

PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT PLAN (PAIP)

*Paradise Valley Corridor Planning Study
US 89 (Gardiner to Livingston)*



Prepared for:
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
MDT	Montana Department of Transportation
MEPA	Montana Environmental Policy Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PAIP	Public and Agency Involvement Plan
RP	reference post
RPA	Robert Peccia and Associates
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 st Century Act
US	United States

PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT PLAN (PAIP)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), in partnership with Park County, has initiated a Corridor Planning Study of United States (US) Highway 89. The study will examine the highway from reference post (RP) 0.0 at the Yellowstone National Park boundary in Gardiner, north to RP 52.5, which is south of Livingston.

The study, referred to as the *Paradise Valley Corridor Planning Study*, will identify feasible improvement options to address safety and geometrical concerns (i.e. road width, horizontal curves, vertical grades, approach density, etc.) within the transportation corridor based on needs presented by the community, the study partners, and resource agencies. Geometric characteristics (road widths, curves, approaches, etc.), crash history, and existing and projected operational characteristics of the corridor will be examined. Existing and projected land uses and environmental resources will also be analyzed.

The study will include a comprehensive package of short- and long-term recommendations intended to address the transportation needs of highway users over the next twenty years (i.e. planning horizon year 2033). Developing these recommendations will help the study partners define the most critical needs and allocate resources.

An initial step in the corridor planning process is to develop a *Public and Agency Involvement Plan (PAIP)* that provides for and identifies public, stakeholder, and other interested parties involvement activities needed to communicate information about existing and future corridor needs. The purpose of the *PAIP* is to establish a process that provides opportunities for interested parties to participate in all phases of the corridor planning process. Providing complete information, timely notices, and opportunities to comment, as well as ensuring full access to key decisions, will help achieve the *PAIP* objectives.

1.1 CORRIDOR PLANNING PROCESS

MDT established the corridor planning process to investigate improvement options for the corridor via the Pre-National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) / Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Study, as provided for in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). If improvement options move into project development, the corridor planning process will yield information and help advance viable improvement options for use in the NEPA / MEPA process, as well as providing an opportunity for partner involvement at all stages.

The purposes for a corridor study are to analyze existing data to determine current and future deficiencies and needs within the corridor and to identify potential environmental issues and mitigation opportunities. The *Paradise Valley Corridor Planning Study* is a pre-NEPA/MEPA study that allows flexibility in examining improvement options for the roadway system should any project move forward. Public, stakeholder, and interested-party involvement are important components of any successful corridor planning process. For this study, a number of proposed involvement strategies will aid in reaching the most people possible to elicit meaningful participation. These opportunities will achieve the following goals:

- Educate corridor users regarding the critical elements included in the Pre-NEPA/MEPA Corridor Planning Study process for the US 89 corridor between Gardiner and Livingston.

- Increase ability to provide input and ask questions throughout the corridor planning study.
- Present findings and recommendations.

1.2 STUDY AREA

MDT established the termini of the *Paradise Valley Corridor Planning Study* as beginning at RP 0.0 in Gardiner, ending at RP 52.5, south of Livingston. A vicinity map (Figure 1) shows the location of the corridor and the surrounding area. The study area includes a 0.75-mile buffer on each side of US 89.

1.3 GOALS OF PUBLIC AND AGENCY OUTREACH EFFORT

The goal of the study partners and the consultant is to provide ongoing opportunities for involvement by members of the public, stakeholders, and resource agency representatives throughout the planning study process. Education and outreach are essential elements in successfully informing individuals about the planning study process.

