

Video transcript for both Q&A sessions of the Ronan-North virtual Open Houses that were held Mon, Nov. 15 and Tue, Nov. 16, 2021.

[Laura Langdon] Yeah, we have one question come in a few minutes ago. Is this being recorded, and will it be on the website? And yes, yes to both. This meeting has been recorded and we will get it up on the website. Yes, I see a question here. The question is I am still unclear how to access the new highway construction, turning both south and north from the Old Highway 93 across from the Boys and Girls Club.

[Bob Vosen] So, Laura, can you bring back I think it was slide eight that had the kind of the in-depth. There we go. That one, perfect. So. The question the Boys and Girls Club is basically just to the right of where the word round starts underneath the blue is where they are. The Boys and Girls Club is further out than that, I guess, but generally that's where the couplet system starts. So, the question is how to access the new highway construction turning both south and north from Old Highway 93 across from the Boys and Girls Club? I am. Not really tracking where old Highway 93 is.

[Miki Lloyd] So, Bob, it might help. Dan, do you have the... I guess, Laura, can we get maybe the traffic plans maybe put up there for that intersection? We're realigning that intersection. And put in a signal there, I think that's what I think, that's what they're asking about is.

[Bob Vosen] Up in Old Highway 93 and 3rd Avenue?

[Miki Lloyd] Yes, I was going to try to get to my traffic plans so that we could look at that a little bit. But they should be able to cross US 93 at the signal. If that's what we're asking, if it's the approach to the Boys and Girls Club, then there's obviously an approach to that area. And then they could. I guess exit out of that approach.

[Laura Langdon] I think that's what he was asking. He said, yes, thanks. OK, so let's see. Whitney has a nice comment, she says it will be so nice to have a light there and that's up that 3rd Avenue intersection. We have a message from Travis. A question for Dan. I own Ronan DQ and Java Junction. How will my current accesses be affected during construction? And will there be an East Side and a West Side access after the project is done?

[Dan Richardson] Sure. Yes, there will be an east side in a west side access there, and can you? Yeah. Maybe you can zoom in. Yeah, I guess you can kind of see there is a. There's an approach on... There you go, thank you Laura. There's an approach on the right-hand side of your property there for DQ from the east side there, and it's kind of like black a little darker black drawn at an angle, their right to the right of the first arrow. Or it might be a highlight that a little bit. Not sure. And then just to the West that there's also an approach which is in the darker black as well, just directly across the street or across the lot from there. So, there will be an access on both sides there. The one here is the one and also the one right here? I'm sorry, to your left Laura so, the Dairy Queen is the one between the couplets here. Okay. So, I go a little further in right there, so that's one access and then right across to the west. So right there's the other access to DQ so. As far as access during construction, I'm not sure. Bob, if you wanted to help address that one as well or how.

[Bob Vosen] Yeah. So, we will maintain access to all businesses during construction. Some additional signing may be necessary for business access. It's always challenging but I can state without a doubt that we will work with the contractor to make sure there is still access to

the businesses It's always a little bit of a challenge, but we recognize the impact construction can have on businesses and we will do as much as possible to keep access and also to keep it consistent so that consumers can and customers recognize this is where I pull it and it's we try not to make those changes frequently, just so that a routine can be developed as well.

[Laura Langdon] Travis, I think has a follow up question. Traffic will continue to be to weigh on present corridor until Ronan in Urban is complete?

[Dan Richardson] That is correct. Yes.

[Laura Langdon] Okay. Thank you, Travis. Whitney has a question. How quickly do you think the bike path will connect that quarter mile north to the existing path? That's up here?

[Dan Richardson] And maybe if you pulled the schedule that Miki was talking about, I think that might...

[Miki Lloyd] Right. And we can't we don't exactly know what the contract will get started working on first. I think at this point, I don't know whether we could say anything sooner than our completion, which would be in 2023. They may start on it earlier, but I'm not sure if they're going to work on it in pieces or what sections they will work on first. can guarantee you it'll be done when the project is complete.

