Montana Department of Transportation

TRANSPORTATION REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TRED

THEODORE ROOSEVELT EXPRESSWAY

Frequently Asked Questions & Public Comments

Final Draft

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December 14, 2006

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1 INTRODUCTION

As an integral part of the study process, the Montana Department of Transportation accepted comments from all interested parties concerning the TRED corridor study. This document compiles the comments, both supportive of and in opposition to the project, received by MDT via mail, email, telephone, through MDT's TRED website, or in person.

Section 2 of this document presents a list of frequently asked questions about the study and supplies comprehensive responses to each.

Section 3 summarizes the public involvement efforts engaged in throughout the study process.

Section 4 contains an itemized archive of comments received, organized by content (supportive or in opposition) and by source. Comments made by governmental officials disclose the author's identity while general public comments do not reveal the comment's source for purposes of privacy.

2 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

US 2 / MT 16 TRED STUDY FAQ

1) ***I would rather see it (the expanded roadway) go through Glendive, Montana and Sidney, Montana than see it go to Williston, North Dakota. Williston will have Highway 2 for interstate in the future and Sidney needs this to help its development as a city.***

   The Theodore Roosevelt Expressway is a congressionally named corridor; it is because of this designation that this study was undertaken. However, this study and any possible resulting highway improvements do not preclude any further highway infrastructure improvements to the area. Additionally any highway improvements completed in the vicinity are also likely to benefit the entire region wherever these improvements may occur.

2) ***Is this going to be a four-lane highway and if so how is the state planning to cross the refuge at Medicine Lake?***

   This study was conducted to examine what conditions would warrant the expansion of the TRE corridor in Montana to a four lane highway. The final determination of whether any expansion occurs and what form that expansion could take will be dependent on several future considerations, including funding availability and environmental studies.

3) ***I oppose any rebuilding along this route that is not four-lane, so I am concerned about plans by MDT to improve portions of this highway corridor. Wouldn't construction of improved two-lane highways with passing lanes reduce the chances to later improve the corridor to four lanes?***

   MDT is seriously considering four-lane options for this corridor, but even in the best of circumstances, planning, engineering, funding, and constructing highway improvements takes many years. We cannot neglect pressing maintenance and safety issues in the meantime. MDT will proceed with construction of improvements already scheduled, which are vital to keeping the highway working well for the citizens and businesses in this area.

4) ***For those of us who own property along the route, when would we find out if part of our property would be needed for highway right-of-way?***

   Property owners will not be left out. This project is trying to determine if an expanded highway system is justified. At this point we don't know the exact location or timing of a highway expansion. When specific route options are

developed, MDT and FHWA will notify potentially affected property owners. At that time, you would be able to assess and weigh-in on specific alternatives.

5) ***Will this facility be converted to an Interstate?***

The federal Interstate building program ended in 1991. It would take an act of Congress to enact further Interstate expansion. There are no plans at this time to convert this facility to an access controlled facility such as an Interstate.

6) ***How much of the (Great Plains International Trade Corridor) is currently four lanes?***

About 25% of the Great Plains International Trade Corridor currently consists of four-lane highways.

7) ***All of this talk is focused on US 2, are you forgetting about MT 16?***

No. This study examined both the US 2 and the MT 16 portions of the Montana portion of the TRE corridor. If any expansion activity along this corridor is approved for expansion, the US 2 section appears to make the most sense to be the first segment. Being the first segment to receive expansion would not mean that the US 2 segment would be the only segment to be expanded.

8) ***Why is MDT building narrower roads than ND?***

Some highways in North Dakota may be wider, or narrower, than Montana's due to different classification, design standards, or age of roadways. States have authority not only to classify highways, but also to set design standards. States pursue renovation and improvement of highways on their own timelines. All these things make it difficult to compare one state's highways to others'.

9) ***Following the environmental documentation (next step), don't you have to program funding for a project?***

Yes. Funding is always a challenge. Arranging finances to complete any project is very important. MDT routinely takes preliminary steps to line up the funds, as we are in this case. The funding is an important, but distant challenge at this stage. The TRED study aims to determine if a project can be justified.

