM

East Valley Middle School Gymnasium

401 Kalispell Avenue

East Helena, MT

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[Back to Public Meetings/News Page](#)

## **ATTACHMENT 2**

### **Copy of EA Notification Letter and Newsletter**



**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
CANYON FERRY ROAD EA**

The MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT), in cooperation with Lewis and Clark County, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) addressing the future improvement of Canyon Ferry Road (Secondary Highway 430). The proposed project begins near the City of Helena's Missouri River Water Treatment Plant and ends just east of the route's junction with Spokane Creek Road (Secondary Highway 284).

CIVIL

TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENTAL

ENGINEERS

The EA discusses the actions and environmental impacts associated with the future reconstruction of 8.4 miles of Canyon Ferry Road. If advanced, MDT would implement the proposed highway improvements under one or more construction projects depending on the availability of funding.

The EA evaluates both a "No Build" alternative and a "Preferred Action" alternative for the project. The No Build alternative includes no major actions to improve the existing road or correct its deficiencies. The Preferred Alternative involves widening of the road's paved surface to include wider shoulders and turn lanes, changing the road's grades and alignment to provide desirable sight distance, relocating conflicting utilities, and improving major intersections. The Canyon Ferry Road project would also include limited access control to help alleviate traffic conflicts, improve safety, and provide for more uniform traffic flows.

The Nationwide *Section 4(f)* Evaluation included with the EA documents compliance with the *U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ACT* for minor effects to historic irrigation features within the project area.

An informal open house meeting to discuss the proposed highway project will be held from **4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 8, 2003** at the East Valley Middle School gymnasium (401 Kalispell Avenue) in East Helena. A Public Hearing to explain the scope of the proposed highway reconstruction project, discuss the findings of the EA, and to take public comments will be held from **7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 8, 2003** at the same location.

The EA can be viewed during normal working hours at the following locations in the area:

- Lewis and Clark County Library (Helena) - 120 S. Last Chance Gulch
- City and County Transportation Office, City and County Building  
Room 438, 316 North Park - (Helena)
- East Helena City Hall, City Clerk's Office - 7 E. Main Street
- Montana State Library (Helena) - 1515 East Sixth Avenue
- MDT Great Falls District Office (Great Falls) - 200 Smelter Avenue NE
- MDT Environmental Services (Helena) Room 111 - 2701 Prospect Avenue
- Robert Peccia & Associates, Inc. (Helena) - 825 West Custer Avenue

P.O. Box 5653  
825 Custer Avenue  
Helena, Montana 59601  
(406)447-5000  
FAX (406)447-5036  
www.rpa-hln.com

The EA is also available for viewing on Robert Peccia & Associates' Internet website at **www.rpa-hln.com** ("News and Info" link).

MDT requests your comments on the EA for this proposed project. To make official comments on the EA you must submit written comments by **JULY 25, 2003** to:

Jean Riley  
Montana Department of Transportation  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena MT 59620-1001

To request a copy of the EA, contact Environmental Services at (406) 444-7228.

For further information about this project, contact Tom Cavanaugh of Robert Peccia & Associates (406) 447-5000 or Michael Johnson, MDT's Great Falls District Administrator at 406-454-5880 or 1-888-730-0898.

To arrange special accommodations for persons with disabilities, call MDT at (888) 730-0898 or TTY (800) 335-7592.

F:\HIGHWAYS\CANFERRY\PUB-INV\EA\Noticetr.doc

### How To Comment on the EA

The public review period on the Canyon Ferry Road EA will conclude on July 25, 2003. Written comments will be received throughout this period and should be sent to:

Jean Riley  
Environmental Services, Montana  
Department of Transportation,  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Comments must be received by July 25, 2003. Oral and written comments will also be taken at the Public Hearing on July 8, 2003.

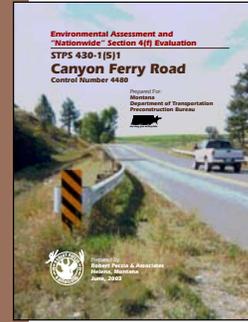
If you have questions about the Canyon Ferry Road project or Public Hearing, please contact:

**Tom Cavanaugh, P.E.**  
Consultant Project Manager  
Robert Peccia and Associates  
P.O. Box 5653  
825 Custer Avenue  
Helena, MT 59604  
(406) 447-5000  
FAX: (406) 447-5036  
tom@rpa-hln.com

**Jason Giard, P.E.**  
Engineering Services Supervisor,  
Montana Department of  
Transportation  
200 Smelter Ave. NE  
P.O. Box 1359  
Great Falls, MT 59403-1359  
(406) 454-5880  
FAX: (406) 453-8737  
jgiard@state.mt.us

**Mick Johnson**  
District Administrator,  
Montana Department of  
Transportation  
200 Smelter Ave. NE  
P.O. Box 1359  
Great Falls, MT 59403-1359  
(406) 454-5880  
FAX: (406) 453-8737  
mijohnson@state.mt.us

To arrange special accommodations for disabilities call MDT at (888) 730-0898. For TTY call (406) 444-7696 or (800) 335-7592.

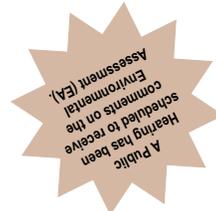


# Canyon Ferry Road Road Reconstruction Project



HIGHWAY S-430 MDT PROJECT STPS 430-1(5)1

Canyon Ferry Road Reconstruction Project - Project Newsletter - Issue No. 5: June 2003



Robert Peccia & Associates  
P.O. Box 5653  
Helena, Montana 59604



### The Next Public Meeting

An OPEN HOUSE and Public Hearing on the Canyon Ferry Road EA will be held on **Tuesday, July 8, 2003.**

Our project team and MDT staff will be on hand to review and discuss the project with you, summarize the EA, and receive your comments on the proposed actions presented in the EA. MDT will record comments formally offered at the Public Hearing.

**Meeting Date:** Tuesday, July 8, 2003

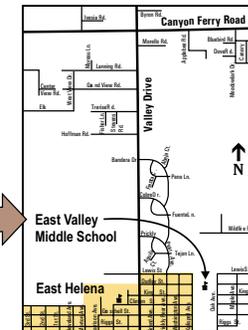
**Where:**  
East Valley Middle School  
401 Kalispell Avenue  
East Helena, MT

**When:**  
4-6:00 pm Open-House  
7-9:00 pm Public Hearing

### EA Available for Review

The Canyon Ferry Road Environmental Assessment (EA) is available for your review and comment. The EA evaluates the potential environmental effects of rebuilding the existing highway between Walter Drive and Spokane Creek Road.

The EA describes the scope of the proposed improvements, the reasons for rebuilding the road, the alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts associated with the Preferred Action and the No Action Alternative. The Preferred Action is described in more detail inside this newsletter.



### EA Viewing and Copies

The EA can be viewed during normal business hours at:

- In Helena**  
Montana Department of Transportation  
Environmental Services, Room 111,  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
City/County Transportation Office  
City/County Building Room 404,  
316 North Park  
Montana State Library  
1515 East Sixth Avenue  
Lewis and Clark County Library  
120 S. Last Chance Gulch  
Robert Peccia & Associates  
825 Custer Avenue

### East Helena Area

City Clerk's Office - 7 East Main Street

The EA can also be viewed by:

- Logging on to [www.rpa-hln.com](http://www.rpa-hln.com) ("News and Info" link) to view the entire EA online
- Requesting a CD-ROM of the EA from MDT Environmental Services (444-7228)
- Copies of the EA can be requested by contacting:

Jean Riley, MDT Environmental Services,  
Montana Department of Transportation,  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001  
(406) 444-7228

**Canyon Ferry Road/Wylie Drive Intersection**

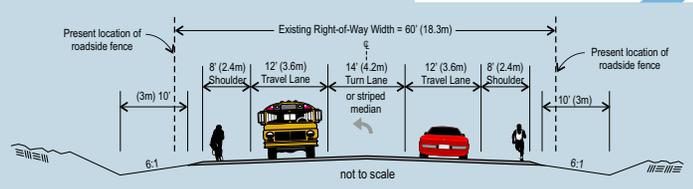
- Install traffic signalization and crosswalks
- Provide left, through, and right turn lanes for EB traffic
- Provide left turn lane and combined through/right turn lane for WB traffic
- Provide left turn lane and combined through/right turn lane for SB traffic
- Provide left, through, and right turn lanes for NB traffic

**Project Beginning to Baldy Drive**

- Rebuild following existing centerline
- Provide two 3.6 m (12-foot) wide travel lanes and two 2.4 m (8-foot) paved shoulders with striped median & center left turn lanes
- Provide 4.2 m (14-foot) wide left turn lanes at Helena Sand and Gravel (RP 1.2), Tizer Road (RP 1.4), and Baldy Drive (RP 1.6)

**Baldy Drive to Wylie Drive**

- Rebuild following existing centerline
- Provide two 3.6 m (12-foot) wide travel lanes, two 2.4 m (8-foot) shoulders, and a 4.2 m (14-foot) wide continuous two-way left turn lane

