



Montana Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Bureau
Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation

Control Number 9345001 Date 5/6/2022

Part 1 - Project Summary

Project Name GORE HILL INTERCHANGE-GTF
Project Number NH 1-10(77)644 Control Number 9345001

Part 2 - Environmental Classification

2.a. Status of Categorical Exclusion (CE): Draft Final Re-Evaluation Date 5/6/2022

2.b. Applicable laws and funding mechanisms:

- NEPA - FHWA (23 CFR 771.117)
NEPA - Other (Other Federal Agency and CFR Citation)
MEPA - MDT (ARM 18.2.261)
MEPA- Other (Other State Agency and ARM Citation)

(If additional NEPA and/or MEPA rules are triggered, cite applicable rules and discuss additional requirements in Part 7 below.)

2.c. Classification of FHWA NEPA CE: N/A Listed CE(c) Listed CE(d) Not listed CE

CE(c) Number and Title (26) Modernization of a highway by resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, reconstruction, adding shoulders, or adding auxiliary lanes (including parking, weaving, turning, and climbing lanes), if the action meets the constraints in paragraph (e) of 23 CFR 771.117.

If CE(c)(23) is used, confirm estimated project cost CN-CE w/INF+IDC is less than \$5 million by checking box.

2.d. Is FHWA concurrence on the CE being requested. Yes No

Part 3 - Project Information

3.a. Project Description (i.e., reconstruct, rural/urban, bridge replacement, rehab, new through lane). Include milestone document reference.

Work Type 130 - Reconstruction-with added capacity. The project will reconstruct and reconfigure the Gore Hill Interchange on Interstate 15 (I-15) in Great Falls and construct a southbound auxiliary lane between the 10th Avenue South and Gore Hill Interchanges.

Project Milestone Documents Available:

Preliminary Field Review Report (approved on December 22, 2017);
Alignment and Grade Review Report (September 2021);

Additional Project Documents Available:

I-15 Gore Hill to Emerson Junction Corridor Planning Study (July 2015); Ownership Report (November 21, 2017); Preliminary Geotechnical Review Report (January 12, 2018); Location Hydraulic Study Report (January 15, 2018); Activity 111 Final Environmental Engineering Analysis Report (May 28, 2018); Bridge Design Concept Memo (June 3, 2019); Preliminary Traffic Engineering Report (July 26, 2019); Supplement to Preliminary Traffic Engineering Report (October 2019); Activity 179 - Detailed Noise Analysis Memo (December 2019); Activity 180 - Air Quality Conformity Determination (December 2019), Activity 181 Draft ISA Form (December 2019); Activity 177 Cultural Resources Report (December 2019), Activity 182 Draft Biological Resources Report/Preliminary Biological Assessment (December 2019); Activity 182 Addendum to Biological Resources Report/Preliminary Biological Assessment (March 2020), and Activity 179 - Noise Screening Analysis (September 2020); Activity 181 Final ISA Form (November 2021)



**Montana Department of Transportation  
Environmental Services Bureau  
Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation**

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2701 Prospect Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620  
(406) 444-7203

MDT-ENV-020 06/21

Page 2 of 14

Control Number  Date

Yes  No Horizontal alignment shift?

Describe

The horizontal alignment for 31st St. SW/Airport Road will remain mostly unchanged except as necessary to accommodate the ramp roundabouts and the shift in the overpass structure. Stationing is from the southeast to northwest. The roadway will leave the existing PTW through a compound 620'/255' curve to the left, shifting the road approximately 51' to the northeast and maintaining that shift over the new structure and into the north roundabout. The new alignment will merge back into existing just past the north roundabout through a 350' curve to the right.

All other roadways except for the Tri-Hill Frontage Road will also remained unchanged except for transitions to roundabouts, as applicable. The Tri-Hill Frontage Road will be moved from its current position to the south, leaving the existing alignment approximately 2000' south of the existing intersection with 31st St. SW via a 1200' radius spiral curve to the right and will continue easterly until the intersection with 31st. St. SW.

Yes  No Vertical alignment shift?

Describe

The vertical alignment for 31st St. SW will be raised slightly to accommodate the new structure. All grades are relatively flat, with the steepest grade of 0.815%. Grades are steepened to provide at least 0.5% along curb grade lines.

All other vertical profiles remain largely unchanged from existing except the ramps are all raised slightly to tie into the roundabouts. The Tri-Hill Road new alignment begins with a long, 0.2% grade to about 216+85. From 216+85 to 224+10 the grade is +3.739, then transitions back to 0.266% to the end.

Yes  No Does the project result in capacity expansion of a roadway by addition of one or more through lanes?

Describe

The proposed project involves the addition of an auxiliary lane to the southbound lanes of I-15 between the Gore Hill and 10th Avenue South interchanges.

***If the project results in capacity expansion of a roadway by addition of one or more through lanes, FHWA signature is required.***

3.b. Project Location Description (include beginning and ending RPs; Section, Township, Range, County, town/nearest town.)