10) ***I am concerned about the NAFTA Superhighway. I've read that this highway expansion is being pushed by Canada, Mexico, and multinational corporations. Who initiated this project, and why?***

The so-called "NAFTA Superhighway" is located hundreds of miles from Montana, and it is wholly unrelated to this study. Improvements to the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway have been advocated by a grass roots effort of Montana

citizens. The TRED Study tends to bear out the long-held position of area citizens that there are local benefits of a four-lane design.

3 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EFFORTS

The study team involved interested parties and incorporated their advice into the design and report of the study. The following summarizes the public involvement efforts:

- **Site visits:** The study team maintained a consistent presence in the study region. Presence by the study team in the affected territory included visits by the Director (January 28), scoping tours (March 21-22), workshops (July 11, November 8) and expert meetings (July 12, August 15, November 8), environmental scan (August 1-2), Saskatchewan (May 16-17).

- **E-Access:** The project web site was maintained as a one-stop information source including draft documents, public presentations, newsletters, contact information, link to MDT comment system.

- **Expert advice:** An expert panel was formed to help refine and review the study. Three national experts were selected based on their expertise and national-scale perspective on the subject. Local representatives were chosen for their specific expertise in the key industries of agriculture, energy, tourism and general industry development. Both the national and local experts commented on the opportunity matrix, and helped refine the probabilities and traffic impacts of prospective developments. In addition, the panelists were thoroughly briefed on the study's overall process and findings and were asked to comment on it. The panel was convened July 11, August 15, and November 8, and comments were accepted from individual panelists throughout the project.

- **Local facilitation:** The Great Northern Development Corp. facilitated the study team's involvement efforts with the local populations by helping identify and make contact with community, business, and public leaders, and in assisting with on-site meetings.

- **Ground-level technical input:** 120 interviews conducted, May – July, 2006, with business leaders, academic experts, governmental agency leaders, and knowledgeable public stakeholders. Most of these interviews were with people in the immediate study area, but many were conducted at the larger regional scale.

- **Peer agency technical input:** Briefings with transportation agencies were held for states and provinces touching the TRE route. Primary contacts were established with each of the state and provincial peer agencies, and these contacts were periodically advised of the status of the project and asked to comment on it. Interviews were conducted with peer agencies in neighboring states and provinces concerning their future plans for highway projects connecting directly or indirectly with the TRE within Montana.

- **FHWA involvement:** MDT's federal peer agency was routinely engaged in project team meetings from pre-contracting through project completion. FHWA was

engaged in weekly briefings, monthly briefings, and all expert process and public meetings. Preliminary and final conclusions were vetted with FHWA, and it received documentation throughout the study. The agency has played a key advisory role.

- **Executive briefings:** Formal briefings for key agencies and interested-parties were held (March 23, September 13).

- **Resource agency involvement:** A workshop was held for resource agencies so they could understand and comment on the study and its potential relationship to federal environmental assessment processes. Comments were requested of the resource agencies on the environmental scan and draft study report.

- **Consultation with peer agencies from other states / provinces:** A briefing of peer agencies in other states was held on February 16, 2006. The study team conducted a site visit to Saskatchewan to learn more about that Province's dispositions regarding comparable improvements, and to gather private and institutional views as they informed this study. Also, a survey of state and provincial agencies along the TRE corridor was conducted to assess their situation with regard to potential improvements.

- **Public workshops:** Public workshops were held to brief local citizens on the project and to ask for citizen input. Those workshops were publicized through local advertising, press releases, and newsletters.

- **Press releases:** News announcements were distributed to regional and state press contacts on July 7, October 5, and November 22.

- **Newsletters:** Newsletters were sent to citizens interested in the process on June 30 and October 27.

- **Draft and comment:** The draft was distributed to resource agencies with a request for comment. The comment period lasted over 30 days. The complete draft was made available by web, CD, print, and local and state depository libraries).

4 PUBLIC COMMENTS

4.1 Comments in Support of the Study

Out of all the comments MDT received concerning the TRED study, a large proportion were supportive in nature, in fact, supportive comments outnumbered comments in opposition by almost a 10-1 margin. These positive comments are presented here.

Official supportive comments are presented first within this section followed by an itemized archive of the general public's positive comments.

4.1.1 Official Letters in Support

The text of a letter received by the Montana Department of Transportation in support of the TRE from the Sheridan County Commissioners follows.