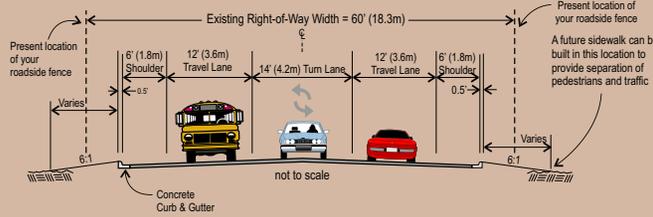


**Canyon Ferry Road/Valley Drive Intersection**

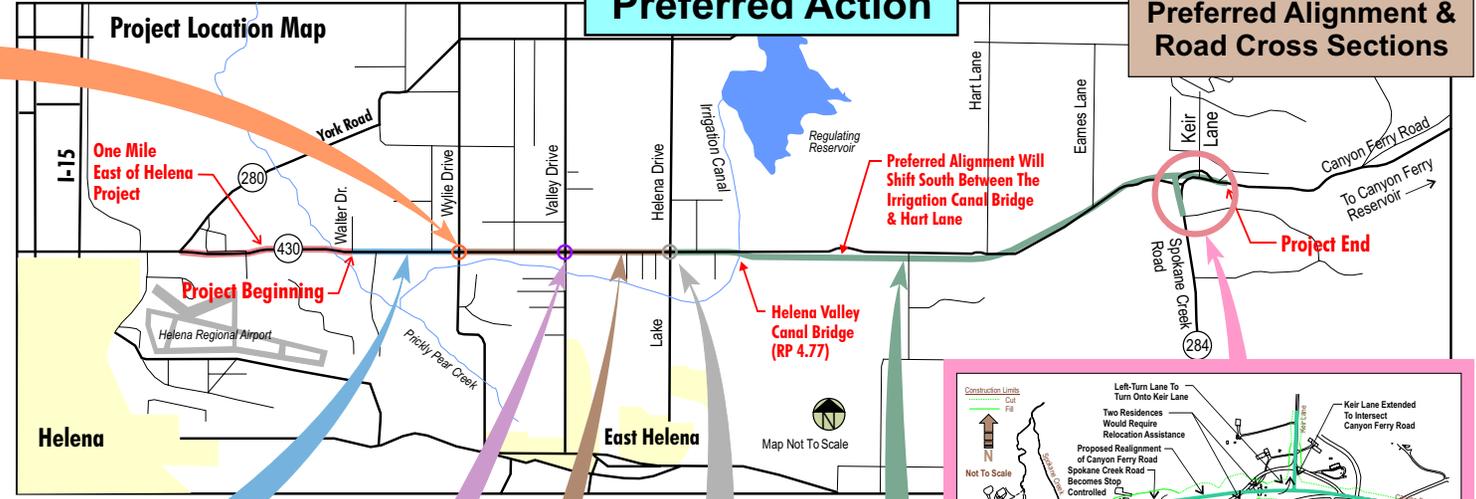
- No traffic signal at this time, maintain flashing beacon and stop controls
- Install provisions for future traffic signal
- Provide left turn lanes and combined through/right turn lanes for NB and SB traffic
- Provide overhead lighting at intersection
- Provide desirable intersection sight distance

**Wylie Drive to Lake Helena Drive**

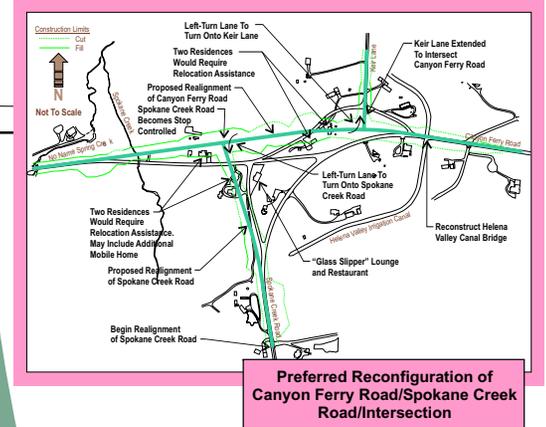
- Rebuild following existing centerline
- Provide two 3.6 m (12-foot) wide travel lanes, two 1.8 m (6-foot) shoulders, and a 4.2 m (14-foot) wide continuous two-way left turn lane
- Provide curb and gutter and a storm runoff collection system
- Consider reducing travel lanes to 3.3m (11-foot), while increasing shoulder widths to 2.1m (7-feet)
- Eliminate sidewalk alternative under this project to reduce overall construction width and cost. Sidewalk can be built under future project when property owner consensus is strong



**Preferred Action**



**Preferred Alignment & Road Cross Sections**

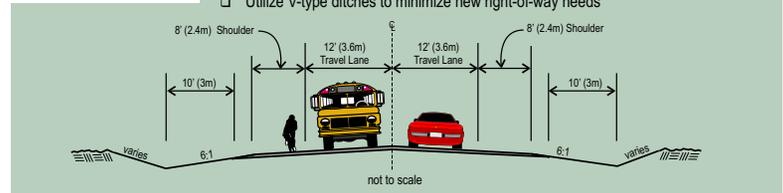


**Canyon Ferry Road/Lake Helena Drive Intersection**

- No traffic signal, maintain flashing beacon and stop controls
- Provide left turn lanes for EB and WB traffic
- Provide overhead lighting at intersection

**Lake Helena Drive to Spokane Creek Road**

- Rebuild following existing centerline to Helena Valley Canal Bridge at RP 4.77
- Rebuild offset from existing centerline east of Helena Valley Canal, modify curves and grades to meet MDT standards
- Provide two 3.6 m (12 foot) wide travel lanes and two 2.4 m (8-foot) paved shoulders
- Utilize V-type ditches to minimize new right-of-way needs



## **ATTACHMENT 3**

### **Sign-in sheets from the July 8, 2003 Open House and Public Hearing**



Montana Department of Transportation  
Public Meeting  
Sign In Sheet

*Please Print!*

Project: Canyon Ferry Road  
Number: STPS 430-1(5)1  
Control Number: CN4480  
Date: Tuesday, July 8, 2003  
Place: East Valley Middle School Gymnasium, 401 Kalispell Avenue, East Helena

Name (Please <u>Print</u> !)	MAILING Address (Please <u>Print</u> !)	Zip Code
MAURICE KRAUT	3562 Heit Rd #5	59602
W. B. Richter	3562 HEIT RD. #5	59602
Andy Boyins	2625 Canyon Ferry Rd.	59602
Chuck Swett	1684 Tarleton st Spring Valley Calif. 92077	
Faye Ann Cummings	2665 Tushy Road	59602
<i>[Signature]</i>	1709 8th Ave	59601
Brian Holling	316 N PARK AVE	59601
John + Kay Hydes	5755 Canyon Ferry Rd	59602
Charles G. Houk	P.O. Box 718 EAST HELENA, MT	59635
Willis E. RANSIER	Box 191 EAST HELENA	59635



Montana Department of Transportation  
Public Meeting  
Sign In Sheet

**PLEASE  
PRINT!**

Project: Canyon Ferry Road

Number: STPS 430-1(5)1

Control Number: CN4480

Date: Tuesday, July 8, 2003

Place: East Valley Middle School Gymnasium, 401 Kalispell Avenue, East Helena

Name (Please <u>Print</u> !)	<u>MAILING</u> Address (Please <u>Print</u> !)	Zip Code
KARAN LAPHAM	5865 ROSENDALE RD E.H.	59635
Edward & Dilly FENLASON	3735 Canyon Ferry Rd East Helena	59635
JIM SHAW	6810 CANYON FERRY RD. HELENA	59602
DON FLAMMOND	3275 EUBSA LT	5601
JOHN O'BRIEN	5412 CANYON FERRY	59635
Brandy O'Brien	5410 Canyon Ferry Rd	59635
BOB & KAY LEACH	3043 Canyon Ferry Rd East Helena	59635
John DENHERDER	3333 Canyon Ferry Rd	59635
Diane O'Brien	5410 Canyon Ferry	59635
ROXANNE VERWORN	3233 CANYON FERRY	59635



Montana Department of Transportation  
Public Meeting  
Sign In Sheet

**PLEASE  
PRINT!**

Project: Canyon Ferry Road

Number: STPS 430-1(5)1

Control Number: CN4480

Date: Tuesday, July 8, 2003

Place: East Valley Middle School Gymnasium, 401 Kalispell Avenue, East Helena

Name (Please <u>Print</u> !)	MAILING Address (Please <u>Print</u> !)	Zip Code
BG Stumberg	— Pastor at Canyon Ferry Rd. Baptist Ch. 4992 Canyon Ferry Rd., E. Helena	59635
Shane O'Brien	5414 Canyon Ferry Rd	59635
Bob + Colleen Garber	4360 Canyon Ferry Rd, E. Helena	59635
DENNIS & CAROL OGLE	3247 Spokane Ck Rd East Helena	59635
Aggie & Mel Hamilton	5620 Canyon Ferry Rd. E. Helena	59635
James P Maxwell	3797 Canyon Ferry Rd	59635
FRANCES NELSON	P.O. Box 1757 E Helena	59635
SHELDON R. CRIDER	5753 CANYON FERRY RD. HELENA	59602



# **ATTACHMENT 4**

## **Transcript of July 8, 2003 Public Hearing**

**CANYON FERRY ROAD  
PUBLIC MEETING  
East Valley Middle School Gymnasium  
401 Kalispell Avenue  
East Helena, MT**

**July 8, 2003**

**OPENING**

**Welcome:** Good evening, thank you all for coming tonight. My name is John Robinson, I'm from the Montana Department of Transportation. The purpose of our meeting tonight is to take public comments on the Environmental Assessment for the Canyon Ferry Road project. The project begins at the Missouri River Water Treatment Plant, which is shown on this display board over here and proceeds east to Spokane Creek Road, also known as Secondary 284. The Department of Transportation has hired the consulting engineering firm of Robert Peccia and Associates from Helena, Montana, to study, design, and develop this project and prepare the Environmental Assessment.

