

APPENDIX D

MONTANA WILDLIFE & TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECT PROGRAM

STEERING COMMITTEE PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

The Committee has developed these criteria to guide their scoring and assist in the evaluation and selection of projects for implementation through the Program. Bulleted items below do not directly correlate to points awarded for each category. The items included and level of detail in the information provided by the applicant is expected to be commensurate with the scope and scale of the project proposal.

I. APPLICATION INFORMATION (Not Scored)

- A. Applicant Name, Affiliation, and Contact Information (mailing address, phone, email)
- B. Contact Person and Contact information (if different than applicant)
- C. Landowner and/or Lessee Name(s) and Contact information (from MT Cadastral)

II. PROJECT INFORMATION (Not Scored)

- A. Project Name
- B. County
- C. Highway and Mile Markers
- D. Geographic Location
- E. Provide a brief overview of the project

III. NEEDS and BENEFITS (Max 20 points, Weighted x 3 = 60 points)

A. Purpose and Need of project (Score 0-5)

- Clearly articulated challenge to be addressed (need)
- The location of the project will appropriately address the challenge
- Clearly articulated solution that will appropriately address the challenge (purpose)
- Clearly articulated expected benefit from the project (safety/connectivity)
- The proposed project is sufficiently justified and reasonable

B. Supporting Data (Score 0-5)

- Clearly articulated the data used
- Data used supports purpose and need of project
- Utilized relevant and sufficient data for broad scale assessment
Examples may include:
 - Montana Wildlife and Transportation Planning Tool (MWTPT)
 - Conflict / Barriers (MWTPT NAC 1, 5)
 - Movement / Conservation (MWTPT NAC 2, 3, 4)
 - Identified the score of each of the project highway segments within the project area and the average score over all of the segments in the project area. Described how the Planning Tool informed the selection of the general project area.
 - Scientific/practitioner literature, research
- Utilized relevant and sufficient data for finer scale assessment
Examples may include:
 - Habitat security
 - Professional consultation
 - GPS collar data
 - Field (boots on the ground) observational data
 - Localized assessment / research / models
 - Camera trap data
 - Citizen science data

C. Project Proposal (Score 0-5)

- Provided comprehensive description of all features and strategies included in the project
- Features and strategies clearly related back to purpose and need
- Included details on dimensions, location, extent, length, etc. for each feature/strategy
- Identified whether proposing new infrastructure and/or retrofit of existing infrastructure

D. Expected Benefits (Score 0-5)

- Clearly articulated benefits regarding safety
- Clearly articulated benefits regarding wildlife connectivity / permeability in the broader landscape
- Utilized relevant data to illustrate benefits, such as:
 - Expert opinion
 - Scientific/practitioner literature, research supporting benefits
 - Clearly articulated change in condition / consequences of the project

IV. IMPLEMENTATION Criteria (Max 20 points)

A. Landowner/community support (Score 0-5)

- Provided project endorsements
- Demonstrated engagement of community working group(s) or partnerships(s)
- Provided evidence of other landowner/community involvement and support
- Demonstrated communication with adjacent and/or directly affected landowners

B. Land protections / Land Use (Score 0-5)

- Discussed and/or referenced land or resource management agency or tribal plans, guidance, or policies conducive to the project
Examples may include:
 - Project area adjacent to public land, protected land, or private land under conservation easement
 - Planning and growth policies conducive to the project
 - Planned/projected development conducive to the project
 - Project area within State Wildlife Action Plan Focal Areas
 - Project area within SO 3362 MT Action Plan Priority Area
 - STIP projects conducive to or considered in the project
- Plans, guidance, and policies referenced are compatible with proposed project

C. Planned projects / Complementary projects (Score 0-5)

- Complementary efforts are planned, underway, or have been completed in the vicinity of the project
 - Identified status and implementing entity
- Clearly articulated the extent to which the scope, timing, and impact of these efforts will benefit the success of the proposed project