> This is our letter of support for the US2/MT16 TRED project. The benefits to us in Northeast Montana will be immeasurable in the event this project is realized. We are seeing a marked increase in oil interest in Sheridan County, and that potential oil production coupled with the road project would bring greatly needed economic opportunities to our area.
>
> With our depressed agricultural economy, we see this road project as a vital part of the future survival of our communities here in Sheridan County. Please give this project your most serious consideration. We support it wholeheartedly.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Gerald Kohler
> Chairman

4.1.2 Official Supportive Comments

Comments in support of the TRE Corridor expansion made by governmental officials are presented here.

The Sheridan County Chamber of Commerce serving Northeastern Montana fully support this project as a four lane highway from North Dakota/Montana through Montana/Saskatchewan borders. We support the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway and the entire Port to Plains Trade Corridor. This project would have a huge economic and tourism impact on the area. This project would be truly a positive from Sheridan County and the entire region.

Richard Rice, President, Sheridan County Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture

Hello:

We as commissioners and residents of NE Montana feel that the proposed US 2/MT16 project is extremely important to the future and survival of NE MT. It is probably as or more important as the current oil boom. It's hard to imagine the spin off of benefits of a project like this. Granted we really appreciate oil, but this opens a whole new set of conditions with our neighbors to the north. With the future development of Saskatchewan's oil and other products it is an ideal situation. I think we are on the brink of opportunity. You have our full and whole hearted support.

Thank You.

Gerald Kohler Chairman, Sheridan County Commissioner

I am very excited about the results of the draft TRED Study in regards to the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway. I agree with the study concerning the recommendation of a 4 lane highway on the Montana portion of this corridor. I feel this project will create economic opportunities for Northeastern Montana that would not be available with the current transportation infrastructure. This part of Montana needs the hope of increased development and economic opportunity that just might happen with this trade corridor between Mexico and Canada. I support this endeavor wholeheartedly and encourage the Montana Department of Transportation to move forward as quickly as possible to develop this project as a 4 lane highway system.

Sincerely yours,

William "Bill" Nyby, Sheridan County Commissioner

The Sheridan Commissioners appreciate the efforts of the MDT concerning the TRED Project. The Project has immense potential for NE Montana and at a recent public meeting there were no concerns of any downside to the project.

Bob Nikolaisen, Sheridan County Commissioner

4.1.3 General Public Supportive Comments

This section contains an itemized list of the general public comments received that were generally supportive of the TRE Corridor study.

1. Hello, we feel the proposed US 2 /MT 16 project is extremely important to NE Montana and the future transportation system in the United States. We feel that a good transportation system as well as our close proximity to Canada could definitely have a positive effect on economic development in NE Montana. We are located in the Williston basin where there is expanding oil and energy activity. With the new Conoco refinery development using the oil from the Alberta oil sands, the transportation needs will definitely increase. It is obvious that the transportation needs will drastically increase in the future.

2. I believe that the TRED project is extremely important to NE Montana. I am very much in favor of the project being completed. The project will benefit everyone in our area .It will help the farmers, truckers, tourists, business owners, and the general public.

3. The proposed US 2 / MT 16 project is very important to our area and the nation. Most importantly we need to have a drive-way from the Canadian border to the Mexican border. The best for the nation is to have this road in areas with the least traffic to make it safer for the border to border traffic. A continuous Divided 4 Lane from border to border will make for a safe appealing road for all transportation to take, therefore alleviating traffic thru overcrowded metro areas. In our local area the oil business has and will continue to increase. We feel the Divided 4 Lane proposed on the US 2 / MT 16 project will have safety and economic benefits for the Local Area, Nation and Continent.

4. This highway project is very important to Plentywood and the surrounding communities. This project will provide increased traffic safety and more jobs in the area. Those dollars will have a roll-over effect which will benefit all businesses, government agencies, and citizens in Montana. THIS PROJECT MUST MOVE FORWARD!

5. I am very much in favor of this highway project. I feel it is very important for northeastern Montana to have access to such a transportation system not only for current transportation needs but also for future economic development in this area.

6. I am very much in favor of this 4 lane highway. I feel it would help this area of Montana with economic development.

7. We the people in Plentywood Mt. feel the proposed us2/mt.16 project is very important to our community and the future transportation system in the United States. We know that a good transportation system as well as our close location to Canada could definitely have a positive effect on our economic development in NE Montana. With the growing oil activity in are area and Canada wanting to truck Alberta oil sands down here we will see a definite increase in traffic in the future along with all other trucking.

