



MDT'S MISSION

*MDT's guiding mission is to serve the public by providing a transportation system and services that emphasize **quality, safety, cost effectiveness, economic vitality, and sensitivity to the environment.***



VISION ZERO

zero deaths · zero serious injuries

MONTANA DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION

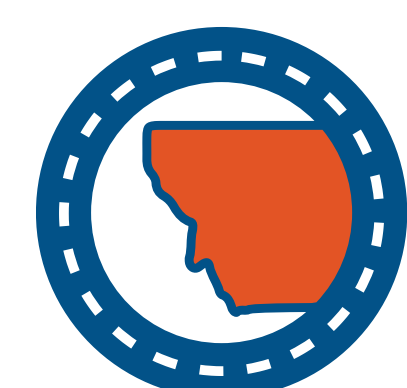
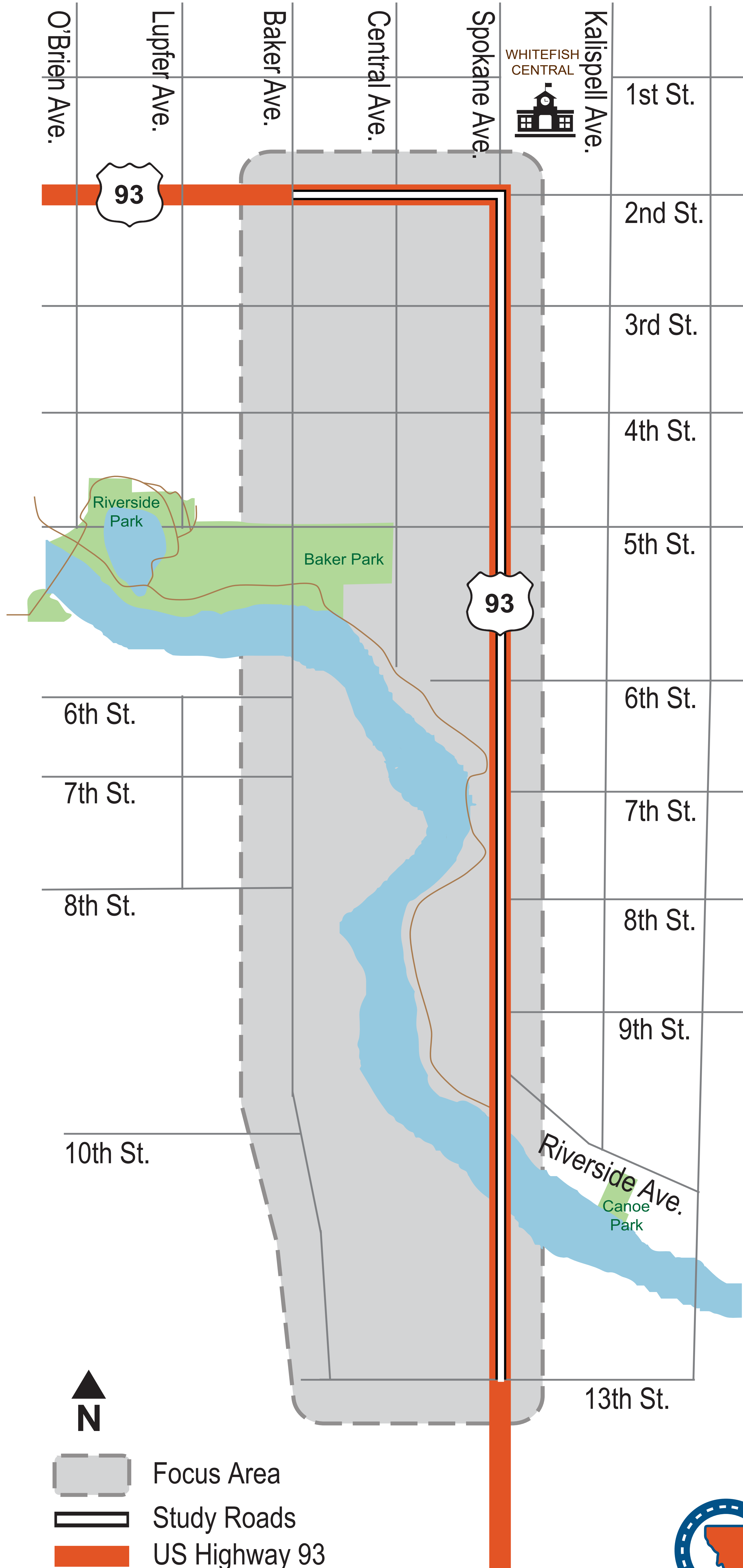
*“Through education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical response we’re **moving toward zero deaths and injuries** on Montana roadways.” —Mike Tooley, Director*

LEARN MORE ABOUT VISION ZERO AT

www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero



PROJECT AREA





DOWNTOWN WHITEFISH
HIGHWAY STUDY

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

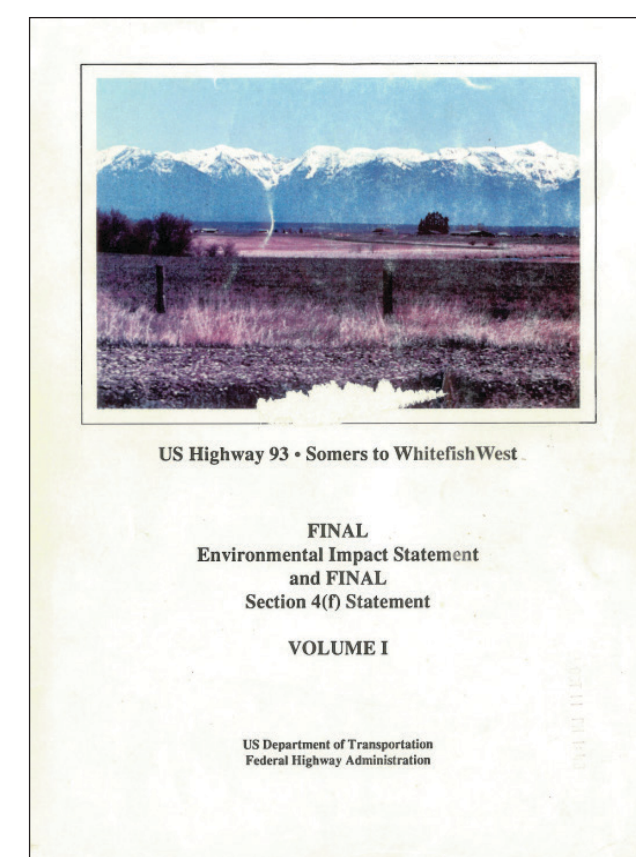
Over the past several years, various local planning documents have been prepared which discuss Downtown Whitefish. Each of these documents have explored design solutions for Highway 93 through different lenses (traffic, environment, bike and pedestrian, downtown businesses, etc.). **The *Downtown Whitefish Highway Study* aims to find ways to improve traffic flow and safety of the highway while considering past planning efforts.**



Downtown Whitefish
Highway Study

The study will **consider past recommendations** and **identify the best solution** that addresses safety and operations for the next 20 years.

1 US Hwy 93 Somers to Whitefish West
Environmental Impact Statement



Connect Whitefish Bicycle
& Pedestrian Master Plan

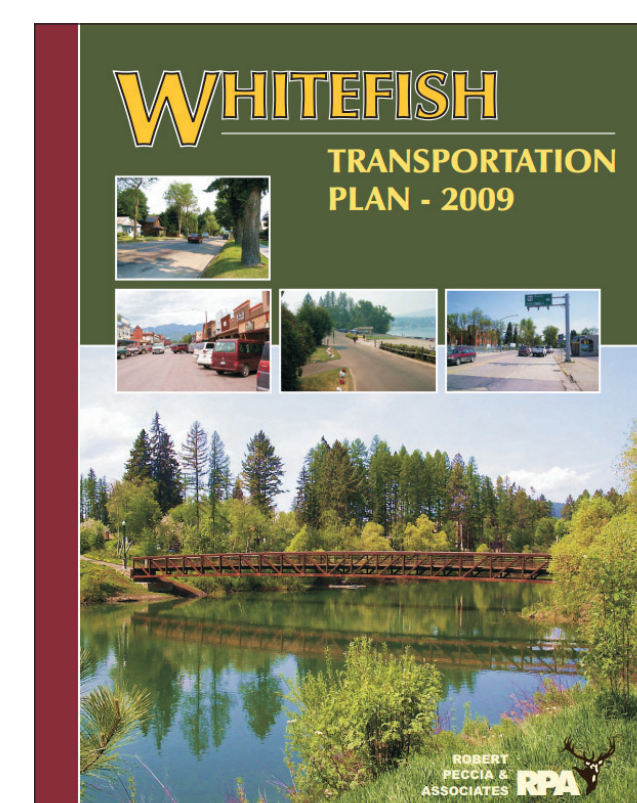
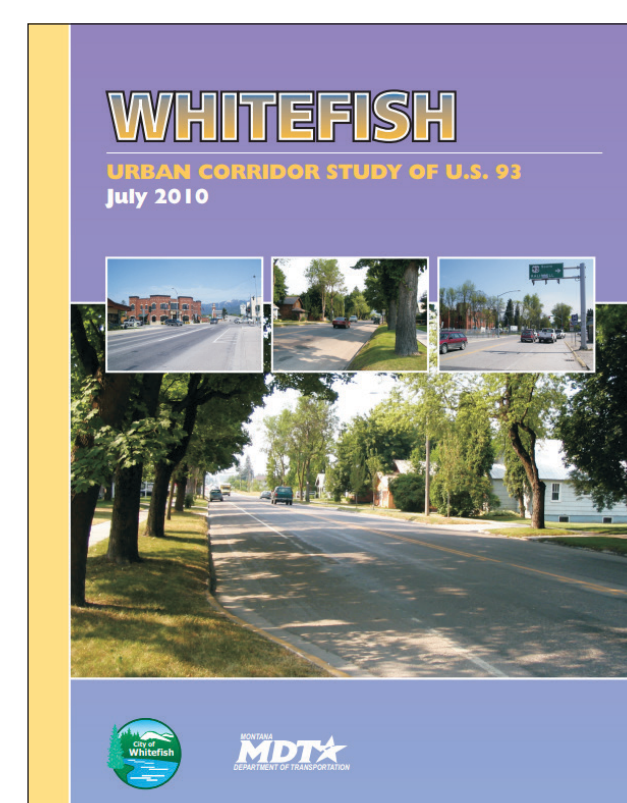
3