[Laura Langdon] Okay, Whitney says thank you. We have a comment from Bonnie. My niece and two nephews walk across the highway twice a day Arlee has already had a child hit in a crosswalk. Is there anything different or safer about this construction than Arlee?

[Miki Lloyd] I'm not sure I can answer this question real great, but Bob, you can tune in if you'd like. I think what we are trying to do is keep the pedestrians and bikes, putting the children on the paths that are designated for them. And then I think crossing at the signal is a is a pretty safe option. Just because it will stop the traffic where they are actually crossing the highway there, the other location that I think a lot of kids cross down at the other signal, which is on Round Butte Road and Terrace Lake Road, which is also signalized. So, I would say that that you know what we're putting in here today. This project is safer than what's out there today, comparison to the Arlee. I think they're a little bit different and Arlee is a full couplet in town, we are going to have several signals in town for people to cross, also just because of the nature of the traffic in town, that helps answer that.

[Laura Langdon] Yeah, Miki, thank you, I think so. Bonnie, do you have any follow up questions or comments? All right, well, Travis has a question about Ronan Urban. So, any ideas on the timeline for the Ronan Urban Project just south of here? And will the new infrastructure bill help to speed up the process?

[Miki Lloyd] So, I'll speak to this one again, if you would like me to Bob, but currently Ronan Urban is only about 30 percent design. Ronan Urban also has an extensive amount of right-of-way, acquisition that has that as needed, plus quite a bit of utility relocation. We are going to plan to focus on that after this project is awarded to construction, but that project going to take quite some time to complete. And currently it's outside our five-year plan for completion of that segment, just due to all those things that that I just discussed. But we are looking at advancing that project as soon as this one this one is awarded. Thank you.

[Bob Vosen] The only thing that I would say to add to that is great job on kind of discussing where we are with the projects as far as the infrastructure bill. It's a little early for us to tell. The bill was just signed by the president today, so I haven't seen it myself yet in its entirety. It's gone back and forth, as many people know through House to Senate before it was sent to the President. Now it is signed. But as to what those, what the numbers are in there, what how that's going to affect project delivery program delivery for us just a little early for me to really be able to comment anything for sure. It does sound promising that there's going to be additional funds in the bill. As far as how the funds might be obligated or directed to be spent, we kind of have to dove in to see what that looks like to do more to come. Definitely a very promising note to have a long-term bill in front of us. Again, that's always exciting, but we'll have to kind of wait and see what how it impacts and what we have to where the emphasis and focus will be in that bill. Everything changes every time we get a new one of these. So.

[Laura Langdon] Thank you, Bob and Miki. All right, we've got another question from Brendan. When completed, will you be able to turn left off Baptiste onto 93?

[Dan Richardson] Yes, you will be able to, and it would help, I could probably I could put up a plan sheet for that as well. Sure, Yeah, I need just a second to pull up the appropriate one for that.

[Laura Langdon] Of course. These are great questions, thank you for chiming in everyone. Bob, someone doesn't like your Bobcat logo.

[Bob Vosen] They'll probably like it even less after we win on Saturday, I guess.

[Dan Richardson] Sorry trying to get the right page up here, Laura so. Sure. OK, I think I can. Am I able to share my screen here, let's see.

[Laura Langdon] Should be a green button.

[Dan Richardson] OK, I think it should be a PDF shown, is that correct, Laura? Right now?

[Laura Langdon] It's loading for me. That's showing.

[Dan Richardson] OK, so Baptiste Road, as I know these are the design plans here, so they might be a little bit not quite as clear, just picture as shown here. But Baptiste Road is on the west side here, and it has been realigned to come in more perpendicular with US 93. There will be a turn. There'll be an opening between the median there for a left turn to come off of Baptiste Road onto US 93. And so that was analyzed both with sight distances as well when it was designed for or on this curve here.

[Miki Lloyd] Dan, did you want me to bring the signing and striping plans up those that does show the left turn lane onto Baptiste?

[Dan Richardson] And I have that as well. Let's see. Just need to get the right sheet up here. So here is the signing and striping plans I'm guessing that's what you're talking about Miki this one?