8. I am very much in favor of this 4 lane highway. I feel it would help this area of Montana with economic development.

9. Call from Redstone, MT to comment in favor of the TRED study. Also in favor of the 4 for 2 concept - "if they are going to blow the money anyway, we should get some safety out of it."

10. I would like to express my support for the TRED project. I believe this would be a great addition to Sheridan County and Plentywood.

11. I am in favor of the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway. I think this corridor hwy would be a great boom to eastern Montana. I believe with freight being ever increasingly hauled via trucks this would be a good addition to the nation's road system. Freight from Canada, including wheat and cattle, will do nothing but increase. Maybe this expressway would offset some of eastern Montana's economical decline caused from the decrease in family farms. I think the MDT should proceed with great idea.

12. I am for TRED. It would be positive for the economy of Montana.

13. We are very much in favor of this 4-lane highway being built.

14. Dear MDOT, I'm submitting comments on the TRED study. I'm a county planner in Plentywood and commute to work on Hwy 16 daily for the past 25 years. I've seen a great increase in truck traffic in the past 5 years due to increased oil activity and transport, as well as changes in agricultural transport where most grain is hauled longer distances by semis, so there is a substantial increase in that truck traffic as well. I support the TRED Study conclusion that Hwy 2 from ND to Culbertson should be a divided 4 lane highway. I don't think Hwy 16 has enough traffic yet to support a four lane but that option should be kept open as traffic loads increase in the future. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

15. I am writing in reference to the proposed US 2 / MT 16 project. This highway project is very important to our area and to the United States. We definitely need a road from the Mexican Border to the Canadian Border. This proposed project work very well as it is best suited for areas with the least traffic to make it safer for border to border traffic. A continues Divided 4 Lane from border to border will make it safe and appealing for all traffic and transportation. This will also provide a much safer way of travel than through the large over crowded road. This project will provide a much needed economic benefits for our local area.

16. Telephoned to add their names to the list of people in support of this project.

17. In support of the project.

18. I am in favor of this road. It will give our community a boost!!

19. I am in favor of this 4 lane. I am a naturalized US citizen from Mexico and this road would be a benefit for future industry in this area.

20. I support the TRED for economic development. This project will greatly benefit the local economy and help us to begin to thrive financially.

21. This is the most import economical move since the 24 hour port at Regway. We strongly support it.

22. Caller from Antelope, MT called in support of TRED.

23. I am very much in favor of the proposed Theodore Roosevelt Expressway Project in Montana on Highways 2 and 16. I believe that a 4 lane highway through our area would greatly increase economic development in the area due to the increased traffic to Canada. I also believe that a 4 lane would result in fewer automobile accidents and automobile deer accidents. On 3 trips that we made to Denver in the past year, we saw many deer in the right-of -way of all the 2 lane highways but not many on the 4 lane highways.

24. I would like to express my interest in the TRED project. This is a very important key to the survival of this rural community. It would mean a great deal to the community as well as all the others along the way in NE MT and NW North Dakota. Please do whatever is needed to see that this project happens.

25. I am for US 2/MT 16 TRED. It will benefit our town greatly.

26. I would like to say it's about time! What a boost to Montana. With a four lane from Mexico to Canada and a four lane from North Dakota to Seattle the commerce of tourism and trade of goods will benefit this whole region. And having Plentywood and the Port of Raymond be the door to the North is awesome. No other city or Port on the High Line could be a better host. I am a

farmer and being a farmer having more options for marketing my crop is huge. I'm all in favor of this project and I mean that as a tax payer. We will do Montana proud having the door to Canada in far North East Montana. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to write to you.

27. The proposed highway project is an important one for our town and the area. We have a 24-hour port to Canada just north of Plentywood which is an asset for the new route, drawing traffic to and from Canada. Increased truck traffic would be beneficial to our local economy, and the possibility of increased tourism from the 4-lane highway would also benefit our area. We do have increased oil activity with many more trucks on the road, and a four-lane highway would greatly increase the safety factor for all involved. We feel this would be a great project to benefit all of us in northeastern Montana.