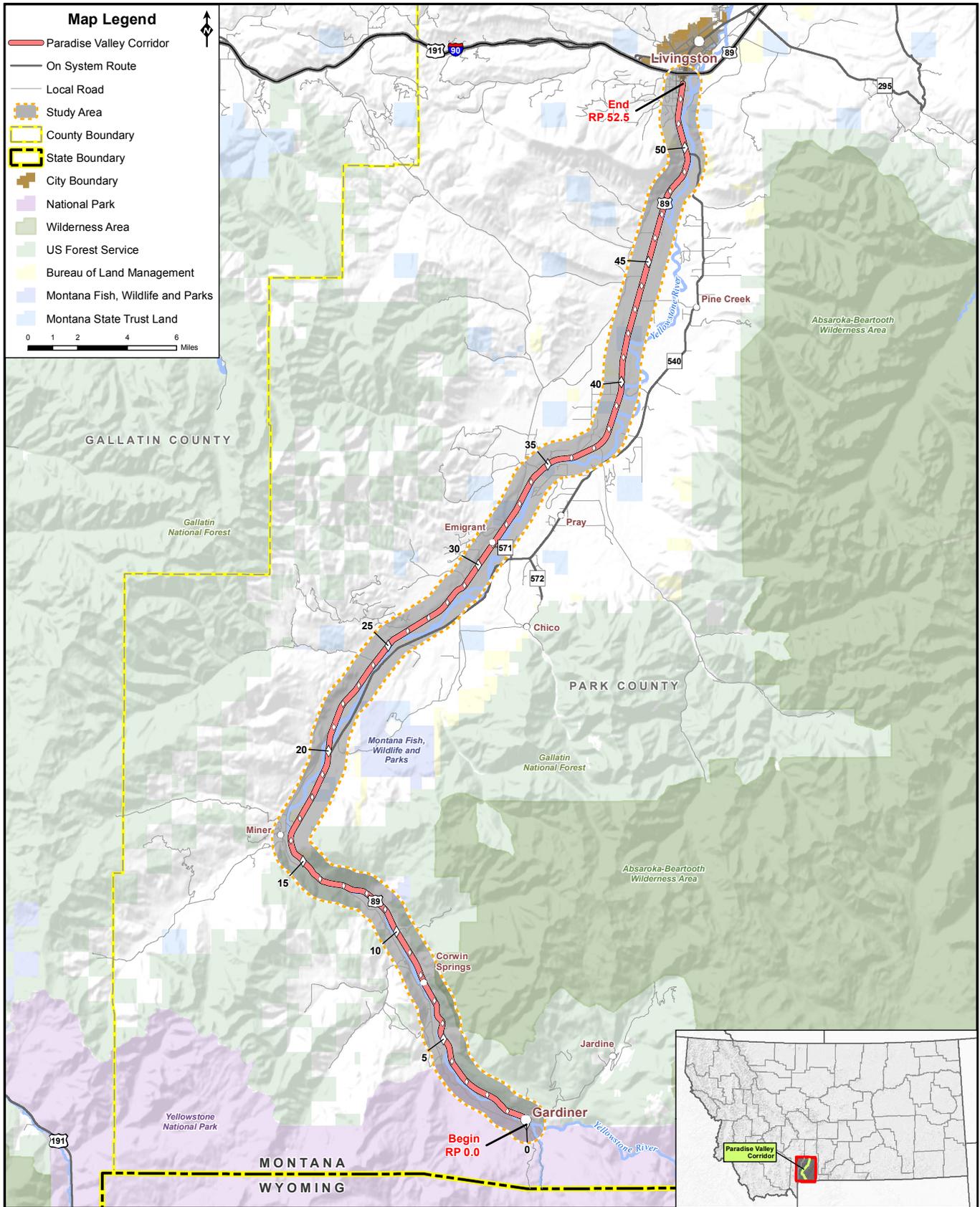


Figure 1: Vicinity Map

2.0 PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

The *PAIP* describes the information and input opportunities that will be provided while developing the *Paradise Valley Corridor Planning Study*. This plan encourages active participation in identifying and commenting on study issues at every stage of the planning process. Participant involvement includes the following:

- The general public—residents of Park County, the cities of Livingston and Gardiner, and adjacent areas
- Landowners and business owners within the study area boundary
- Resource agencies
- Stakeholders and outreach groups
- Other interested parties

This document contains descriptions of notification of informational meetings and other information. MDT, Park County, and RPA will provide information regarding all aspects of the planning study to the public and interested parties and will seek their input throughout the process.

2.1 STUDY CONTACTS

All information published regarding the *Paradise Valley Corridor Planning Study* will have contact information for MDT, Park County, and RPA. This information is provided below.

- **Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)** – Statewide and Urban Planning
2960 Prospect Avenue (PO Box 201001), Helena, MT 59620-1001
Contact: **Sheila Ludlow** – *MDT Project Manager*
(406) 444-9193
sludlow@mt.gov
- **Park County** – Planning Department
414 E. Callender Street, Livingston, MT 59047
Contact: **Mike Inman** – *Senior Planner*
(406) 222-4102
wminman@parkcounty.org
- **Robert Peccia and Associates (RPA)** – Consultant
825 Custer Avenue (PO Box 5653), Helena, MT 59604
Contact: **Jeff Key, PE** – *RPA Project Manager*
(406) 447-5000
jeff.key@rpa-hln.com

2.2 PUBLICATIONS

MDT and RPA will jointly develop meeting announcements, and MDT will advertise the announcements at least twice before informational meetings (three weeks and one week before the meeting). The ads will contain the meeting location, time and date, meeting format and purpose, and locations for document review (if applicable). The following print publications will carry the display ads:

- **Livingston Enterprise** – print and online: <http://www.livingstonenterprise.com/>
- **Gardiner Community Newsletter** – print and online:
<http://www.gardinerchamber.com/newsletter.cfm>

In addition, RPA will publish newsletters, flyers, or both, one month before each informational meeting. The newsletters will describe work in progress, results achieved, preliminary recommendations, and other related topics. RPA will deliver each newsletter and flyer to Park County, MDT, and select stakeholders for distribution and posting to their individual internet sites. Print copies of newsletters will be available at the public meetings.

