VOLUME II

FHWA-MT-EIS-95-01-F

F 5-1(9)6, U.S. HIGHWAY 93
EVARO - POLSON
MISSOULA AND LAKE COUNTIES, MONTANA

FINAL

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

AND

SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
AND
STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FHWA-MT-EIS-95-01-F

F 5-1(9)6 U.S. Highway 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
and
SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

Volume II

Submitted Pursuant To 42 U.S.C 4332(2)(C);
49 U.S.C. 303; MEPA 2-3-104 and 75-1-101
and Executive Order 11990

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
and
Montana Department of Transportation

Cooperating Agencies

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Soil Conservation Service
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Department of Housing
and Urban Development

Introduction

In Volume II, the term preferred alternative refers to the Montana Department of Transportation's (MDT) Preferred Alternative, unless otherwise noted.

Volume II presents information about the public hearing and comments received from governmental agencies and the public about the draft environmental impact statement (EIS). Comments and responses to comments are organized in three general categories:

- Written comments from governmental agencies
- Written public comments received before, at and after sessions of the public hearing
- Oral testimony received at sessions of the public hearing in Arlee, St. Ignatius, Pablo and Polson

Each category of comment is organized with three sections of information:

1. An index of the comments received

   The pages for the index are on white paper

2. Copies, summaries or descriptions of the comments received

   These pages are on yellow paper

3. Responses to the comments

   The pages for the responses to comments are on green paper

Comments and responses are numbered, beginning with governmental agencies, then written public comments, and concluding with oral testimony. Each comment with a number has a corresponding number for its response. Agency comments and responses have a prefix "*A-*" prior to the number. Public written comments and oral testimony do not have a prefix preceding the number.

Categories of comment and response are identified at the top of each page, where appropriate.

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1. Public Notices For Public Hearing

The following notice of the filing of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f) Evaluation FHWA-MT-EIS-95-01-D for a project on US Highway 93 from Evaro through Polson in Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana was published in the Federal Register / Vol. 60, No. 52 / Friday, March 17, 1995 / Notices, Page 14433

> *EIS No. 950079, DRAFT EIS, FHW, MT,*
> *US 93 Highway Transportation Project, Improvements between Evaro and Polson, Funding and COE Section 404 Permit, Missoula and Lake Counties, MT, Due: May 08, 1995. Contact: Joel Marshik (406) 444-7632*

A Notice Of Availability Of Draft Environmental Impact Statement And Section 4(f) Evaluation and A Notice of Public Hearing For U.S. Highway 93, Evaro-Polson, Montana F 5-1(9)6, March 16, 1995 were published in three newspapers on the referenced dates:

Char-Koosta News, a newspaper of general circulation, published in Pablo, Lake County, Montana on:

24 March 1995

07 April 1995

Lake County Leader, a newspaper of general circulation, published in Polson, Lake County, Montana on:

30 March 1995

14 April 1995

The Missoulian, a daily newspaper of general circulation, published in Missoula, Missoula County, Montana on:

24 March 1995

11 April 1995

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION
AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
FOR U.S. HIGHWAY 93, EVARO - POLSON, MONTANA, F 5-1(9)6
March 16, 1995

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) are proposing to improve U.S. Highway 93 for a distance of 56.3 miles from Evaro, Montana through Polson, Montana. Copies of the draft environmental impact statement and Section 4(f) Evaluation (draft EIS) are available for review at the Missoula District Office of the Montana Department of Transportation and at U.S. post offices and community libraries in the project area. Copies may be obtained by writing to:

Joel Marshik, Manager, Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Sessions of the public hearing for the proposed action will be held from 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm. as follows:

Tuesday, April 25, 1995 at the St. Ignatius Senior Citizens Center, St. Ignatius

Wednesday, April 26, 1995 at the BIA East and West Conference Rooms in the Tribal Complex of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in Pablo

Thursday, April 27, 1995 at the KwaTaqNuk Resort, in Polson

Project representatives will be available at each meeting to discuss the proposed action and to receive public comments. Public comments are welcome, are due May 8, 1995 and can be submitted at the public hearing or can be sent to MDT at the above address.

After incorporating public and agency comments, a final environmental impact statement and Section 4(f) evaluation (final EIS) will be prepared and circulated. The Record of Decision will be based on the final EIS.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SECTION 404 EVALUATION

The District Engineer, U.S. Army Engineer District, Omaha, Nebraska (Corps) is evaluating the proposed action. Permits are issued under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act which regulates the discharge of dredge or fill material in the nation's waters. The purpose of this notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed action and to solicit comments on the issuance of the permits. Participation is encouraged so that the Corps is better able to complete a more thorough public interest review. Comments assist the Corps to make a reasonable decision based on public interest factors.

The following is a brief summary of the draft EIS.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The proposed action is needed to improve transportation on US 93, which is important to local, regional and nationwide travel. Transportation demand is high and is expected to continue to increase.

