

Polson Area Transportation Plan US 93 Polson Corridor Study



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Prepared For:

Montana Department of Transportation
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
Lake County
City of Polson

Prepared By:

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Helena, Montana

Working Draft
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Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Transportation Plan Purpose	1
1.2 Corridor Study Purpose	2
1.3 Study Area	2
1.4 Goals of Public Involvement & Outreach Effort	5
2.0 Public Participation Procedures	5
2.1 Study Contacts	5
2.2 Publications	6
2.3 Radio and Television	6
2.4 Stakeholder Contact List	9
2.5 Document Availability	10
2.6 Meetings	11
2.6.1 Technical Oversight Committee Meetings	11
2.6.2 Resource Agency Meeting/Involvement	11
2.6.3 Public Meetings	11
2.6.4 Public Hearings	12
2.6.5 Other Meetings	12
2.6.6 Public Outreach Events	12
2.6 Consideration for Traditionally Underserved Populations	13
2.7 Study Schedule	13
3.0 Overall Study Communication	13
3.1 Summary	13

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1</i>	<i>Polson Area Transportation Plan – Study Area Boundary</i>
<i>Figure 2</i>	<i>US 93 Polson Corridor Study – Study Area Boundary</i>
<i>Figure 2-1</i>	<i>Polson Area Transportation Plan Schedule</i>
<i>Figure 2-2</i>	<i>US 93 Polson Corridor Study Schedule</i>

1.0 Introduction

Lake County, City of Polson and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), in partnership with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), has initiated the development of the Polson Area Transportation Plan and US 93 Polson Corridor Study. These two area-wide interrelated transportation planning processes will assist state and local governments and the community at large in guiding transportation infrastructure and implementation over the next 20-year planning horizon. The comprehensive Polson Area Transportation Plan will provide an opportunity for local governments and residents to work together to develop innovative approaches necessary to plan and implement an integrated transportation system that will beneficially serve the community's citizens and visitors well into the future. The US 93 Polson Corridor Study will primarily focus on US 93, the principle arterial through the greater Polson area, and will assist MDT in determining cost-effective ways to address transportation needs including the feasibility of a truck bypass to US 93. The corridor planning process will provide information into any future NEPA/MEPA process, help identify viable improvement options, and provide opportunity for public involvement at all stages.

An initial step of the corridor study and transportation plan processes is to develop a Public Participation Plan that provides for and identifies public involvement activities on existing and future transportation system needs. The purpose of this plan is to ensure a proactive public involvement process that provides opportunities for the public to be involved in all phases of the corridor study and transportation plan process. This is accomplished by providing complete information, timely public notice, opportunities for making comments, and ensuring full access to key decisions.

1.1 *Transportation Plan Purpose*

The Polson area transportation plan is intended to help guide decisions about the future of the transportation system in the area. The development and implementation of a transportation plan is a tool for managing growth and accommodating development needs. Public participation is a key component in any successful transportation planning process. For this planning study, numerous public participation strategies are being proposed to reach as many people as possible and gather essential information to guide infrastructure improvements. The City of Polson has been one of the fastest growing areas in Montana and it is expected that the City will become a designated urban area based on the 2010 Census. The level of public involvement in transportation issues generally increases with the community's growth. In the Polson area, this population growth has manifested itself in new development and new employment with additional traffic and higher demands on the local transportation system. The transportation plan will provide public outreach opportunities that will:

- Educate the public on the important elements of planning and engineering the community's transportation system,
- Respond to the increasing interest of the general public to participate in planning of the community, and
- Increase the public's investment in the Transportation Plan.

1.2 Corridor Study Purpose

The purpose for a corridor study is to analyze existing data to determine current and future deficiencies and needs within the corridor and identify potential environmental issues and mitigation opportunities. The US 93 Corridor Study is a pre-NEPA/MEPA study that allows flexibility in examining improvement options for the roadway system should any project move forward. Additionally, this study will look at the feasibility of a truck bypass to US 93 as previously examined in the 1996 US 93 – Evaro to Polson Environmental Impact Statement. Public participation is an important component in any successful corridor planning study process. For this study, a number of public involvement strategies are proposed to reach the most people possible and elicit meaningful participation. These opportunities will:

- Educate the public on important element and the process of planning the US 93 corridor near Polson,
- Increase the public's ability to provide input and ask questions throughout the corridor planning study, and
- Present findings and recommendations.