**Introduction:** First of all I would like to make some personal introductions. From the Department of Transportation, we have Michael Johnson, the District Administrator for District Three. Also with us is Jason Giard, the Engineering Services Engineer from Great Falls and District Three. Also with us is Bob Tholt, the Consultant Design Project Engineer from the Department of Transportation. From Robert Peccia and Associates we have Dan Norderud, the Environmental Planner, and Tom Cavanaugh, the Professional Engineer and the Project Manager.

**Meeting Format:** This meeting tonight is a formal public hearing on the Environmental Assessment. We always follow the same format. First Tom Cavanaugh and Dan Norderud will give a presentation of the project, an overview of the project and explain the Environmental Assessment. After Tom and Dan are both done and have completed their presentations, we will open it up to take your formal comments on the Environmental Assessment as it was posted at the different locations in the area. I will ask that you please raise your hand if you would like to give a comment on the Environmental Assessment, and I will come to you with the microphone. I also ask that you state your name. As always, we are recording this meeting so we know who gave the comment and exactly what was said. We ask that only one person speak at a time and when another person is speaking, please give that person the floor.

Some of you did not sign in or pick up comment forms from the back table, so I will pass some more comment sheets around so please take one. Written comments are due by July 25, 2003. There is an address on the top or you may leave it with us tonight. I will place a box for comments in the back and if you would like to write your comment down tonight and put them in the box, that is fine too. Of course, any comment you state tonight will go on the record. With that, I will turn it over to Tom Cavanaugh and Dan Norderud.

**PRESENTATION – Tom Cavanaugh**

Thank you John. Ladies and gentlemen we are here tonight to discuss the Environmental Assessment for the project.

**Project Limits:** As John described. The project begins at the Water Treatment Plant next to Prickly Pear Creek and extends out to include the Spokane Creek Intersection. However, efforts to improve this section of the road really began several years ago when Lewis and Clark County and the Department of Transportation undertook the one-mile east of Helena job. That job, as you people recognize, is the one that was recently completed just west of this proposed project. As a continuation with the intended upgrade, Lewis and Clark

County nominated this project in 2000. This project intends to upgrade and reconstruct the highway from where the one-mile left off to the remainder. After Lewis and Clark County received approval from the Federal Highway Administration and MDT in July of 2000, they immediately entered into a preliminary field review. What that preliminary field review did was to allow the staff of the County and MDT to go out and make notable notes on the deficiencies on the project and outline an intended preliminary proposed scope of work. In April of 2001, Robert Peccia and Associates, who we represent, was brought on board to start working out the real preliminary plans. Once the activities were taken care of and underway, we made contact with the public and property owners in June of 2001 to let you know about the intended improvements.

**Public Meetings:** The first public informational meeting on this project was held November 2001. That public informational meeting is what we considered the Scoping Meeting. It allowed us to interact with you more on a one-on-one basis to gather your comments and truly scope what this project needs. Armed with that information, we began to develop alternatives and looked at several different scenarios.

With that, about a year ago in June 2002, we held our second public informational meeting. That informational meeting was to present the findings of the alternatives that we considered, and in addition, we presented the preferred treatment at that time. What you see behind me is the preferred treatment. It has changed very little since a year ago. What we've been doing in that time is actually preparing the document we are here to discuss tonight, the Environmental Assessment. So that brings us to the current state of affairs. In a few minutes, Dan Norderud will present more findings in detail about the impacts of this study.

**Next Step:** Where do we go from here? Should this project be advanced and we find that your comments and the impacts are not deemed significant; we expect to probably wrap up the environmental process by August of this year. With that wrapping up, it would allow the Federal Highway Administration to start releasing funding to allow us to immediately enter into the right-of-way process. First we would have to start finalizing the right-of-way, but it would be short order after that to start appraising the property and get ready to actually come out and start negotiations with the property owners. We would actually expect right-of-way negotiations to start sometime early in 2004. Now with a project of this size, being over eight miles long, we could fully expect this project to take six months up to a year to actually acquire the right-of-way. The intent is to acquire the right-of-way through the whole project.

**Cost:** With that, I need to make everybody aware that as it sits now, this project is fairly expensive with a price tag of just under \$9 million. The Department of Transportation believes they cannot build this complete project under one project – it will probably be let in two or more constructions. My understanding is that the first construction would continue west east basically from the Water Treatment Plant out to just east of Lake Helena Drive. That project would be scheduled to be let by the Fall of 2005. With any luck, we would actually see some utilities being moved at that time but in all reality most of the construction will not be started within that western segment until about 2006.

**Purpose of Project:** With that, I think it is fairly evident but I need to make notes on why we intend to build this road. The fundamental purpose of this proposed project is to upgrade the remaining portion of Canyon Ferry Road to provide a safe and efficient means of travel. Lewis and Clark County with the cooperation of MDT intends to also reconstruct the western end of this segment between York Road and Custer Avenue. So this project, as I said before, it is MDT's intent to clear up the remaining portion of Canyon Ferry Road. To accomplish this and to provide for a facility that would meet MDT standards, we would have to incorporate actual physical changes to the highway. As it sits now this highway is outdated and substandard to say the least. We would have to increase the facilities efficiency, safety, comfort, and convenience for the traveling public. We would have to bring this road's design into compliance with the current standards. With that, it would reduce the maintenance obligations of MDT, and as we all realize, maintenance dollars are being stretched thin this day and age.

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Until the County completed the first project in 1972, this highway really hadn't had any upgrades. So it has been over 30 years since full attention and the funding has been available to rebuild this road to current standards. Prior to the mid 1970's this road was basically a gravel road. Except in the year 2000, as most of you people recognize, the Department of Transportation did do a thin-lift overlay between the beginning of the project and Lake Helena Drive.

**Need for Project:** The need for this project includes maintaining this highway for increased road use. This is one of the few east-west modes of travel that the east valley has. If it does not gain the attention that it needs, the Department of Transportation cannot keep up with routine maintenance with the increased traffic load and it would just become more and more pot holey and more unsafe for the traveling public.

**Bridges:** There are actually three bridges that are proposed to be replaced on this project. Two of those are considered functionally obsolete or somewhat structurally unsound. Now replacing a bridge is an expensive proposition, so that would also have to be tied with this project.

**Traffic:** Also some of the needs for this project are to be proactive with the developing changes in traffic conditions and traffic volumes. Today we see about 1500 to 6000 vehicles travel this route per day on an average day. Within the design life of this project we can expect those numbers to double. So on the western portion, which is the busiest stretch of this highway, you would see upwards of 12,000 vehicles within the next 20 years.

**Accident History:** Also a major concern is the accident history we see here. Along the commercial residential section, as we call it, namely from the beginning of the road to Lake Helena Drive, the accident trend is typically collisions between moving vehicles. Almost 70% of those accidents were coded as intersection related in people's driveways, in their driveway access, etc. Approximately one third of those accidents occurred when people were trying to make a turning maneuver. With this project, it would allow us that center turn lane where warranted. Of course, additional lane would widen the road as necessary. Now within the rural section of the project east of Lake Helena Drive, you can contribute most of the accidents that are recorded due to the outdated geometrics, if you will, the sharp curves, the steep crest hills, the lack of shoulders, the steep ditches, etc.

So if I may finalize the need for this project, this project as presented would offer road widening, improve site distance, slope flattening, provisions of turn lanes, access management, lighting, and proper delineation, and intersection reconfigurations that should substantially improve the safety of this road.

**Alternatives:** As I mentioned, since the June meeting of last year, we have studied numerous alternatives for this highway. Most of those alternatives are where to place the highway. The first alternative, besides that, would be the "no action" alternative. As described, if we do nothing, it would be simple routine maintenance. The Department of Transportation would not make any other effort and the road would likely continue to deteriorate.

Another alternative that we looked at within the commercial residential section in the western segment, was considering shifting the alignment away from the centerline. Considering that portion of the project west of Lake Helena Drive is so built up on left and right hand sides of the road, we could not justify shifting the roadway any further left or right in favor of one side compared to the other. It would just create too much impact. Within the rural section of the project, an alignment that was considered was shifting the alignment more northerly of the existing highway. Similar to the western portion of the project, there was already substantial residential development on the north side of the highway that we could not justify pushing the highway north.

Now why, do you ask, do we consider shifting an alignment? Well, an alignment shift allows us to build the road on one side while we maintain traffic on the existing road for the most part. That helps considerably in

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the cost of the project where the traveling public and the contractor that is building the road do not have to intermingle and for safety reasons as such. That is about the extent of my discussion.

I would like to finalize it with the alternatives that we've considered at Spokane Creek Road. There is a lengthy discussion in this Environmental Assessment on the study and I would like to just touch upon it and this EA covers that much more thoroughly than I have the time tonight.

There were four alternatives or variations that were studied at the Spokane Creek Road intersection. One of those alternatives has been labeled as the preferred action. For the most part, we could not with the other alignments that we looked at conceivably accept them because they did impact additional residences. It may not be the same ones that the preferred alignment impacts, but it still could not work its way through there. With that, I'll pass this on to Dan Norderud.

