Maclay Bridge Planning Study

MEETING MINUTES

INFORMATIONAL MEETING - NUMBER 3

DETAILS

Location: Big Sky High School - Multi-Use Room / Cafeteria
915 South Avenue West, Missoula, MT
Date: September 27, 2012
Time: 6:00 PM – 9:30 PM

MEETING NOTIFICATION

- A press release for the meeting was released to area media outlets on September 17th.
- Display ads were posted in the *Missoula Independent* (September 6th and 20th) and the *Missoulian* (September 9th and 23rd).
- Information about the meeting was also posted on the study website: http://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/maclay/.
- Study newsletters were sent to identified interested parties, including:
  - Missoula County Commission
  - Missoula Emergency Services
  - Missoula County Public Schools
  - Target Range School District
  - Mountain Home Montana
  - MT Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
  - US Forest Service
  - Target Range Homeowners Association
  - Missoula Rural Fire District
  - Maclay Bridge Alliance
  - Community Medical Center
  - Hidden Heights Homeowners Association
  - Target Range Water and Sewer District
- Email notification was sent to 81 individuals currently on the study email list.

PLANNING TEAM MEMBER ATTENDANCE

• Shane Stack	MDT
• Sheila Ludlow	MDT
• Susan Kilcrease	MDT
• Zia Kazimi	MDT
• Chris Hardan	MDT
• Lewis YellowRobe	Missoula County
• Erik Dickson	Missoula County
• Jeff Key	RPA
• Scott Randall	RPA

Meeting minutes are intended to capture the general content of meeting discussions. Meeting minutes may include opinions provided by attendees; no guarantees are made as to the accuracy of these statements and no fact checking of specific statements is provided or implied from the publishing of final meeting minutes.

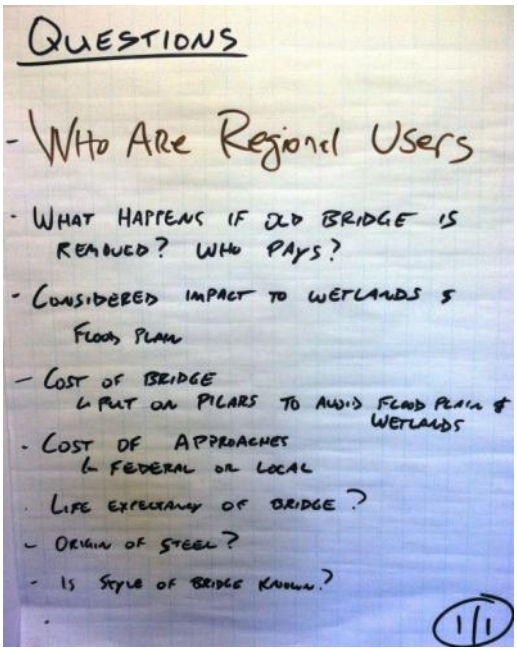
GENERAL

The third informational meeting for the *Maclay Bridge Planning Study* was held on Thursday, September 27th, 2012 at the Big Sky High School in Missoula. The purpose of the meeting was to review the draft needs and objectives, and draft improvement options under consideration, with the public. The meeting began at 6:00 PM. A presentation was made from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM, followed by a comment period in which participants were asked to step up to the podium and give their comment in 3 minutes or less. Questions embedded in the comment(s) were recorded on a flip chart such that RPA could come back later and respond to the questions. Those participants that exceeded the 3 minute comment period had the option to go to the back of the line and rotate through again to finish their comment (several participants elected to do this).

A total of 81 members of the community signed in at the meeting. Others were present who did not sign in, bringing the estimated total attendance to approximately 100 individuals.

QUESTIONS

A number of comments were posed as questions during the comment period. These questions were recorded on a flip chart (see image). A summary of the questions received during the meeting is presented below, along with draft responses offered at the meeting:

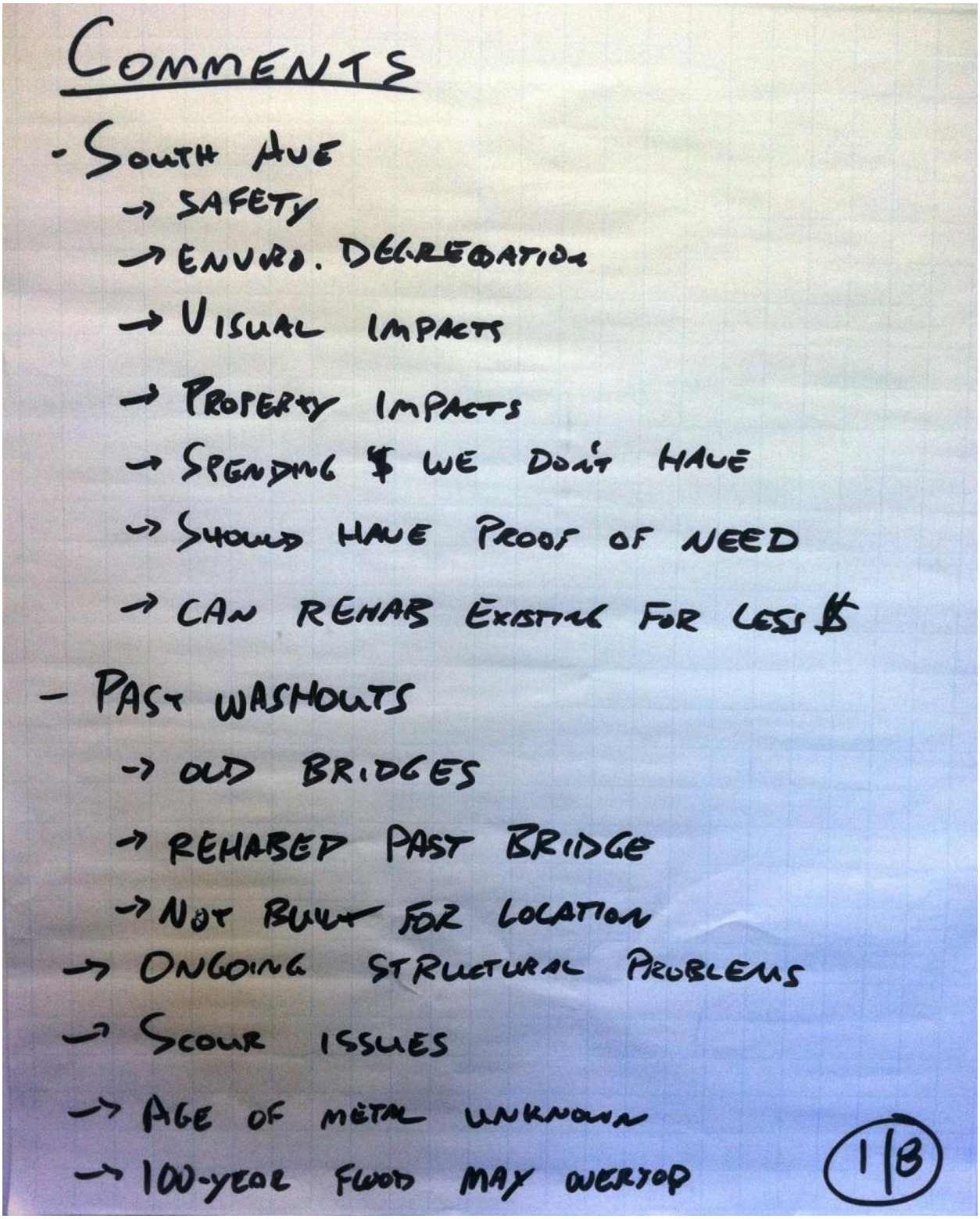


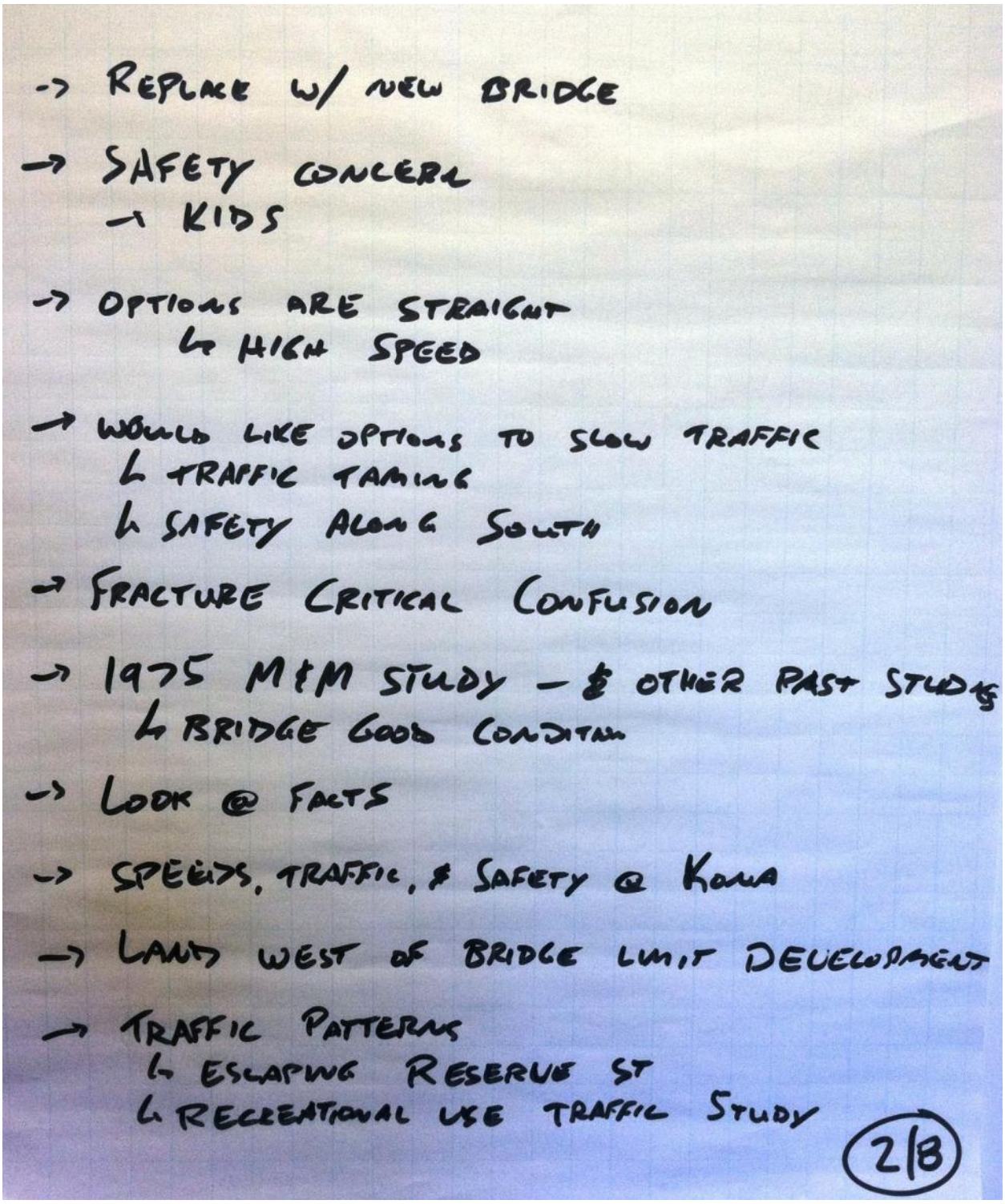
- Who are the “regional users” referenced in the draft Needs and Objectives?
    - *Regional users refer to those individuals in the Missoula urban area that may pass through the Maclay Bridge area to access recreational lands west of the Bitterroot River.*
- What happens if the old bridge is removed? Who pays for removal costs?
    - *The answer to this question was not immediately known at the public meeting.*
    - *Post-meeting clarification: removal costs for the existing single-lane bridge would be eligible costs via the MDT Off-System Bridge Program.*
- Have you considered the impact to wetlands and flood plains at the end of South Avenue?
    - *Wetlands have not been delineated. Wetland delineation is a project level activity that is performed if and when a project is developed. Accordingly, wetland delineation and potential impacts will not occur as part of this pre-NEPA/MEPA planning study. Floodplain limits are known, and will be considered for potential impacts as the study continues.*
- Do you know the cost of a new bridge at a South Avenue location? It would have to be put on pillars to avoid the flood plain and associated wetlands.
    - *The cost of a new bridge at a South Avenue location has not been calculated yet, however “rule-of-thumb” costs for simple bridges are approximately $150 per square foot of bridge.*