Whitefish Urban Corridor Study

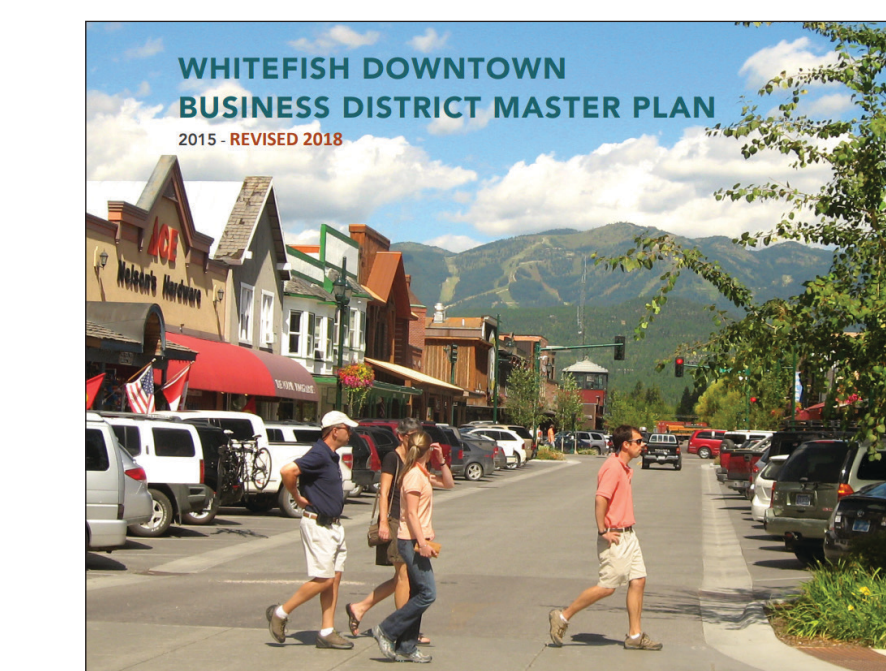
Whitefish Transportation Plan

2



Whitefish Downtown Business District Master Plan

4



Hwy 93 South Corridor Plan

5



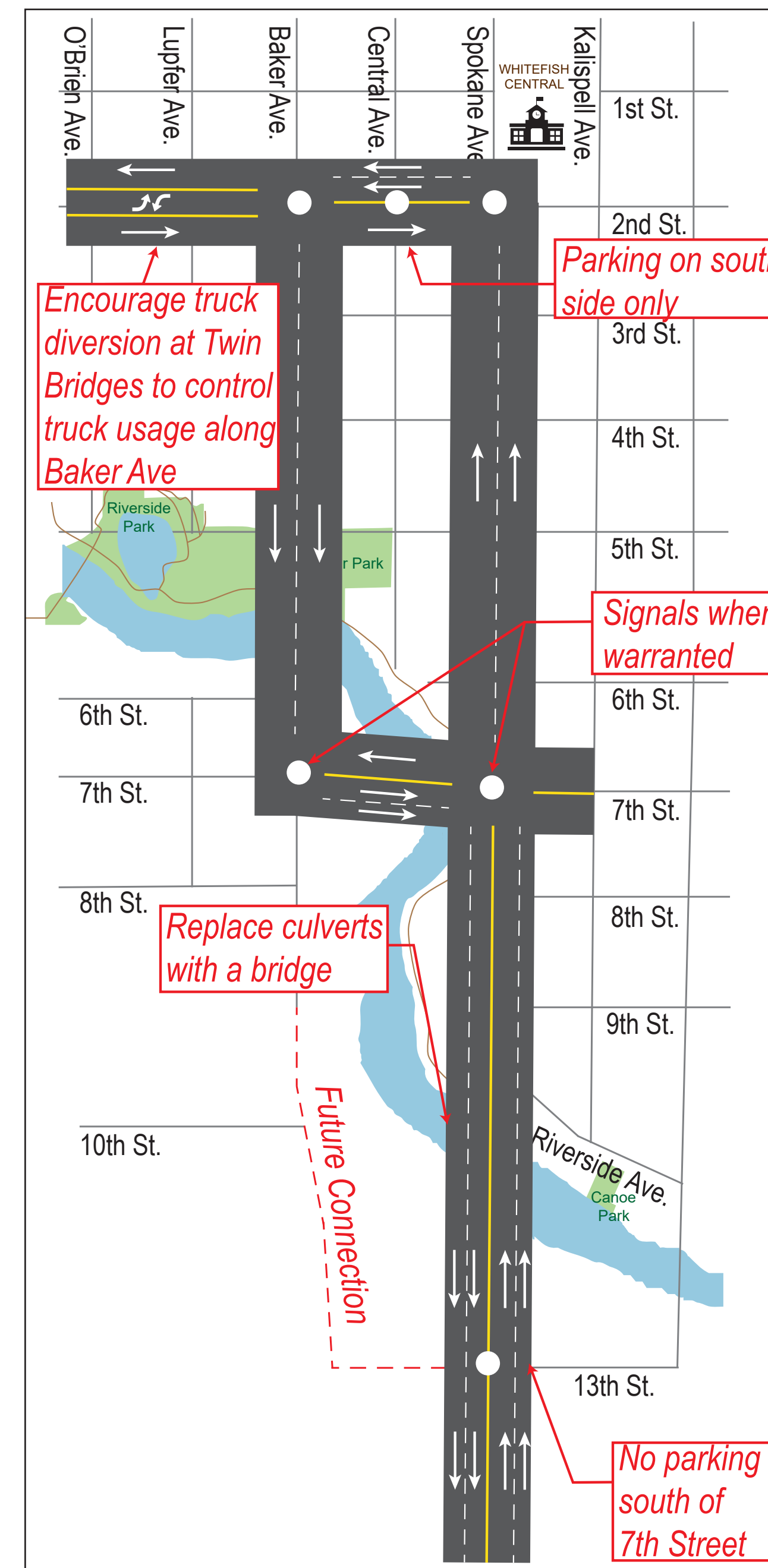


PAST RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the past several years, multiple design solutions have been proposed for Highway 93 through Downtown Whitefish. **More detailed evaluation of past recommendations is needed before a final decision can be made.** Through the current *Downtown Whitefish Highway Study*, project partners aim to analyze past design options and identify potential new ideas to ultimately arrive at a solution that will address safety and operational concerns for all users over the next 20 years.

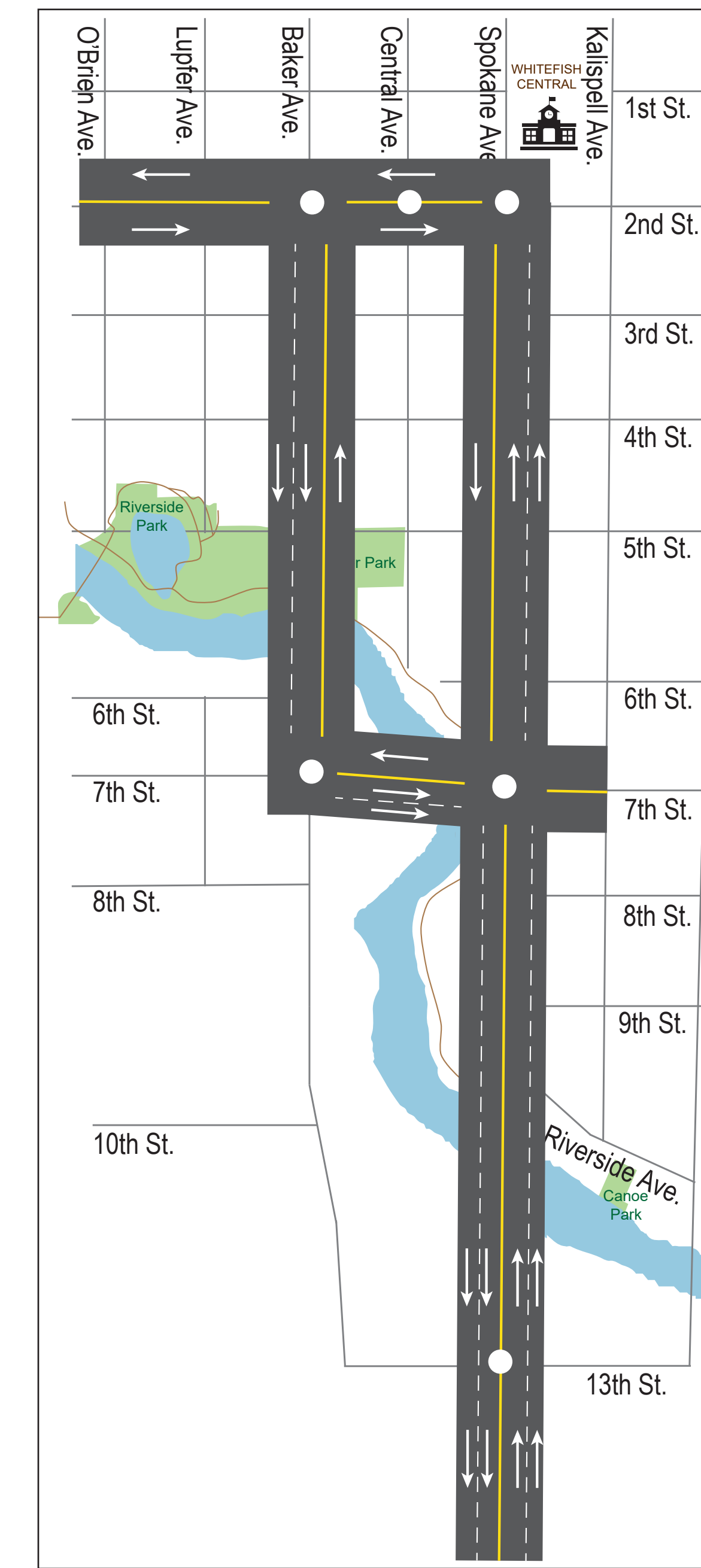
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Hwy 93 Somers to Whitefish West