## **PRESENTATION – Dan Norderud**

**EA Background:** To give you a little background on our Environmental Assessment. Environmental Impact Analysis is required by law, there is a federal law called the National Environmental Policy Act and a Montana law called the Montana Environmental Policy Act. Both of those laws require that an impact analysis be done before any federal funding or decisions are made about a project like this. Environmental Analyses can take a variety of different forms: the most complex form is an Environmental Impact Statement, which is currently underway for the I-15 Corridor through the Helena valley. The simplest form is a checklist. EA's fall somewhere in the middle. They allow us to consider alternatives. They don't require as involved process but they do require an examination and the same things that must be looked at through the remainder of the environmental documents. EA's are often prepared in situations where we don't know what the level of impact will be or whether project effects are not expected to be significant. The main purposes of these documents are really to determine if the effects of what is being proposed reach a significant level. It is also a way that the Montana Department of Transportation can document their compliance with a whole host of other federal and state laws and regulations that come into play on projects like this.

The Canyon Ferry Road EA really consists of four or five different parts. First, is a description of what is being proposed, which Tom alluded to. It's just basically what improvements would be done under one or more projects within this corridor. The purpose and need discussion related to why these improvements are being proposed. Why is reconstruction needed? The alternative section is a key part. That sets up just what effects are going to be analyzed for the preferred action and for other options that might be considered, and also the impact of doing nothing. The existing conditions are looked at and then the potential changes from what's being proposed are summarized in the document. Lastly, there is a summary of coordination between interested agencies and the public. Accepting your comments tonight is one important part of the process and it is really why we are here tonight.

What have we learned from the Environmental Assessment? We used the preliminary plans and bridge layouts that we have behind us (referring to graphic) to predict what kind of environmental effects this project might have. Tom briefly went through the scope and these drawings and aerial photos behind us are something you can review later and see in more detail in your specific interest area of what is being proposed.

The option of doing nothing is carried through the Environmental Assessment really as a way of comparing and contrasting what the effects are going to be of what is proposed.

**Impacts:** In general, we've found that rebuilding Canyon Ferry Road would only result in minor long-term impacts, and minor temporary adverse effects during construction. At this point in the process we would conclude, based on that analysis, that the impacts don't reach the level of significance and an EIS wouldn't be required to advance this project.

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I wanted to briefly go over a couple of the key impact areas that were notable to us and kind of set up some of our discussions tonight. The first and more obvious impact is right-of-way, access control, and relocations. The new highway that would be reconstructed would be wider than the existing roadway, the design would be different, and the location would be different. All those factors require additional right-of-way from property owners adjoining the project. Most all landowners along this corridor will be affected in one way or another.

The preferred reconfiguration of Canyon Ferry Road, Spokane Creek Road Intersection as it is proposed, would require the relocation of four residences and possibly one mobile home located adjacent to the highway. These are obviously notable impacts that must be dealt with. Affected landowners would receive fair market value for any of the land or buildings that had to be acquired and would be compensated for any damages to the remaining property they have that would be affected by the reconstruction.

**Access:** Access control is being proposed as part of this project and to a large degree is an important safety measure within the corridor. Accesses that exist today would all be reviewed as part of work. We will talk one-on-one with each one of the landowners and try and come up with a way to eliminate accesses that might not be necessary, combined, or just settle on what is the best and safest situation for that corridor. All properties that adjoin the road will be provided with reasonable access to their land.

**Utilities:** Utility impacts are another major item that is quite apparent. There are a variety of overhead and underground utilities that are right in the ditch next to the existing highway and also drain fields associated with private septic systems that must be dealt with during our right-of-way phase.

**Farmlands and irrigation systems:** Minor amounts of land: agricultural land and farmland is going to be converted from those uses to right-of-way. The road crosses now and the new road will also cross a variety of small irrigation ditches as well as affecting portions of the Helena valley canal. In fact one small area of a portion of the Helena valley canal must be relocated to provide enough room for the reconstructed highway. This work has all been coordinated to date with the Helena Valley Irrigation District on a number of occasions and also with the Bureau of Reclamation.

**Water Quality Impacts** is another item of attention. Reconstruction through the urban area of the project would include the installation of a new storm drainage system. What is proposed right now is a series of French drains that would be located within the right-of-way area to try and capture some of that storm water runoff. New culverts are going to be required at Spokane Creek Road and also at a nearby stream that we call “No Name Spring Creek” that is just west of Spokane Creek. Road reconstruction would even require a minor relocation of a portion of that spring creek to accommodate the new highway. This work is all going to be something that is subject to permitting through the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Stream Protection Act and the Corp of Engineers 404 permitting process.

The project would also result in some encroachments on delineated flood plains within the area and affect about an acre and a half of wetlands that exist primarily down along the Spokane Creek / Spring Creek area. Flood Plain Permits are again required from the County to permit this work and a 404 Permit is necessary for the wetlands that are jurisdictional in nature.

**Land Use Impacts:** As I mentioned the project would obviously convert a certain amount of land from its present use to highway right-of-way, however, we don't see any major changes in land uses that are directly going to result from the highway improvements. Obviously a wider road could encourage, in the future, some indirect development of new residential areas, as the route becomes a more convenient and maybe a more attractive commuter route.

**Noise Impacts:** Our noise studies showed that within the project time frame (about 20 years), there is about nine locations along the corridor that may experience noise impacts, however, it is important to note that even if nothing were done, these impacts are likely to occur at a majority of these locations. The noise abatement measures – there are a number of things to reduce traffic related noise, berms, barriers of different kinds,

changing the traffic flow characteristics, reducing speeds, and restricting access of certain vehicles on the road are all ways that could help with the noise but these are really not found to be a reasonable or feasible things to be doing out here.

**Cultural Resources:** There are some minor affects to historic irrigation ditches. The EA contains a document in the back called a 4F Evaluation that identifies these ditches and shows that proper coordination was accomplished regarding the treatment of any effects on those ditches.

**Traffic:** Tom mentioned traffic circulation and safety. We are very hopeful that the kinds of improvements that are being proposed here are going to increase the safety and quality of travel on this route. Hopefully they will be the kind of measures that will help reduce accident frequencies and severity.

**Construction impacts** are obvious. If you are rebuilding this road, there will be delays, there will be dust and noise generated in work zones, maybe some temporary lane closures. The area where the road is being built will be disturbed and subject to erosion while it is disturbed, however, there will be a variety of things that will be incorporated in to mitigate or offset those kinds of effects.

**Secondary or cumulative effects** were also looked at and probably the most notable one that comes to my mind is the I-15 interchange situation in Helena. There is a recommendation for a future interchange at Custer Avenue and this will be when that interchange is ever constructed, that will be the first time there will be a direct connection between Canyon Ferry Road and I-15 and it could, by itself, change the traffic volumes and some of the traffic flow patterns in this portion of the valley. The EA discusses a variety of other aspects and we would be happy to run through them with you after the meeting.

**Next Step:** I just wanted to go into what happens next. As John mentioned, we are taking comments on the Environmental Assessment through July 25<sup>th</sup>. Your oral and written comments will be taken tonight or you can leave your comment forms here or send them to the address shown on the form before the 25<sup>th</sup>. After July 25<sup>th</sup>, we will review all the comments we have received on this Environmental Assessments, summarize them, make whatever changes are necessary to address those comments, supplement materials in the environmental document, and correct whatever errors and omission might be pointed out to us. If it is judged at that point that no significant impacts are likely, the FHWA would be asked to make a finding of No Significant Impact or FONSI. If the FHWA issues a FONSI, then this project can proceed towards final design and right-of-way acquisition stages. If the FHWA for some reason couldn't make that determination, there would be some retooling necessary to the project or in the worst case an Environmental Impact Statement would have to be done to move forward. But, as Tom mentioned, we are shooting towards having the Environmental done sometime during August and moving on with the project. With that, John, I'm going to turn it back over to you and you can accept comments.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT:

John Robinson: At this point we will open it up to take your comments on the Environmental Assessment. If anybody would like to speak, please raise your hand.

- C: (Charles Houk) I'm the Minister of Cross Roads Christian Church and I'm at the beginning of the project on Walter Drive. I'm putting in a 50-car parking lot on Walter Drive. My concern is left-turn ingress and egress into Walter Drive and the apron that would go with it.
  - C: (Don Flammond) I live on Canyon Ferry Road and Dusty Maiden. The project would be good but we've got to really look at is the speed limit down through there. It is a race track already and if you widen it out then it will be a lot better racetrack for them guys. You know, that is all residential area and we've already had one fatality down there and we don't need any more. Thank you.
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C: (Bob Leach) I live near the corner of Canyon Ferry and Wiley Drive. I would like to see a reduction in the speed limit to 45 mph beginning just prior to Wiley Drive coming from the west going east and on the east side of the project going west just prior to Lake Helena Drive. Those are intersections we have a lot of trouble with. People need to start slowing down prior to those lights, whether they are 4-way stops or a red and green light they need to be reminded. Also, like they said, the area in between is residential and there is no reason for 55 mph on that. There are just too many people having to turn.

The other thing is we need a sidewalk on that road between at least Valley Drive and Wiley Drive either on the north or the south side. I would rather see it on the north side not for my convenience but because that is where most of the pedestrian traffic would be. I think it would get much more use on the north side. There is a big housing development up Dusty Maiden so there is more residential on the north side, but I would also like to see it on the south side for my convenience. I just think it would be much safer if we had some kind of a sidewalk on that.