28. I am writing this note to let you know I support the US2/MT16 Project. I have been a resident of NE Montana all my life and any improvements to the highways in our area would certainly be a positive asset for commerce and safety. A 4-lane highway to the Canadian border would definitely mean safer travel for commercial trucks and cars since we have the different speed limits for each. Thank you for considering this important project for our area.

29. I want to express my support for the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway and the Great Plains Corridor. I feel this would increase economic development in Northeastern MT.

30. I am in favor of the Theodore Expressway and I think that it would greatly help with all the truck traffic.

31. I am in favor of the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway project, and really would like to see the north and south road come into being. There is a distinct probability that this highway would help the economy of Northeast Montana.

32. I am in support of the project as I have many times been behind a line of cars behind a truck or wide motor home. This creates a traffic danger. Also, I believe our area would greatly benefit from the economic boost of this expressway.

33. I am in full support of the development of TRED. I am a restaurant owner and a farmer. The benefits of other means of transporting ag products cannot be overstated. My restaurant business volume goes up with increased traffic such as during the summer months, and down during decreased traffic times such as now during winter. Right now my business is approx. 50% less than July.

34. I feel that the new highway is a great idea. Our highways around here narrow and are not very safe for high traffic, semi trucks, etc. It would be a lot safer if the roads to and from here were four lanes. It would make for make for safer travel in every aspect.

35. Dear Sirs: I have attended a local meeting in Plentywood, Mt concerning the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway. I am in favor of the project. I agree with the conclusions in the Executive Summary of the study of the TRED project. The additional factor of economic growth in an area not already subject to overcrowding and high costs makes sense to me.

36. I would like to express my positive opinion for the proposed US2/MT 16 for our community. As a long time employee and member of the local Chamber of Commerce, I feel the economic impact will help to promote other business opportunities for our area. By increasing the highway to 4 lanes, it will make it safer for the increased flow of traffic. We are already seeing a lot of truck traffic with the oil business which will continue to increase in the future. We are a major link to Canada and this corridor will help create more business between the two countries and on down to Mexico. With highway 16 connecting up to highway 2, the flow across the entire northern part of Montana will be beneficial to all.

37. Caller from Antelope, MT: In favor of the study's conclusions.

38. Caller from Plentywood, MT: In favor of the idea and project.

39. I am a small business owner in Plentywood. I favor expansion of HWY 16 into a for-lane to become the TRED. We are close to a 24 hour port into Canada and the expansion would be a boost to the declining economy in this area. Thank you.

40. I am definitely in favor of this trade corridor project. (TRED)

41. Yes, I am in favor of the US 2/MT16 TRED For economical reason.

42. As a realtor I get all kinds of comments. The most commented on is the roads. Yes, we need a four lane highway to help promote our area, and make traveling safer. We have a lot to offer. In my opinion we would see more tourism, hunting and maybe more retired people. I have had calls from people in the big cities wanting to move their family to a safe place, but the transportation was a problem. It may also be a possibility that we could get some industry if we had decent roads. Time is of essence to most.

43. I support the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway Project. I think the proposed Highway would be a great economic boost for this corner of the state.

44. I am in favor of the new highway from the port of Raymond to Culbertson and U.S. 2 from Culbertson to North Dakota border as segments of Theodore Roosevelt Expressway because of truck traffic. It will also be safer as far at traffic goes.

45. I live at Redstone Mt and feel that the 4 lane highway would be a great improvement to this area. It would help with the heavy truck traffic in the area as well as making the area better accessible for travelers.

46. I would like to express my positive opinion for the proposed US2/MT 16 for our community. As a long time employee and member of the local Chamber of Commerce, I feel the economic impact will help to promote other business opportunities for our area. By increasing the highway to 4 lanes, it will make it safer for the increased flow of traffic. We are already seeing a lot of truck traffic with the oil business which will continue to increase in the future. We are a major link to Canada and this corridor will help create more business between the two countries and on down to Mexico. With highway 16 connecting up to highway 2, the flow across the entire northern part of Montana will be beneficial to all.

47. Please help Eastern Montana's economy by making sure that this actually happens.

48. I think that the TRED project would be a very good thing for northeast Montana.

49. This project would really help our area as we try to promote economic development. There is a need for better highways in order for industries to consider a location in the Northeast corner of Montana. Without a good system of roads, we don't have much of a chance promoting ourselves. This project would create opportunities for agriculture, tourism, trucking, and the oil & other industries to expand in a safe way.