1.3 Corridor Study and Transportation Plan Areas

The termini of the US 93 Corridor Study has been established by the MDT as being along US 93 from (RP) Reference Post 56.5 (US 93/Caffrey Road) to RP 63.0 (0.8 miles beyond the Rocky Point Road intersection). The study area for the Polson Area Transportation Plan includes the city limits of Polson, in addition to a 2-mile radius outside of the city limits. Physical features within the study area include Flathead Lake, Flathead River, and public, private, and tribal property. The study areas for the Polson Area Transportation Plan and the US 93 Polson Corridor Study are shown in Figures 1 and 2, respectively.

Sources:

Aerial Imagery courtesy of National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP); USDA 2009

TIGER/Line transportation network courtesy of US Census Bureau; 2000.

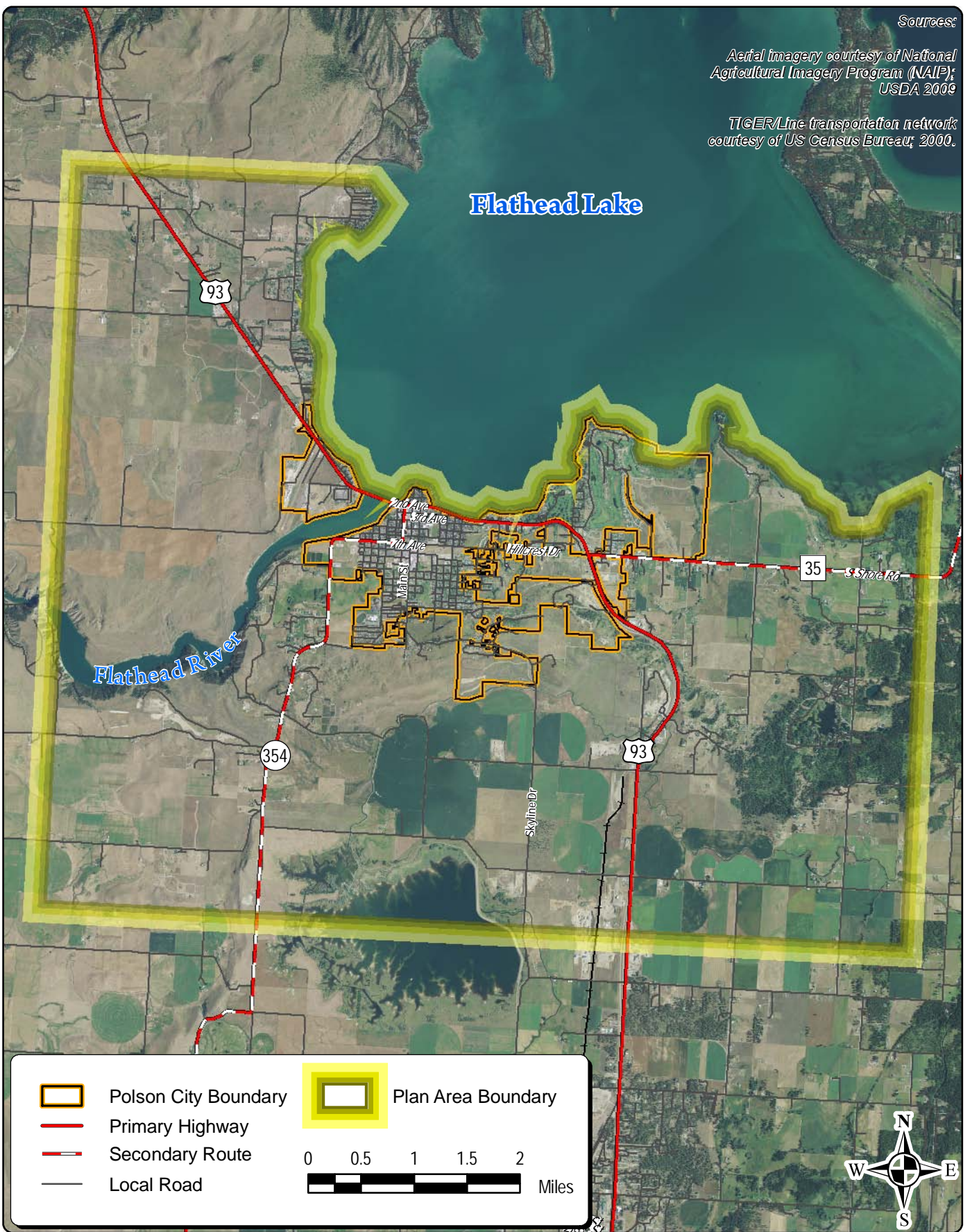


Figure 1
 Plan Area Boundary
 Polson Area Transportation Plan

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Sources:

Aerial imagery courtesy of National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP); USDA 2009

TIGER/Line transportation network courtesy of US Census Bureau; 2000.