C: (John Denherder) 3333 Canyon Ferry Road. I would like to speak of, basically again, traffic control. My concern is picking up my paper or picking up my mail and watching the school kids. Are they going to do anything to have a pull-off or centralize the mailbox system, etc?

Another consideration I have, I have been out there 33 years when it was a dirt road and the deer came up to the fence. The road noise is terrible. I sit a couple of hundred feet back from the road and it is almost like they are in the living room. I don't know what can be done. A couple of things were mentioned but whether the composition of the macadam can be changed or something. It is this last topping that really made the road noise.

The V ditches that are to be placed in, I'm asking again are you going to leave us with cobblestone and sand or are you going to sit there and grass it for us? That basically covers my concerns that were mentioned with other people. Thank you.

C: (Dennis Ogle) I live right on the corner of Spokane Creek Road and Canyon Ferry Road. I have two questions. First, I'm in a unique position like a lot of the property owners here that are going to loose property, I have a position here – what is going to happen with the property the highway currently sits on if they remove that highway, is that going to be made available to the landowner; the adjacent landowner?

Second, we're on that corner on that road and it is my fault for not making the previous meetings, but I was under the assumption that our driveway would turn down to Spokane Creek Road and I see tonight that our driveway would go up and take that sharp corner that is one of the bad areas of that road right now. I realize there will not be near as much traffic but in the wintertime if this is the route we are going to have to use, is that particular part of the road going to be maintained by the highway department for snow removal or will that be left up to the landowners? That can be a treacherous piece of highway because of the angle. When you pull out on it, it is not flat – it is at quite an angle and if it is not maintained it can be difficult to get up that stretch of road.

C: (Bob Glass) I own the Glass Slipper. I just listened to Dennis' comments and I think Dennis is right. I was just talking to Jason about that. The old existing road that goes up that hill from the Glass Slipper is very dangerous and is awful steep and when it gets slick, they go off it. I feel that maybe you should take what Dennis says and come down to Spokane Creek Road instead of going up and then around and down by the Glass Slipper.

C: (Jim Maxwell) Corner of Canyon Ferry and Lake Helena. From Wiley and Canyon Ferry out to Lake Helena, is the base going to come down and be rebuilt? Because it was laid down for traffic way back when and with the heavy trucks coming across there and the traffic, you can see how weak, how it goes up and down, and in the Spring it sinks and goes up. I'm just kind of wondering – if you put

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all that money into a road and then have the same thing happening that is happening at the present time.

- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) I would like to answer that question. The other questions up to this point will take a little looking into so I don't have an immediate answer to those. But your question – considering the road base, it will be rebuilt according to what we project is the needed road base for future traffic. You won't see that existing road base which is anywhere from minimal layer of plant mix oil to a couple of inches of gravel. You will see a much thicker section designed and built for the intended purpose of this highway.
- C: (Jim Maxwell) May I approach the picture on the little drawing board – I want to show you something. As you can see, this passing lane here is great but my corner sits right up here and waste water treatment brings fertilizer out and at least twice a day this brig truck has to lock up his 18-wheeler because we've got a beautiful blinking light there but people think they can break out in front of him. It is the same with Helena Sand and Gravel, Big Sky, or whoever. At Custer and Washington Street there is a pressure stop light. You can talk with the Highway Patrol because we have. For instance, Lake Helena, Valley, and Wiley if you have a pressure stop light it is going to slow a lot of traffic down because coming down, like on Sunday all the traffic is bad, but on the day when everybody is going home you can count a couple of thousand people going by here. They don't slow down when somebody pulls out. You've got to come out going as fast as you can push the gas on. Right here when you are coming down the hill, for instance, when I turned in my driveway Saturday morning, we got passed on the left side on a solid yellow line. A lot of people are kind of concerned about this. The Highway Patrol calls it a suicide lane. If you, the Highway Department, put a pressure stop light at these three intersections, I think we are going to eliminate a lot of accidents. There was a girl who had just graduated from High School last year who was killed at my corner. It is pretty sad to see her Mom and Dad putting fresh flowers on every other week and crying and other people that visit that grave. Here in May I had to help in the East Valley with a car accident when they had to take the person out on a backboard because his back was bent up in the car accident. I don't know what happened, they just pulled out in front. I think a stop light there might slow people down. 45 mph from that corner all the way into Power Townsend ... the Highway Patrol has presented this to the Highway Department and the Legislature and they just slough it off. They say it's a highway but how many people is it going to take to bury before someone takes an interest in this. We've confronted the Director of the Highway Department and Dave doesn't have much comment on it. These guys are working great at designing it and taking our comments, but we need everybody's help in this. This is great, helping everybody out for a turn lane and widening it but we have a lot more safety than what we have. The Highway Patrolman on TV said about the last one at Valley Drive ... you know they prepped Valley Drive, Wiley and Lake Helena for accidents.
- A: (Michael Johnson) I'm going to touch on a couple of things that have been raised so far. We have certain warrants that are required for signals to be installed and we use the same warrants in Montana that are accepted nationally. On this particular roadway, one of those intersections does warrant a signal and it will be signalized and that is Wiley Drive, the remainder of the intersections do not. One of the things I will tell you is that when you put a signal in at an intersection, the accidents actually increase by about a margin of times seven. I can tell you for a fact that if you put a signal in, you are going to see a lot more accidents than you are seeing now. That is not just a guess that is a fact. Our goal would be to try to get the left turning traffic out of the movement of the others. When you see a signal, I can tell you if we have honest people in this crowd, when that light turns yellow I know which one of the peddles they are going to step on – and it is not the break. That is the problem. At a signal, everybody sees a yellow light and marginally pink, and we are going through it. So times seven is the number of accidents that it increases at signalized intersections. I hope that answers part of your question. Wiley does get a signal, the other two do not.
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A couple of other issues brought up so far tonight. Speed limits – we will take a look at speed limits on this route as soon as it is completed. Several questions came up over here about speed limits. With regard to speed limits, we generally accept the recommendation from the county when we do a speed zone study. We do this study, we actually erect a speed limit, but the enforcement of the speed limit is the enforcement agency and that is the county.

With regard to sidewalks – one of the things we had to do here is balance the cost of the project with the amount of money available. Sidewalks are very, very expensive. Concrete is very, very expensive. We had to eliminate something and besides cutting the project in half, we eliminated the sidewalks.

The V ditches and grass – someone made a comment about whether we were going to leave gravel. We intend to grass and re-seed all of the ditches.

- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) We will look at the left turns at Walter Drive and there are also a couple of other locations that we will investigate for left turns. For most of the project we do have the left-turn bay all the way through, but we will look at all of the locations for left-turn bays.
- A: (Michael Johnson) Our consultant will answer all of these questions and all of the concerns raised on every one of the individual topics. I just wanted to catch up with some of these answers before we go on.
- Q: (Jim Maxwell) One more question then. If you are not going to put in a pressure stop light at Valley and Lake Helena, in some instances at those corners we have a stop light, caution light at both those intersections, on the east and south how about putting a flashing yellow light 100 or 150 feet back cautioning that there is a stop light ahead because people blow right through the intersection? Thanks to Commissioner Anita Varone, one of the gravel trucks in town blew out a stop sign there and some people from out-of-state went driving through it and five went to the hospital. It's an ugly corner. The Highway Patrol says that. I just want to make everything that's happening known.
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) Jim I would like to add onto your comment that we will be looking at advanced flashers for the three major intersections, namely Wiley Drive, Valley Drive, and Lake Helena Drive, just as you recommend. I would like to make one other point. With Valley Drive, currently that intersection does not meet the warrants that Mick discussed to install a signal. Being that the project will probably be constructed starting in 2005, our studies indicate that Valley Drive, during the life of this project, will probably meet the warrants for signalization. Now, meeting warrants does not necessarily mean a signal needs to be installed. It just allows us to progress further because, as Mick mentioned, sometimes signals are not the correct suitable means of controlling an intersection. But I would like to let you know that a signal at Valley Drive probably is coming sometime during the design life of this project.
- A: (Mick Johnson) I'm going to respond to one more question that was raised. There was a question about what we are doing with the abandoned roadway. Once the roadway has been abandoned in front of these properties, we would ask that the landowner adjacent to those properties send us a letter requesting the sale of that abandoned property and by state law, if it really is excess right-of-way, we would have to sell it. Someone back here asked if they could have the excess right-of-way or the old roadway, we will obliterate it and that property can be put up for sale if the adjacent landowner requests it.
- Q: (Dennis Ogle) Will the road be obliterated with the project or at some other later time?
- A: (Mick Johnson) The areas of the roadway that would not be used will be obliterated with the project.
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C: (Sue Garber) I live on Canyon Ferry Road. Recommending maybe along with the caution lights, rumble strips. I've driven Lake Helena Drive recently going north to south, rumble strips really get your attention when you hit them and it is a blind corner when you reach Lake Helena Drive and Canyon Ferry Road. I can see how that girl got killed there because the trees there and the cross street there, and you can't see that it is suppose to be an intersection. It's very deceiving and I believe rumble strips both on Lake Helena Drive and Valley would be very necessary.