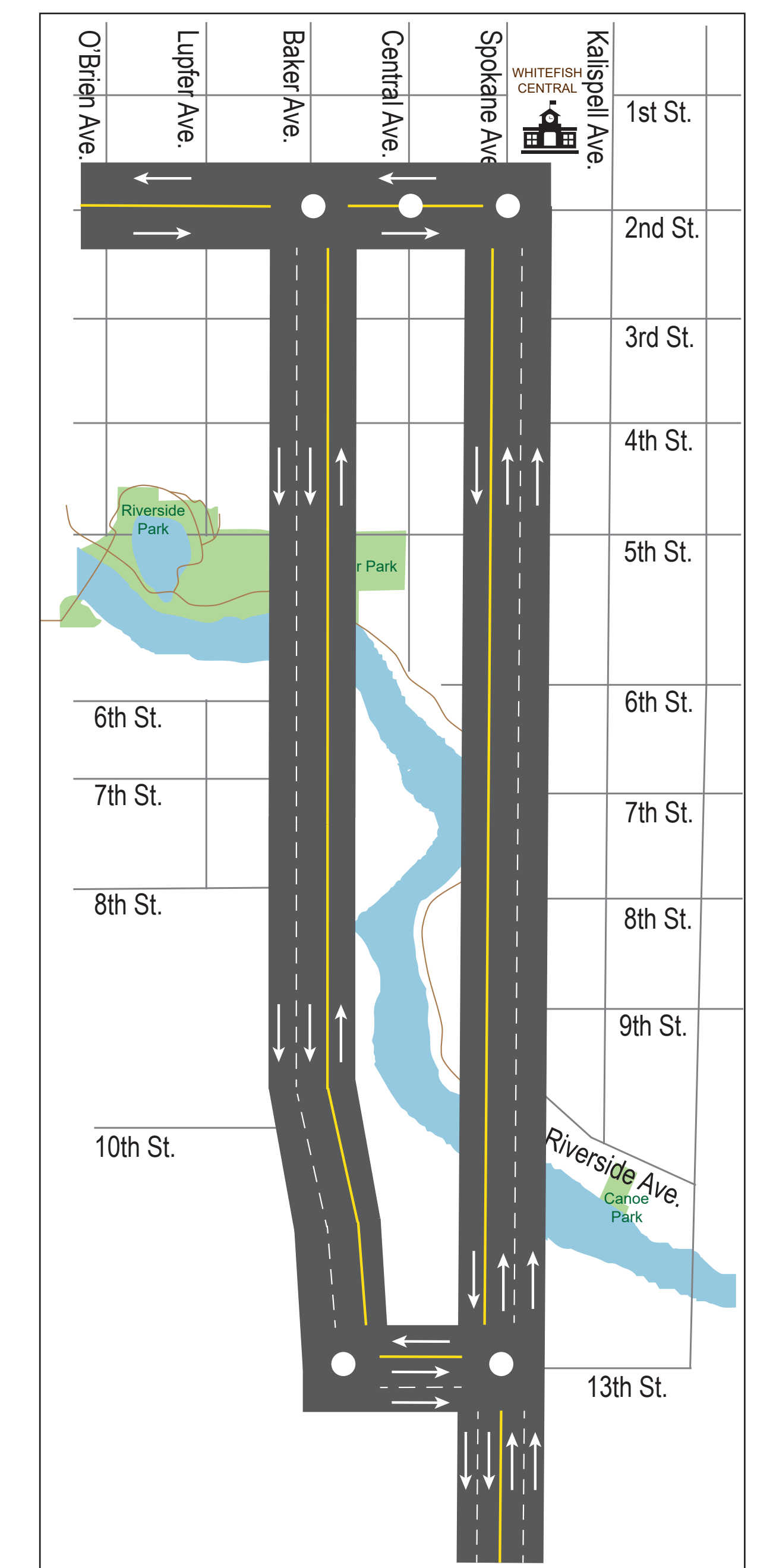


2

Whitefish Urban Corridor Study



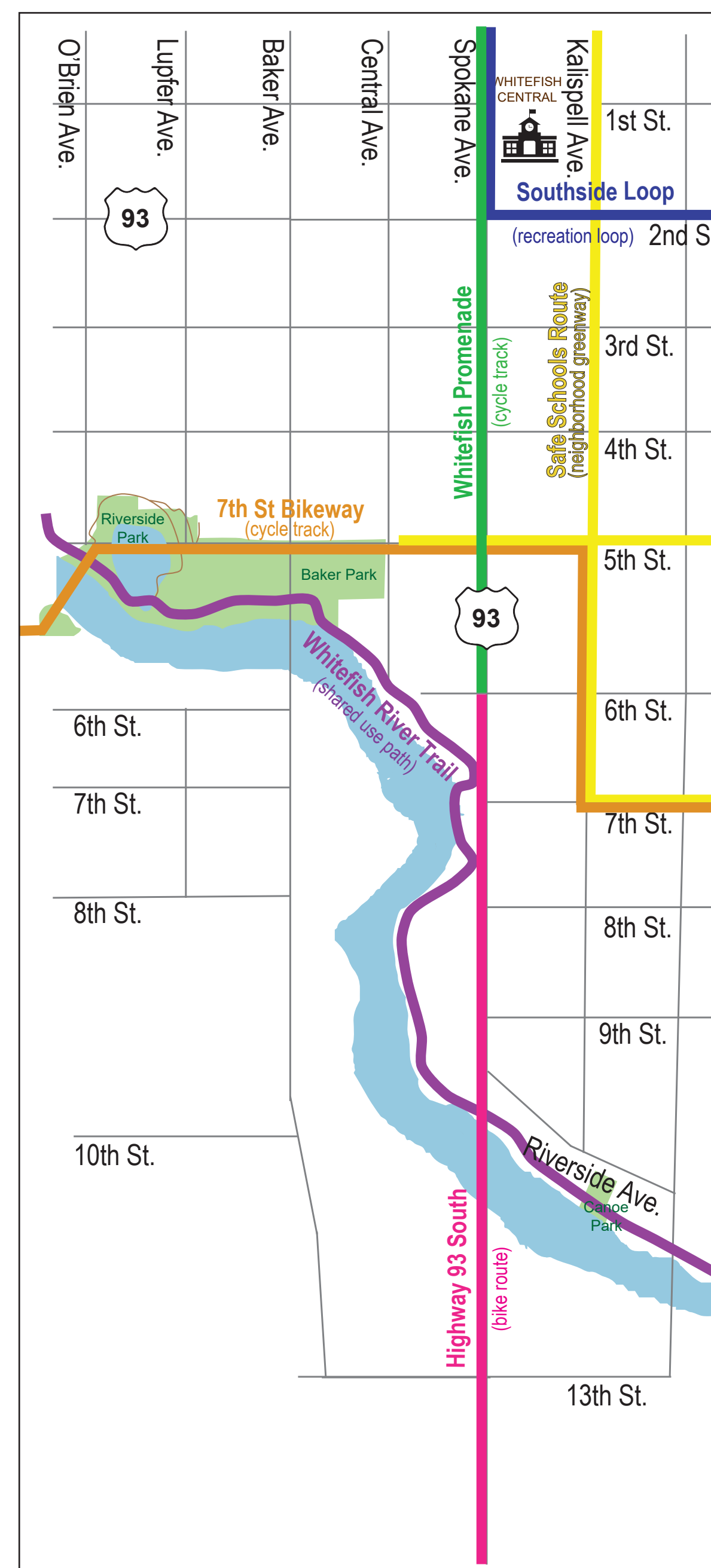
CONTRA-FLOW



MODIFIED ALTERNATIVE C

3

Whitefish Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan



4

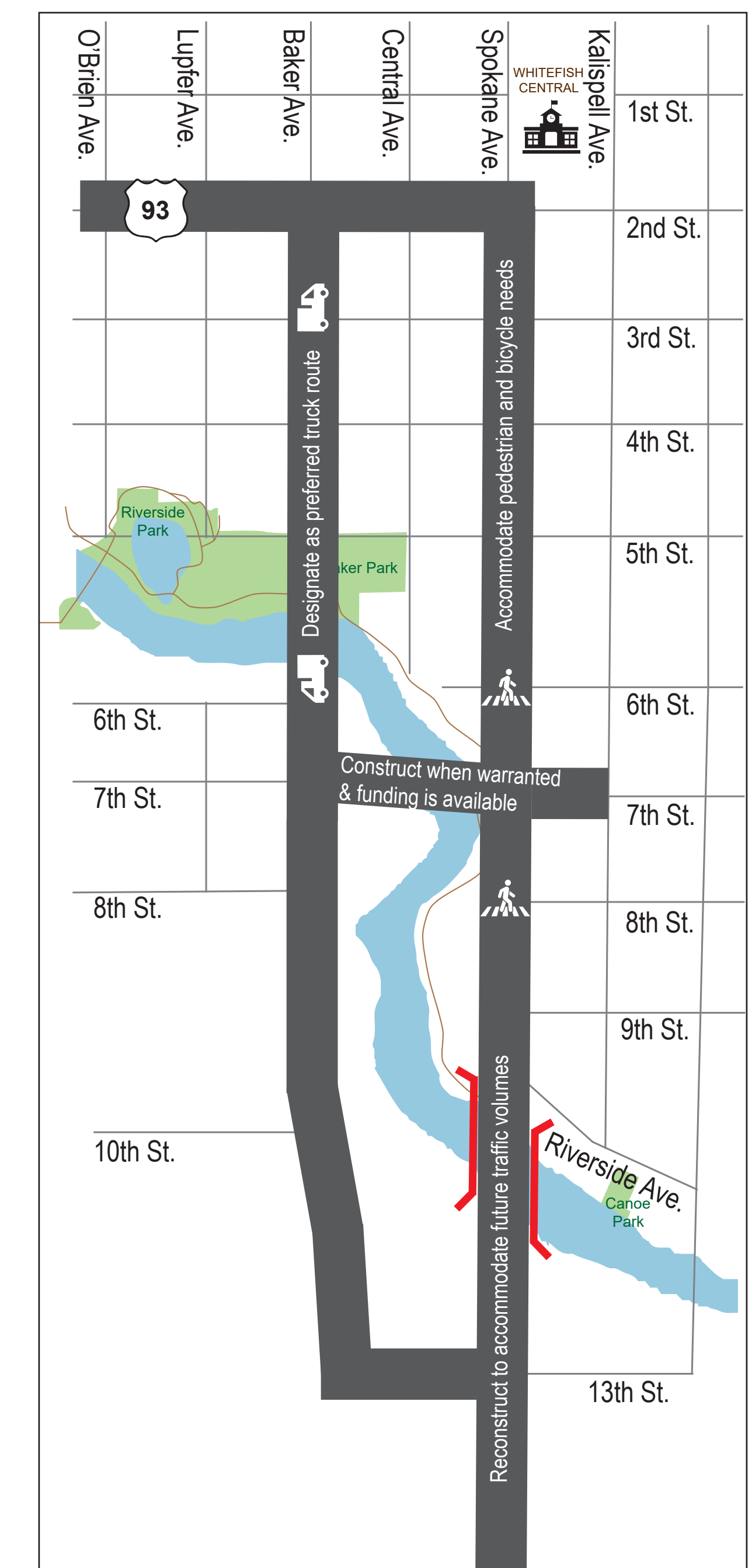
Whitefish Downtown Business District Master Plan

→ Does not support **Spokane Ave widening**, but does support Baker Ave improvements

→ Desires a **cycle track along Spokane Ave** consistent with *Whitefish Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan*

5

Hwy 93 South Corridor Plan

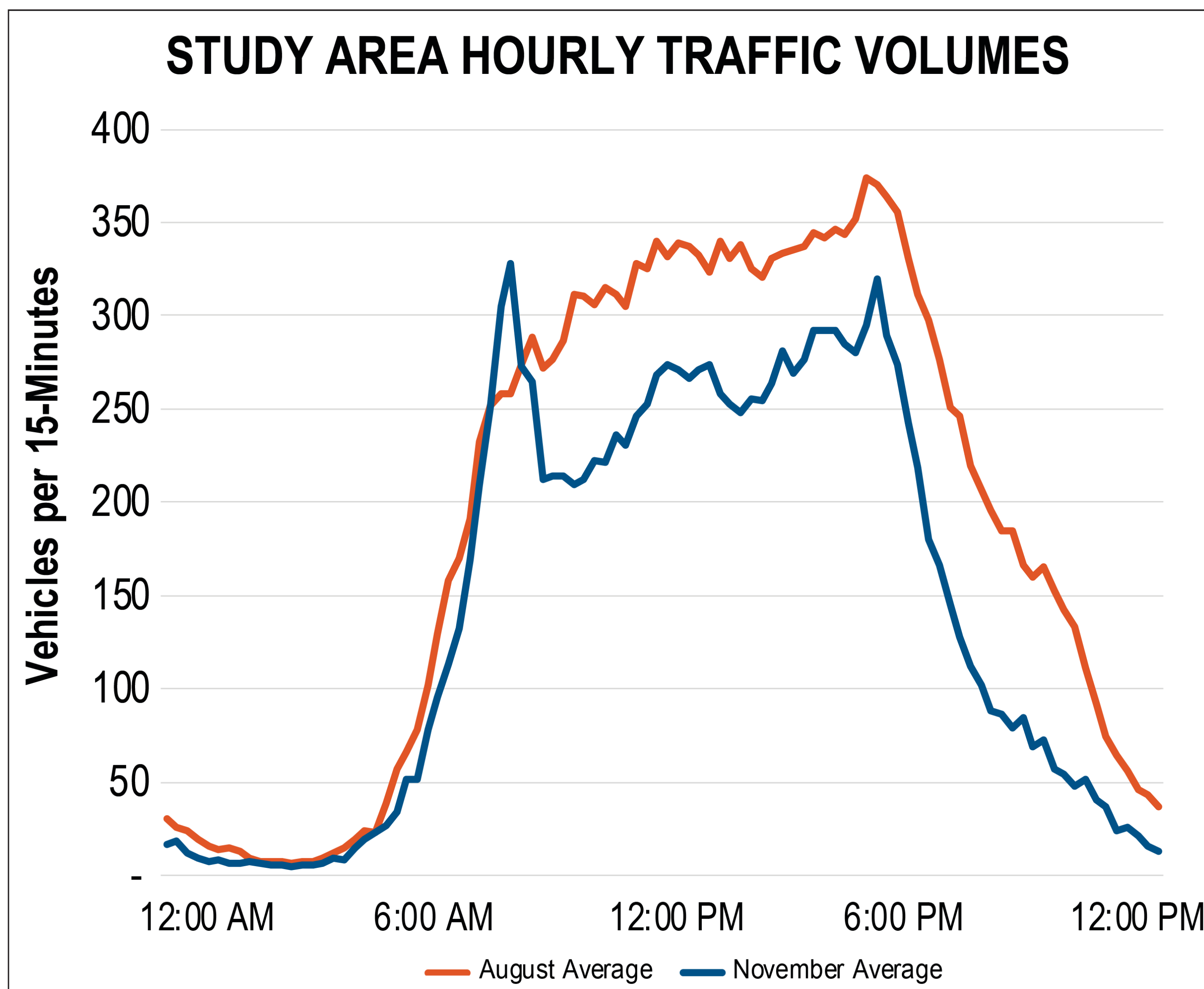




FOCUS AREAS

VEHICLE MOBILITY

Highway 93 is located in the center of the Whitefish community and serves as the primary travel route through the city for residents, visitors, and other through traffic. On an average day, Highway 93 experiences traffic volumes ranging from about **7,500 to 16,000 vehicles** through Downtown Whitefish. High traffic volumes can contribute to **congestion and travel delays** on the highway and local cross streets.

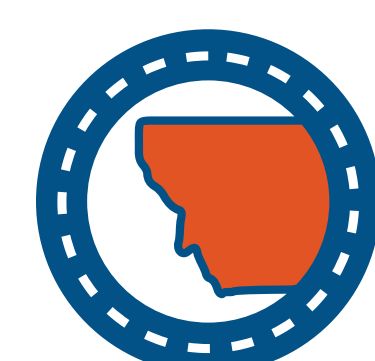


*Study area includes traffic volumes along Highway 93 and Baker Avenue.



82%

of Whitefish's workforce
uses a vehicle to
commute to work.





FOCUS AREAS

TRANSIT ACCOMMODATIONS

Multiple providers offer public transportation options within Whitefish. Eagle Transit operates a **fixed-route service** and offers dial-a-ride **paratransit services** on an appointment basis for individuals with disabilities. Currently, Eagle Transit's **inter-city service** to Kalispell and Columbia Falls is limited. Recreational **shuttle services** to Whitefish Mountain Resort and Glacier National Park are also offered by other providers. Providing transit opportunities can help reduce vehicle congestion.