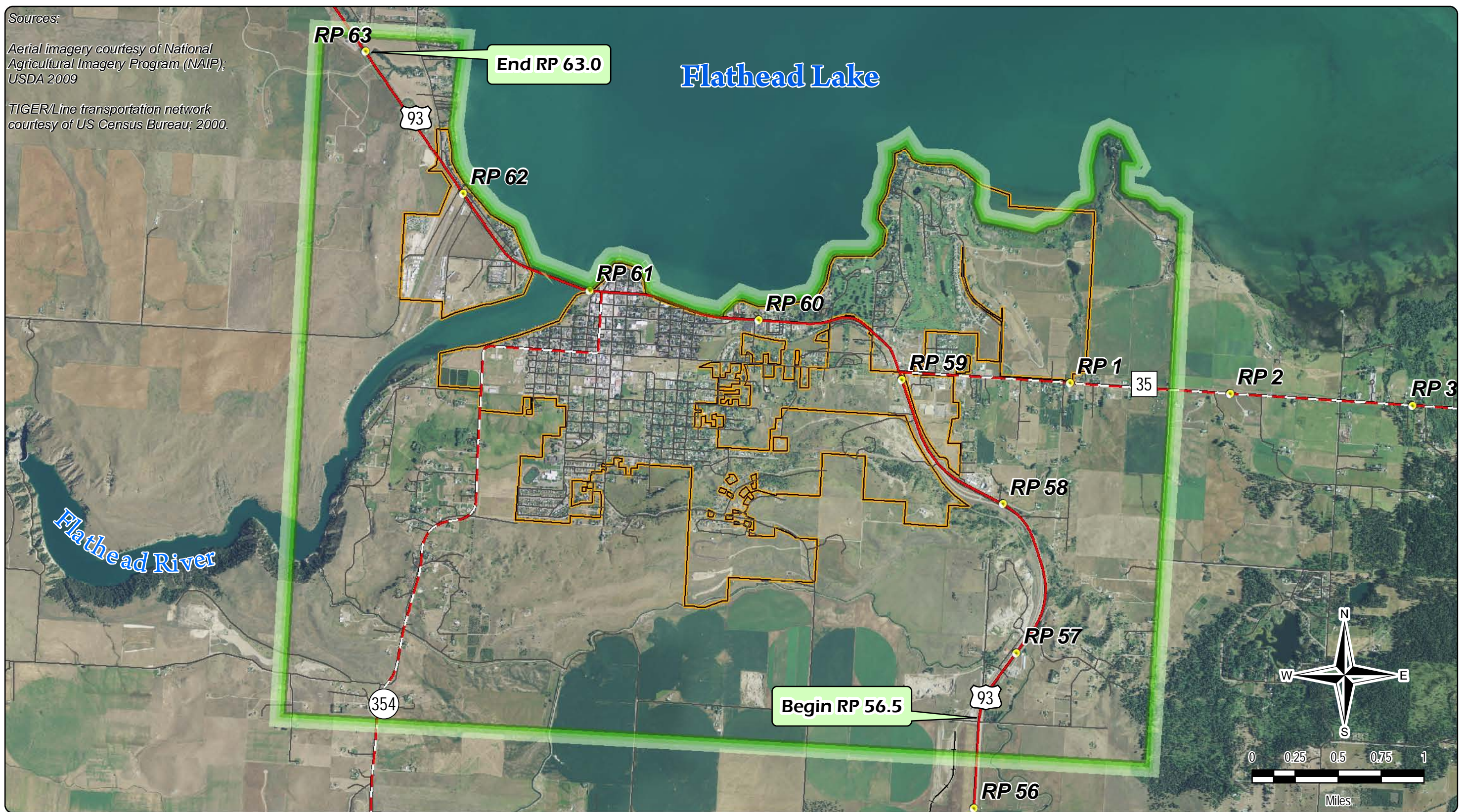






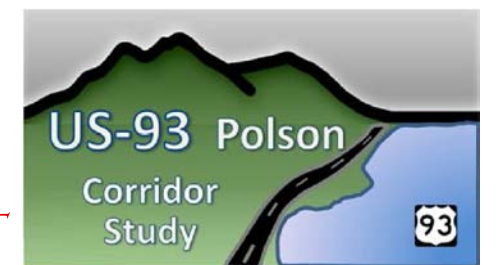


Figure 2
Study Area Boundary
US 93 Polson Corridor Study

-  Polson City Boundary
-  Primary Highway
-  Secondary Route
-  Local Road
-  Study Area Boundary
-  Reference Post

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1.4 Goals of Public Involvement & Outreach Effort

The goal of the study partners and the consultant is to have ongoing public involvement for the corridor study and transportation plan processes. Education and public outreach are an essential part of fulfilling the local entities' responsibility to successfully inform the public about the corridor study and transportation plan processes. All four contracting entities (CSKT, Lake County, the City of Polson and MDT) seek to encourage public involvement and meaningful participation. These public outreach activities will be devoted to defining relevant issues and presenting preliminary findings of the analysis and studies of the existing transportation and socio-economic systems.