A: (Tom Cavanaugh) Now, when you make mention of rumble strips, I'm assuming you are talking about the transverse rumble strips that lay across the travel lane as you approach an intersection. We call them bump strips. As you travel across them they rumble underneath you. I believe we are planning to install those. Lake Helena Drive may be difficult to install those on because, correct me if I'm wrong, but that material they laid down was a recycled asphalt that may not be very conducive to actually milling it. That is not to say that we couldn't figure out a way to actually install them.

**NOTE:** (Tom Cavanaugh) I would like make a note that, it hasn't come up, but the major intersections that we are looking at, Wiley Drive, Valley Drive, Lake Helena Drive, Spokane Creek Road, and probably including up the hill to Kerr Lane will be lighted. None of those intersections are lit today. So that is part of the project we are proposing.

Q: (Gene Ransier) 5719 Canyon Ferry Road. I've got two questions: this project that you have proposed here tonight, is that the final definitely where the road is going to go if and when they put it in? Or are they going to change their mind again and put it someplace else?

A: (Tom Cavanaugh) What we have presented tonight is what we propose to be final. That is why we are opening it up for your comments.

C: (Gene Ransier) One more question. I've been out there on my corner and I've had my home for about 35 years. I moved out there in 1969 before the highway was even paved. I'm not overly anxious or happy about having to move but I'm going to have to move because you've got the highway designed right through my house, my garages and my son's mobile home, along with three or four other families out there. If I'm going to have to move, when is the state going to start acting on this? Am I going to be there six months or am I going to be there for the next three years?

A: (Tom Cavanaugh) I would say you will be there probably for about six months but not for three years. As soon as this environmental process is finalized, it will allow us to open the funding necessary to approach you and start negotiating. I think it's MDT's intent and willingness that as soon as we get through the process, to get out and start discussing the options with you people as soon as possible. So I'm saying it will be probably be within six months at the max before you start hearing from us. Mick, Jason, does that sound about right? Right after this process we will be out there working with you people – so sometime this fall or early next year.

A: (Mick Johnson) Those four properties that have the relocations and the impacts – residences will be taken care of first.

C: (Gene Ransier) You say four people have to be relocated. I say five. There are five families living out there. That mobile home that is on my property is my sons. That is his permanent home.

A: (Tom Cavanaugh) Yes you are correct Mr. Ransier. We have identified that. We were uncertain at that point in time, but if you're saying the impacts that you see tonight will require relocation assistance, then we believe you. We just didn't have enough information at this point in time to know that. So what you're saying is correct and we believe you, then it would probably be five people.

---

- Q: (Gene Ransier) Another thing, what you have told me tonight such as you're probably looking at six months before the state starts buying the right-of-way and I have to move out, well that is just about what I was told a year ago. According to what some of the people told me last fall, I'd been moved out of there along about April or May and they are not doing anything about it. I mean, I don't know if I want to put in new carpet or do any maintenance on the house. I just want to know how long you figure I'm going to be there before I have to move so I know what I'm going to do and what I'm not going to do.
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) I think some of that would be up to you, to be honest. When the state comes out, and this is getting into state policy and Mick or Jason might want to comment on this more so than I, but I think you would have the option of either staying where you are until the project is built or close to it, or proceeding on with your alternatives of whatever you want to do. If you want to move out then you could, if not then you could stay. As we noted, that section with the Spokane Creek Road intersection probably won't be built for another seven, eight, maybe nine more years. So it is your choice, you could stay there longer than six months or a year from now.
- A: (Jason Giard) I do want to clarify the right-of-way acquisition that we are saying we would get started on the four or five properties that have direct impacts for relocation and there may be some other properties that have major impacts. We will start on those negotiations here in the next six months to a year, but the rest of the right-of-way we will probably not be out seeing people and buying land until late in 2004 and maybe not even until 2005. We are planning on having all of the right-of-way bought by the end of 2005 and go into construction in 2006. So we don't want everybody here to think that we are going to be out in six months starting buying right-of-way. Like Tom said, we want to get some of those properties bought as soon as we can but it is still going to be awhile before we start buying right-of-way.
- Q: (Ann Wright) What are they going to do with the drainage system at Spokane Creek and Canyon Ferry Road. If we decide to build back on our property, I don't want that drainage area coming right through the property. Are you going to drain it across the road to the Glass Slipper?
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) Ann, are you talking about Spokane Creek itself or ...
- Q: (Ann Wright) There is quite a drainage system that comes down from up above there that goes around ... from Kerr Lane, it comes around that little point there on the north side of the highway. That is why we have a ditch around that corner of the point. It drains out now through a field but if we decide to build back there, where are you going to put the water?
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) Well, we would try to direct it as soon as possible toward Spokane Creek which is the natural route it wants to go. If there is some future development that you're interested in on your property we would be more than willing to work with you on that. But we try not to adjust drainages far outside the right-of-way limits. If it crosses the right-of-way or it comes in contact with the highway then we will deal with it, but we are not willing to go a quarter mile back from the highway to make changes to ditches unless it is absolutely necessary for the highway's sake.
- C: (Melvin Hamilton) I lease Ann's place. What she is talking about comes out right on the highway right now and it's pushed water up onto the road before this flood and it will go exactly where she wants to put her house. It won't be back no quarter of a mile, it will be right there.
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) Mr. Hamilton, you answered that question and we will deal with it.
- Q: (Melvin Hamilton) Another thing, you talk about moving these culverts down the creek, have you been out there and looked at the hole it washed on the north side of those culverts lately?
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) I looked at it after the waters of the March 13<sup>th</sup> snowmelt.
-

- Q: (Melvin Hamilton) The water's dropped about six feet since then and you ought to come out and look at it now. There is a hole there probably 20 to 30 feet deep.
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) It definitely scoured that property there.
- Q: (Melvin Hamilton) There is going to be a lot of fill and you're going to put rock and everything else in there to make a bed for them culverts, and what's going to stop that? Next time there is another flood it is going to wash down into my property further.
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) Thank you for your comments and we will have to consider that because that is a problem area and we are looking at that.
- Q: (John Denherder) I don't know if this is appropriate to the Environmental Assessment, but I would be interested in knowing how the fair market value is assessed and if a landowner objects, what is the process?
- A: (John Robinson) The process is written down in this brochure. Do you have a copy of this? This has questions and answers and almost every question that anybody might have is written out in that brochure quite clearly. If you have questions beyond that, please call us.
- Q: (Nate Nelson) The one question that isn't answered are well heads that will be in the right-of-way, will they drill new wells for those people?
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) I believe we would have to drill a new well if your well is in the proposed right-of-way. With the negotiations and the right-of-way acquisitions, we will either pay for you to drill a new well at a reasonable cost – the cost of the well, or other means. But you won't be shorted the water by any means.
- Q: (Melvin Hamilton) I've got another question on Spokane Creek. I've got agricultural access on the east side of the bridge and it doesn't show it going back in on your pictures, but I've got a small bridge down below that won't hold the weight of large loads of hay we bring out onto the main road. Do you have any idea what you are going to do about that?
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) Well, we've started looking at the access management. As Dan talked about, we look at means with access management to improve upon the safety of the road. Later on in this project we will be approaching each and every one of you concerning the way the right-of-way is finalizing and your access. We won't propose anything that you won't see. So, Mr. Hamilton, with your access we will have to deal with that a little later, but we will be discussing that again.
- Q: (Bob Leach) I live 3043 Canyon Ferry Road. I proposed or mentioned sidewalks on the north side. If we can't do concrete and if that is too expensive, you are already there with blacktop, can we put in a bike trail? If you would consider that I'd appreciate it. Also, on your map, is that blue line the edge of the easement or the edge of the highway?
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) These drawings actually have two blue lines: one is really highlighting the existing pavement as it is, but the blue line you are referring to would be the proposed right-of-way as we see it right now. The outer blue line, the lines farthest removed from the highway is, at this point in time, what we believe would be the proposed right-of-way needed.
- Q: (Bob Leach) How far in the old right-of-way are you coming?
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) Depending on the section of the project, it would definitely vary because it varies with the amount of cuts and fills and the road width.
-

- Q: (Bob Leach) I'm concerned about the church.
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) The church just east of Valley Drive, generally through this section between Wiley and Lake Helena Drive, we would anticipate 14 to 15 feet of additional right-of-way, being on the edge of the existing easement on each side.
- C: (Bob Leach) Thank you.
- Q: (\_\_\_\_\_) Tom, when you say 14 to 15 feet on the existing easement, when I talked to you last I thought we were talking about the centerline of the road towards my fence.
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) If I could clarify that, the 15 feet is additional to what the existing easement is now through there. The existing easement is 30 feet from the centerline of the road – each side of the road. Fifteen feet beyond that makes it about 45 feet from the centerline to each side of the road – north and south of the road, 45 feet from centerline if what would be proposed at this time.
- Q: (B.G. Stumberg) 4992 Canyon Ferry Road. I'm the pastor at Canyon Ferry Road Church. In your booklet it says that if your buildings or other improvements such as fences are in the new right-of-way, the state must purchase the improvements at the appraised value. If you're interested it is possible to buy back these improvements for their approved salvage value and move them to another location. Does that mean we have to put up our own fences?
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) No. Fences – particularly fences. Since there is a fence out there now, we would build the new fence in that location but not buildings.
- Q: (B.G. Stumberg) What about the sign at the church? It is going to be right on the edge there.
- A: (Tom Cavanaugh) That sign would have to be relocated outside the right-of-way and I believe the department would have to negotiate with you for the cost to do that.