The project begins approximately at RP 277.8 at the south end of the Gore Hill Interchange on/off ramps and extends north to the 10th Avenue South Interchange at RP 278.5. The project includes the Gore Hill Interchange (Exit 277) and southbound I-15 between the 10th Avenue Interchange (Exit 278) and Gore Hill. The project also includes the intersections of 31st Street SW and Tri Hill Frontage Road, and the I-15 ramp terminals at the Gore Hill Interchange. The project area is located within the urban boundary of Great Falls and occurs within Township 20 North, Range 3 East, Sections 16 and 21 in Cascade County.

3.c. Have the local officials (city and/or county) been consulted on the project? Explain below.

The I-15 Gore Hill to Emerson Junction Corridor Planning Study was developed in 2015 by MDT in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and in coordination with the Great Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The planning study was developed through an advisory committee consisting of local stakeholder representatives. The process included two public informational meetings, a resource agency workshop, and a public comment period.

The Great Falls Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) was updated in 2018. The plan included recommendations to make improvements to the Gore Hill Interchange as outlined in the Corridor Planning Study. The LRTP included meetings with the Great Falls Transportation Advisory Committee, two public information meetings, and a project website with an online commenting platform.

Planned public outreach activities for the project have included meetings with local officials, community leaders, and other key stakeholders and property owners. Continued meetings will be held through the project life.

The project's Alignment and Grade Review Meeting was held on June 17, 2021 and included local City officials.



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Environmental Services Bureau  
Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation**

PO Box 201001  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620  
(406) 444-7203

MDT-ENV-020 06/21

Page 3 of 14

Control Number

Date

3.d. Are relevant local planning documents available?

Yes  No  N/A

If yes, see below, select one of the following:

A copy of the plan is on file. The proposed project is consistent with the plan.

A copy of the plan is on file. The proposed project is not consistent with the plan. Additional documentation is attached.

3.e. Right-of-Way

Yes  No Will acquisition of right-of-way be required?

Yes  No Will construction permits or temporary easements be required?

**Part 4 - Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Issues  
(See Storm Water Management Plan and Environmental Manual Chapter 46)**

Yes  No  TBD Is the project within a regulated MS4 Area?

Yes (Area)

A Low Impact Development (LID) Practice analysis will be conducted and documented in the file. Coordination with local MS4 coordinator will occur and be documented.

**Part 5 - Permits and Approvals (Environmental Manual Chapter 29)**

Yes	No	TBD	Permit or Approval	Describe
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US Army Corps of Engineers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CWA Sec 404 <input type="checkbox"/> Section 10	A Jurisdictional Determination will be submitted to the COE to determine if 404 permitting will be necessary.
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Exempt Activity	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Notification Nationwide	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Notification Nationwide Type	NW 14 or 23
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual Permit <i>(If individual permit is required, the PA threshold is exceeded, FHWA must concur with PE finding for federally funded project)</i>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CW 401 Certification Authority <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DEQ <input type="checkbox"/> EPA <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Govt	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual 401 Certification	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tribal Permit for Aquatic Resources <input type="checkbox"/> ALCO <input type="checkbox"/> ALPO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stream Protection Act - SPA 124	

Notes (Provide additional explanation as needed.) Wetlands impacted by the proposed project do not appear to be connected to any surface waters and are likely non-jurisdictional wetlands. A jurisdictional determination will be completed. Should the wetlands be determined to be jurisdictional, they would be permitted under NWP 14 or 23.

**Part 6 - Social, Economic and Environment Considerations**

The following sections describe resources that may be present and the potential impacts (direct, indirect, permanent and temporary) that may result from the proposed project. If a resource may be adversely impacted by the project, cumulative impacts, including growth impacts, will need to be identified and discussed. Describe potential mitigation measures that will be employed. Attach additional pages or supplemental information if necessary.

**6.1. Access**

6.1.a. Permanent Access Control Changes

Yes  No Will this action result in the creation or modification of an access control resolution for a particular roadway.

6.1.b. Temporary Access or Changes in Access Control

Yes  No



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Environmental Services Bureau  
Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation**

PO Box 201001  
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Helena, MT 59620  
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MDT-ENV-020 06/21

Page 4 of 14

Control Number  Date

Will the following conditions be met: The proposed project will not involve major traffic disruptions because the following provisions will be made for access by local traffic and be posted. Through-traffic dependent businesses would not be adversely affected. Interference to local events such as festivals or parades would be avoided or minimized. The temporary road, detour or ramp closure will not substantially change the environmental consequences of the action. There will not be substantial controversy associated with the use of temporary road, detour, or ramp closure.

**6.2 Air Quality** (Environmental Manual Chapter 42)

6.2.a. Criteria Pollutants

Yes  No Is the project subject to conformity?

The project is not subject to conformity. The project is located in an area that is in attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for all regulated criteria pollutants. Therefore, the project is not subject to conformity. No additional analysis or discussion is required.

6.2.b. Is this project exempt from Mobile Source Air Toxins (MSAT'S) analysis?

Yes. Rationale is documented in the ISA.

No. The project has low potential for MSAT effects. Rationale is documented in the ISA.

No. The project has high potential for MSAT effects. MDT will conduct and document an MSAT analysis.