Education and public outreach are an essential part of fulfilling the local entities' responsibility to successfully inform the public about the corridor study and transportation planning processes.

2.0 Public Participation Procedures

The Public Participation Plan describes the public information and input opportunities that will be provided as part of the development of the Polson Area Transportation Plan and US 93 Polson Corridor Study. This plan encourages active participation in identifying and commenting on corridor and transportation issues at every stage of the planning process. Participants in this public participation process include:

- The general public – residents of the City of Polson, the Flathead Reservation, and adjacent unincorporated areas (Lake County) affected by the planning efforts;
- Landowners and business owners affected within the study area boundaries;
- The Technical Oversight Committee (TOC) – made up of 9 representatives of the study partners, including the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); and
- Stakeholders and Outreach Groups.

Methods of notifying the public of the planning processes, upcoming meetings, and other information are detailed in this document. The general public will be kept informed of all aspects of the plan and study, and their input will be sought throughout the process. The public and interested parties shall provide input to the Consultant via the methods detailed herein.

2.1 Study Contacts

Contact information for CSKT, Lake County, City of Polson, MDT and the Consultant will be provided to the public. Telephone numbers and email addresses of plan and study contacts will be published in information that is released and is also included here.

AUGUST 4, 2010

City of Polson, 106 1st Street East, Polson, MT 59860; (406) 249-5637; Contact – Todd Crossett, polsonmanager@centurytel.net

Lake County, 106 Fourth Avenue East, Polson, MT 59860; (406) 883-7204; Contact – Bill Barron, lakecommissioners@lakemt.gov

CSKT, 36100 Second Street East (PO Box 278), Pablo, MT 59855; Contact – Joe Hovenkotter, jhovenkotter@cstk.org

Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), Statewide and Urban Planning, 2960 Prospect Avenue (PO Box 201001), Helena, MT 59620-1001; (406) 444-9193; Contact – Sheila Ludlow, sludlow@mt.gov

Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), Missoula District Office, 2100 W Broadway (PO Box 7039), Missoula, MT 59807-7039; (406) 523-5830; Contact – Shane Stack, sstack@mt.gov

Camp Dresser & McKee, Inc. (CDM), 50 West 14th Street, Suite 200, Helena, MT 59601 (406) 441-1400; CDM Project Manager – Jeff Key, P.E., KeyJA@cdm.com

2.2 Publications

Meeting announcements will be developed by CDM and advertised by MDT at least three weeks prior to meetings. The ads will announce the meeting location, time, and date, the format and purpose of the meeting, and the locations where documents may be reviewed (if applicable). The following print newspapers may carry the display ads.

Char-Koosta News – print and online <http://www.charkoosta.com>

Lake County Leader– print and online <http://leaderadvertiser.com>

The Valley Journal– print and online <http://www.valleyjournal.net>

The Missoulian– print and online <http://missoulian.com>

Daily Inter Lake– print and online <http://www.dailyinterlake.com>

Flathead Beacon– print and online <http://www.flatheadbeacon.com>

Also, three newsletters for each study will be made available one month prior to each formal public meeting. Newsletters will describe work in progress, results achieved, preliminary recommendations, and other related topics. Each newsletter will be saved as a PDF and delivered to CSKT, Lake County, the City of Polson, MDT and select stakeholders for their use in posting to their individual internet sites.

2.3 Radio and Television

Meetings may also be announced on local radio and television stations. Input from the TOC will identify

AUGUST 4, 2010

the most popular radio and television stations on which announcements will be made.