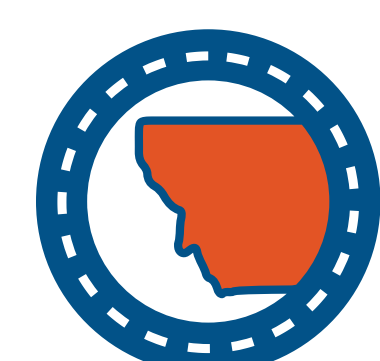
EAGLE TRANSIT



SNOW BUS



GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD SHUTTLE





FOCUS AREAS

PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE MOBILITY

There are many pedestrians and bicyclists in Downtown Whitefish, especially during warm-weather months. Downtown retail shops, dining, entertainment, and recreational amenities draw **thousands of walkers and bikers each day**. The crossing at 2nd Street and Central Avenue is particularly busy.



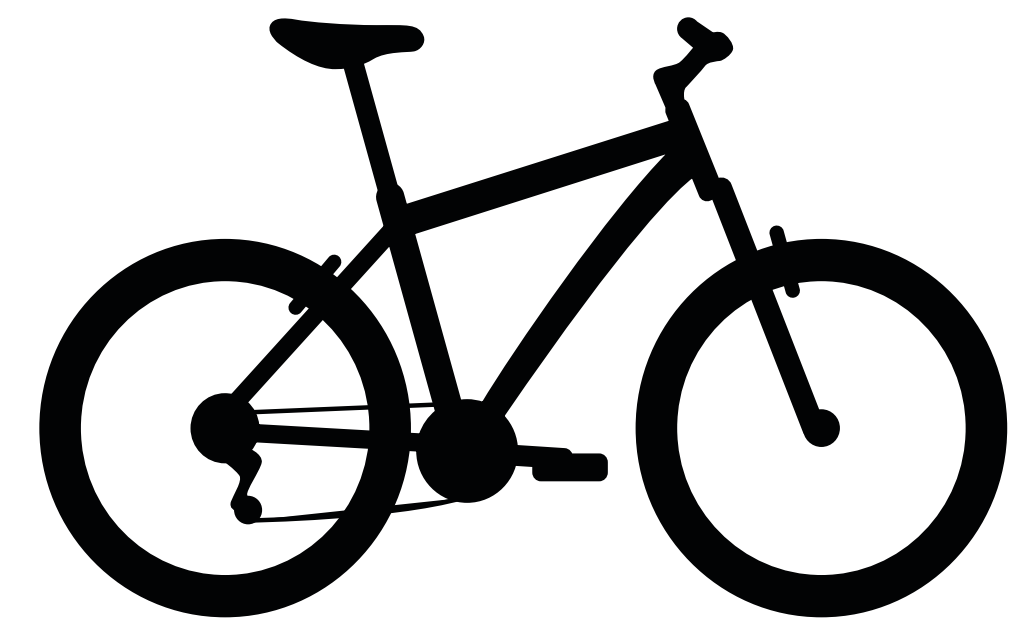
August

8,471

November

1,135

*pedestrians counted at the
2nd Street/Central Avenue
intersection*



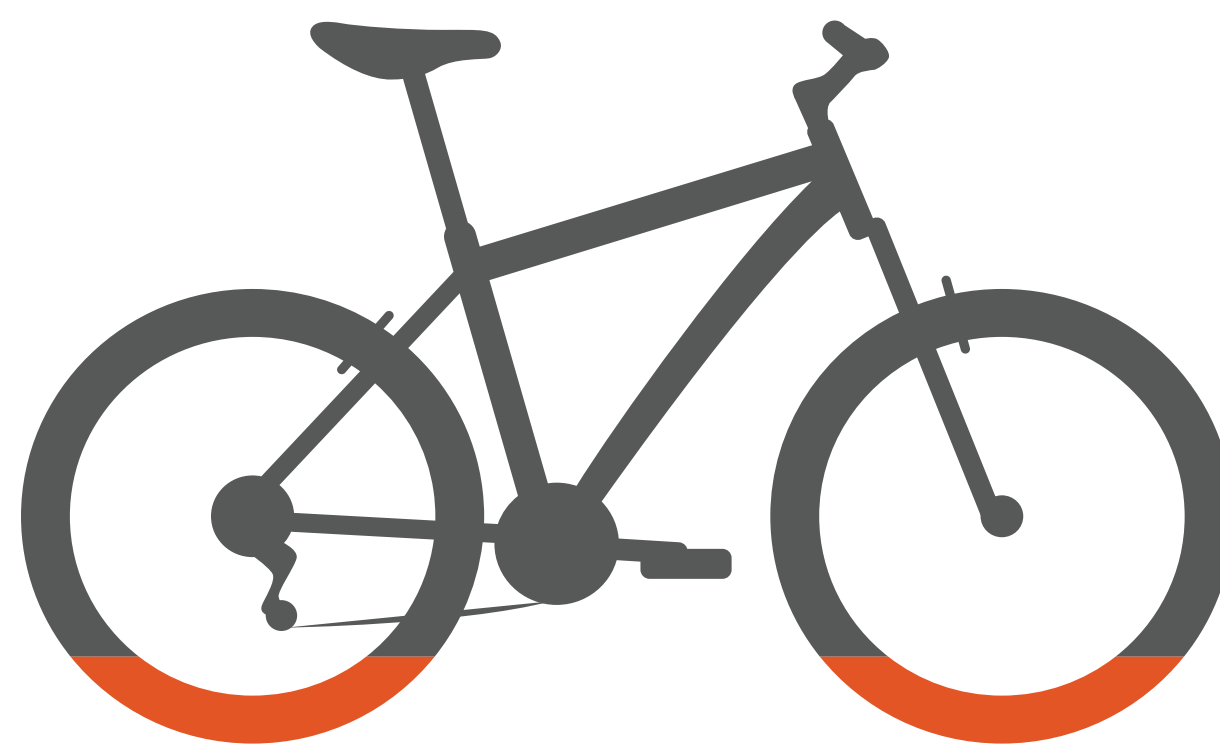
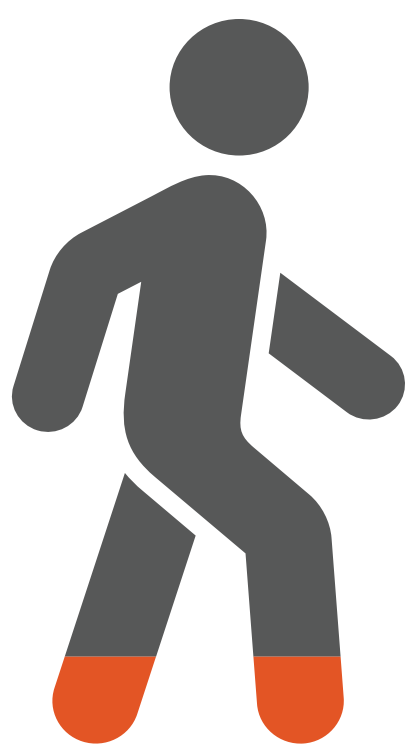
August

25 - 88

November

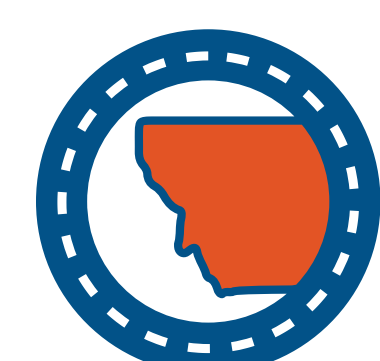
1 - 14

*bicycles counted at the study
intersections*



12%

of Whitefish's workforce
walks or bike to work.
This is about twice as high
as the Montana average!





FOCUS AREAS

HEAVY VEHICLES

Commercial trucks commonly travel through Downtown Whitefish using Highway 93. During busy times, large **trucks can block intersections** due to short distances between Downtown intersections. Trucks can also have difficulty navigating Downtown due to **lack of space to make wide turns**.