[Miki Lloyd] Yes. And then you can see the left turn that you can turn off of US 93 onto Baptiste, but then you see the stop bar on Baptiste that then obviously you can turn.

[Dan Richardson] So there's the dedicated left turn here and then the stop bar here multiuse path crossing there. Then either left or right through there.

[Laura Langdon] That's great. We got to thank you for showing these, That's helpful. Bonnie had a comment. I'm just going back to the crossing; Bonnie is just concerned about all the kids trying to get to school and home to different direction. Traffic to cross is just more chances for danger.

[Bob Vosen] And definitely, we recognize that there will be, you know, we'll be putting up additional signing of the good news is for those crossings if they're crossing down at Round Butte Road, those will be signalized intersections, which do provide a safer level of crossing than obviously unsignalized intersection does. And when we get done with the final project where it's a couplet-only situation, there will be two lanes, but they'll only have to look in one direction, not have to be paying attention in both directions as they're crossing the street.

[Laura Langdon] I have a question here from Robbie, what are the proposed speed limit changes?

[Bob Vosen] So, interestingly enough, speed limit changes are how they're set is a complex matter set in state law. So the speed limits generally are going to stay the same as what they are now. You can see actually in this in that images and the dash line shows where it's currently located, and the solid line shows where its final location so MDT is not allowed to change speed limit. There's a legislative mandate or a legislative process actually spelled out in Montana code on how speed limits are changed. So long story short is that this time the speed limits will remain the same in the areas they are. It'll just be additional lanes of traffic north of town.

[Laura Langdon] Thank you, Bob. Travis has a follow up, he's curious about the Round Butte access into the DQ lot. Will that remain active until Ronan Urban, or will it be closed at the time of this construction? This could affect future construction plans for a possible remodel or rebuild of the current store.

[Dan Richardson] So, when this project is complete the accesses shown that we spoke to earlier, which is right here and right here, will be the ones that are active now. And along with the ones on Round Butte Road. And so, the current one right now, I believe, is a little bit further south that will be closed off to the sidewalk and the curb. So, these will be in place after this project is done. And then the Round Butte will remain as it is right now.

[Laura Langdon] Thanks, Dan. So, this is about the shared use path. Why does the pathway cross the highway and not stay on the west side to Round Butte Road?

[Dan Richardson] And I can address part of that here with it, crosses the highway there for, I guess there's a number of reasons, I suppose. And Miki, maybe you can fill in some as well. That's part of it was to fit within the design of the of way as well. So, to make sure it's. Fits with the environmental impacts and all that, and as well.

[Miki Lloyd] Yes, and Dan I think you're correct on that, I think the other thing that we looked at is that the east side of the roadway to Round Butte Road is very developed and put in the path, even though it doesn't seem as though it's a wide path to actually engineer that in and then get drainage and hydraulic features put in would actually have impacted quite a few of the landowners there, where on the other side, it didn't have quite that impact because it's

undeveloped for the most part, except for the senior citizen center down there. It was felt that that's the way it would be. Also, to connect into the Ronan Urban Project, I believe it's running on the east side all the way through the town of Ronan, south of Round Butte Road. So, I think it was kind of thought that then, you know, it's being consistent, stayed on that side, is what I remember.

[Bob Vosen] And Miki, we at MDT also coordinated with the city as far as which side they desired us to have the path on, is that correct?

[Miki Lloyd] Yes. And actually, one step further, we've actually talked quite a bit with our technical design committee, which consists of CSKT to the city Ronan and at times, Lake County. There, there are sometimes in on some of those conversations, and sometimes not. But we have coordinated with that group, which includes MDT and FHWA also when we're looking at those alternatives to try to determine the best location for that, especially as we move into design and where actually have more information when it's just a line on a paper, it's pretty easy to look at. But when we actually find out two impacts, then sometimes we may change our mind because of now known known issues or impacts.