The existing roadway has various geometric features that do not meet current standards for safety and design. Existing level-of-service (LOS) is poor, generally LOS D, compared with the desired standard of LOS B for rural highways. It is projected that by the design year 2015 capacity of the existing facility will be exceeded, and the highway will be operating at LOS F in most sections. Accident numbers per mile are substantially higher than statewide averages.

ALTERNATIVES

The draft EIS analyzes various alternatives including No Action, several alignment alternatives, several lane configuration alternatives, transportation demand management measures and alternate highway routes.

THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Based on engineering and environmental evaluations completed to-date, on comments received from the public and on recommendations of local, state and federal agencies involved with or affected by the project, it is proposed that the highway be reconstructed on its existing alignment from Evaro thru Polson. At Polson, Alignment 3, an additional new alignment approximately 5.8 miles long south and west of Polson, is recommended as an alternate route and for truck traffic.

Preservation of a corridor of land for possible future highway construction is recommended through the Arlee area west of the community (Alignment 2) and through the Ronan area west of the community (Alignment 4). Corridor preservation will use measures such as cooperative access control; land use planning and regulation; purchase of easements or right-of-way; or other public/private cooperative methods.

A four-lane highway is recommended from Evaro to Polson. A continuous two-way left-turn center median will be included, mostly in areas with a large number of intersections and turning vehicles. Through Polson, the recommended roadway will include a two-lane roadway with a continuous two-way left-turn center median on the existing alignment and a four-lane highway on Alignment 3, south and west of the community.

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

The capacity of the highway will be increased substantially, resulting in traffic operation at LOS B in the design year, instead of LOS F with No Action. Operating efficiency will be improved substantially, and congestion will be reduced.

Based on experience near the proposed action, accident rates and frequencies, particularly accidents involving injuries and fatalities, are expected to decline.

With partial access control and land use planning and regulation, strip development and other highway-related development can be better controlled.

Approximately 370 acres of land will be converted to new highway right-of-way.

Approximately 46 acres of farmland that is prime or unique farmland or farmland of statewide or local importance will be converted to highway right-of-way.

The physical prominence of the highway will increase with related barrier effects and visual effects.

The highway will be more desirable for commuters, which may encourage population growth.

Relocation of several buildings, including approximately eight residences, will be required.

About 40 acres of wetlands will be filled or otherwise destroyed. They will be replaced by wetlands that provide similar or better functions and values.

Special wildlife crossings will be constructed in the Evaro area and other areas. This is to benefit grizzly bear and other wildlife by improving migration routes and decreasing or avoiding highway mortality.

Direct use of land from several Section 4(f) properties will be required.

Continuation of major highway traffic through Arlee and Ronan will continue adverse traffic operation and safety conditions. Short-term impact to some businesses will occur during construction.

Carbon monoxide (CO) emissions will decrease. PM_{10} emissions will not differ substantially from No Action, except in Polson where traffic volumes in the city will be substantially reduced.

A Notice Of Changes To The Public Hearing And Comment Period For U.S. Highway 93, Evaro-Polson, Montana F 5-1(9)6, March 16, 1995 was published in three newspapers on the referenced dates:

Char-Koosta News, a newspaper of general circulation, published in Pablo, Lake County, Montana on:

14 April 1995

28 April 1995

Lake County Leader, a newspaper of general circulation, published in Polson, Lake County, Montana on:

13 March 1995

20 April 1995

The Missoulian, a daily newspaper of general circulation, published in Missoula, Missoula County, Montana on:

14 April 1995

21 April 1995

NOTICE OF CHANGES TO THE PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENT PERIOD FOR U.S. HIGHWAY 93, EVARO - POLSON, MONTANA, F 5-1(9)6

This notice is to advise the public that an additional session of the public hearing for the proposed action will be held on April 24, 1995 at the Cafeteria of the Arlee Elementary School on Fyant Street in Arlee. This meeting is in addition to the three previously advertised sessions of the public hearing. The public hearing for the proposed action will therefore be held from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. as follows:

Monday, April 24, 1995 at the Cafeteria of the Arlee Elementary School, Arlee,

Tuesday, April 25, 1995 at the St. Ignatius Senior Citizens Center, 212 North Main Street, St. Ignatius,

Wednesday, April 26, 1995 at the BIA East and West Conference Rooms in the Tribal Complex of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in Pablo, and

Thursday, April 27, 1995 at the KwaTaqNuk Resort, in Polson.

At each of the four sessions of the public hearing, a formal presentation and public comment period will be held beginning at 7:00 p.m. Before and after the 7:00 presentation at each hearing, project representatives and displays will be available to explain the proposed project, to answer questions and to receive public comment.

At the request of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council, the public comment period has been extended from May 8, 1995 to June 23, 1995.