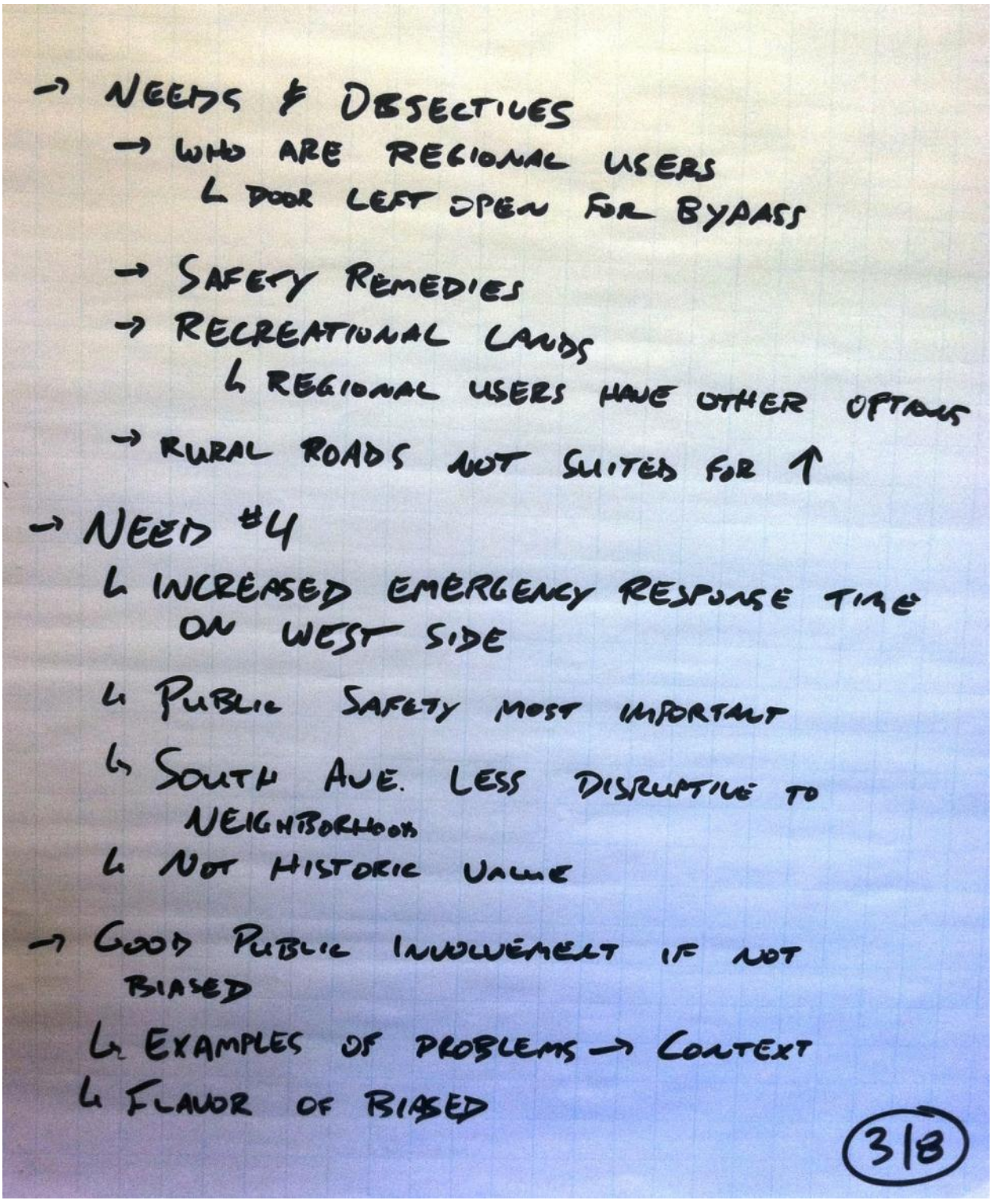
- If a new bridge was built, who pays for the approaches to the bridge, especially if considerable road work is necessary? Does it come from Federal, state or local funds?
    - *Who pays for approaches varies. The MDT Bridge Bureau has latitude when applying "off-system" bridge funds to approaches and roads that connect to the bridge. If the approach/road work is necessary to "tie-in" existing roads to the bridge and bring them up to standards, then generally they can be funded with Federal money through the off-system bridge program. If the approach and road work is a larger part of the overall bridge project, and perhaps builds numerous miles of new roadway, then it is likely not eligible for Federal off-system bridge funds. The MDT Bridge Bureau examines the proportion eligible for Federal funding on a case-by-case basis.*
- What is the life expectancy of the existing bridge under rehabilitation?
    - *Under a major rehabilitation, the goal would be to attain a life expectancy similar to that of a new bridge - between 50 and 100 years of service. For a minor rehabilitation, the life expectancy would be much less than that.*
- Do you know the origin of the steel, and how strong it is? That would influence the rehabilitation potential in the future.
    - *The origin and strength of steel is unknown. To obtain the strength of steel, samples would need to be obtained from the existing structure and tested in a laboratory.*
    - *Post-meeting clarification: the origin and strength of steel of the existing bridge can be reasonably estimated, and has been for analysis purposes, given the documented history and age of the individual bridge sections.*
- Is the style and width of a new bridge known?
    - *The style and width of a replacement bridge is not known. This is a project level discussion and would be decided if and when a project is developed. Due to the type of traffic and surrounding land uses, the minimum requirement for a two-way, two-lane bridge width would likely be 28 feet (two 12-foot driving lanes and two 2-foot shoulders).*