50. I feel the TRE would be a huge asset to our area. It would increase economic development and increase employment to our area. I also have a personal interest in this, as my husband does highway construction work too over the State. Most of his work takes him hundreds of miles away from home and this would be excellent in having him work at home. We are support this project strongly.

51. I am in favor of the expansion of US 16. I travel into Plentywood for work or spend the rest of my weeks on the road (1000-1500 miles a month in NE MT). I travel south to Culbertson to US 2, to Bainville or Poplar and also to Plentywood and on to Scobey. There is truck traffic during the entire year. It would be nice to have an expanded highway to keep the flow of traffic moving better. My mother lives in Billings, and my daughter and granddaughter will be moving there soon. It would be nice to have the traffic moving smoother as there are grain and beet trucks on the road many times when we travel that route. With an expanded highway there would be more opportunities for trade. We see many trucks moving north and south, to and from Canada, daily.

52. I think it would be a great improvement for the state and would help the local communities of eastern Montana immensely. Very much in favor.

53. I completely agree that the TRE Hwy and the Improvements to Hwy 2 absolutely have to happen. This is a reflection on the trade and everything in the area. I approve.

54. Support the TRE corridor.

55. Support the TRE corridor improvements.

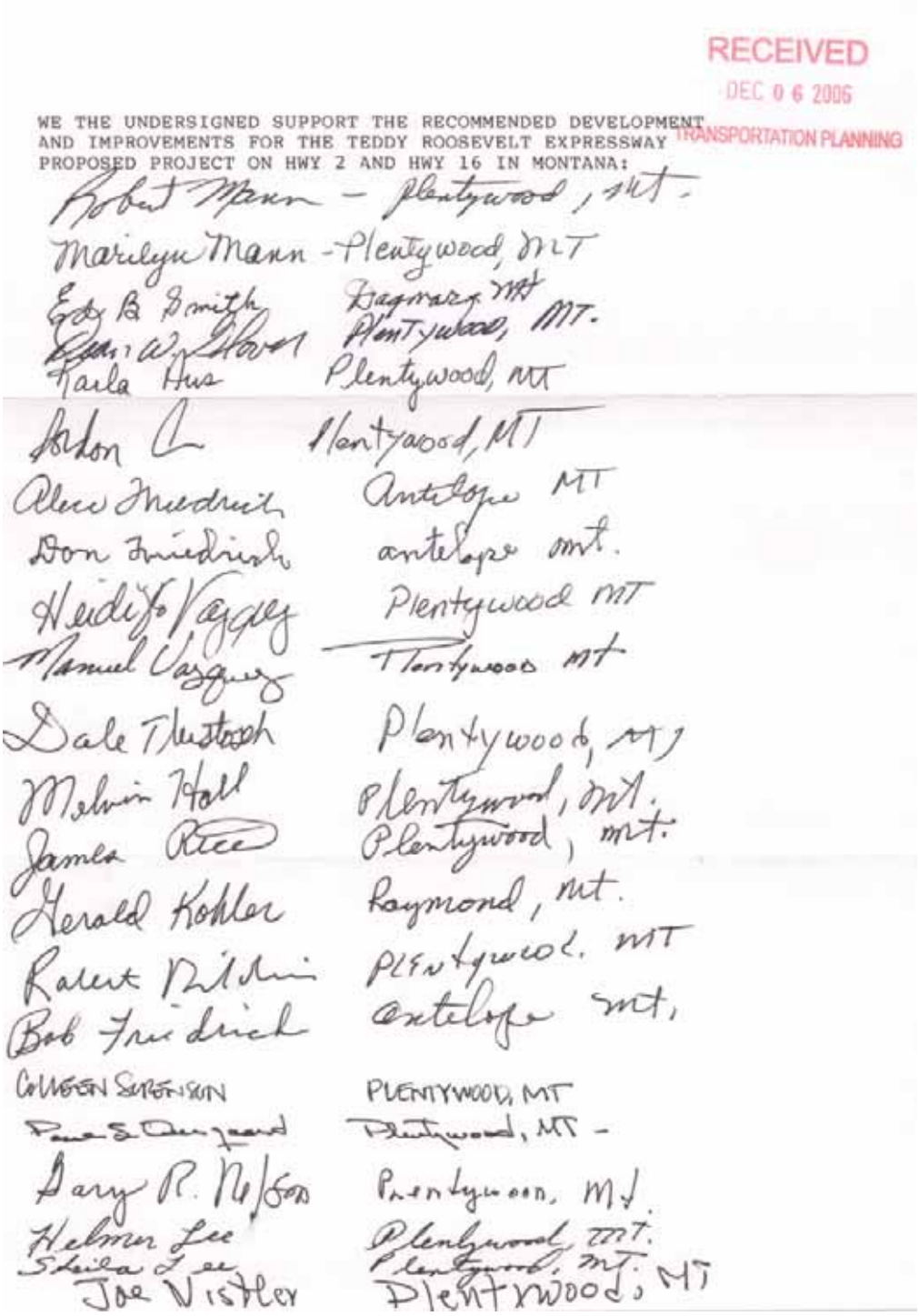
56. I am in favor. I think this would benefit the economy in our area.