2.3 RADIO AND TELEVISION

Meetings may also be announced on local radio and/or television stations. Planning Team input will identify the most popular radio and television stations for announcements.

2.4 STAKEHOLDER CONTACT LIST

A stakeholder contact list will include individuals, businesses, or groups identified by Park County and MDT. The stakeholder list will identify individuals and groups with likely project interests and will enable actively seeking out and engaging them in all phases of the study process. A sign-in sheet for individuals who attend informational meetings will facilitate expanding the stakeholder list. The groups or businesses (at a minimum) listed below will be included in the initial list:

- Park County Commission
- Park County Rural Fire District
- Park County Sheriff's Office
- Park County Road Department
- Park County Planning Department
- Park County Public Schools
- Park County Airport Board
- Park County Planning and Development Board
- City of Livingston
- Gardiner Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Gardiner Community Council
- Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District
- Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (*also resource agency contact*)
- US Forest Service (*also resource agency contact*)
- US National Park Service (*also resource agency contact*)
- US Bureau of Land Management (*also resource agency contact*)
- Gallatin Valley Land Trust
- Montana Land Reliance
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Montana Wild Sheep Foundation
- Montanan's for Safe Wildlife Passage
- Northern Plains Resource Council
- Trout Unlimited – Joe Brooks Chapter
- MSU Extension

2.5 DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

Electronic copies of study deliverables and technical memorandums will be posted on the study website at the following address: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/paradisevalley/

Hard copy materials may also be made available at the following locations:

- Park County Planning Department (414 E. Callender Street, Livingston, MT 59047)
- MDT Bozeman Area Office (907 North Rouse Avenue, Bozeman, MT 59771)

The following required Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) statement will be included on all published materials:

“Park County, MDT, and RPA attempt to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity associated with this study. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information, call (406) 447-5000, TTY (800) 335-7592, or Montana Relay at 711. Accommodation requests must be made at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled activity and / or meeting.”

3.0 MEETINGS

3.1 PLANNING TEAM MEETINGS

MDT will schedule Planning Team meetings every three weeks over the 12-month study period (16 Planning Team meetings). Groups included in the meetings will be Park County, MDT, Federal Highway Administration, RPA, and others as needed. The meetings will track progress and address study development issues and questions. The meetings are important for the exchange of technical information and ideas during the development of the study. Throughout the meetings, the Planning Team will identify and discuss issues, problems, and possible solutions.

The Planning Team will consider all public comments received over the duration of the study. As comments are received from the public, they will be logged into a public comment matrix and provided to the Planning Team for consideration. Written responses will not be offered to the individual making the comment unless a specific question or response is warranted. After the draft report is published, an additional public comment matrix will be created to log public comments received specific to the draft report, and will contain written responses as applicable. All public comments received, and any provided responses, will be duly considered and placed in the appendices to the final report.

3.2 INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Two informational meetings will take place throughout the study. Each will occur in two locations, Gardiner and Livingston, and they will be similar in form and content. The first informational meeting will take place early to introduce the study, describe relevant features, and explain the process. This meeting will also enable obtaining information about the study area from interested parties. The second informational meeting will occur following completion of the draft *Paradise Valley Corridor Planning Study*. The purpose of this meeting will be to present the types of recommended improvements and to receive feedback. Staff will record comments and concerns at all meetings for consideration throughout the planning process.

3.3 RESOURCE AGENCY MEETING/INVOLVEMENT

A meeting will be scheduled and held with Resource Agencies. MDT will organize the meeting, and RPA will facilitate it with assistance from the study partners, as necessary.

3.4 CONSIDERATION FOR TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

Additional efforts are necessary to involve traditionally underserved segments of the population, including the disabled, minorities, and low-income residents. Including these groups helps to ensure planning that reflects everyone’s needs. The steps listed below will help with these efforts.

- **Plan meeting locations carefully:** Hold Informational meetings in locations that are accessible and compliant with ADA. If a targeted population is located in a certain geographic part of a city or county, then the meeting location should be close to the area for convenience.
- **Seek help from community leaders and organizations:** To facilitate involvement of traditionally underserved populations, consult with community leaders and organizations representing these groups about the most effective ways to reach their members.
- **Be sensitive to diverse audiences:** At informational meetings, study partner staff and the Consultant will attempt to communicate as effectively as possible. Presenters will avoid using technical jargon, and staff will wear appropriate dress and adhere to common rules of conduct.

3.5 STUDY SCHEDULE

Adherence to the study schedule is important to stay on track and to keep all participating parties engaged. Figure 2 contains the study schedule for the *Paradise Valley Corridor Planning Study*. It is RPA’s intent to adhere to this schedule.