## **CLOSING**

John Robinson: I would urge everyone, if you haven't given a comment tonight and you think of any other comment or if you would like to add to your comments, please fill out your comment form and mail it to the address on the top by July 25<sup>th</sup>. Also, we have extra brochures and drawings of the plans. If you haven't grabbed one of these, I'll put them on this back chair. Please take one of these with you. If you have written comments that you would like to drop off with us, just put it in this box before you leave. If there are no other comments, we can wrap this up.

Tom Cavanaugh: We will be available until 9:00 so if people have some specific sites or specific questions, I would be more than happy to try and resolve some of those questions at this time looking at the boards more closely.

John Robinson: Thank you very much for coming.

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## ATTACHMENT 5

### Copies of Written Comments Received on the EA

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Comments (letter dated June 24, 2003)
  - EA Comment form - Charles G. Houk
  - EA Comment form - Robert Garber
  - EA Comment form - Jim Shaw
  - Mike and Marla Ducello's Comments (letter dated July 4, 2003)
  - Brian K. Holling, P.E., City-County Transportation Coordinator's Comments (letter dated July 11, 2003)
  - Geraldine Coplin's Comments (letter dated July 17, 2003)
  - Terry Zimmerman's Comments (letter dated July 24, 2003)
-

Aug-08-03 03:28pm

From-MDT CONSULTANT DESIGN SECTION

4064446253

T-236 P.002/002 F-930



**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
HELENA REGULATORY OFFICE  
10 WEST 15TH STREET, SUITE 2200  
HELENA, MONTANA 59626

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

RECEIVED  
JUN 25 2003

JUN 25 2003

MASTER FILE

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

ENVIRONMENTAL

Barry -  
Comments from Corps  
on Canyon Ferry Road  
please distribute

Subject: Corps File Number 2001-90-525  
Canyon Ferry Road  
STPS 430-1(5)1, MDT Control Number 4480  
Comments on Environmental Assessment

Ms. Jean A. Riley, P.E., Engineering Section Supervisor  
Environmental Services Bureau  
Montana Department Of Transportation  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
PO Box 201001  
Helena, Montana 59620-1001

See  
CC: Tom Martin

Dear Ms. Riley:

This letter provides comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the subject project, which was received by this office on June 24, 2003. This highway reconstruction project is located on Canyon Ferry Road between Helena and Canyon Ferry Lake in southern Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

Under the authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, Department of the Army permits are required for the discharge of fill material below the ordinary high water mark of our nation's rivers, streams, lakes or wetlands. Based on the information provided in the EA, there will be work that requires a Department of Army authorization.

As specific design details are developed, the Montana Department of Transportation is reminded that all new culvert or bridge crossings of Waters of the United States (WUS) must have no more than minimal effect on the hydraulic flow characteristics of the natural stream. All new stream crossings must also allow for unimpeded migration of all aquatic life indigenous to the waterway.

All impacts to WUS, including impacts to streams as well as wetlands, must be avoided if practicable. Unavoidable impacts must be minimized. Compensatory mitigation for all remaining unavoidable impacts to WUS will be a Section 404 permit requirement.

Feel free to solicit additional comments from this office as the design develops or if new site information becomes available. Please call me at (406) 441-1375 if you have any questions or would like to discuss these matters further, and reference Corps File Number 2001-90-525.

Sincerely,

Todd N. Tillinger, P.E.  
Helena Regulatory Office

Jul-29-03 12:09pm From-MDT CONSULTANT DESIGN SECTION

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T-215 P.006/007 F-901

MASTER FILE  
COPY

### MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Comment Form

Project: Canyon Ferry Road-Environmental Assessment  
Project Number: STPS 430-1(5)1  
Control Number: Control Number 4480

*John Robinson*  
*Michael Johnson*  
*Gebarel*

*Bob Thout*

*Rebecca Olson*  
*North*  
*CAU...*

You are invited to make your comments on this form and leave it with the meeting officials or take it with you and mail it to Jean Riley, Montana Department of Transportation, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001 by July 25, 2003. Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below. Thank you for your interest and comments on this project. Feel free to use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

July 8, 2003

NAME AND ADDRESS: Charles G. Hawk  
P.O. Box 718 East Helena  
Associated w/ Crossroads Christian Church  
3125 Walter Drive, Helena MT

COMMENTS: Phase one of Crossroads C.C. is about  
90% completed - A Multipurpose Building -  
INTENDED USE IS 7 DAYS/WEEK.  
We are installing a 50 vehicle parking Area  
My concern is ingress and egress from  
WALTER DRIVE - needed is a left turn lane  
at Walter Drive and Apton.

We have build and planned for the widening  
of Canyon Ferry Road

*Charles G. Hawk*

Jul-29-03 12:09pm From-MDT CONSULTANT DESIGN SECTION

4064446253

T-215 P.005/007 F-801

COPY

## MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Comment Form

Project: Canyon Ferry Road-Environmental Assessment  
Project Number: STPS 430-1(5)1  
Control Number: Control Number 4480

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Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below. Thank you for your interest and comments on this project. Feel free to use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

### NAME AND ADDRESS:

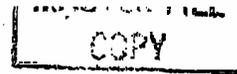
ROBERT GABBER  
4360 C.F. RD.  
E. HELENA, MT 59635

COMMENTS: South to North Drains for a large area south of Canyon Ferry Rd. Needs further attention. By a NCRS study, about 14 sq. miles drains thru my place east of Lake Helena Drive (about 1/4 mile east). Lake Helena Drive south of Helena Valley Irrigation was flooded to a depth of 12-14" with water overrunning the south canal bank for long distances on my place (greater than 1/2 mile). This year in March I experienced heavy damage to the drain/dry creek bottom, with flooding over Canyon Ferry Rd, in spite of large culverts. Large volumes of water transposed the ditches on both sides of Lake Helena Drive up to Estate Subdivisions. Flood carrying structure over Canal adjacent to Lake Helena Drive needs to be constructed. This concern should be coordinated with L+C. County & HELENA VALLEY IRR. DISTRICT.

Jul-29-03 12:09pm From-MDT CONSULTANT DESIGN SECTION

4064446253

T-215 P.004/007 F-901



# MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Comment Form

Project: Canyon Ferry Road-Environmental Assessment  
Project Number: STPS 430-1(5)1  
Control Number: Control Number 4480

You are invited to make your comments on this form and leave it with the meeting officials or take it with you and mail it to Jean Riley, Montana Department of Transportation, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001 by July 25, 2003.

Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below. Thank you for your interest and comments on this project. Feel free to use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

NAME AND ADDRESS: TIM SHAW  
6810 CANYON FERRY ROAD  
HELENA 59602

COMMENTS: DO NOT CHANGE ANY  
SPEED LIMITS IN THE PROJECT AREA.  
LOWERING THEM WOULD INFLUENCE DISOBEDIANCE.  
GOOD DESIGN -

Jul-29-03 12:09pm From-MDT CONSULTANT DESIGN SECTION

4064446253

T-215 P.007/007 F-901

Jean Riley  
Montana Department of Transportation  
2701 Prospect Ave.  
PO Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001

JUL 09 2003

ENVIRONMENTAL

Mike and Marla Ducello  
3265 Wheatland Drive  
Helena, MT 59602  
mducello@in-tch.com

MASTER FILE  
COPY

Friday, July 04, 2003

RE: Canyon Ferry Road Reconstruction Project

We are very much in favor of the proposed action regarding the Canyon Ferry Road (CF Rd) Reconstruction. We have several questions/concerns, however as our subdivision entrance intersects CF Rd about ¼ mile West of Hart Lane – in the area where the highway will be relocated North of existing center. Wheatland Drive presently serves about 120 acres and six homesites.

First, who will be responsible for rebuilding/extending the private drive approaches where CF Rd will be moved south of the existing centerline? Wheatland Drive presently needs a new culvert and approach installed, but we have been putting it off due to the expectations that this project may change the location and or elevations of the approach. The current ditch at this intersection is very shallow causing water and silt to pool at Wheatland drive which has completely filled the existing culvert.

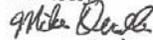
Second, will mailboxes still be allowed on CF Rd, or will they be required to be moved? If they have to be moved will there be criteria specified for mailbox access and turn around space which may necessitate widening the intersecting driveways?

Third, will school bus stops remain the same after the project is complete?

Our final concern at this time is whether the speed limit will change. It is our opinion that 60 MPH is adequate given that this is a rural area with numerous private drive approaches, farm equipment access points, school bus stops, and rural mail stops.

This project has been a long time coming - kudos to DOT and Robert Peccia and Associates for finally making it happen. Last year's improvements at the York Road – Canyon Ferry intersection has really increased safety and improved traffic flow. The proposed improvements for the rest of Canyon Ferry Road should make the overall access to the East valley and lake area that much better.

Sincerely



  
Mike and Marla Ducello

Jul-29-03 12:08pm From-MDT CONSULTANT DESIGN SECTION 4064446253

T-215 P.001/007 F-901



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JUL 14 2003

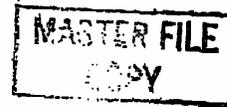
ENVIRONMENTAL

DEBRA R. MOLLING, P.E.  
 Transportation Coordinator  
 City of Helena  
 Lewis and Clark County  
 316 North Park  
 Helena, MT 59623  
 (406) 447-8457  
 bholling@ci.helena.mt.us



City of Helena

July 11, 2003



Jean A. Riley, P.E.  
 Engineering Section Supervisor  
 Environmental Services  
 Montana Department of Transportation  
 P.O. Box 201001  
 Helena, MT 59620-1001

RE: Canyon Ferry Road Environmental Assessment and Nationwide Section 4(f)  
 Evaluation - STPS 430-1(5)1; CN 4480

Dear Jean:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Environmental Assessment for Canyon Ferry Road. Lewis and Clark County continues to support this project and we are offering the following comments on the EA document.