57. In favor. Would be a great asset to this community and, I believe, to everyone.

58. Very much in support of this project for economic development.

4.1.4 Petitions in Support of the Project

A petition in support of the TRE Corridor expansion received by MDT is reproduced below.



RECEIVED
DEC 06 2006
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

WE THE UNDERSIGNED SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE TEDDY ROOSEVELT EXPRESSWAY PROPOSED PROJECT ON HWY 2 AND HWY 16 IN MONTANA:

Robert Mann	Plentywood, MT.
Marilyn Mann	Plentywood, MT
Eddy B Smith	Raymond MT
[illegible]	Plentywood, MT.
Paula Hus	Plentywood, MT
[illegible]	Plentywood, MT
Alice Friedrich	Antelope MT
Don Friedrich	antelope mt.
Heidi Vaggley	Plentywood MT
Manuel Vaggley	Plentywood MT
Dale Thustosh	Plentywood, MT
Melvin Hall	Plentywood, MT.
James Rice	Plentywood, MT.
Gerald Kohler	Raymond, MT.
Robert Wilson	Plentywood. MT
Bob Friedrich	antelope mt.
COLLEEN SORENSON	PLENTYWOOD, MT
[illegible]	Plentywood, MT -
Gary R. Nelson	Plentywood, MT
Helmer Lee	Plentywood MT.
Sheila Lee	Plentywood, MT.
Joe Vistler	Plentywood, MT

4.2 Comments in Opposition to the Study

Not all the comments MDT received about this study were positive, however. Any comment that was generally in opposition or critical of this study follows from this point onward within this document.

4.2.1 General Public Letters in Opposition

The text of a letter in opposition to the TRE Corridor expansion sent by a concerned citizen and received by MDT follows.

> I was somewhat surprised to see the article on the Theodore Roosevelt Corridor in the Sunday, November 26, 2006 edition of the Tribune. I will be contacting Senator Max Baucus, Senator-elect John Tester, and Representative Dennis Rehberg regarding my opposition to this issue.
>
> I do not think the Tribune has done their research on this project. Maybe they should. The Agri-News, published in Billings, has featured many articles on this subject warning us of the underlying push for this road and the implications behind the road. My son in Minnesota found a great article on the Internet regarding this highway. I can assure you it is not to help the economies of a few counties in eastern Montana and North Dakota, although that is the way they are selling it to our communities. This corridor is starting in Mexico and going through to Canada. Some people are calling it the NAFTA Superhighway and our government and the governments of Canada and Mexico have secretly been planning this for years. Follow the money—see what multi-national corporations are behind this project and why.
>
> Who initiated this project? How does the Department of Transportation have the authority to make this decision? Supposedly you and your co-workers work for us (we the people). Who is giving you this authority? If our elected officials are in favor of this project, then who is padding their pockets? I would appreciate an answer to all of my questions as I am very concerned about the direction my Country is going.

4.2.2 General Public Opposition Comments

An itemized list of the comments opposing this study or its objectives received by MDT appears here.

1. This is a blatant waste of taxpayer dollars. Since when does widening a road improve the economy of agricultural based communities? Why is the current road not adequate again? The presence of a Flying J truck stop does not constitute economic development. I am against this project.