Spokane Ave

3 - 5%

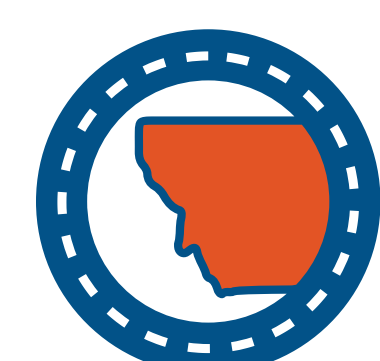
Baker Ave

1 - 2%

of the vehicle mix



**THRU TRUCKS ARE
DISCOURAGED ON
BAKER AVENUE**

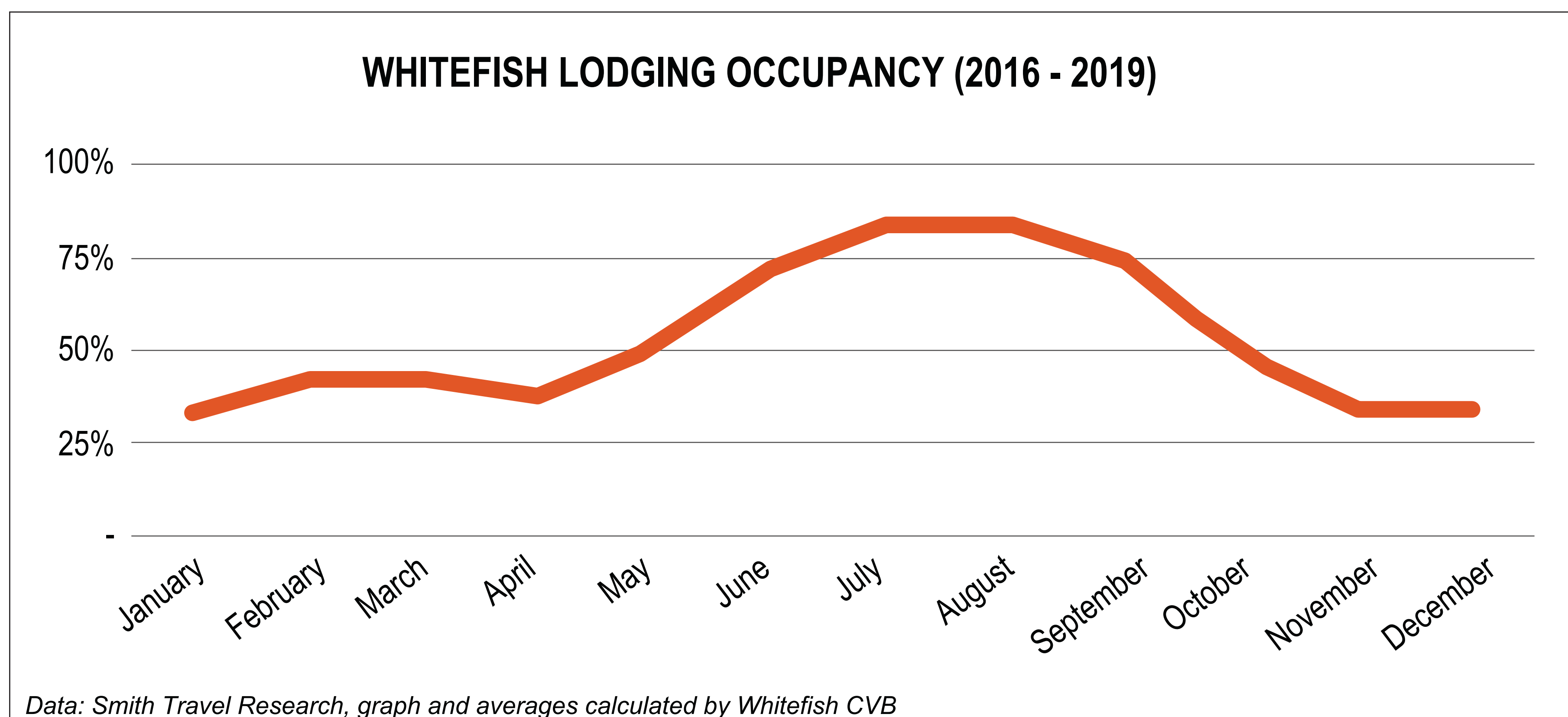




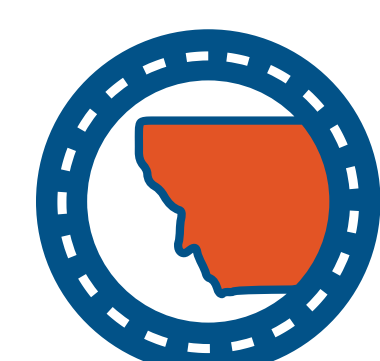
FOCUS AREAS

ECONOMIC VITALITY

The Whitefish economy is based on diverse sectors including **tourism, outdoor recreation, and service industries**. In recent years, Whitefish has also seen strong growth in **real estate, construction, and healthcare**. However, summer tourism remains the strongest influence on the economy. A safe, efficient transportation system is critical to support Whitefish's thriving local economy.



Source: Explore Whitefish

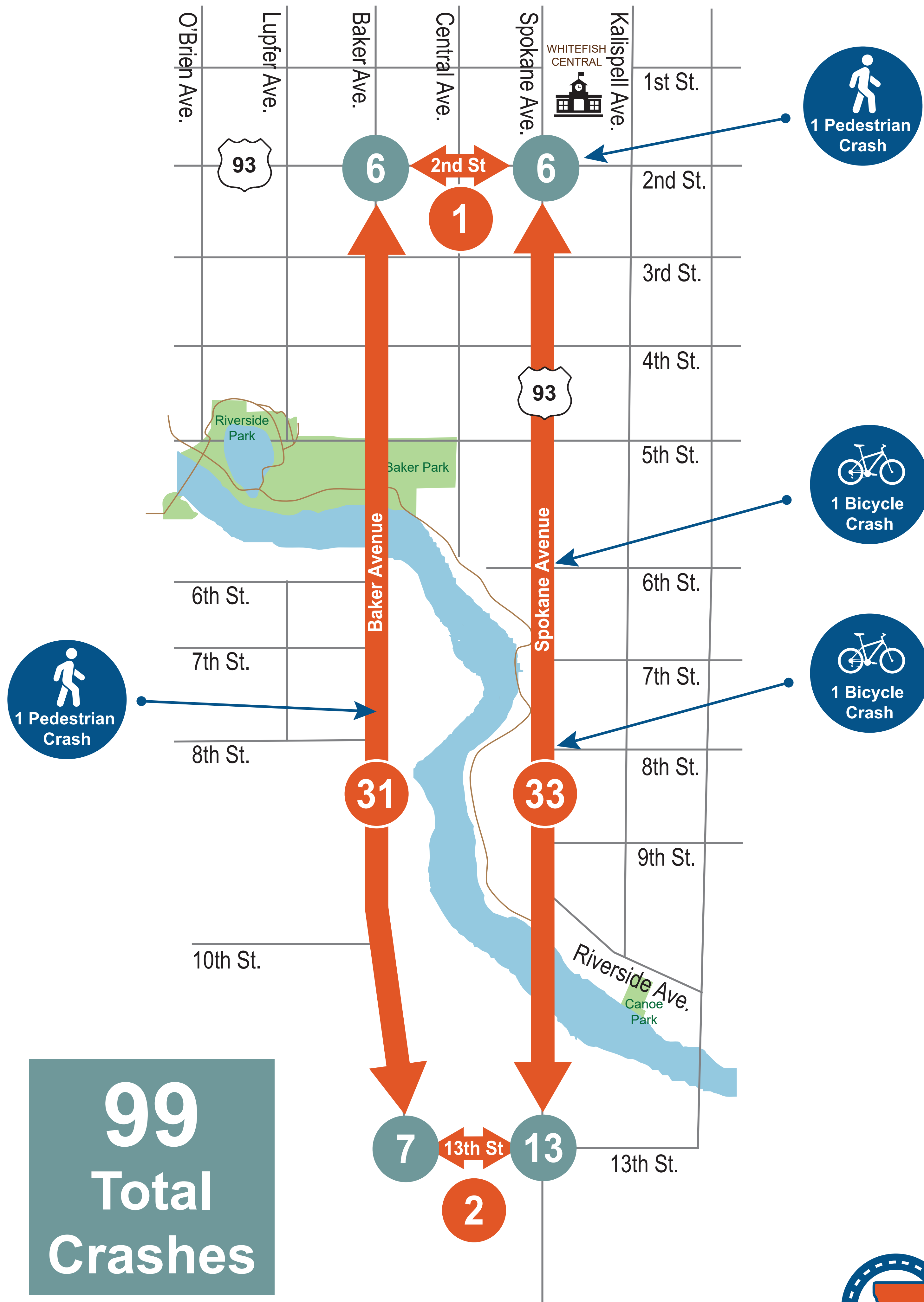




FOCUS AREAS

SAFETY

Safety is a primary focus area on all MDT projects. In support of **Vision Zero**, MDT is striving to **eliminate all deaths and injuries on Montana highways**. From 2014 to 2018, 99 crashes occurred on study roadways in Downtown Whitefish. Of these, **2 crashes caused serious injuries** and 16 crashes caused possible injuries.



