



# Welcome!





Eliminate all traffic fatalities  
and serious injuries

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Increase safe and healthy  
mobility for all

**Together, we can save lives!**

Learn more about Vision Zero at [www.mdt.mt.gov/VisionZero](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/VisionZero) 

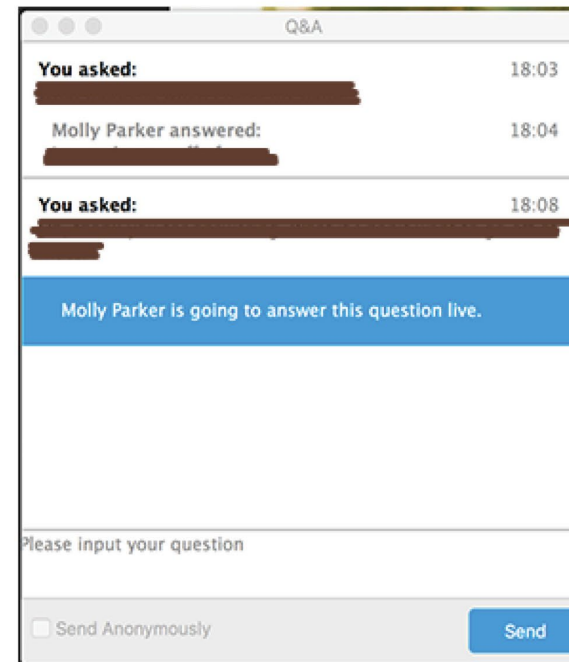
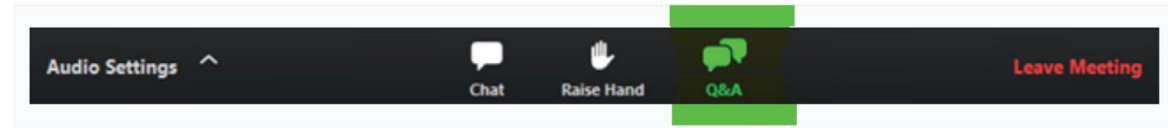
We need **EVERYONE**  
to do their part:

- Drive attentively
- Drive sober
- Drive to the conditions and do not speed
- Eliminate distracted driving, including cell phone use
- Wear your seatbelt



# How to use Zoom's Question & Answer Feature

- Communicate with the project team using the Q/A button.
- Generally, we will respond to your question live.
- Type your question at any time and we will respond at the end of the presentation.





# Project Team

- Mike Taylor, MDT Acting District Administrator
- Kurtis Schnieber, MDT Billings Acting Preconstruction Engineer
- Shaun Sampson, MDT Consultant Design Project Engineer
- Tim Erickson, HDR Project Manager
- Chris Brehmer, Kittelson & Associates Senior Traffic Engineer
- Lisa Gray, HDR Public Involvement







# Project Overview

- The existing 27th Street at-grade railroad crossing located in the heart of downtown Billings.
- One of the busiest at-grade railroad crossings in Montana with about 32 trains and 6 switching operations daily, which can create the following issues:
  - Congestion
  - Impacts to emergency services
  - Frustrated drivers
  - Decreased downtown user experience







# Project Specifics

- Ground level study of the 27th Street at-grade rail crossing.
- Identify short-term and long-term improvement solutions.
- Vet each solution through a transparent decision process.
- Incorporate feedback from local stakeholders and the public.
- Determine what should and can be implemented.

***Stakeholder input is important to success!***





# Stakeholder Engagement and Comments

## Stakeholder engagement:

- Public meetings
  - November 2018
  - April 2019
  - December 2020 (virtual only)
  - December 2022 (virtual and in-person)
- Ongoing stakeholder and business owner outreach
- Ongoing meetings with the City of Billings and Yellowstone County, including emergency response personnel



## Comments received for long-term alternatives (overpass and tunnel):

- **Both:** expensive, negative impacts to businesses and homes, divides downtown, ruins historic district, no pedestrian/ bicyclist accommodations.
- **Overpass:** changes downtown too much (casts shadows), have created negative change in other cities.
- **Tunnel:** impacts to water table, and drainage and ice issues.

## Comments received for short-term alternatives (traffic signal modifications and warning system):

- Great ideas if these would help emergency response times.
- ITS technology continues to evolve, we should use it.
- 21st century technology can solve these problems.





# Two-Lane Overpass and Two-Lane Tunnel Alternatives

Both alternatives meet evaluation criteria for:

- Design standards
- Project goals
- Traffic mobility and route connectivity
- Multi-modal connectivity

Neither alternative meets the evaluation criteria for:

- Stakeholder interests
- Property impacts and business access
- Capital costs

*Both alternatives will be retained in the study but not implemented at this time.*

**Two-Lane Overpass Representation**



**Two-Lane Tunnel Representation**



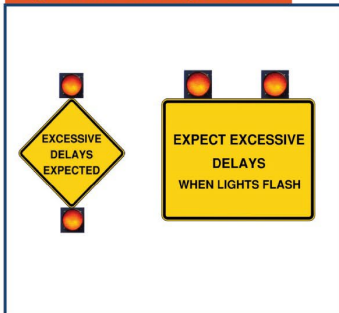




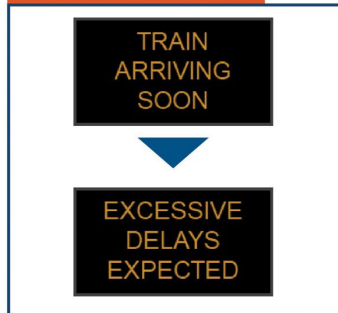
# Traffic Signal Modifications and Excessive Delay Warning System Alternatives

Through engagement with the city, the project team studied alternatives that would keep the crossing at-grade.