In accordance with MDT Standard Specification 107.11.3, the contractor would be required to adhere to applicable air quality rules and regulations, which may required the use of dust suppression and emission control measures to minimize short-term construction-related impacts.

**6.3 Aquatic Resources**

Due to the nature and scope of the project, no impacts to aquatic resources are expected. Adequate supporting information is included in Part 3. No detailed analysis is necessary.

6.3.a. Wetlands

Yes  No  TBD Are wetlands present on or adjacent to the project site?

All practicable means to avoid and minimize impacts will be employed. All unavoidable impacts will be mitigated in accordance with applicable requirements (e.g., US Army Corps, Tribal, and/or EO 11990).

Available Wetland Mitigation Site(s) or mitigation strategy, as needed: (Discussion)

Three wetland sites were identified within the project area (see Additional Discussion below). Preliminary designs suggest permanent wetland impacts are possible at site WL-1C. Preliminary estimates show about 0.117 acres of total wetland impacts. Wetland mitigation is not anticipated Wetland WL-1C is likely isolated and non-jurisdictional.

The roadway improvements will occur primarily within the existing road right-of-way, thereby avoiding wetland impacts to the extent possible. Impacts will be further avoided by clearly marking construction limits to avoid inadvertent impacts on wetlands and streams, locating equipment staging in upland areas, and using standard best management practices to avoid sedimentation and other water quality impacts.

A Protection of Aquatic Resources special provision will be included in the project contract.

Reference: Activity 182 Biological Resources Report (December 2019) and Addendum to the Biological Resources Report (March 2020).

**6.3.b. Streams**

Yes  No  TBD Are stream(s) present on or adjacent to the project site.

Available Stream Site(s) or mitigation strategy, as needed: (Discussion)

**6.3.c Other Regulated Aquatic Resources** (Irrigation features, lakes, etc.)

Yes  No  TBD Are other aquatic resources present on or adjacent to the project site.



Montana Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Bureau
Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation

Control Number 9345001 Date 5/6/2022

Available Other Aquatic Resource Site(s) or mitigation strategy, as needed: (Discussion)

[Empty box for aquatic resource site(s) or mitigation strategy]

Three wetlands were identified along the west side of the I-15 SB exit ramp at the Gore Hill Interchange. Highway runoff and seepage from these wetlands drains through culverts under I-15 to concrete lined ditches. Based on aerial photo interpretation it appears that flow from the wetlands eventually disperses and infiltrates in fields south of I-15. There does not appear to be a connection to any other streams or waterbodies.

Wetland A is an emergent depressional wetland in a ditch north of I-15. The wetland is 0.042 acres in size. Vegetation is dominated by common cattail and mountain rush with some sandbar willow within the wetland. A metal drainage trench conveys water to the wetland from the adjacent hillslope and standing water was observed in the ditch.

Wetland B is a seep wetland on the hillslope north of I-15. The wetland is 0.112 acres in size. Vegetation is dominated by common cattail with a minor amount of mountain rush. The slope has obvious signs of slumping, and small drainage channels emerge from the downslope side of the wetland.

Wetland C is an emergent and scrub/shrub depressional wetland in a ditch north of I-15, similar to Wetland A. The wetland is 0.268 acres in size. Vegetation is dominated by common cattail and sandbar willow. The wetland drains to a culvert under I-15.

Additional Discussion (Explanation)

The contractor will be required to adhere to the terms and conditions of MDT Standard Specification Section 208 for Water Pollution Control and Aquatic Resource Preservation.

6.4 Biological Resources

6.4.a. Threatened and Endangered Species Act

Due to the nature and scope of the project, no impacts to protected resources would be expected. Adequate supporting information is included in Part 3. No detailed analysis is necessary.

Yes No Are there any recorded occurrences of T&E Species and/or critical habitat in the proposed project's vicinity?

Explain (List) Grizzly Bear, Monarch Butterfly

In regard to federally listed threatened and endangered species, the proposed project:

- Will have no effect.
May affect.

Grizzly Bear:
Based on the lack of documented occurrences of grizzly bear within one mile of the study area and the project would have no impacts on grizzly habitat, the project will have no effect on grizzly bears.
Monarch Butterfly:
Based on the lack of suitable overwintering habitat, timing of vegetation clearing in relation to the timing of the arrival of monarchs in Montana, and the abundance of habitat containing adult and larval food species adjacent to the project area, the proposed project will have No Impact on the monarch. The project is unlikely to jeopardize the continued existence of the monarch. In the event that the monarch becomes listed prior to the project completion, this project would have no effect to monarch.
Reference: Activity 182 Biological Resources Report (December 2019), Addendum to the Biological Resources Report (March 2020), Second Addendum to the Biological Resources Report (April 2022)

6.4.b. Bald and Golden Eagle Protection

Due to the nature and scope of the project, no impacts to protected resources would be expected. Adequate and supporting information is included in Part 3. No detailed analysis is necessary.



Montana Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Bureau
Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation

Control Number 9345001 Date 5/6/2022

Yes No Are there recorded Bald and/or Golden Eagle nests in the proposed project's vicinity?

No additional analysis necessary.

6.4.c. Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Due to the nature and scope of the project, no impacts to protected resources would be expected. Adequate and supporting information is included in Part 3. No detailed analysis is necessary.