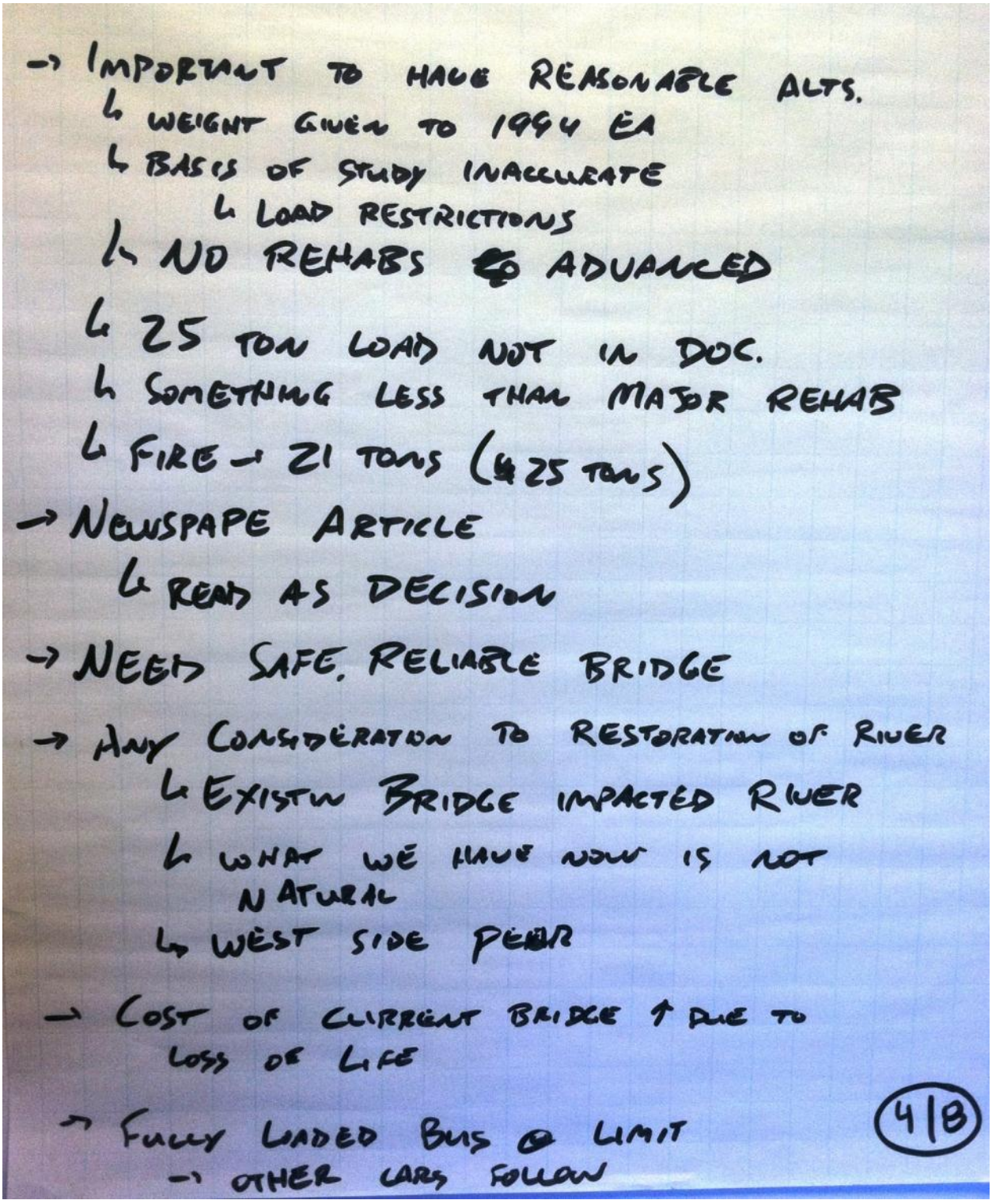
COMMENTS

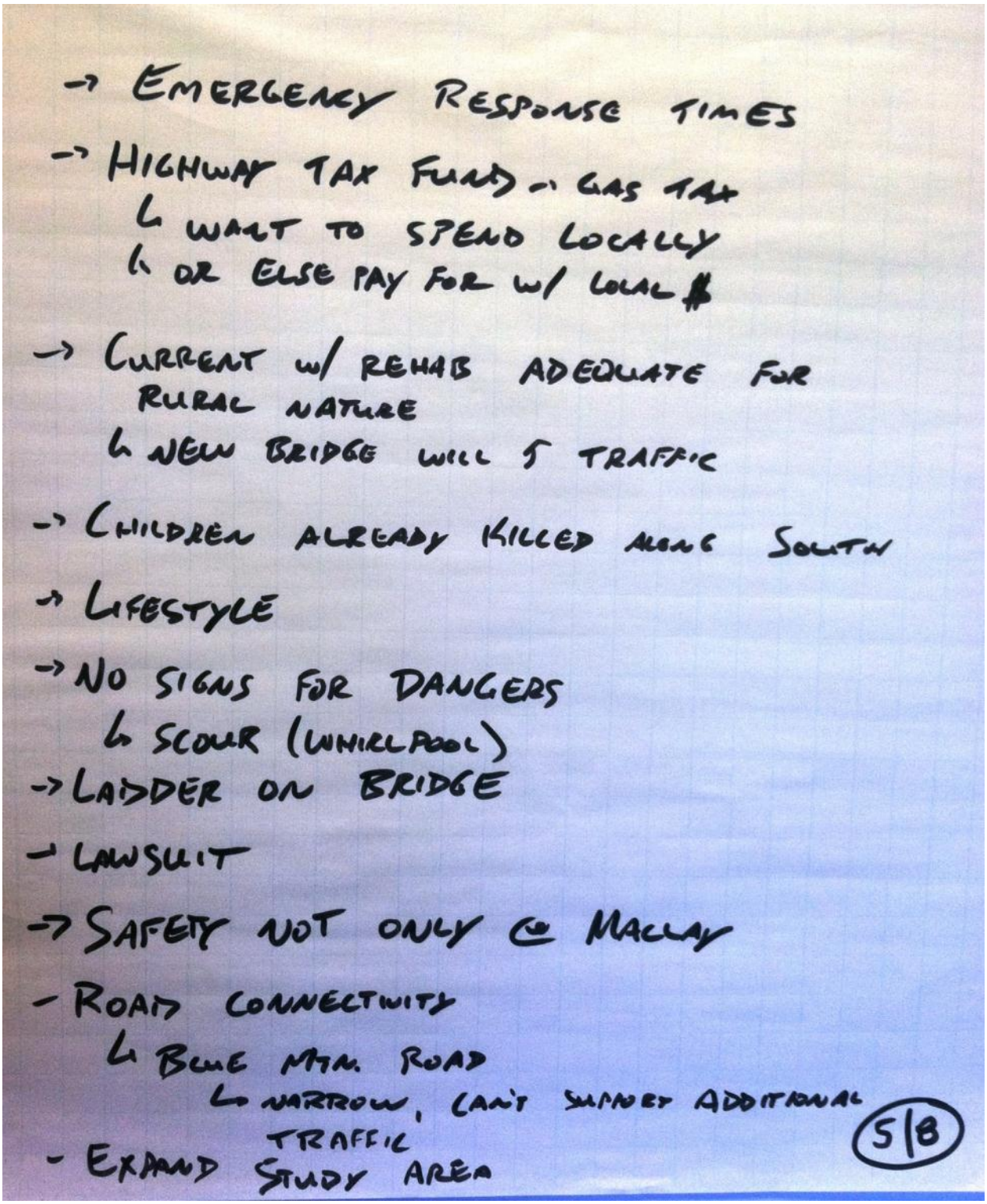
Numerous verbal comments were made during the comment period (i.e. after the presentation). In addition, comment sheets were available for all members of the audience. Several written comments were received at the meeting and are attached. Verbal comments received were transcribed on flip charts. Images of the flip chart notations are included below:

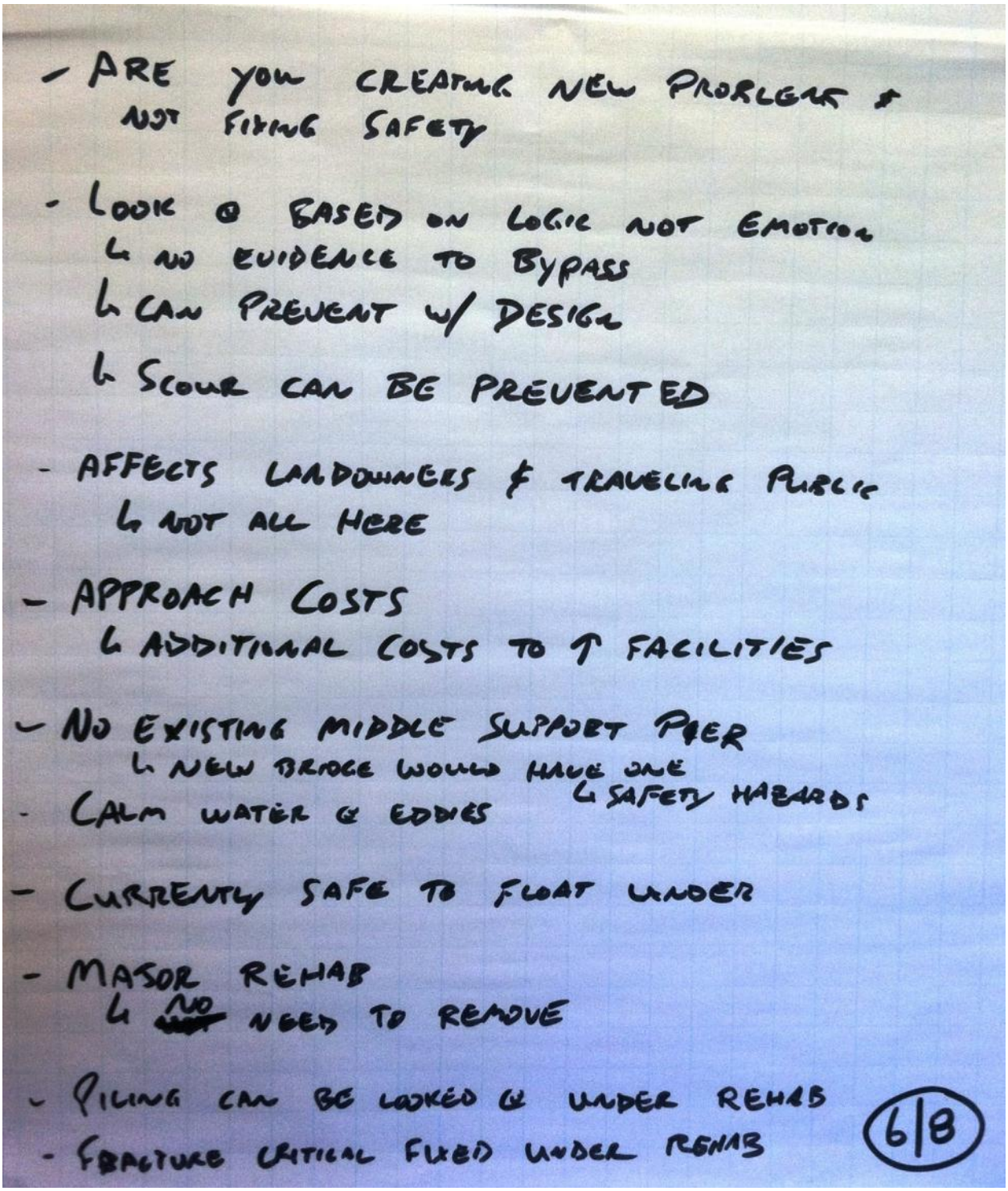

COMMENTS
- SOUTH AVE
→ SAFETY
→ ENVIRO. DEGREDATION
→ VISUAL IMPACTS
→ PROPERTY IMPACTS
→ SPENDING $ WE DON'T HAVE
→ SHOULD HAVE PROOF OF NEED
→ CAN REHAB EXISTING FOR LESS $
- PAST WASHOUTS
→ OLD BRIDGES
→ REHABED PAST BRIDGE
→ NOT BUILT FOR LOCATION
→ ONGOING STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS
→ SCOUR ISSUES
→ AGE OF METAL UNKNOWN
→ 100-YEAR FLOOD MAY OVERTOP
1/8

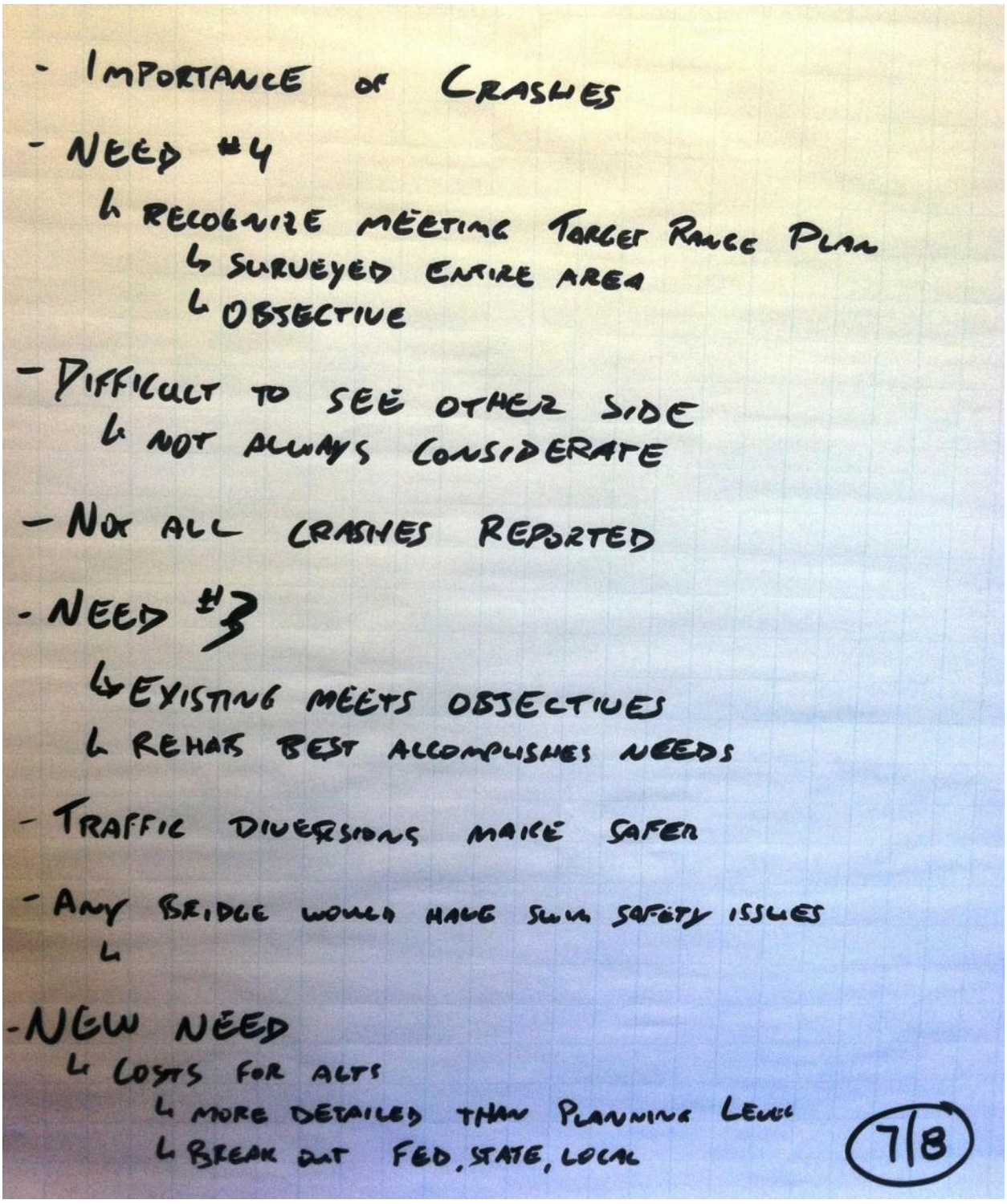

-> REPLACE W/ NEW BRIDGE
-> SAFETY CONCERN
-> KIDS
-> OPTIONS ARE STRAIGHT
L HIGH SPEED
-> WOULD LIKE OPTIONS TO SLOW TRAFFIC
L TRAFFIC TAMING
L SAFETY ALONG SOUTH
-> FRACTURE CRITICAL CONFUSION
-> 1975 M&M STUDY - & OTHER PAST STUDIES
L BRIDGE GOOD CONDITION
-> LOOK @ FACTS
-> SPEEDS, TRAFFIC, & SAFETY @ KONA
-> LAND WEST OF BRIDGE LIMIT DEVELOPMENT
-> TRAFFIC PATTERNS
L ESCAPING RESERVE ST
L RECREATIONAL USE TRAFFIC STUDY
2/8

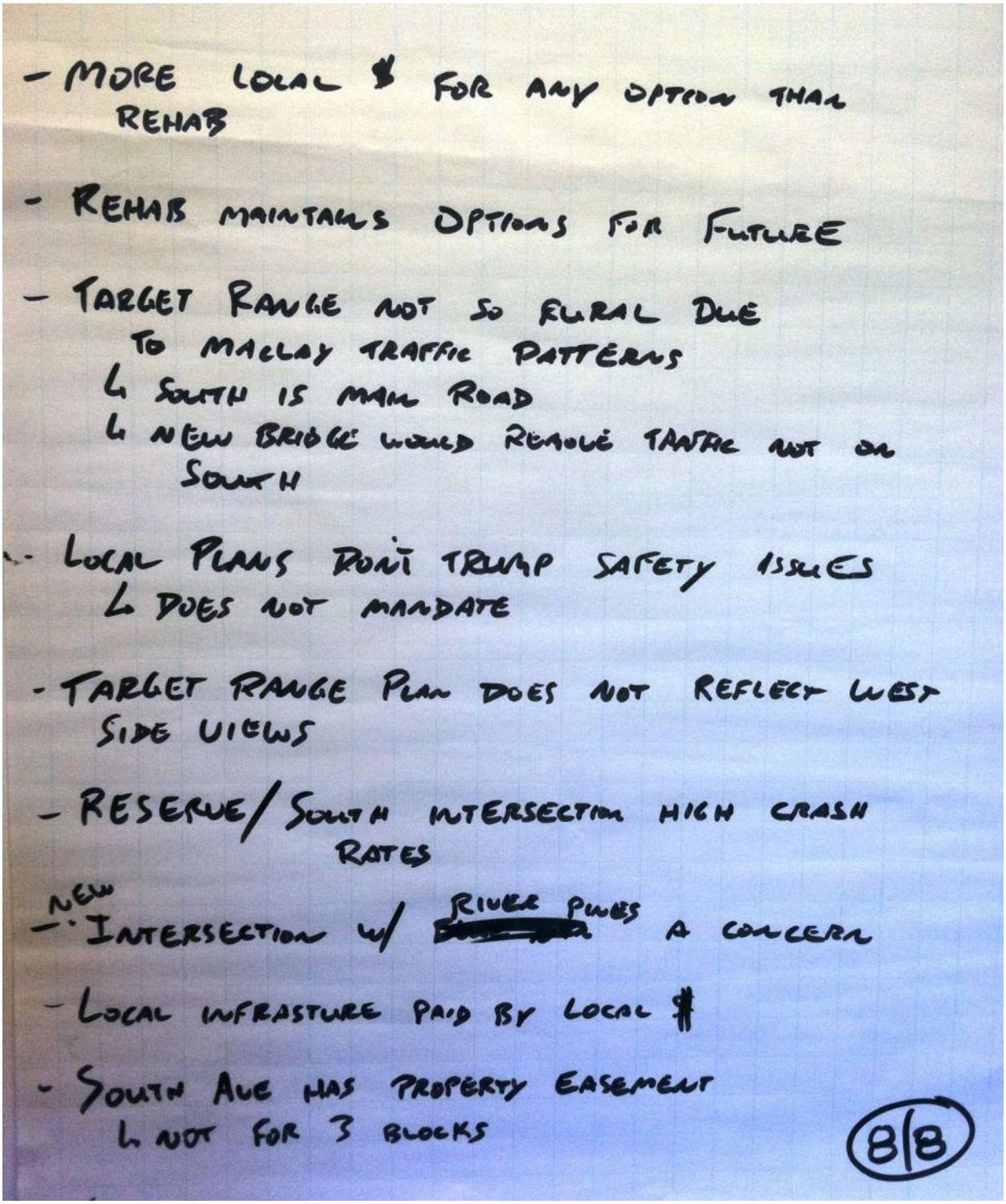

→ NEEDS & OBJECTIVES
→ WHO ARE REGIONAL USERS
↳ DOOR LEFT OPEN FOR BYPASS
→ SAFETY REMEDIES
→ RECREATIONAL LANDS
↳ REGIONAL USERS HAVE OTHER OPTIONS
→ RURAL ROADS NOT SUITED FOR ↑
→ NEED #4
↳ INCREASED EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIME ON WEST SIDE
↳ PUBLIC SAFETY MOST IMPORTANT
↳ SOUTH AVE. LESS DISRUPTIVE TO NEIGHBORHOOD
↳ NOT HISTORIC VALUE
→ GOOD PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IF NOT BIASED
↳ EXAMPLES OF PROBLEMS → CONTEXT
↳ FLAVOR OF BIASED
3/8


→ IMPORTANT TO HAVE REASONABLE ALTS.
↳ WEIGHT GIVEN TO 1994 EA
↳ BASIS OF STUDY INACCURATE
↳ LOAD RESTRICTIONS
↳ NO REHABS & ADVANCED
↳ 25 TON LOAD NOT IN DOC.
↳ SOMETHING LESS THAN MAJOR REHAB
↳ FIRE → 21 TONS (& 25 TONS)
→ NEWSPAPE ARTICLE
↳ READ AS DECISION
→ NEED SAFE, RELIABLE BRIDGE
→ ANY CONSIDERATION TO RESTORATION OF RIVER
↳ EXISTG BRIDGE IMPACTED RIVER
↳ WHAT WE HAVE NOW IS NOT NATURAL
↳ WEST SIDE PIER
→ COST OF CURRENT BRIDGE ↑ DUE TO LOSS OF LIFE
→ FULLY LOADED BUS @ LIMIT
→ OTHER CARS FOLLOW
4/8


→ EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIMES
→ HIGHWAY TAX FUNDS - GAS TAX
↳ WANT TO SPEND LOCALLY
↳ OR ELSE PAY FOR W/ LOCAL $
→ CURRENT W/ REHAB ADEQUATE FOR RURAL NATURE
↳ NEW BRIDGE WILL ↑ TRAFFIC
→ CHILDREN ALREADY KILLED ALONG SOUTH
→ LIFESTYLE
→ NO SIGNS FOR DANGERS
↳ SCOUR (WHIRLPOOL)
→ LADDER ON BRIDGE
→ LAWSUIT
→ SAFETY NOT ONLY @ MACLAY
- ROAD CONNECTIVITY
↳ BLUE MTN. ROAD
↳ NARROW, CAN'T SUPPORT ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC
- EXPAND STUDY AREA
5/8


- ARE YOU CREATING NEW PROBLEMS & NOT FIXING SAFETY
- LOOK @ BASED ON LOGIC NOT EMOTION
↳ NO EVIDENCE TO BYPASS
↳ CAN PREVENT W/ DESIGN
↳ SCOUR CAN BE PREVENTED
- AFFECTS LANDOWNERS & TRAVELING PUBLIC
↳ NOT ALL HERE
- APPROACH COSTS
↳ ADDITIONAL COSTS TO ↑ FACILITIES
- NO EXISTING MIDDLE SUPPORT PIER
↳ NEW BRIDGE WOULD HAVE ONE
↳ SAFETY HAZARDS
- CALM WATER @ EDDIES
- CURRENTLY SAFE TO FLOAT UNDER
- MASOR REHAB
↳ NO NEED TO REMOVE
- PILING CAN BE LOOKED @ UNDER REHAB
- FRACTURE CRITICAL FIXED UNDER REHAB
6/8


- IMPORTANCE OF CRASHES
- NEED #4
L RECOGNIZE MEETING TARGET RANGE PLAN
L SURVEYED ENTIRE AREA
L OBSECTIVE
- DIFFICULT TO SEE OTHER SIDE
L NOT ALWAYS CONSIDERATE
- NOT ALL CRASHES REPORTED
- NEED #3
L EXISTING MEETS OBJECTIVES
L REHAB BEST ACCOMPLISHES NEEDS
- TRAFFIC DIVERSIONS MAKE SAFER
- ANY BRIDGE WOULD HAVE SOME SAFETY ISSUES
L
-NEW NEED
L COSTS FOR ALTS
L MORE DETAILED THAN PLANNING LEVEL
L BREAK OUT FED, STATE, LOCAL
7/8



- MORE LOCAL $ FOR ANY OPTION THAN REHAB
- REHAB MAINTAINS OPTIONS FOR FUTURE
- TARGET RANGE NOT SO RURAL DUE TO MACLAY TRAFFIC PATTERNS
  - SOUTH IS MAIN ROAD
  - NEW BRIDGE WOULD REMOVE TRAFFIC NOT ON SOUTH
- LOCAL PLANS DON'T TRUMP SAFETY ISSUES
  - DOES NOT MANDATE
- TARGET RANGE PLAN DOES NOT REFLECT WEST SIDE VIEWS
- RESERVE/SOUTH INTERSECTION HIGH CRASH RATES
- NEW INTERSECTION w/ RIVER PINES A CONCERN
- LOCAL INFRASTURE PAID BY LOCAL $
- SOUTH AVE HAS PROPERTY EASEMENT
  - NOT FOR 3 BLOCKS

8/8

Maclay Bridge Planning Study

COMMENT FORM Informational Meeting #3 (September 27, 2012)

We welcome your comments.

Just as the '94 EA study recommended, the best option continues to be building a new bridge at the South Ave #1 location. I would submit the following rationales for choosing this recommendation!

1) current bridge location creates scour hole that is an extremely dangerous manmade hazard that has already taken human life & damages river
2) current bridge cannot handle necessary loads for some emergency vehicles
3) current bridge could collapse w/ fully loaded school bus
4) current location causes traffic to reroute from south westly gas & polluting
3) current location takes more time for emergency vehicles from fire station & CMC to cross river - would be quicker @ South Ave.
6) South is already main artery through target range w/ school, hospital, and fire house. Makes sense & is more efficient to have bridge on main artery.
7) have federal $ to build new bridge, unsure if we don't use federal $ & current bridge fails, would need to use county $.
8) new bridge would create local jobs
9) South Ave location would save gas $, provide cleaner air, eliminate risk, eliminate major county liability, & increase response time for emergency vehicles reaching west side of river
10) bridge @ South would preserve rural nature of Target Range by eliminating traffic that uses Fairview neighborhoods to access current bridge

Please mail or email your comments to:
Sheila Ludlow, *Project Manager*
MDT Statewide and Urban Planning Section
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
406-444-9193
Email: sludlow@mt.gov

To receive further study information, please provide your name and address:
Name: _____
Address: _____
_____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

Maclay Bridge Planning Study

COMMENT FORM Informational Meeting #3 (September 27, 2012)

We welcome your comments.

(1) I have lived in Missoula - off of North Ave W for >20 yrs & have NEVER for 1 second thought that the bridge should be moved. Maclay Bridge is a great part of Missoula - where it is & how it is. Rarely do you Ever have to wait >1 minute to cross, and having it be 1 lane adds a rural feel - a Missoula feel which I would like to Maintain - NOT Replace NOT CHANGE.

