

Maclay Bridge Alliance Meeting  
September 4, 2012  
1:30 PM to 3:30 PM

The meeting was attended by representatives from the following:

- Maclay Bridge Alliance (MBA)
- Missoula County
- Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)
- RPA

Updated Schedule for the group – paper copy of schedule was handed out.

The next public informational meeting is to present the Needs & Objectives and Improvement Options Under Consideration, where opportunity for public comment will be provided.

#### Stakeholder Feedback and Questions

1. Were the screening criteria sideboards to the options? There are many options, but it is unclear how the screening criterion ties to the needs and objectives. Will the upcoming meeting allow for input on the options and the needs and objectives?
2. It was suggested the Planning Team clarify what “high level” means. Some people interpret “high level” to mean very detailed. It would be beneficial if they explain to the public so there is no misunderstanding. Terms such as “coarse filter” and “fine filter” were suggested. It was explained that all the information used in the study comes from information that is already publicly available. Planning studies use publicly available information - this helps keep the costs low.
3. The traffic demand model should look at the Miller Creek travel information showing travel demand on South Avenue. The current study doesn’t have that information. The concern is that there will be more traffic on South Avenue from the Bitterroot Valley if a new bridge is built there.
4. Is there a third version of the Needs & Objectives? Decisions pivot on the Needs & Objectives and it is critical that they are understood and why they are there. The public needs to have a clear understanding of the Needs & Objectives. Tying the Needs & Objectives to other locations in the document might help.
5. There needs to be a level playing field. Issues need to be transparent. Member advocates the strength of the steel should be tested. Without that we don’t have all the information creating division in the community.
6. The 1994 EA stated that within ten years the bridge would have a significant strength loss. This study needs to determine if rehabilitation of the bridge is an option. Is the geometry sufficient? A single-lane bridge could be considered a traffic calming measure. A pedestrian structure could be constructed as a separate facility. *MDT mentioned that rehab options are broad and can vary. MDT stated that whatever option is chosen, context sensitive design needs to be considered.*

7. What are the needs and why would we want to build a new bridge? The public does not understand why a new bridge would be constructed.
8. It was suggested that the Need & Objective statements be more limited. Is the bridge going to be used to limit growth? Or do we want to accommodate future growth?
9. It was mentioned that the pulp mill closed and the roadways may not require as much capacity as they have in the past.
10. Would a new bridge create a new bypass or another route for people to use? There is concern about growth in other areas using the new bridge.
11. MDT mentioned traffic calming could be used in any option of a new structure.
12. The example of the improved portion of Big Flat Road was provided. When the County was asked about traffic calming for this roadway – rumble strips were suggested. This idea was not liked. What kind of traffic calming could be used for a bridge and the connecting roadways?
13. Who would pay for a traffic calming devices? Who would pay for the road improvements? Would it be the County?
14. Whatever option is considered – traffic calming needs to be included, it is a concern of the neighborhood.
15. What about South Avenue all the way to Reserve Street? The study needs to cover the entire area. It doesn't cover the potential future growth or area. There is a regional park that is planned that will be a big traffic generator.
16. Is there a way that the model could be explained for people to better understand it?
17. Could we build another one-lane bridge? *One of the improvement options under consideration is a one-lane bridge.* Federal funds will not fund a one-lane bridge as it does not address the "functional obsolete" component, which means that the county would have to fund the bridge.
18. Are the Miner's Addition Subdivision traffic volumes represented in the model? It is a 150 unit subdivision. It is claimed that they will access South Avenue, and also maybe the Fort.
19. There is mistrust with the model. Statistics can be manipulated to get people to believe things. Take Costco as an example - people were told that it wouldn't increase traffic.
20. MDT asked what the neighborhood character is. Response - rural by design. How is that character affected by a bridge? Response - it will increase the traffic and changes the character and becomes busier. The Target Neighborhood Plan only covers east of the river, but the neighborhood is both east and west. Air quality and noise along with volume and speed of the traffic affect the character.
21. Is the travel demand model affected by time of day? Are the peak hours factored into the model and the demands?

22. Have there have been issues brought up for emergency response times? Are there examples? What is a standard response time, and is this too long now? What hindrance does the bridge have at this time?
23. Has the County simply stated why they would want to replace the bridge?
24. Is a new bridge required to meet AASHTO Standards? *MDT response – the bridge would have to meet standards, but the roadway geometrics might be able to be built below AASHTO Standards.* The report should state what it means to meet the AASHTO Standards.
25. What about a shared use path? *A shared use path would be separate facility from the existing bridge.*