Yes No The proposed project may have impacts subject to the conditions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

No additional analysis necessary.

Additional Discussion on Biological Resources

Migratory Bird Treaty Act Special Provisions will be included in the project contract.

The proposed project is not located within designated sage grouse habitat.

6.5 Economic Impacts (Environmental Manual Chapter 20)

Due to the nature and scope of the project, no effects on the local economy are expected. No detailed analysis necessary.

Due to the nature and scope of the project, minor or temporary effects on the local economy are expected. A detailed analysis is necessary. The following explanation will justify that the impact is not "significant". (Explain below)

A detailed economic analysis has been conducted and is documented in the file and/or summarized in Section 7. Analysis does not indicate potential for significant adverse impact.

Explain not "significant"

No long-term economic impacts are anticipated due to the implementation of this proposed project. Minor, short-term economic benefits could be seen during construction particularly if the project is built by contractors using local or regional workers. This would produce income for employees that could be spent within Great Falls and Cascade County for housing and necessary goods and services. Benefits could also be realized through the purchase of construction materials. It is anticipated most construction materials, like concrete and paving materials, would generally be available in the Great Falls area.

6.6 Environmental Justice (EJ) (Environmental Manual Chapter 24).

Would the proposed project likely create disproportionately high and/or adverse impact on the health or environment of minority and/or low-income populations as described in Executive Order 12898?

Due to the nature and scope of the project, no disproportionately high and/or adverse EJ impact is expected. No detailed analysis necessary.

Due to the nature and scope of the project, minor effects on EJ populations may occur. A detailed analysis is not necessary. The following explanation will justify that the impact is not "disproportionately high and/or adverse". (Explain below.)

An EJ analysis has been conducted and is documented in the file and/or summarized in Section 7. Analysis does not indicate potential for significant adverse impact.

6.7 Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) (Environmental Manual Chapter 33)

Due to the nature and scope of the project, no impacts to farmland resources are expected. Adequate supporting information is included in Part 3. No detailed analysis is necessary.

Yes No Is the project within existing ROW acquired on or before 8/4/84 or located within an area of existing development?

Yes No Is the project specifically for the purposes of national defense?

6.7.a. Will farmland (as defined in 7 CFR 658.2) be directly or indirectly converted as a result of the project?



# Montana Department of Transportation Environmental Services Bureau Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation

Control Number  Date

- No. Project is not subject to FPPA. No additional analysis or discussion required.
- Yes. A farmland impact analysis was conducted in accordance with the most current NRCS procedures and is documented in the file. Analysis does not indicate potential for significant adverse impact.
- Yes. A farmland impact analysis will be conducted in accordance with the most current NRCS procedures and will be documented in the file. Analysis will not indicate potential for significant adverse impact or else the level of environmental documentation will be re-evaluated.

### 6.8 Floodplains

All stream crossing would be designed in accordance with Executive Order (EO) 111988 amended and 23 CFR 650 Subpart A and in coordination with the appropriate regulatory agencies. Projects within a designated 100-year floodplain will have a floodplain development permit prior to the start of construction. MDT Hydraulics will secure and document the permit for the permanent facility. In accordance with Standard Specification 107.11.2.H, the contractor is required to secure applicable floodplain permits for temporary facilities.

- Due to the nature and scope of the project, no impacts to floodplains are expected. Adequate supporting information is included in Part 3.a above. No detailed analysis is necessary.
- Yes  No Does a delineated floodplain exist in the project area under FEMA's Floodplain Management Criteria?

Additional Information if needed

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has delineated 100-year floodplains associated with the Sun River and Missouri River Creek within the City of Great Falls on digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panels 30013C0601E and 30013C0602E, effective March 19, 2013. The project limits are not within the delineated floodplain associated with the Sun and Missouri Rivers. Anticipated project changes will have no effect on regulatory floodplains.

### 6.9. Hazardous Materials and Substances (Environmental Manual Chapter 44.)

- Due to the nature and scope of the project, no impacts to hazardous materials and substances are expected. Adequate supporting information is included in Part 3. No detailed analysis is necessary.
  - Yes  No The project occurs in an area where local permitting is required for ground disturbance activities in a Superfund Site.
  - Yes  No Hazardous materials, hazardous substances, and/or petroleum products are currently on and/or adjacent to the proposed project.
- No additional analysis necessary.

Additional information if needed

Sites with hazardous substance concerns are located within the Great Falls International Airport development area and Town Pump. Past petroleum releases in the general area have all been resolved. These LUST sites are all located away from the Gore Hill Interchange-GTF project area and would appear to pose no concerns for improvements on I-15 and associated intersections.

Reference: Activity 181 ISA Form and supporting materials (November 2021).

Should evidence of hazardous materials and/or underground storage tanks be discovered during construction, in accordance with MDT Standard Specifications 107.23 and 107.24, the contractor would be required to immediately stop work in the area until the significance of the site is determined and appropriate measures implemented.