**Section III, C, 2 (page 29):** This section refers to a future engineering investigation of travel speeds after the reconstruction is complete. However, at the recent request of Lewis and Clark County, MDT has prepared a speed limit investigation in May of 2003. This investigation included an area that is within the Canyon Ferry Road project limits. The EA should be revised to include this information.

**Section IV, C, 11 (page 99):** The City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County will soon be updating the Helena Area Transportation plan in cooperation with MDT. Part of that plan will include a document that is under final review titled "Helena Non-Motorized Transportation Plan". This plan will include standards for construction of bicycle paths in the Helena area. Although this plan is not currently adopted and not available for use in this EA, Lewis and Clark County encourages its use during final design.

**Section IV, C, 14 (page 106):** Lewis and Clark County is concerned about the potential construction related traffic impacts. We strongly encourage the use of detours and work zones that can accommodate two-way traffic during the construction of the project. While some inconvenience is inevitable, we would like to see this minimized or mitigated to the fullest extent that is practical.

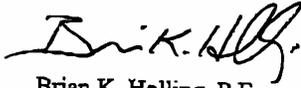
Jul-29-03 12:08pm From-MDT CONSULTANT DESIGN SECTION

4064446253

T-215 P.003/007 F-801

Thank you again for the opportunity to review and comment. If you have questions related to these comments, please contact me at (406) 447-8457.

Sincerely,



Brian K. Holling, P.E.  
City-County Transportation Coordinator

cc: Sharon Haugen, file

Jean Riley  
Environmental Services, Montana  
Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001

July 17, 2003

Seraldine Coplin  
3540 Canyon Ferry Rd  
East Helena, MT 59625  
(406) 227-5010

Re: Canyon Ferry Rd  
Reconstruction Project

Dear Ms. Riley:

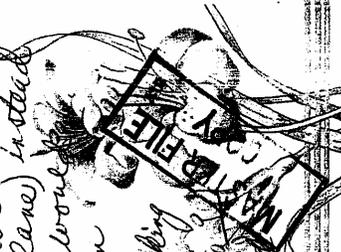
I have contacted Tom Cavanaugh, Consultant Project Manager of Robert Peoria & Assoc., regarding the Canyon Ferry Environmental Assessment & he referred me to you - to address our concerns to you in writing.

Our concerns are as follows:

The shoulders of the road should be sufficient for ~~shoulders~~ ~~of equal~~ ~~width~~. There isn't that much walking along road nor bicycling in this area (~~is~~ not like in town where sidewalks are needed.) **WE DO NEED THE SHOULDERS**

I was informed that in our own ~~town~~ ~~area~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~road~~ ~~to~~ ~~take~~ ~~these~~ ~~drive~~. There will be a 3 lane roadway (including a turning lane) instead of the existing 2 lane, which would require 15' of our property from old property line.

They are taking 15' of our property to extend this roadway for the sides. We are not going to be compensated for the 15' they're using from



Seraldine Coplin

Re: Canyon Ferry Rd  
Reconstruction Project

To: Ms. Jean Riley  
Our Property?

Also, will our existing fence be replaced? What happens to our mailbox shed tree & our approach to the new road?  
We would greatly appreciate a reply to these concerns. (written would be great)  
Thanking you in advance.

Sincerely,

Seraldine Coplin  
3540 Canyon Ferry Rd  
East Helena MT 59625  
~~(406)~~ 227-5010



08/06/2003 09:47

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MDT ENVIRONMENTAL

PAGE 02

**RECEIVED**

JUL 25 2003

**ENVIRONMENTAL****MASTER FILE  
COPY**

July 24, 2003

MDT  
Attn Jean Riley  
P. O. Box 201001  
Helena, Montana 59620-1001

RE: Canyon Ferry Road Reconstruction

Dear Sir,

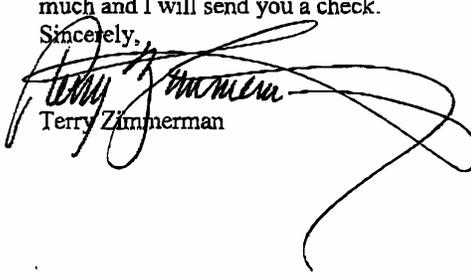
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Canyon Ferry Road reconstruction. I believe that you have done a good job on keeping the people informed and on the design of the new road.

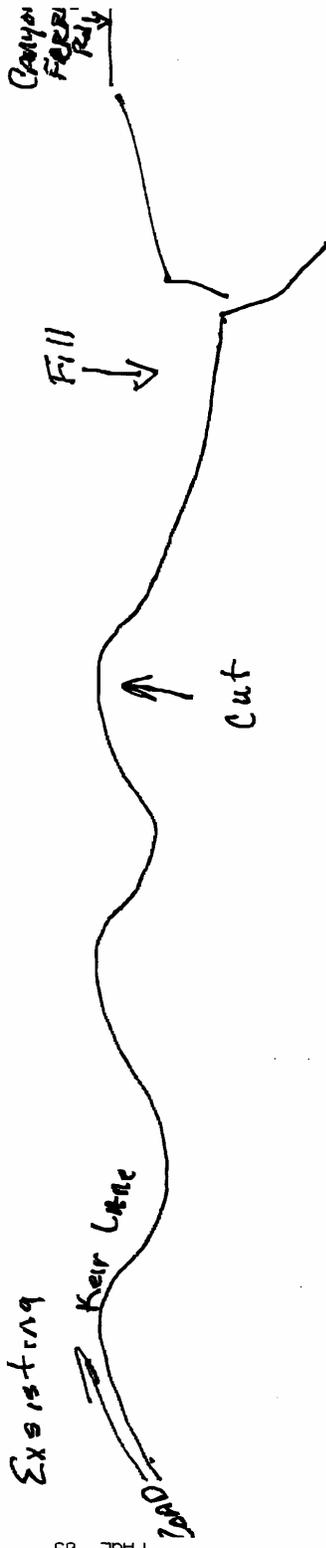
I am making a comment on the Keir Lane reconstruction end of the project. It appears that the Keir Lane road will come directly into Canyon Ferry Road at a "T" intersection. I am concerned that the Keir Lane road hill will be cut down and the base filled near Canyon Ferry Road intersection. The purpose is to remove the "Roller Coaster" effect of the Keir Lane road into an immediate "T" intersection. As Keir Lane is presently designed Keir Lane has several large dips that cars are allowed to drop out of sight on despite the fact that the road is straight. It is possible with Keir's design that a car traveling down Keir toward Canyon Ferry Road (redesigned) could actually travel to fast and not know that an intersection is coming up and have an accident. It is also possible that a car coming down the hill will not be able to stop if ice is on the road causing them to slip into Canyon Ferry Road "T".

Three young people have been killed at this site. My son was one of them. I would appreciate it you would cut the hill portion off Keir lane as much as possible and fill the base to bring the road into a more flat and less roller coaster road. I believe that it will save lives.

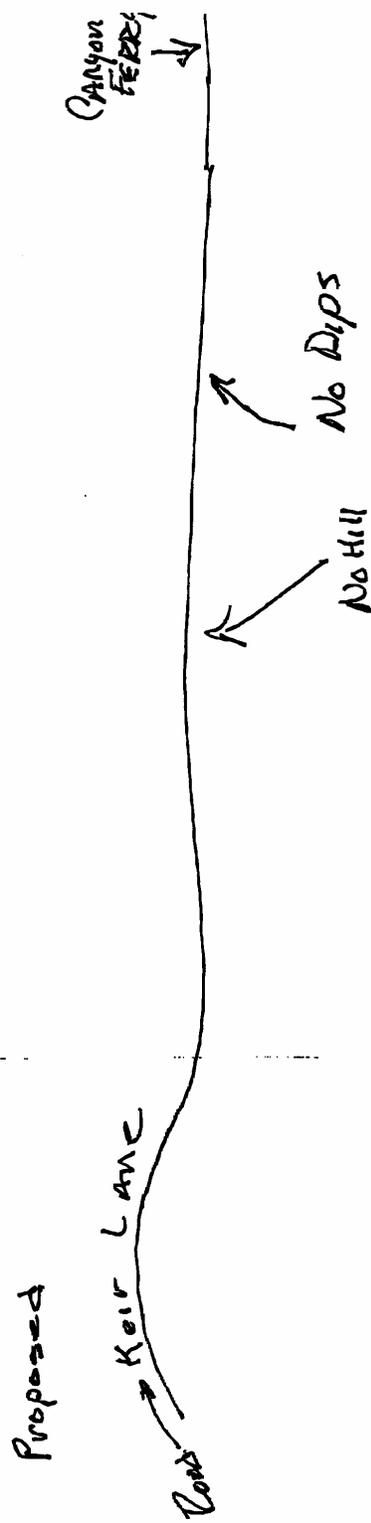
I was not able to make your meeting and I would appreciate it if you could send me a copy of the EA for the July 8, meeting. If there is an expense let me know how much and I will send you a check.

Sincerely,

  
Terry Zimmerman



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