[Bob Vosen] Going one step further on that, Miki, I'm going to share with the group that we did look at keeping this shared use path. As you leave, own and traveled north up the screen instead of crossing at the intersection where it is now, we've looked at crossing it, excuse me, further north, actually north of where the Red X is on the screen. Spring Creek Road. But we found some really tremendous challenges with doing it under crossing at that location. And that's the water table in the area is really high, so it's challenging to be able to build up an underpass or a tunnel for the pedestrian path to travel through in this core section of the corridor.

[Laura Langdon] Thank you, Bob, and Miki. And Dan, we've got another Q&A. How will the shared use path cross back across Highway 93 to give access to Main Street and the schools on the west side of the trail?

[Dan Richardson] On that path there's a signalized intersection at Round Butte Road where they can cross there and that will give you access onto the pathway heading to the West to Main Street there. So, there will be signalized cross sections there or crosswalks.

[Bob Vosen] Both intersections that you're looking at right now. On the screen will be signalized. Intersection with Round Butte, with both legs of the couplet will have signals with protected pedestrian crosswalks.

[Laura Langdon] Thank you. I'm not seeing a follow up comment or question quite yet, but we can hang on. Any other comments, questions, if you like to go back to another slide, perhaps. Not seeing any right now. Well, we can move on. You know, if anything does come up, if you if you think of something or just want to know a little bit more, you can reach us on the website. And then Miki Lloyd, who is here as well. Her contract is up on the screen and I can type in the chat as well. Thank you. Any other questions or comments, I think we've got one here. Hi. How will bike and ped traffic be managed during construction?

[Bob Vosen] So, I can speak to that a little bit, Laura Bob again, and bike and pedestrian traffic will be managed. Similar to how we have other construction projects in areas where there are already trails and paths, those will be maintained in some fashion to allow people to continue

to have the access that they currently do. And what I mean by that is there's a sidewalk that we're impacting. We will provide an alternative route, an assigned detour route, if you will, for the pedestrian or bicycle traffic. If there is not a path or a sidewalk in the area, we won't be making those accommodations until it's completed at the end. and then generally for bicycle traffic that's trying to traverse through the project. That will be similar to other construction projects where, we will provide room for bicycles to traverse the project. At times, they will have to follow the same traffic control. If they're traveling in the lane of traffic like a motor vehicle, they have to abide by the same traffic control with the motor vehicle that's for their own safety as they go through the construction zone. So, recognize there are needs and impacts, and we will also be working coordinating with the contractor as the project progresses to make sure that access does remain available.

[Laura Langdon] Thank you, and Hayley, let us know if you have any follow up questions. We've had a few more chats come in. What businesses will be affected?

[Jacquelyn Smith] This is Jacquelyn, and I could answer that. I'm not sure if the question is so much relating to the impacts for the design and the right of way needed, or if it's how construction impacts will be for the businesses. So, I'll answer both. And if there's a follow up question, just let me know in regard to acquiring the necessary right away. We have, I believe, acquired all the right of way needed from the businesses. There's just a little bit of private ownership that is still needed that we're working on, but we have worked with the adjacent businesses to get the necessary right of way for the couplet and the existing 93 roadway work that's needed. Regarding construction, all access to businesses will be maintained. You will not be shutting off any access to the businesses. And we do plan to have public outreach regularly during construction to help inform the general public and the businesses, so they know what activities are going on and if they need to. Just so everybody can be aware and try to operate business as usual as much as possible.

[Laura Langdon] Thank you, Jacquelyn. Few more. Did I miss the potential timeframe for when the rest of the project, I'm assuming, Ronan South, but I think Ronan Urban as well? When will that be done?

[Miki Lloyd] I can try to help, at least from a design standpoint, so we've been focusing on Ronan North for the last few years just to try to get a portion of the project to be able to be let to construction. Ronan Urban is at about 30% design, so it's not ready to go yet. It also includes a considerable amount of right of way acquisition in the town of Ronan, plus significant utility relocations on 1st Avenue. And so that project is going to take quite a bit of time to develop. So, we don't have a timeframe on it yet. As we finish up Ronan North and start focusing on Ronan Urban. We hope to get a better schedule for that and be able to communicate some additional schedule information on that piece later. Thank you, Chris. If you have any other questions, feel free to chat them again or reach out. And thank you, Miki. All right, one from summer. Sorry, if you answered this, but is the walking path crossing the highway via an overpass? The answer to that is no, it's an at-grade crossing, but it's at the signal as the new signalized crossing at old US 93 and 3rd Street. So, it allows the opportunity for the peds or bikes to cross at a signal.