### 6.10. Historic and Archaeological Resources (Environmental Manual Chapter 30.)

- Due to the nature and scope of the project, no impacts to historic and archaeological resources are expected. Adequate supporting information is included in Part 3. No detailed analysis is necessary.
- Yes  No Are any historic, archaeological or cultural resources on or eligible for listing on the National Register present within the project's Area of Potential Effect?

**Historic Resources**



**Montana Department of Transportation  
Environmental Services Bureau  
Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation**

PO Box 201001  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620  
(406) 444-7203

MDT-ENV-020 06/21

Page 8 of 14

Control Number

Date

Historic Resources					
Smithsonian #	Name	Eligible?	Date of Concurrence in Eligibility	Effect Determination	Date of Effect Determination
24CA0386	U.S. Highway 91	Yes, but Non-Contributing Segment	1/31/2020	No Adverse Effect	1/21/2020
24CA1872	F-86A Sabre jet fighter	Unresolved	N/A	No Adverse Effect	1/21/2020
<input type="button" value="Add Row"/>		<input type="button" value="Delete Last Row"/>			

Yes  No Is there confirmed potential for adverse effect on cultural/historic resources?

Provide additional information below, if needed or reference Section 7. Include specific information related to each resource by Smithsonian Number. Cut and paste from existing reports.

Ethnoscience completed a cultural resource inventory of the project area in November 2019. One previously recorded site (24CA0386) and one new site (24CA1872) were identified within the project inventory area.

Site 24CA0386 is U.S. Highway 91 in Cascade County. This update inventoried a 1,616-foot (0.31-mile) segment of the site at the junction of I-15 and Airport Drive in Great Falls. The highway segment consists of two parts divided by Airport Drive. The northeast part, known as Old Airport Road, is an isolated dead-end remnant between Airport Drive (I-15 Exit 277) and 10th Avenue South (I-15 Exit 278). The southwest part, known as Ulm North Frontage Road, provides local access between Ulm (I-15 Exit 270) and Great Falls (I-15 Exit 277). The segment of 24CA0386 within the project area has lost integrity and is recommended as a non-contributing portion of the site.

Site 24CA1872 is an F-86A Sabre jet fighter that was mounted as a static display by the Montana Air National Guard circa 1965. The F-86A was used by the Guard from 1953-1956. The display aircraft never served with the Guard, but is painted to look like ANG 2637 – City of Great Falls. Site 24CA1872 is recommended not eligible for NRHP listing.

Based on information above, MDT requested concurrence of a No Historic Properties Affected determination for sites 24CA0386 and 24CA1872 via a letter to SHPO dated January 6, 2020. SHPO could not concur with this determination however, in correspondence dated January 21, 2020, SHPO did concur that the project would have No Adverse Effect of sites 24CA0386 and 24CA1872. In further correspondence dated January 31, 2020, SHPO concurred that the segment of 24CA0386 described in a letter dated January 23, 2020 from MDT is non-contributing. According to this correspondence, the eligibility of site 24CA1872 as non-contributing was left unresolved until further information was available.

Ethnoscience's report also investigated the possible existence of a prehistoric site (24CA0022) in the general project area based on an unverified report of a lithic cultural material scatter in the SW of Section 21 recorded in 1974. No evidence of 24CA0022 was observed within the inventory area. The entire inventory area is previously disturbed by construction activity and/or agricultural cultivation. Ethnoscience concluded the potential for intact subsurface cultural deposits is highly unlikely within this disturbed environment.

Should evidence of historic or pre-historic sites be discovered during construction, in accordance with MDT Standard Specifications 107.11, the contractor would be required to immediately stop work in the area until the significance of the site is determined and appropriate measures implemented.

**6.11. Induced Growth Analysis - Impacts to Planned Growth and Land Use ([Induced Growth Guidance](#))**

Yes  No Is this project exempt from screening due to the nature and scope of the project?

No detailed analysis necessary - Explain exemption

MDT's Indirect Effects Screening Process and guidance was consulted to evaluate the potential for induced growth resulting from the implementation of this project. According to the guidance, CE(c) list projects are exempt from indirect effects screening. This project does not have an economic development purpose and is not intended to serve any specific existing or





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Environmental Services Bureau  
Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation**

PO Box 201001  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620  
(406) 444-7203

MDT-ENV-020 06/21

Page 9 of 14

Control Number

Date

newly planned development. The project is intended to reconfigure an existing interchange by providing roundabouts at the ramp terminals and adding an auxiliary lane for southbound traffic between the 10th Avenue South and Gore Hill Interchanges.

Additional information, if needed.

The existing interchange serves the Great Falls International Airport and several businesses located near the interchange.

**6.12 Noise** (Environmental Manual Chapter 43)

Yes  No Is this a Type I action as defined in 23 CFR 772?