Crashes reported from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2018





FOCUS AREAS

PARKING

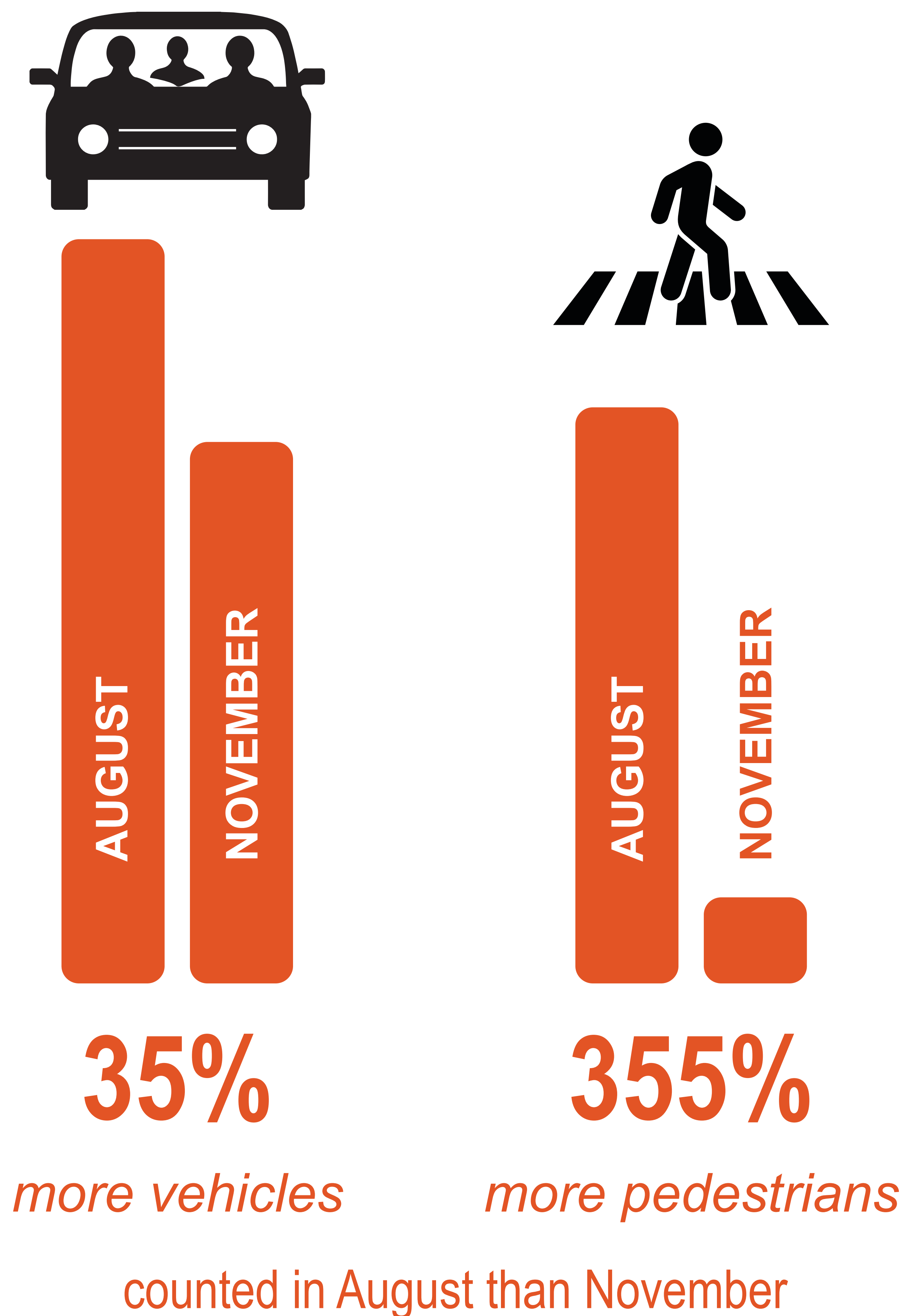
Downtown Whitefish offers **on-street parking options** within the study area on Spokane Avenue, 2nd Street, and Baker Avenue. **Small parking lots** and a **parking garage** also provide parking for access to local businesses and downtown services. Providing enough parking for employees and visitors is a common concern for downtown businesses.





SEASONAL TRAFFIC

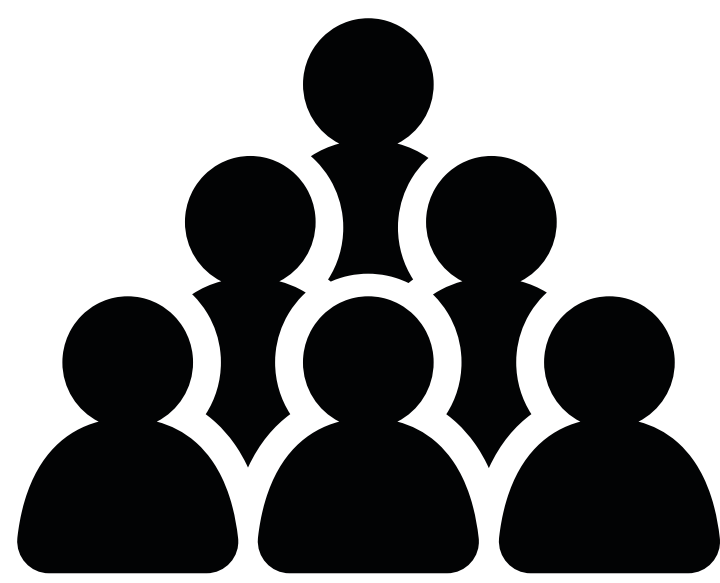
Downtown Whitefish experiences a **spike in vehicle and pedestrian volumes during summer months**. Tourists and other part-time visitors are drawn to downtown shopping, dining, services, events, and recreational amenities. It is challenging to accommodate seasonal fluctuations in traffic with the current highway configuration.





FUTURE GROWTH

Traffic volumes in Downtown Whitefish are anticipated to increase as the community continues to grow. The **population** of Whitefish has steadily grown over the past decade. The increasing population, combined with strong growth in the tourism industry, has resulted in increasing **traffic volumes** in Whitefish which are expected to continue growing in the future.



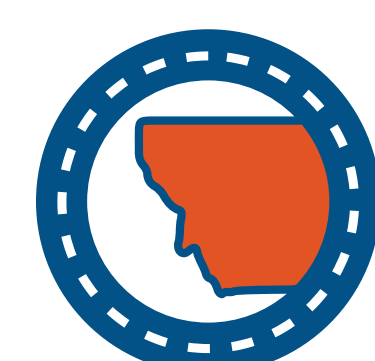
11%

*overall increase in
Whitefish's population*



12%

*overall increase in
traffic in Whitefish*





OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Downtown Whitefish owes its **character** to important natural resources and pedestrian-friendly recreational, commercial, and residential developments. The **Whitefish River** runs through the middle of Downtown Whitefish, with **pedestrian/ bicycle trails, open spaces, and parks** along the waterfront. **Mountain and river views** enhance the aesthetic appeal of the Downtown area. Paved driveways and local roadways intersect study corridors to provide **access to adjacent uses**.





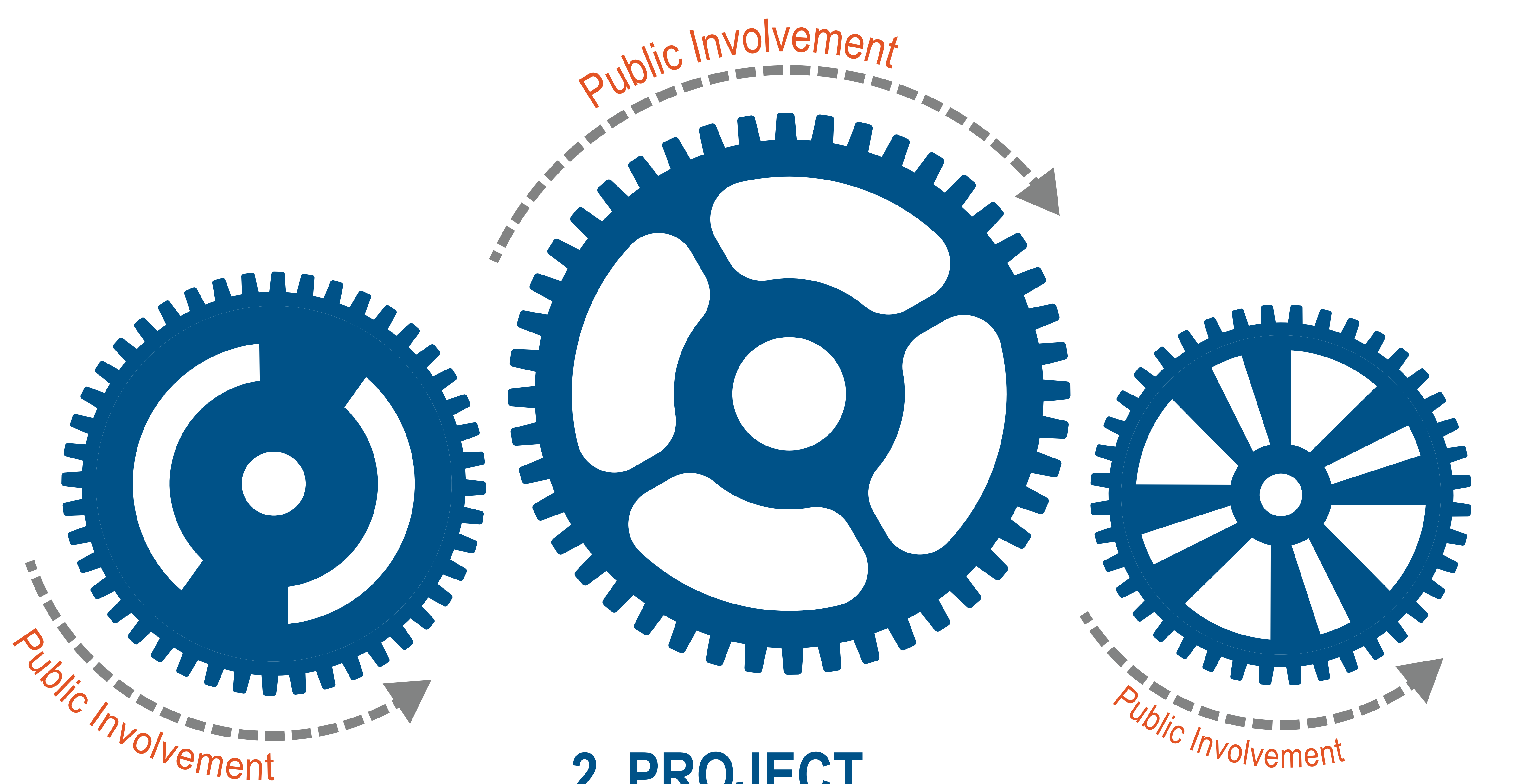
CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES



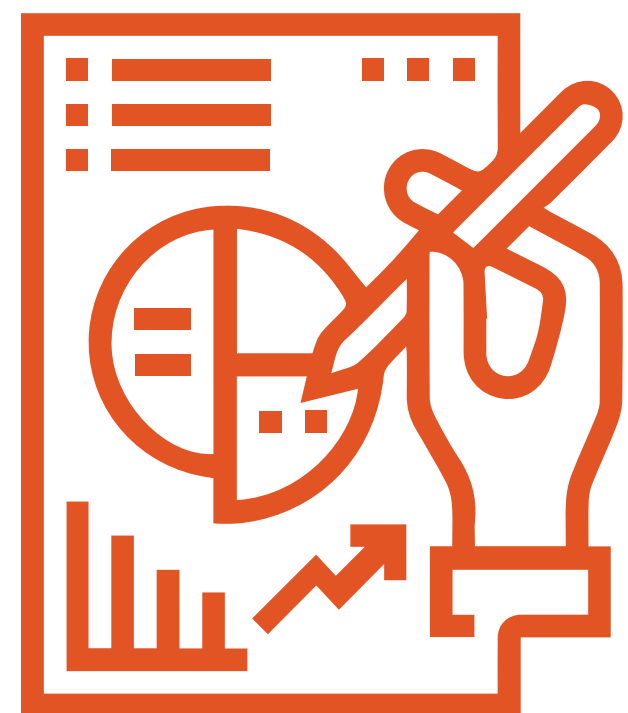


DOWNTOWN WHITEFISH
HIGHWAY STUDY

MDT PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



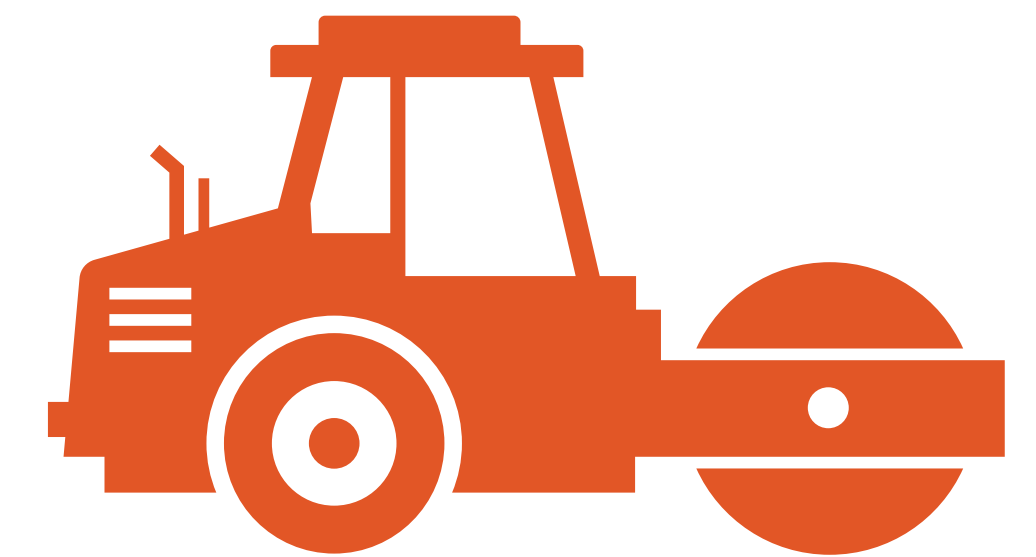
1. PLANNING



2. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

- Nomination
- **Feasibility/Survey Phase**
- Design
- Right-of-Way Acquisition

3. CONSTRUCTION

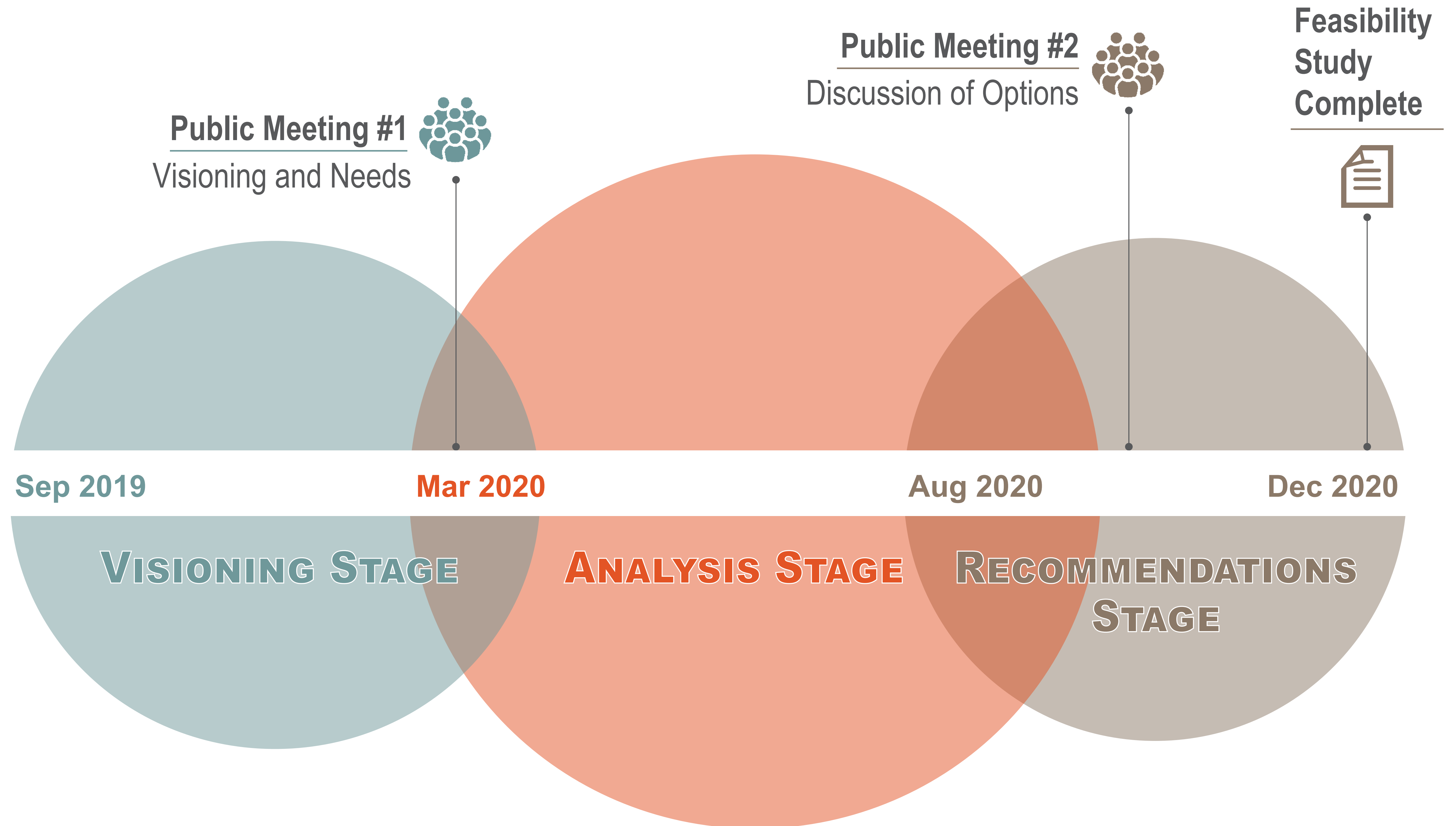




DOWNTOWN WHITEFISH
HIGHWAY STUDY

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The *Downtown Whitefish Highway Study* is currently scheduled for **completion by the end of 2020**. A final design and construction schedule will be determined following completion of the study.





DOWNTOWN WHITEFISH
HIGHWAY STUDY

STAY IN THE KNOW!



CALL

COURTENAY SPRUNGER
AT 406-261-7665

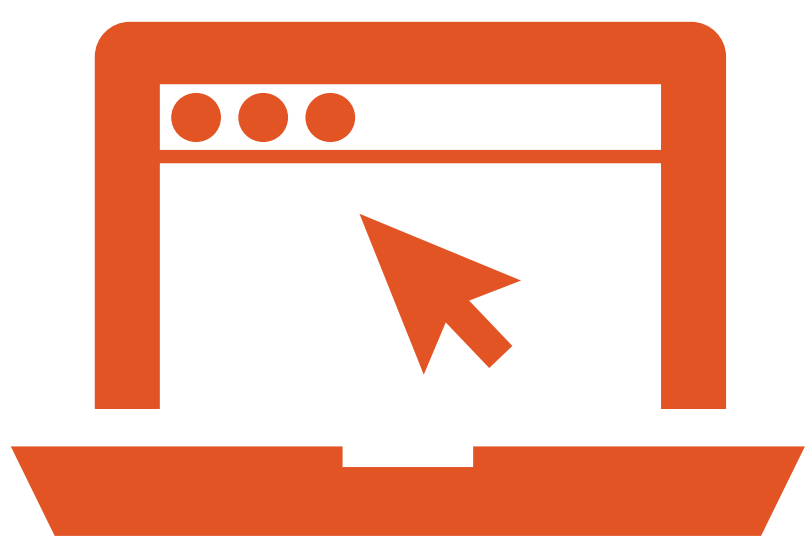
WITH A COMMENT OR QUESTION



EMAIL

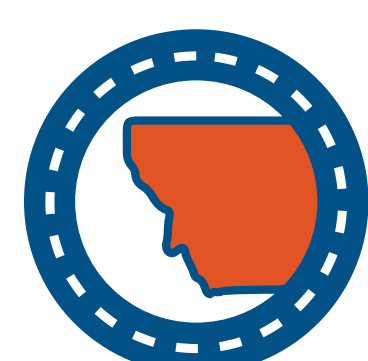
Courtenay@BigSkyPublicRelations.com

TO SUBMIT A COMMENT OR TO SIGN UP
FOR PERIODIC PROJECT UPDATES



VISIT

www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/DowntownWhitefish/



VISION ZERO
zero deaths · zero serious injuries
MONTANA DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION