

# Maclay Bridge Planning Study



## Inside This Issue

Study Description - **P.1**

What is a Planning Study - **P.1**

Informational Meeting #2 of 4 - **P.1**

Study Area - **P.2**

Key Findings - **P.2 & P.3**

Study Schedule - **P.3**

Community Involvement Opportunities - **P.4**

Contacts - **P.4**



## Study Description

Missoula County, in partnership with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is conducting a planning study of the Maclay Bridge over the Bitterroot River west of the City of Missoula to determine the potential needs of the bridge and connecting roadways within the area.

The purpose of the study is to identify feasible improvement options to address safety, geometric and environmental concerns based on needs presented by the community, study partners, resource agencies, and other interested parties.

The study will include a comprehensive package of short- and long-term recommendations intended to address the transportation needs over the planning horizon. These recommendations will assist the study partners in targeting the most critical needs and allocating resources appropriately.

The Maclay Bridge is a one-lane bridge that crosses the Bitterroot River approximately 2.75 miles west of Reserve Street via North Avenue.

## What is a Planning Study?

A *Planning Study* is a planning-level assessment of the study area that occurs prior to any project-level environmental compliance activities under the National and Montana Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA / MEPA).

Planning studies include early communication with interested parties to help identify needs, constraints, and opportunities for the areas of interest and to help determine if there are implementable improvement options given potential needs and available resources.

The *Planning Study* is developed strictly as a planning tool and not a design or construction project. The study is designed to help facilitate a smooth and efficient transition from transportation planning to future environmental reviews should a project be developed.

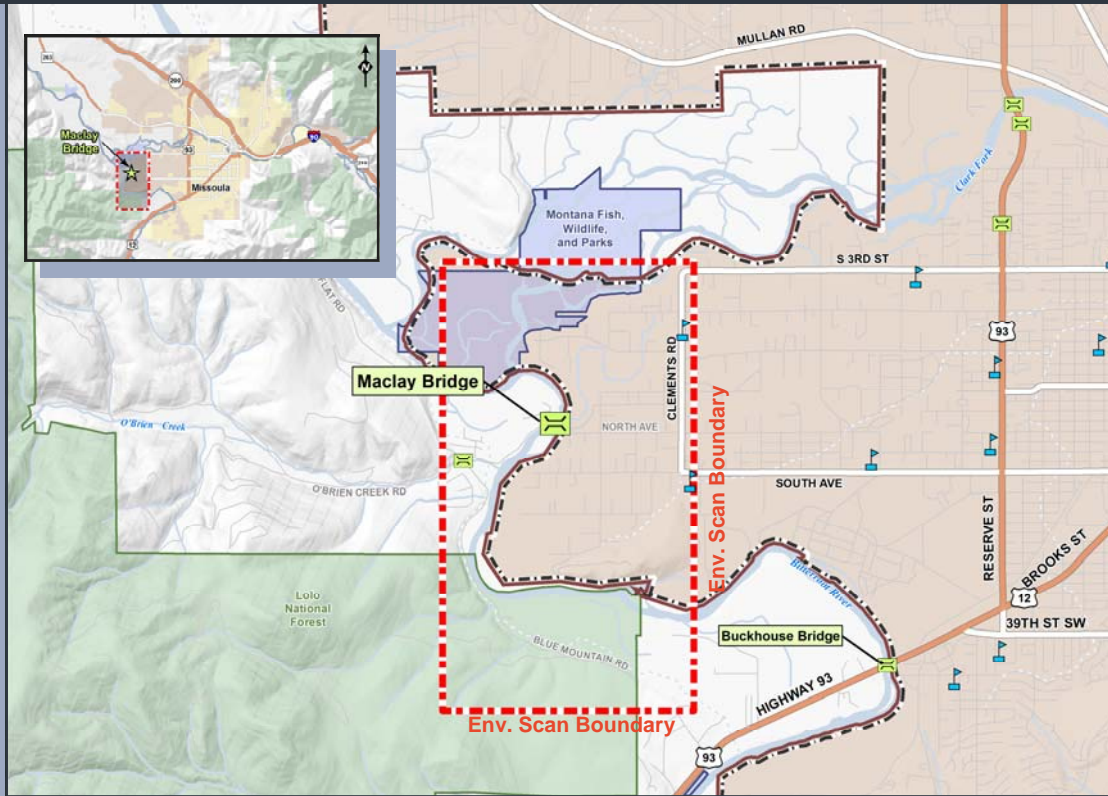
## INFORMATIONAL MEETING #2 of 4 Please Join Us!

TUESDAY  
JULY 10, 2012  
6:00 PM  
TARGET RANGE  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL  
4095 SOUTH AVENUE  
WEST  
MISSOULA, MT

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend. We hope to see you there!

## Study Area

The study area for the *Maclay Bridge Planning Study* was established to encompass the areas potentially affected by the potential replacement, upgrade, or reconstruction of the Maclay Bridge.



## Key Findings

### Transportation System

#### Traffic Volumes

- Existing and projected traffic volumes exceed the AASHTO standard for a single-lane bridge.

#### Safety

- A number of crash trends and areas of concern were identified within the crash analysis area. Specific areas of concern identified are located on the following roadways:
  - ◆ Big Flat Road
  - ◆ Blue Mountain Road
  - ◆ North Avenue
  - ◆ River Pines Drive
  - ◆ South Avenue

#### Travel Time

- Without the existing Maclay Bridge in service, travel times between Fire Station 1 and the intersection of Big Flat Road/Blue Mountain Road/O'Brien Creek Road/River Pines Road can be expected to take almost 2 minutes longer by travelling via Buckhouse Bridge and 18.5 minutes longer by travelling via Kona Bridge.
  - ◇ Any delay in emergency response travel time, typically measured in seconds, is an important consideration within the planning area.

#### Horizontal Alignment

- Three horizontal curves do not meet current Missoula County or MDT standards.
  - ◇ Two of the sub-standard horizontal curves lead into and out of each side of the existing bridge.

- ◇ A crash trend has been identified at the west end of the bridge (intersection of River Pines Road & Riverside Drive).

#### Clear Zones

- Numerous locations have features within the horizontal clear zone and are unprotected. Primary concern is located along River Pines Road adjacent to the Bitterroot River, where the top of fill slope is within 2 to 4 feet of the edge of the travel lane.

#### Bridge

- The existing bridge is "functionally obsolete" due to the approach geometry on both ends of the bridge, and the narrow single lane bridge width.
- The existing bridge is "load restricted" due to its present condition, which prevents some vehicles from crossing.
- The Maclay Bridge has a Bridge Health Index that suggests its individual components are in good condition.
- There are no bicycle or pedestrian features on the bridge.

#### Parking

- Parking concerns are evident based on numerous resolutions passed by the Missoula County Commission, and also based on numerous "911 calls" to the area.

#### Widths

- The single lane bridge width of 14 feet does not meet current AASHTO, Missoula County or MDT standards for width given existing and projected traffic volumes.
- Roadway widths on River Pines Road do not incorporate shoulders.
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are absent on River Pines Road.

## Key Findings

### Environmental Considerations within Environmental Scan Boundary

#### Prime Farmland

- Areas of prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, and farmland of local importance are located within the area.

#### Water Resources

- The Bitterroot River, Clark Fork River, and O'Brien Creek are located within the area. The Bitterroot River and Clark Fork River are listed as 303(d) water bodies, which do not meet water quality standards.
- Irrigation facilities exist within the area.
- Numerous private groundwater wells are in the area, along with on-site wastewater systems.

#### Wetlands

- Wetlands are located within the area.

#### Floodplains and Floodway

- FEMA-delineated floodplains exist along the Bitterroot and Clark Fork Rivers, and at the confluence of O'Brien Creek and the Bitterroot River.
- Missoula County would have a "no increase" requirement for the 100-year base flood elevation measured against the existing FEMA base flood elevations.

#### Hazardous Substances

- There are eight underground storage tank (UST) locations.
- There is one leaking underground storage tank (LUST) location.
- There is one petroleum release compensation site.

#### Air Quality

- Transportation conformity analysis would be required regardless of funding sources, via the MPO's regional emissions analysis, should an improvement option be forwarded.

#### Fish and Wildlife

- Five endangered, threatened, proposed, or candidate species are listed for Missoula County. Of the five, two may be likely to occur within the area. These are the Bull Trout (threatened, critical habitat designated) and the Yellow Billed Cuckoo (candidate species).
- 13 animal species of concern are listed for Missoula County.

#### Vegetation

- No endangered, threatened, proposed, or candidate plant species are expected to occur within the area.
- One plant species of concern may potentially be found within the area – Toothcup (*Rotala ramosior*).

#### Cultural and Archaeological Resources

- Eleven separate cultural resources are known to exist within the area.
- Fourteen 4(f) resources are located within the area. One of the fourteen is also a 6(f) site.

### Other Considerations

Neighborhood residents have expressed concern over:

- Speeds being an issue on North Avenue, River Pines Road and South Avenue.
- Traffic Growth through the neighborhood in recent years, and the potential for that to continue.
- Safety and the potential for increased vehicle crashes.
- Noise impacts due to increasing vehicular traffic through the area.
- Livability and the desire to maintain the rural character of the area and limit traffic growth.

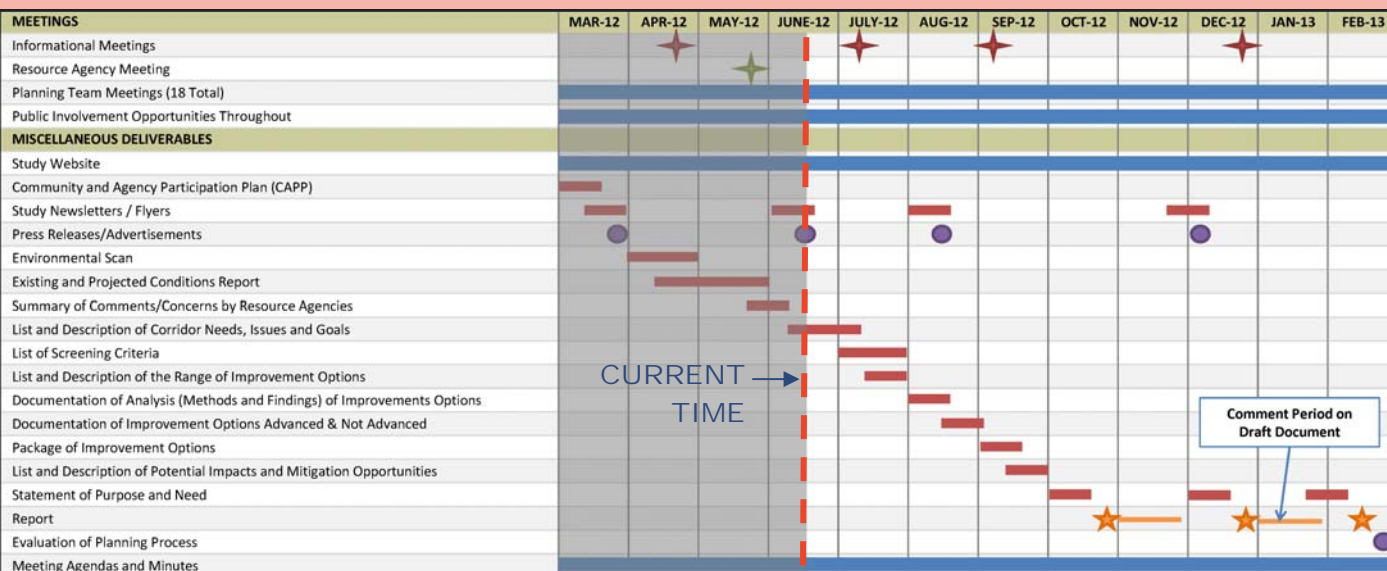
- ◇ The *Target Range Neighborhood Plan* emphasizes the importance of continued County maintenance of the structure to help preserve access for local and Missoula Valley residents seeking recreational opportunities on nearby lands.
- ◇ The *Target Range Neighborhood Plan* does not identify the need for a new bridge.

#### Project Nomination

- Missoula County has nominated the existing Maclay Bridge for replacement using funding from FHWA's *Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program*, pending the outcome of this planning study.

## Study Schedule

The Maclay Bridge Planning Study began in March 2012 and is expected to be completed by the end of February 2013.



Public Involvement Throughout



## Maclay Bridge Planning Study

### Contacts:

#### Lewis YellowRobe

Missoula County  
406-258-4651  
[lyellowrobe@co.missoula.mt.us](mailto:lyellowrobe@co.missoula.mt.us)

#### Erik Dickson, P.E.

Missoula County  
406-258-3772  
[edickson@co.missoula.mt.us](mailto:edickson@co.missoula.mt.us)

#### Sheila Ludlow

MDT Project Manager  
406-444-9193  
[sludlow@mt.gov](mailto:sludlow@mt.gov)

#### Shane Stack

MDT Missoula District  
406-523-5830  
[ssstack@mt.gov](mailto:ssstack@mt.gov)

#### Jeff Key, PE

RPA Project Manager  
406-447-5000  
[Jeff.key@rpa-hln.com](mailto:Jeff.key@rpa-hln.com)

### Community Involvement Opportunities

Community involvement is important to any successful planning study process. The purpose of community involvement is to ensure a proactive process that provides opportunities for the community to be involved in all phases of the planning study. The community is invited to participate in the process through community informational meetings and ongoing study information review and input.

A study website ([www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/maclay](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/maclay)) has been developed to provide online opportunities to comment on the *Maclay Bridge Planning Study* effort. Dates, times, and locations for all community outreach events will be announced prior to the events through local media and the study mailing list.

The study team will collect and consider all comments received to better understand the potential issues. Those with a specific interest in the study are encouraged to join the study mailing list. They can do so by submitting their name and contact information to Jeff Key at [jeff.key@rpa-hln.com](mailto:jeff.key@rpa-hln.com).

Missoula County and MDT attempt to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity associated with this study. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information, call (406) 447-5000 or TTY (800) 335-7592, or call Montana Relay at 711. Accommodation requests must be made at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled activity and / or meeting.

STUDY NEWSLETTER—ISSUE ONE, JUNE 2012



ROBERT PECCIA & ASSOCIATES  
PO BOX 5653  
HELENA, MT 59602