Frequency	Call Sign	Format	Home Community	Licensee
600 AM	KGEZ		Kalispell, MT	Skyline Broadcasters, Inc.
750 AM	KERR		Polson, MT	Anderson Radio Broadcasting, Inc.
1180 AM	KOFI		Kalispell, MT	Kofi, Inc.
1240 AM	KSAM		Whitefish, MT	Bee Broadcasting, Inc.
88.7 FM	KLKM	Christian	Kalispell, MT	Educational Media Foundation
89.1 FM	KUFM	National Public Radio	Missoula, MT	The University Of Montana
91.5 FM	KPLG		Plains, MT	Hi-line Radio Fellowship, Inc.
92.3 FM	KQRK		Ronan, MT	Anderson Radio Broadcasting, Inc.
93.3 FM	KGGL		Missoula, MT	Fisher Radio Regional Group, Inc.
94.9 FM	KYSS-FM	Country	Missoula, MT	Capstar Tx Limited Partnership
95.9 FM	KHNK		Columbia Falls, MT	Bee Broadcasting, Inc.
96.3 FM	KBAZ	New Rock	Hamilton, MT	Capstar Tx Limited Partnership
97.1 FM	KALS		Kalispell, MT	Kalispell Christian Radio Fellowship, Inc.
98.5 FM	KBBZ		Kalispell, MT	Bee Broadcasting, Inc.
100.7 FM	KIBG		Wallace, ID	Anderson Radio Broadcasting, Inc.
103.9 FM	KZMN		Kalispell, MT	Kofi, Inc.
105.1 FM	KWOL-FM		Whitefish, MT	Cathleen R. Bee Dba Rose Communications
106.3 FM	KDBR		Kalispell, MT	Bee Broadcasting, Inc.
106.7 FM	KBQQ		Pinesdale, MT	Fisher Radio Regional Group Inc.

Source: The Center for Public Integrity - Radio stations that reach ZIP code 59860, Polson, MT.

<http://projects.publicintegrity.org/telecom/search/default.aspx?zip=59860>

AUGUST 4, 2010

Channel	Call Sign	License Type	Network	Home Community	Licensee
3	K03DJ	Translator (VHF)		Polson, MT	Blacktail Tv Tax District
6	K06EL	Translator (VHF)		Ferndale, Etc., MT	Swan Hill Tv, Inc.
8	KPAX-TV	Commercial (VHF)	CBS	Missoula, MT	Kpax Communications, Inc.
9	KCFW-TV	Commercial (VHF)	NBC	Kalispell, MT	Bluestone License Holdings Inc.
10	K10LP	Translator (VHF)		Polson, MT	Blacktail Tv Tax District
11	K11HO	Translator (VHF)		Polson, MT	Polson Tv Improvement Association
11	KUFM-TV	Educational (VHF)	PBS	Missoula, MT	The University Of Montana
13	KECI-TV	Commercial (VHF)	NBC	Missoula, MT	Bluestone License Holdings Inc.
14	K14LT	Translator (UHF)		Polson, MT	Blacktail Tv Tax District
15	K15GP	Translator (UHF)		Kalispell, MT	Blacktail Tv Tax District
16	K16GJ	Translator (UHF)		Polson, MT	Polson Tv Improvement Association
17	KMMF	Commercial (UHF)	FOX	Missoula, MT	Montana License Sub, Inc.
20	K20CP	Translator (UHF)		Elmo, MT	Salish Kootenai College
23	KTMF	Commercial (UHF)	ABC	Missoula, MT	Mmm License Llc
25	KSKC-CA	Class A (UHF)		Pablo/ronan, MT	Salish Kootenai College
26	K26DD	Translator (UHF)		Kalispell, MT	Trinity Broadcasting Network
30	K30II	Translator (UHF)		Polson, MT	Blacktail Tv Tax District
41	K41IW	Translator (UHF)		Polson, MT	Blacktail Tv Tax District
44	K44FR	Translator (UHF)		Blacktail, Etc., MT	Blacktail Tv Tax District
51	K51HT	Translator (UHF)		Kalispell, MT	Blacktail Tv Tax District

Source: The Center for Public Integrity - Television stations that reach ZIP code 59860, Polson, MT.

<http://projects.publicintegrity.org/telecom/search/default.aspx?zip=59860>

2.4 Stakeholder Contact List

A stakeholder contact list will be produced that will include individuals, businesses, or groups identified by the CSKT, Lake County, City of Polson, and MDT. The intent of developing the stakeholder list is to identify those individuals and groups to actively seek out and engage in all phases of the study and plan processes. Individuals who attend public meetings will also be added to the stakeholder list. The following groups or businesses (at a minimum) will be included in the initial list, providing that addresses and/or emails are obtainable from each respective group for these purposes:

- CSKT Tribal Council
- City of Polson
- Lake County Commissioners
- Lake County Planner
- Polson Chamber of Commerce
- Polson Airport
- Polson K-12 School District
- Downtown Business Owners Association
- US 93 User's Group
- Water User's Group (Flathead Lake and Flathead River)
- Office of Emergency Management
- Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
- County Fire Departments and Emergency Medical Personnel
- County Sheriff and Montana State Highway Patrol
- Montana Truckers Association (MTA)
- Interested Landowners
- Employers:
 - KwaTaqNuk Resort
 - St. Joseph Medical Center
 - Businesses along US 93

2.5 Document Availability

All study deliverables and working draft technical memorandums will be available in hard copy format at the offices of the CSKT, Lake County, City of Polson, and the MDT. These are the “formal” locations at which materials will be available. In addition, when the Public Draft and Final Draft of the Polson Area Transportation Plan and US 93 Polson Corridor Study are made available in the Spring of 2011, hard copies will also be located at the Polson City Library.

Document Availability Locations:

- CSKT Land Use Planning Department, 42487 Complex Boulevard, Pablo, MT
- Lake County Planning Department, 106 4th Avenue East, Polson, MT
- Polson City Hall, 106 1st Street East, Polson, MT
- MDT District 1 Office, 2100 W Broadway, Missoula, MT
- MDT District Office, 85 5th Avenue East North, Kalispell, MT
- MDT Statewide and Urban Planning Section Office, 2960 Prospect Avenue, Helena, MT
- Polson City Library, 2 1st Avenue East, Polson, MT (Public Draft and Final Draft Reports Only)

Electronic copies of study deliverables will be posted on the study websites at the addresses shown below within 7 days of receiving approval to do so by the study partners.

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/polsoncorridorstudy/>

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/polsontransplan/>

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

The CSKT, Lake County, City of Polson, MDT, and CDM attempt to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity associated with this project. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information, call (406) 441-1400 or TTY (800) 335-7592, or by calling Montana Relay at 711. Accommodation requests must be made at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled activity and/or meeting.

2.6 Meetings

2.6.1 Technical Oversight Committee Meetings

Technical Oversight Committee (TOC) meetings will be scheduled every month for the duration of the twelve-month corridor study and transportation plan period. Individuals included in the meetings will be the Consultant, CSKT, Lake County, City of Polson, FHWA, MDT personnel, and others as needed. The meetings are intended to track progress and address study development issues and questions. The meetings are considered an important aspect for the exchange of information and ideas during the development of these studies. Throughout these meetings, issues, problems, and possible solutions will be identified and discussed.

There will be two study status meetings and one public hearing each with the CSKT Tribal Council, Lake County Commission, and the Polson City Council, as necessary, to ensure that goals, objectives, and decisions are acceptable to elected officials.

2.6.2 Resource Agency Meeting/Involvement

After the first formal public meeting has been held on the study, a meeting will be scheduled and held with the Resource Agencies. The meeting will be organized by MDT and facilitated by CDM with assistance from the study partners as necessary.

2.6.3 Public Meetings

Three formal public opportunities will be held throughout the duration of the Corridor Study and Transportation Plan. The first public meeting will be a combined transportation plan/corridor study meeting to discuss and identify the issues and visioning that will help define community perceptions and goals, as well as identifying issues that should be addressed as part of the transportation planning effort. This initial effort would consist of a 2- or 3-hour workshop that would be very interactive. The purpose would be for CDM to define the transportation plan and corridor study processes, and then engage the community appropriately.

The second public meeting will also be a combined transportation plan/corridor study meeting that will occur after initial field studies have been completed and the transportation-related problems are defined. The purpose of this gathering with regard to the Transportation Plan will be to review the identified problems with the public to assure that all of the major transportation problems have been included in the analysis. Potential Recommended Improvement Options relative to the Corridor Study will also be presented. An informal open house would be held where attendees could visit with study personnel at several displays, followed by a formal presentation by the Consultant with questions and answers.

The third set of public meetings will be different in that the Corridor Study and Transportation Plan will each have their own meeting. The third public meeting for the Corridor Study (expected to occur first) will be held in order to present the Draft Corridor Study Report and its findings. The third public meeting for the Transportation Plan will be held to present the preliminary recommendations and findings. Individual work stations will be set up for participants to move about to their areas of interest

AUGUST 4, 2010

and review and comment on the preliminary findings. It is hoped that participants can become fully engaged through this mechanism and alleviate many of the “confrontational” situations that can occur in large, traditional public forums. The purpose of this venue will be to present the types of recommended improvements and receive initial feedback from the community.

2.6.4 Public Hearings

Three public hearings will be held after the draft Polson Area Transportation Plan and US 93 Polson Corridor Study documents have been published. These public hearings will be held separately with the CSKT Tribal Council, the Lake County Commission, and the Polson City Council. These hearings will be designed to obtain official comments from the public prior to final approval of the document(s) and production of the final report(s).

The comments made during the hearings will be transcribed by CDM staff and entered as part of the public record of the planning process. The comments will be reviewed and responses will be provided in the final documents as an appendix.