***If yes, PA threshold exceeded, FHWA must concur with the CE finding for a federally funded project.***

Compliance with provisions of 23 CFT 772 and MDT's Noise Policy will be ensured and documented in the file. Noise abatement will be examined for reasonableness and feasibility. A final decision of the installation of the abatement measure(s) will be made upon completion of the project's final design and the public involvement process. At any point in the design process, if new or different information is identified that could impact the significance assessment associated with the noise impact, an amended NEPA/MEPA analysis could be required. If significant impacts were identified, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process may need to be initiated or the project design may need to be modified. (Explain below)

The proposed project meets the criteria for a Type I project established in 23 CFR 772 and requires a traffic noise analysis. The Gore Hill Interchange-GTF project is considered Type I because it involves the addition of an auxiliary lane to the southbound lanes of I-15 between the Gore Hill and 10th Avenue South interchanges. Additionally, the project will require the construction of a segment of Tri Hill Frontage Road on a new location. MDT's Noise Policy says that if any segment or component of an alternative meets the definition of a Type I project, then the entire alternative is considered to be Type I and is subject to the noise analysis requirements.

Reference: Activity 181 Initial Site Assessment form with attachments (November 2021).

Big Sky Acoustics prepared a Noise Screening Report for the Gore Hill Interchange-GTF project in September 2020. The consultant estimated traffic noise levels at 12 noise-sensitive receptors located within 500 feet of the project limits and predicted impacts at one single family residence (Receptor B1) under current (2018) conditions and projected Design Year (2041) traffic conditions with and without the proposed action. Receptor B1 is located on the northwest side of I-15 and northeast of the Gore Hill Interchange. The predicted Design Year (2041) noise levels with the proposed action are 1 to 2 dBA greater than current noise levels at modeled receptors. Therefore, the traffic noise levels are not predicted to increase more than 10 dBA over existing noise levels with the implementation of this project.

Also, because traffic noise impacts were predicted, traffic noise abatement measures were evaluated. Barriers, design modifications (including horizontal alignment shifts), and traffic management measures were considered and determined not be reasonable or feasible.

Therefore, it was determined that noise mitigation was not required.

**6.13. Public Involvement**

Yes  No A public involvement plan would be completed in accordance with MDT's Public Involvement Handbook.

Explain

The project Level of Impact (LOI) has been determined to be Moderate, and level of public involvement C, as defined by MDT's Public Involvement Plan. A public involvement plan for this project has been developed for this project. The public involvement plan will identify an understanding of the need for public involvement, audiences/stakeholders, engagement activities, and the strategy and intent of activities. A public involvement consultant has been retained to assist with public involvement activities and to help expand public awareness and support for the project. Efforts to date include the development of a project website and media outreach. Interviews with key stakeholder and property owners will be part of the planned public outreach activities.

**6.14 Recreational Resources**



**Montana Department of Transportation  
Environmental Services Bureau  
Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation**

PO Box 201001  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620  
(406) 444-7203

MDT-ENV-020 06/21

Page 10 of 14

Control Number  Date

Due to the nature and scope of the project, no impacts to publicly-owned recreation resources are expected. Adequate supporting information is included in Part 3. No detailed analysis is necessary.

Yes  No Publicly-owned recreational resources are present on or adjacent to the project site.

No additional analysis necessary.

**6.15 Right-of-Way (ROW)**

Yes  No Will acquisition of ROW be required?

Yes  No Will construction permits or temporary easement be required?

Yes  No  N/A Will ROW acquisition be considered "minor" per the Programmatic Agreement (PA)? *For purposes of the PA, an acquisition is considered more than minor if it will substantially affect the functionality of the property and/or primary structure on the property.* If no, action may not be processed under paragraphs CE(c)(26), (c)(27), and (c)(28).

Yes  No  N/A Will residential or commercial displacement be required? If yes, action may not be processed under paragraphs CE(c)(26), (c)(27), and (c)(28).

Yes  No  N/A Will acquisition of land for hardship or protective purposes, or early acquisition be required?

**6.16 Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act (Environmental Manual Chapter 15.)**

Due to the nature and scope of the project, no impacts to Section 4(f)-protected resources would be expected. Adequate supporting information is included in Part 3.1 above. No detailed analysis is necessary.

Yes  No Are there any parks, recreation areas, wildlife and or waterfowl refuges, or historic sites on or adjacent to the project.

4(f) Resources				
Resource	Use?	Type of Use (Permanent, Temporary, Constructive)	Documentation (De Minimis, Programmatic, Full 4(f))	Date of Completion
U.S. Highway 91, 24CA0386	<input type="text" value="No"/>	<input type="text"/>		
F-86A Sabre jet fighter, 24CA1872	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>	<input type="text" value="Permanent"/>	De Minimis	5/6/2022
<input type="button" value="Add Row"/>	<input type="button" value="Delete Last Row"/>			

Yes  No  TBD Will there be a "use" of Section 4(f) protected sites?

***If "yes", PA threshold exceeded, FHWA must concur with the CE finding for a federally funded project.***

Work has been coordinated with and documented with the managing agency/agencies. Documentation is available on file.

Additional Information if Needed:

U.S. Highway 91, 24CA0386

U.S. Highway 91 within the area of the proposed project was determined to be non-contributing to 24LC0386 (SHPO concurrence received 1/31/2020, and the proposed project was determine to have "No Adverse Effect" on 24CA0386 (SHPO concurrence received 1/21/2020). Based on these two findings, the proposed project will have no 4(f) use of U.S. Highway 91, 24CA0386.