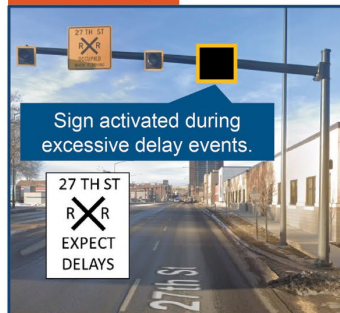
Sign with Flashing Beacon



Dynamic Message Sign



Blank-Out Sign



Note: Also represents concepts for "secondary" signs

Alternatives satisfy the following evaluation criteria:

- Stakeholder interests
- Property impacts and business access
- Traffic mobility and route connectivity
- Project goals
- Multi-modal connectivity
- Capital costs

*These alternatives will be retained in the study.*



# Traffic Signal Modification Alternatives

**Traffic Signal Enhancements** are a combination of activated signs and railroad preemption and signal timing strategies to manage vehicles while a train is crossing 27th Street and to manage traffic after the train has passed.

- **Concept 1C:** No Right Turn blank-out sign for the eastbound approaches on Montana Avenue at 29th Street, N Broadway, and N 27th Street.
  - For normal operations, the sign will be dark. When a train crosses, the sign will display a NO RIGHT TURN sign.
- **Concept 2A:** Left Turn Recall includes monitoring operations of the southbound left-turn movements at N 27th Street and Montana Avenue.





# Excessive Delay Warning System Alternative

**Excessive Delay Warning Systems (EDWS)** provide information to travelers about a train crossing 27th Street and possible delays. This will allow travelers to make informed decisions to use alternative routes.



Note: Also represents concepts for “secondary” signs

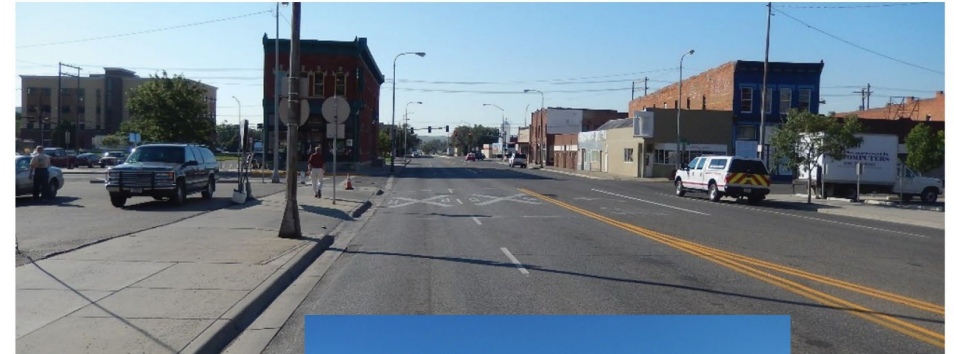
Intersection	Traffic	Potential Sign Placement
2nd Ave. N & N 27th St.	8% (1,035 vehicles of all southbound crossings)	Between N 27th St. and N 28th St.
1st Ave. N & N 27th St.	11% (1,410 vehicles of all southbound crossings)	Between N 27th St. and N 26th St.
Montana Ave. N & N 27th St.	34% (4,220 vehicles of all southbound crossings)	Between N 27th St. and N 36th St.
1st Ave. S & N 27th St.	17% (1,550 vehicles of all northbound crossings)	Between 27th St. and 26th St.





# Potential Next Steps

- **Conduct pilot study** – Identify and deploy a pilot of the Excessive Delay Warning System. The pilot study would be designed to test different messaging strategies and identify and resolve challenges for the permanent system.
- **Include No Right Turn blank out signs in design** – Include “No Right Turn” blank-out signs for the eastbound approaches on Montana Avenue at N 29th Street, N Broadway, and N 27th Street. Coordinate with the City of Billings one-way to two-way conversion and Montana Avenue (27th to 22nd) project.
- **Implement Left Turn Recall** – Implement a minimum recall, which keeps traffic moving, for southbound left-turn movements at N 27th Street and Montana Avenue.







# How to Comment and Stay Involved



## In-Person Meeting

Fill out the comment form and drop it in the box.



## Online Meeting

We will capture your comments.

Many thanks to our great project team!

- MDT
- City of Billings
- Yellowstone County

## Contact

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🌐 web: [mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/billings27thstreet/](http://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/billings27thstreet/) **OR SCAN HERE**





# Thank You!