D. Partnerships in place and role of each partner (Score 0-5)

- Project proposal includes multiple partners
- Clearly identified the role each partner plays(ed) in development, implementation, and/or funding of the project

V. FUNDING Criteria (Max 10 points)

A. Cost estimate (Score 0-5)

- Clearly identified the total cost of project implementation (including development, design, and construction)
- Completed the budget template
- Identified major line items in the proposal
- Used the appropriate average bid prices
- Consulted with and identified professionals for assistance

B. Funding contributions and sources (Score 0-5)

- Clearly described the funding plan
 - Identified sources of funding
 - Identified amount of funding from each source
 - Identified status of funding from each source (secured, pending, possible)
 - Identified timeframes and steps needed to secure pending or possible funding
- Majority of funding is secured or pending
- Completed the budget template
- Identified remaining gap between cost and revenue, if one exists
- Described opportunities and potential for procurement of additional funding

VI. FEASIBILITY/OPPORTUNITY Criteria (Max 25 points)

A. Engineering / technical feasibility (Score 0-5)

For less complex projects:

- Clearly and accurately identified existing conditions within the project area
 - Utilities
 - Structural conflicts/impediments
 - Accessibility and terrain
 - Roadway grade
 - Vegetative communities and distribution
- Clearly articulated ROW considerations
- Clearly articulated engagement or consultation with MDT, FWP, Tribal, or other governmental personnel
- Identified if engineering design is anticipated and entity(ies) expected to complete the design
- Project appears potentially technically feasible based on the information provided

For more complex projects:

- Thoroughly addressed the items above
- Clearly articulated consultation with MDT or an outside firm and the input received, including any engineering evaluations completed
- Included appropriate conceptual sketches, drawings, and/or maps as attachments
- Clearly articulated structure proposals
- Clearly and accurately identified
 - Potential impacts to the travelling public
 - Anticipated project schedule and duration
 - ROW considerations (acquisition and/or agreements needed)
- Clearly articulated the proposal for engineering design and entity(ies) expected to complete the design
- Project appears potentially technically feasible based on the information provided

B. Biological / Ecological feasibility (Score 0-5)

- Clearly articulated consultation with MDT, FWP, and/or Tribal biologists and the input received pertaining to challenge, purpose and need, proposed solution, and expected benefit
- Discussed consultation with road ecology experts or scientists
- Clearly documented endorsements, concerns, or potential drawbacks identified through consultation
- Project appears potentially biologically/ecologically feasible based on the information provided

C. Proposal for construction (Score 0-5)

For less complex projects:

- Clearly articulated the general proposal for construction of the project features
 - Work activities
 - Methods and equipment
 - Traffic control needs or plan
- Identified the entity(ies) expected to complete construction
- Construction proposal appears potentially feasible based on the information provided

For more complex projects:

- Thoroughly addressed the items above
- Contractor identified is insured and bonded

- Construction proposal appears potentially feasible based on the information provided

D. Proposal for post-construction monitoring (Score 0-5)

- Clearly articulated a post-construction monitoring plan appropriate to stated purpose and need (conflict/connectivity) to evaluate
 - Expected benefits
 - Lessons learned
 - Unforeseen impacts
 - Adaptive management recommendations
- Clearly identified personnel/entity(ies) responsible for post-construction monitoring
- Clearly identified any novel mitigation strategies or designs, or target species for which there is limited available research regarding use of crossing structures
- Monitoring proposal appears potentially feasible based on the information provided

E. Proposal for short- and long-term maintenance and operation (Score 0-5)

- Clearly articulated a short-term maintenance proposal and responsible entity(ies) for expected day to day maintenance items relevant to features proposed, including schedule and method of inspection
- Clearly identified expected long-term maintenance activities, identified affected features, and the responsible entity(ies)
- Clearly articulated an operation proposal and responsible entity(ies) and identified activities that may require additional agreements
- Maintenance proposal appears potentially feasible based on the information provided