F-86A Sabre jet fighter, 24CA1872

The proposed project was determined to have "No Adverse Effect" on 24CA1872, with SHPO concurrence received on January 21, 2020. On April 7, 2022 SHPO was notified of the intent to make a de minimis impact finding on the resource.

The proposed project would require right-of-way acquisition and construction permits on the



# Montana Department of Transportation Environmental Services Bureau Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation

PO Box 201001  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620  
(406) 444-7203

Control Number  Date

parcel containing the jet fighter display. The jet fighter jet display itself will not be disturbed as a result of the project. Because the project will not disturb the fighter jet display, and was determined to have "No Adverse Effect" on it, a de minimis impact determination was made.

### 6.17 Section 6(f) of the National Land and Water Conservation Act (Environmental Manual Chapter 32) or Similar Deed Restriction.

- Due to the nature and scope of the project, or the location, no impacts to protected resources would be expected. Adequate supporting information is included in Part 3 above. No detailed analysis is necessary.
- Yes  No Have any of the parks, recreation areas, or other properties on or adjacent to the project been acquired (in fee or in easement) and/or improved with funds from the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965, the Federal Aid in Fish Restoration Act, the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, or other public-use money that includes deed restrictions or covenants on the property.

No additional analysis necessary.

### 6.18 Social Impacts (Environmental Manual Chapter 19.)

- Due to the nature and scope of the project, no social impacts would be expected. No detailed analysis is necessary.

### 6.19 Tribal Lands/Issues (Environmental Manual Chapter 31.)

- Yes  No Is the project located within a current American Indian Reservation border?
- Yes  No Is the project located outside a current American Indian Reservation border, but in an area of interest to the Tribal government?

Documentation of coordination with the Tribal government is on file for overall project coordination, and any coordination related to aquatic resource permitting, 401 certification, and/or history and cultural resources.

### 6.20 Vegetation (Environmental Manual Chapter 37)

- Due to the nature and scope of the project and the site, a seeding special provision is not necessary.
- A seeding provision will be included in the contract documents to ensure appropriate re-vegetation of disturbed areas.

In accordance with Standard Specification 201, clearing and grubbing activities would occur only with staked construction limits.

To re-establish permanent vegetation and to reduce the spread and establishment of noxious weeds, disturbed areas within MDT right-of-way and easements would be seeded with desirable plant species, as soon as practicable, as recommended and determined feasible by the MDT Reclamation Specialist. The seeding mixture special provision will be included in the contract documentation.

Re-vegetation plan will conform to the requirements of 23 CFR 650 Subpart B. Post construction, the site would be monitored until final stabilization is met.

Additional information as needed. Document any deviations from standard procedures.

### 6.21 Visual Quality/Aesthetics (Environmental Manual Chapter 22)

- Yes  No Will the project have the potential to impact roadside classification or visual aspects such as aesthetics, light, glare or night sky?

Additional information as needed. Document any deviations from standard procedures.

### 6.22 Water Quality (In accordance with MDT Standard Specifications 107 and 208, the contractor would be required to adhere to applicable water quality rules, regulations, and permit conditions.).



**Montana Department of Transportation  
Environmental Services Bureau  
Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation**

PO Box 201001  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620  
(406) 444-7203

MDT-ENV-020 06/21

Page 12 of 14

Control Number

Date

Due to the nature and scope of the project, no impacts to water quality would be expected. Adequate supporting information is included in Part 3. No detailed analysis is necessary.

**6.22.a Groundwater** *(Domestic and irrigation well impacted by the project will be mitigated with the landowner)*

Yes  No Are Public Water Supply Wells located on or adjacent to the project?

Explain

Ensure the DEQ setback requirements of a 100-foot isolation zone in which no source of pollutant can be located is accounted for in project plans.

**6.22.b Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program Under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)**

Yes  No  N/A  TBD Will the project include stormwater drainage wells such as dry wells, bored wells, and infiltration galleries that are regulated as Class V injection wells by EPA under the NPDES program.

Explain

**6.22.c Stormwater - Temporary Erosion and Sediment Control**

MDT's contractor will be contractually obligated to provide temporary erosion and sediment control in accordance with FHWA rules at 23 CFR 650 Subpart B and applicable stormwater permit requirements at the MPDES and/or NPDES.

**6.22.d Stormwater - Permanent Erosion and Sediment Control (PESC)** *(If the scope of the project includes a rehabilitation or reconstruction, evaluate need for incorporation of PESC and discussed this with Road Design and Hydraulics.)*

Due to the nature and scope of the project and the site, a PESC analysis is not necessary.

A PESC analysis is necessary and is being coordinated with personnel on the Design Team.

Explanation of any deviations from MDT's Standard Practices and/or further coordination for incorporation of PESC into the project design.

**6.22.e Stormwater - Local Requirements** *(Discuss compliance with local stormwater requirements with Road Design and Hydraulics.)*

Due to the nature and scope of the project and the site, local stormwater requirements do not apply.

Local stormwater requirements apply that are being coordinated with personnel on the Design Team.

Describe Local Stormwater Requirements:

Explain

**6.23 Wild and Scenic Rivers** *(Environmental Manual Chapter 35)*

Yes  No Will the proposed project require work in, across or adjacent to a Wild and Scenic River?