[Laura Langdon] Thank you. Elizabeth Reed has a question. Will there be a modification or widening to Round Butte Road between the shared use path in the school, so that students can travel that section safely?

[Jacquelyn Smith] This is Jacquelyn. I do want to share with the group, and this will help answer the question. We are tying another construction project with this Ronan North project and it is being funded through a transportation alternatives grant. And that is going to include building new sidewalk on the north side of Round Butte Road to help have a continuous pedestrian connection for the students over there. So, the roadway will not be widened. Let me also just answer the direct question. The roadway will not be widened, but there is going to be some new pedestrian features out there.

[Laura Langdon] Thank you. I think we had another chat. Oh, yeah. She was saying thank you. Those were really good questions. Anyone have anything else you like to follow up on or any other comments? We have a comment here. I'll just go ahead and read it from Kaylee, I hope you will provide training to the flaggers through the construction zone on cyclist safety so that they know to watch for cyclists and provide a slower crossing time. In my experience, too often oncoming traffic is allowed to come through the construction before the cyclist can make it through the zone, because I can't go as fast as the car. The section of Highway 93 between Ronan and where the trail starts is currently used by many cyclists, even though there is no dedicated shared use path there. Another option would be to provide a cyclist detour on Old Highway 93 during construction. The team have any follow up comments or questions?

[Bob Vosen] I couldn't get my button to unmute. Sorry about that. Hey, Kaylee, thanks for the great comment. We'll definitely pass it on. I like the idea of trying to develop a bicycle detour. I think that with a little bit of advance notice, we could put some signage for southbound traffic to turn up there by Mud Creek and get over on the Old Highway 93 and keep the bicyclist out of the construction zone. That's the best option for everyone. So, thanks for the great comment. We'll definitely make sure to kind of advance that as we continue to develop traffic control plans.

[Laura Langdon] Thank you, Bob. Can we access this presentation later? Yes, we are. We will be posting this as well. We'll have a transcription too. Thank you, Summer. How will northbound traffic turn into Pizza Cafe?

[Bob Vosen] So, I guess Elizabeth, I got a kind of a follow up question for you, if you can see on the screen right here where the Pizza Cafe is northbound traffic, there's a break in what's shown as a white section between the blue or the double blue southbound arrows are. That's where one project is complete. That'll be where northbound traffic would turn in and then traffic coming out will also share that. There's another approach further to the left on your screen that is will be for southbound traffic only northbound won't be able to access that. And during construction, it's always challenging with all of the to maintain business successes. But we will be working with the contractor in the traffic control contractor to make sure there is access to businesses at all times. So, I hope that answered your question if it didn't. Please post to follow ups like make sure I fully understood the question.

[Dan Richardson] Bob, there is and there is a turn line as well, you can kind of see it there on the image in the orange there it's left turn for the northbound traffic to get into the parking lot there.

[Bob Vosen] It develops back to where the first left in the first north. But I know it's the middle northbound arrow is, yep, right through where the red dot is at that turn lane developed. So, thanks for pointing that out Dan. Well, I just again want to thank everyone for joining us. I think that we've got all of the Q&A is answered at this point, so. We are excited to move forward with

the project. There are still some challenges in front of us. I wish I had a firmer schedule that we could provide right now and give you a day. This is one that's going to start, but we're not quite there yet. But as I said, we will be working to continue to keep the community well informed and involved in the process.

[Laura Langdon] Thank you, Bob. Yeah. I don't see any other comments or chats as well, but you have our email as well as the website. Thank you everyone for coming. These are really great questions. Really appreciate it. Thank you.