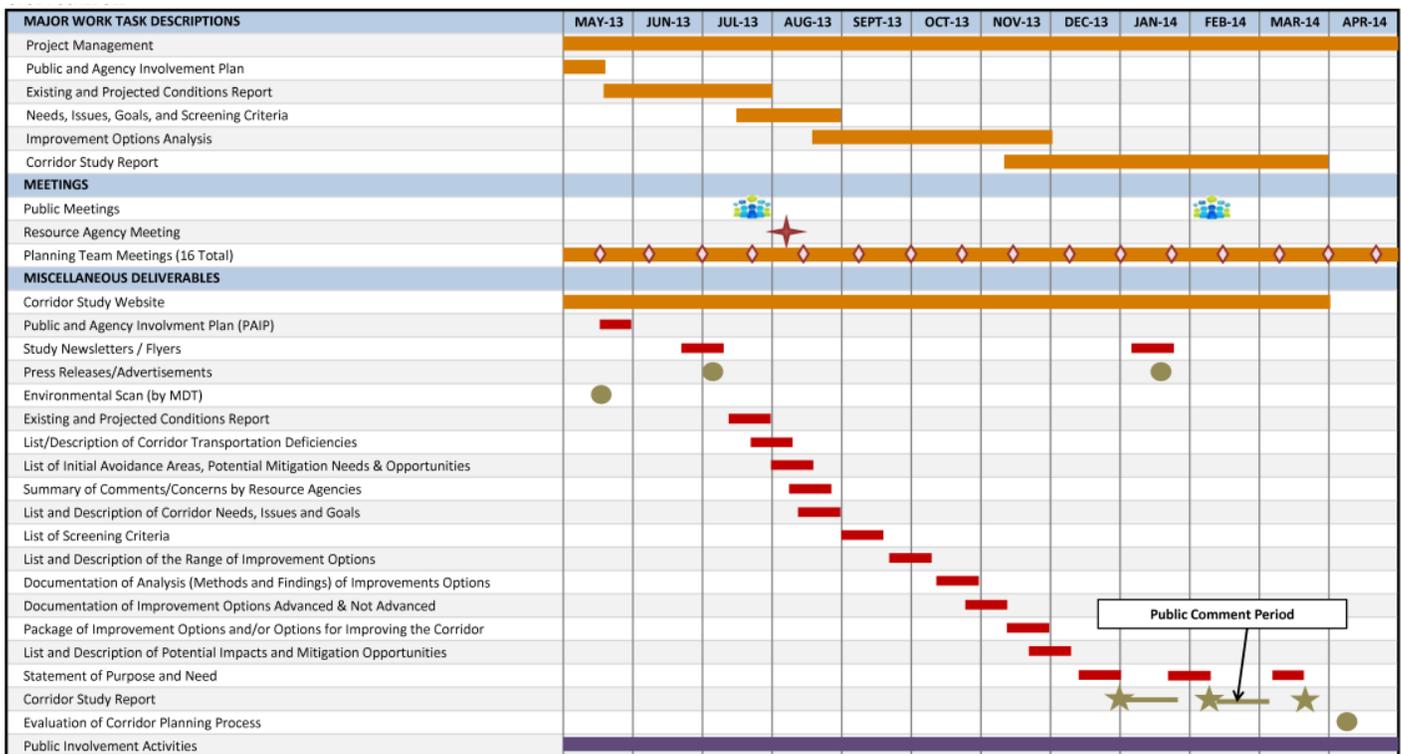


Figure 2: Study Schedule

4.0 OVERALL STUDY COMMUNICATION

The *PAIP* establishes guidelines and procedures for encouraging participation. The following communication strategies and techniques will be used to distribute study information to the community at large and to seek a higher level of engagement. RPA will apply the techniques that best suit the *Paradise Valley Corridor Planning Study* development.

- All relevant deliverables and associated materials will be posted on the study website at the following address:
 - www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/paradisevalley/
- Public service announcements and interviews on radio and television may be conducted to explain the subject matter and promote participation.
- Newsletters will be provided at least one month before each informational meeting.
- Press releases for the newspaper or other widely circulated publications will be developed.
- Technical memorandums will be provided to MDT for posting to the study's internet site. They will also be distributed to the Planning Team to provide a better understanding of proposed issues and recommendations and, in return, to provide the study partners with feedback and an opportunity for continual comment.
- Hard copies of all materials will be made available at the locations described in Section 2.5, as well as at the MDT Statewide and Urban Planning Section (2960 Prospect Avenue).
- Upon request, special presentations may be made to groups and organizations.
- Fact sheets may be developed to help explain or describe study-related issues.
- Special issues documents may be announced or reported on at meetings and/or via email.

Questions and comments from interested parties concerning the participation process, working draft technical memorandums, the draft *Paradise Valley Corridor Planning Study* documents, and other work products will be included in an appendix to the actual documents.