Additional information as needed:



**Montana Department of Transportation  
Environmental Services Bureau  
Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation**

PO Box 201001  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620  
(406) 444-7203

MDT-ENV-020 06/21

Page 13 of 14

Control Number

Date

The proposed project will require the following environmental special provisions:

- Protection of Storm Water Drainage System and Compliance with Local Permit Requirements
- Storm Water Permitting Requirements under the Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES)
- Protection of Aquatic Resources
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act - Structures

**Part 8 - FHWA Comments**

**Part 9 - FHWA Signature Rationale**

Yes  No Is FHWA Concurrence on the CE necessary?

Explain why FHWA concurrence is necessary:

- Action is not listed in 23 CFR 771.117.
- Action is listed in 23 CFR 771.117, no PA threshold is exceeded, but MDT is requesting FHWA concurrence.

Action is listed in 23 CFR 771.117, but a PA threshold is exceeded as documented below. Actions listed in 23 CFR 771.117 that exceed any of the thresholds below may not be approved by MDT. MDT May certify to FHWA that the action qualified for a CE. FHWA concurrence is required for the CE to be valid.

If "yes" is answered for any item below, FHWA concurrence is required.

Abbreviated Signature Triggers from Programmatic Agreement	Yes/No
9.a. RIGHT-OF-WAY. The action involved acquisition of more than a minor amount of ROW.	No
9.b. RIGHT-OF-WAY. The action involved acquisition that results in residential or non-residential displacements.	No
9.c. RIGHT-OF-WAY. The action includes acquisition of land for hardship or protective purposes, or each acquisition pursuant to the Federal acquisition project.	No
9.d. CAPACITY. The action results in capacity expansion of a roadway by addition of one or more through lanes.	Yes
9.e. ACCESS. The action involves the construction of temporary access, or the closure of existing road, bridge, or ramps, that would result in major traffic disruptions.	No
9.f. ACCESS. The action results in changes in access control that affect traffic patterns.	No
9.g. HISTORIC PROPERTIES. The action results in a determination of adverse effect on historic properties pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA.	No
9.h. SECTION 4(f). The action requires the "use" of properties protected by Section 4(f).	Yes
9.i. SECTION 6(f). The action requires the acquisition of lands under the protection of Section 6 (f) or other unique areas or special lands that were acquired in fee or easement with public-use money and have deed restrictions or covenants on the property.	No
9.j. CWA SECTION 404. The action requires an Individual CWA Section 404 permit.	No
9.k. FLOODPLAIN PERMIT. The action requires work encroaching on a regulatory floodway or work affecting the base floodplain (100-year flood) elevations of water course or lake, pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 11988 and 23 CFR 650 Subpart A.	No
9.l. WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS. The action requires construction in, across, or adjacent to a river designated as a component of, or proposed for inclusion in, the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers published by the US Department of the Interior/US Department of Agriculture.	No



**Montana Department of Transportation  
Environmental Services Bureau  
Categorical Exclusion (CE) Documentation**

PO Box 201001  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620  
(406) 444-7203

MDT-ENV-020 06/21

Page 14 of 14



Control Number

Date

9.m. NOISE. The action is defined as a "Type I Project" per 23 CFR 772.5 and MDT's Noise Policy.	Yes
9.n. T&E SPECIES and CRITICAL HABITAT. The action may affect federally listed or candidate endangered species, or proposed or designated critical habitat or projects with impacts subject to the conditions of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.	No
9.o. AIR QUALITY. The action does not conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) which is approved or promulgated by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in air quality non-attainment areas.	No
9.p STIP. The action is not included in or is inconsistent with the statewide transportation improvement program (STIP), and in applicable urbanized areas, the transportation improvement plan.	No

In accordance with the provisions of 23 CFR 771.117(a), this pending action would not cause any significant environmental impacts. Additionally, this pending action would not involve unusual circumstances as described at 23 CFR 771.117(b) or ARM 18.2.261(2). The proposed project is appropriately fiscally constrained in accordance with 23 CFR 450.104.

**Approval Signatures**

N/A	N/A
Local Agency Approving Authority	Date
	5/6/2022
MDT Environmental Services Project Development Engineer	Date
	<b>APPROVED</b> <small>By Tom Gocksch at 1:05 pm, May 06, 2022</small>
MDT Environmental Services Engineering Section Supervisor	Date
Federal Highway Administration	Date

- Standard Distribution List     Maintenance Distribution List     Custom Distribution List

Distribution List: Lisa Hurley, Fiscal Programming Section Supervisor  
Jason Gilliam, Right-of-Way Bureau Chief

- Shaun Sampson, Consultant Project Manager
- Dave Holien, P.E. Acting Consultant Design Engineer
- Darin Reynolds, P.E., Engineering Construction Contracting Bureau Chief
- Tom Martin, P.E., Environmental Services Bureau Chief
- Tom Gocksch, P.E. ESB, Engineering Section Supervisor

- Dawn Stratton, Fiscal Programming
- Montana Legislative Branch Environmental Quality Council
- JD Buck, MS4 Data Manager