2. I am concerned about this project as it concerns Plentywood. The truck traffic has increased so much over the last several years and there is only one street to handle all this traffic. With this new proposed 4-lane highway the traffic will increase more. I think it is creating a unsafe traffic condition. The highway runs on First Avenue through Plentywood where there is a lot of residential homes. There are some other things happening that will also increase traffic in the future. With the increased oil activity and the proposed expansion of the elevator in Westby, this will put more heavy trucks through our town.

3. I am a trucker who does a lot of business shipping goods back & forth across the Canadian border. I'm concerned about some things I have read and heard about the development of this and similar corridors nationally. I'm not concerned about my business, but about the overall effects of corridors like this.

   We live right on Hwy 5 West. Any time you get a road, you get traffic, and that brings some nuisances. People stop in our yard at all hours of the day and night, some of them very poorly prepared for the climate and conditions here.

   The Kansas City Smart Port. Is it true that there is a central border & customs station being built in Kansas to enable through shipping by certain shippers & carriers? What is going on with this? If anything, we need to step up our border protection.

   The Texas project. Is it true that some part of this corridor is being developed as a private road by foreign investors? With all the taxes I pay to help support the highway system, I should not have to pay to use it. Why are we letting another country do this type of thing on US soil?

   I'm against this project if that's how it's going to be.

4. It seems to me that a 4-lane highway from North Dakota to Culbertson and north to the Port of Raymond serves too few people in Montana. It will mostly benefit North Dakota and Canada. US#2 really needs upgrading just east of Dodson and from Harlem to Havre and it seems a poor use of funds to do a four lane for such a small part of the State. There are over 20 wooden bridges between Harlem and Havre that need to be removed. Maybe a two lane with passing lanes would be

adequate. Please consider these solutions when deciding which way to go. Thank you.

5. Who is footing the bill for this thing? Seems like the major beneficiaries are Canada and Mexico. How do we propose to get their contributions to building it, maintaining it, and patrolling it? How are we going to pay for this, other than with my tax dollars? A main issue for me is the trafficking of illegal aliens and drugs. I have no problem with the people who come here legally and pay taxes like the rest of us, but we have to get serious about solving our problems with illegal traffic.

6. I think this is one of the stupidest things I've ever heard of. It makes the US a dumping place for all the illegals that want to come in from Mexico and Canada.

4.3 November 8, 2006 Open House Comments

Mark Sovig: We had a group from TX, CO, ND, and MT who went to Regina and met with their Chamber of Commerce, who is very supportive of this study. While supportive, most of their funding is Provincial. I think our improvements put pressure on them to improve their roads.

Sen. Kitzenberg: Do you realize the importance of the study if it doesn't happen? We have a commitment from ND to four lane to MT if MT does. If we don't improve, where does the traffic go? Will everything fall apart? I'm worried that an improved two lane will go in from ND to Bainville. Studies show that you get the economic development benefits from a four-lane, not a two-lane. I want this area to be like Shelby, where 2000 people/day travel to/from Canada.

Sen. Kitzenberg: Driving down here tonight, one issue from widening Glasgow to Nashua was that existing bridges could be utilized (for future 4 lane widening), I saw the contractor tearing down the existing bridge at Nashua. A widened two-lane is the "kiss of death." If it goes in at Bainville I don't think we will be able to get four lanes anywhere else on US 2.

Ed Smith: I served 8 years on the Transportation Commission. To think we can build two more lanes any time we want (in the future) is wrong. Where do we get the funding? How do we progress while still providing a safe system?

Bob Olson: For those of us who own property, when do we find out what right-of-way is needed? Will this facility be converted to an interstate?

Unknown: How much of the (Great Plains International Trade Corridor) is currently four lanes?

Unknown: The four-lane in SD to NE is scheduled to be complete by 2010.

Sen. Smith: I feel that passing lane sections are dangerous.

Mark Sovig: We appreciate your comments on connectivity. I think interstate and intrastate connectivity are very important pieces. Following the environmental documentation (next step), don't you have to program funding for a project?

Unknown: Diamond B trucking in Plentywood has recently doubled their operation (serving energy). All of this talk is focused on US 2, are you forgetting about MT 16? Why is MDT building narrower roads than ND?