2.6.5 Other Meetings

Up to ten other meetings may be conducted over the 12-month schedule. While the Consultant is in the Polson community, meetings with neighborhood groups, special interest groups, additional Council meetings, interested landowners, and others may be needed or requested. Coordination and approval by the study partners will be obtained prior to the meetings.

Summary of Proposed Meetings:

CSKT Tribal Council -----	Two Study Status Meetings & One Public Hearing
Lake County Commission -----	Two Study Status Meetings & One Public Hearing
Polson City Council -----	Two Study Status Meetings & One Public Hearing
1 st Public Meeting -----	One Open House with Formal Presentation (Visioning & Issues)
Resource Agency Meeting ----	Corridor Workshop (US 93 Polson Corridor Study only)
2 nd Public Meeting -----	One Open House with Formal Presentation
3 rd Public Meeting -----	Presentation of Corridor Study Report (US 93 Polson Corridor Study only)
3 rd Public Meeting -----	Preliminary Recommendations (Polson Area Transportation Plan only)
Other Meetings, up to ten total (as needed or requested)	

2.6.6 Public Outreach Events

Community events will provide valuable public outreach opportunities. Presence at the Farmers’ Market

is anticipated as a possible opportunity to interact with and engage the public on the planning study processes.

- Farmers' Market; Fridays 9 AM – 1 PM, May to October; Contact – J.E. Donald Blais; (406) 883-3595.

2.6 Consideration for Traditionally Underserved Populations

The TOC and Consultant recognize that additional efforts must be made to involve traditionally underserved segments of the population in the public process for the study and plan, including the disabled, racial and ethnic minorities, and low-income residents. Including these groups leads to planning that reflects the needs of everyone. The following steps will help with these efforts:

Plan Meeting Locations Carefully

- Public meetings will be held in locations that are accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a targeted population is located in a certain geographic part of the City or County, then the meeting location should be in that area for convenience.

Seek Help from Community Leaders and Organizations

- To facilitate involvement of traditionally underserved populations, community leaders and organizations that represent these groups will be consulted about how to most effectively reach their members.

Be Sensitive to Diverse Audiences

- At public meetings, study partner staff and the Consultant will attempt to communicate as effectively as possible. Technical jargon will be avoided and appropriate dress and conduct will be adhered to.

2.7 Study and Plan Schedule

Adherence to the study and plan schedule is important to stay on track and keep all participating parties engaged. The study schedules for the Polson Area Transportation Plan and US 93 Polson Corridor Study are attached as Figures 2-1 and 2-2, respectively. It is CDM's intent to adhere to these schedules.

3.0 Overall Study and Plan Communication

3.1 Summary

The Polson Area Transportation Plan and US 93 Polson Corridor Study Public Participation Plan establish guidelines and procedures for encouraging public participation. The following communication strategies and techniques may be used in their entirety (or partially) to distribute the information to the community at large and seek a higher level of engagement. The TOC and the Consultant will utilize as many of these techniques as possible that best suit the planning study processes.

AUGUST 4, 2010

- All relevant deliverables and associated materials will be posted on the study and plan websites at the following addresses:
 - <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/polsoncorridorstudy/>
 - <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/polsontransplan/>
- Public service announcements and interviews on radio and television may be conducted to explain the subject matter and promote participation.
- Articles and press releases for the newspaper or other widely circulated publications will be developed.
- Informal presentations will be made at regional sites, open houses, round tables, or other community forums to receive input from the affected community.
- Formal presentations will be made to various service clubs and civic and professional groups.
- Select mailings, as requested by interested parties, will be provided to individuals or groups that have expressed interest or made comments at meetings.
- Technical memorandums (working drafts) will be provided to the CSKT, Lake County, City of Polson, and the MDT for posting to their respective internet sites, and also distributed to the TOC, to provide a better understanding of proposed transportation issues and recommendations and, in return, to provide the four study partner with feedback and an opportunity for continual comment. Hard copies of all materials will be made available at the following locations:
 - CSKT Land Use Planning Department, 42487 Complex Boulevard, Pablo, MT
 - Polson City Hall, 106 1st Street East, Polson, MT
 - Lake County Planning Department, 106 4th Avenue East, Polson, MT
 - MDT District 1 Office, 2100 W Broadway, Missoula, MT

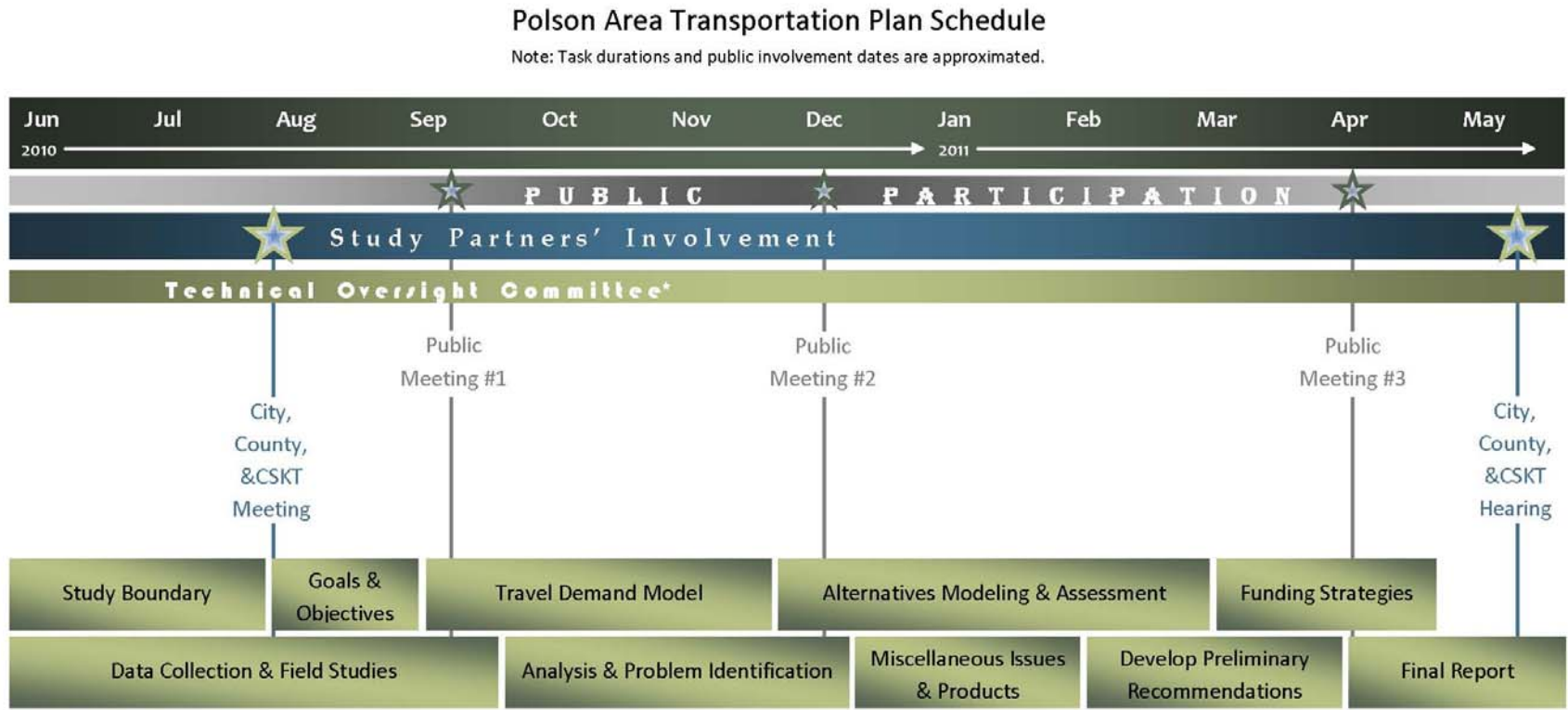
AUGUST 4, 2010

- MDT District 1 Office, 85 5th Avenue East North, Kalispell, MT
- MDT Statewide and Urban Planning Section Office, 2960 Prospect Avenue, Helena, MT
- Special presentations will be made, upon request, to community groups and organizations.
- Fact sheets may be used to explain transportation related issues.
- Special issues “technical memorandums” will be announced or reported at meetings and/or via email on relevant transportation issues.

Responses to questions and comments from the public concerning the public participation plan, working draft technical memorandums, the draft and public draft Polson Area Transportation Plan / US 93 Polson Corridor Study documents, and other work products will be made via written response in an Appendix to the actual documents. In some circumstances, the TOC and/or the Consultant will respond directly to an individual or group by letter or telephone call, or by way of a periodic newsletter.

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Figure 2-1 (Polson Area Transportation Plan Schedule)



* The Technical Oversight Committee is scheduled to meet on a monthly basis until Transportation Plan completion.

Figure 2-2 (US 93 Polson Corridor Study Schedule)

US 93 Polson Corridor Study Schedule

Note: Task durations and public involvement dates are approximated.



* The Technical Oversight Committee is scheduled to meet on a monthly basis until study completion.