(2.) Why spend Millions to make a new bridge when a lot less could be spent making the current bridge better? Has the current bridge been proven to be unsafe?

(3) I now have two little ones that will go to Target Range - I might seriously consider moving to a new district if the bridge changes secondary to safety concerns — A straight-away from Reserve to the bridge?! Who planned that? — What will be done to safeguard near the school.

(+) Overall — Not a Well Planned Idea - at All.

Please mail or email your comments to:
Sheila Ludlow, *Project Manager*
MDT Statewide and Urban Planning Section
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
406-444-9193
Email: sludlow@mt.gov

[redacted]

Maclay Bridge Planning Study

COMMENT FORM Informational Meeting #3 (September 27, 2012)

We welcome your comments. — Thank you.

In the interests of preserving the unique character of the Target Range area, while addressing the real safety and traffic concerns presented by the current Maclay Bridge, I would like to see the most minimal approach be adopted. Being a rural community, we don't really need a large new infrastructure, so rehabilitating the current structure and perhaps adding another single lane parallel to the current bridge seems to me to be the most common sense and cost effective approach. Most of the roadway and traffic infrastructure is already present and there would be minimal disruption to traffic if the new sister span was built prior to the current bridge being refurbished. Done properly with traffic calming measures incorporated, this option would seem to have the least additional impact and still address the functional needs of the community, while preserving its same character and charm.

Please mail or email your comments to:
Sheila Ludlow, *Project Manager*
MDT Statewide and Urban Planning Section
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
406-444-9193
Email: sludlow@mt.gov

[redacted]

Maclay Bridge Planning Study

COMMENT FORM Informational Meeting #3 (September 27, 2012)

We welcome your comments.

I feel the options have been very well explored and explained.

The importance of traffic calming on South Ave Big Flat / Blue Mtn is paramount with a bridge design.

It was a very well managed meeting!

Thank you!

Please mail or email your comments to:
Sheila Ludlow, *Project Manager*
MDT Statewide and Urban Planning Section
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
406-444-9193
Email: sludlow@mt.gov

I'm on your email list already.

[redacted]

Maclay Bridge Planning Study

COMMENT FORM Informational Meeting #3 (September 27, 2012)

We welcome your comments.

I live on the West Side of the Bitterroot River. We need Access to the East side. I support the a new Bridge and Retaining the Maclay Bridge Maintained to the End of its Useful Life. The new Bridge doesn't have to Be Like the Kona Bridge. Property Values will Be Effected By Reduced Access. Increased Emergance Response time. Safety is important. We should Not give up the option of funding or PRIORITY for Replacement at County or State Levels. I don't Feel that the Target Range Home owner assoc. (TRHOA) Represents the Interest of all the Residents on the West Side of the River as they Claim.

Please mail or email your comments to:
Sheila Ludlow, *Project Manager*
MDT Statewide and Urban Planning Section
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
406-444-9193
Email: sludlow@mt.gov

To receive further study information, please provide your name and address:
Name: _____
Address: _____
_____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

Maclay Bridge
Needs and Objectives Comments

Sept. 27, 2012

[redacted]

Need Number 3: Minimize adverse impacts from options to the environmental, cultural, scenic and recreational characteristics of the area.

I feel Big Flat/Blue Mtn.Rd. in itself is a recreational "site". It's a favorite of all type of bicyclists. It's well-known as the most scenic part of the Missoula Marathon and runners and walkers are frequently seen on all areas of the road. My concern with a Kona Ranch-style bridge is that it will not only increase traffic, but will encourage even larger trucks to use the road. I think Missoula needs, and would benefit more, from keeping this rural area scenic, instead of turning it into another commercial highway. I'm concerned that, as we try to keep up with "progress" and growth, we'll be losing a part of historical, rural, and scenic Missoula that we can't reclaim.

Need Number 4:

I wholeheartedly agree with the objective to "recognize the historic value of the Maclay Bridge to the community and the role it plays in local regional events". Regardless of the outcome of the bridge decision (though I favor a one-lane bridge), I feel very strongly about the importance of leaving Maclay Bridge intact as a part of Missoula's history and to be used by bicyclists and pedestrians,

Thanks for listening.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Maclay Bridge
NEEDS & OBJECTIVES COMMENTS

[redacted]

My home is west of the Bitterroot River, adjacent to Big Flat Road, about 4 miles from Maclay Bridge. I would like to comment about these NEEDS AND OBJECTIVES.

1. The introductory paragraph of the draft report talks about 'local and regional' use of the bridge. My assumption is that 'local' refers to neighborhood users, ie, those that live in Target Range or Big Flat areas, including O'Brien Creek. So, "Who are regional users?" The word "Regional" is used several times in this report, but there is no explanation. It is a term that could be interpreted as a door left open for a by-pass in spite of denials that there is any intent to do that.

2. Need number 1: "Improve the safety and operation of the river crossing and connecting roadway network." This is a commendable goal, but Montana Department of Transportation has only recently assessed crash trends at this location and prescribed remedies. Since those remedies have yet to be implemented, it would seem that a large part this need may have already been met.

3. Need number 2: "Provide a long-term river crossing and connecting roadway network that accommodates planned growth in the Maclay Bridge area." One objective for this need is: "Provide connectivity to neighborhood residents, and regional users accessing recreational lands to the west of the Bitterroot River. Again, we see the term 'regional', but another key word is recreational lands. I would like to point out that 'regional users' have two other nearby bridges to accommodate recreational access. Certainly, the few minutes lost in using Buckhouse or Kona Ranch Bridges does not inhibit recreation. If recreation is driving the need for access, that purpose imposes neither a sense of urgency nor the need for large capital investment to enhance a short-cut to an area served by two other nearby bridges. Opening an alternate corridor into this area will jeopardize recreational values west of the river by channeling higher speed, higher volume traffic onto rural roads ill-suited for such purposes.

4. Need number 3: "Minimize adverse impacts from options to the environmental, cultural, scenic and recreational characteristics of the study area." An objective for this need is "Provide reasonable access to recreational sites in the study area." Surely, the existing Maclay Bridge, plus two existing high capacity bridges, satisfies that need. Another objective is "Avoid or otherwise minimize adverse impacts to historic, cultural, and archaeological resources that may result from implementation of options." The Target Range Neighborhood Plan did consider the bridge and potential replacements. The best solution for neighborhood goals

was continued maintenance and support of the existing bridge, which happens to be eligible for the National Historic Register. Any other option appears to be contrary to the Neighborhood Plan. Therefore, I submit to you that in-place rehabilitation of the existing Maclay Bridge best accomplishes these objectives, while accommodating the recognized needs of this Study and the Target Range Neighborhood Plan.

Thank you,

[redacted]