2. Agency Comment

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Lake Board of County Commissioners
Missoula Board of County Commissioners
U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

COMMENT NUMBER	TOPIC(S)
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)	
A-1	Future review of response to comments by CSKT
A-2	Safety is primary concern
A-3	Speed limits
A-4	Adequacy of EIS for considering alternatives
A-5	Comparison of alternatives
A-6	Social and cultural impacts are glossed over
A-7	Effects of proposed action on CSKT
A-8	Consistency with public interest in preserving CSKT sovereignty
A-9	Secondary and cumulative impacts
A-10	ISTEA and balance of environmental, socioeconomic and engineering
A-11	discussion of new growth and development is not adequately analyzed
A-12	Access management
A-13	Section 4(f)
A-14	Section 4(f)-Polson regatta grounds
A-15	Design period is too short and should consider past
A-16	Review of wetlands mitigation plan
A-17	Road maintenance
A-18	Deferring design issues is a mistake
A-19	Photographs are misleading
A-20	Intermediate plans to improve highway during 10 to 15 years
A-21	Difficult to get around in document
A-22	Purpose and need
A-23	NHS is proposed
A-24	Three percent growth rate
A-25	Accidents per mile is misleading statistic
A-26	Passing/left-turn lanes in Polson
A-27	Congestion
A-28	Cooperation of jurisdictions
A-29	CO emissions
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COMMENT NUMBER	TOPIC(S)
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Cont'd)	
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A-32	ALCO permit
A-33	Construction date
A-34	Tribal roads program
A-35	Road deficiencies
A-36	Polson bridge passing lane
A-37	Approaches and accidents
A-38	Reason for handling Polson differently
A-39	Two-lane alternative is downplayed
A-40	Eight-foot shoulders
A-41	Separate bike path
A-42	Acceleration from turnouts
A-43	Transportation demand management (TDM) may improve LOS levels
A-44	TDM measures
A-45	TDM and preferred alternative
A-46	Total base population is higher due to drivers outside immediate area
A-47	Diverting traffic to alternate highway routes
A-48	MT 200 should be MT 28
A-49	Alternate route evidence
A-50	Frontage roads need NEPA analysis
A-51	Speed limit enforcement
A-52	Preferred alternative in tables in Chapter 5
A-53	Roadway deficiencies
A-54	Access control and Lane Configuration C
A-55	TDM analysis
A-56	Community teams and design process
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A-58	Access control
A-59	Traffic signals
A-60	Traffic signals

COMMENT NUMBER	TOPIC(S)
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Cont'd)	
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A-62	Wildlife crossings
A-63	LOS D is exaggerated
A-64	Schools on or near the highway outside communities
A-65	School bus stops
A-66	Speed limit in Pablo
A-67	1994 AASHTO Guidelines
A-68	Approaches
A-69	Accident history and safety audit
A-70	four-lane highway versus two-lane highway
A-71	Accidents in snowy or icy conditions
A-72	Passing lane accident rates
A-73	30th highest hourly volume and seasonal fluctuations
A-74	Update of 1985 Highway Capacity Manual
A-75	Traffic Along Rural Routes (TRARR) Procedure
A-76	Slow moving vehicle turnouts
A-77	LOS and capacity analysis
A-78	Absolute capacity in traffic volume numbers
A-79	Land status table
A-80	Senior citizens center in Ronan
A-81	Undeveloped land
A-82	Agricultural land
A-83	Lumber mill at Pablo
A-84	MRL and spelling
A-85	Draft Comprehensive Resources Plan
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A-93	Social setting discussion is inadequate
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A-97	Commuters inside Lake County
A-98	Growth since 1990
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A-100	Tribal health and human services department
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A-103	Bicycle use
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A-106	Pedestrian crossing at St. Ignatius
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A-111	Lake levels
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A-125	Reservation boundary on map is incorrect
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COMMENT NUMBER	TOPIC(S)
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A-161	Safety for children
A-162	Bicyclists required to stop or yield
A-163	Signage and education
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A-165	CSKT wants to evaluate air quality conformity analysis
A-166	Air quality modeling
A-167	STAMINA 2.0 noise model
A-168	"are properly implemented" repeated, P. 7.9-1
A-169	Fisheries and sediment yields
A-170	Erosion control measures
A-171	Permits for fill in wetlands
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COMMENT NUMBER	TOPIC(S)
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Cont'd)	
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A-182	Acreage for parkland
A-183	Energy savings with TDM
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A-185	Update preparers' experience
A-186	Appendix B
A-187	Highway's relationship to long-term cultural environment
A-188	Different design alternatives may make avoidance possible for cultural properties
A-189	Use of 20-year design period
A-190	Comments on the preliminary draft EIS
A-191	Effect on cultural resources from impacts to fish and wildlife
A-192	Effect on cultural resources from impacts to noise
A-193	Effect on cultural resources from impacts to air quality and water quality
A-194	Deficiencies in draft EIS determined in cooperation with Missoula County
A-195	Opposition by the Tribal Council to truck bypass around Polson
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A-196	Support for proposed action
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A-197	Effect of highway improvement on population growth Legal period of applicability for EIS Wildlife overpass Non-motorized transportation and pathways
U.S. Department Of The Interior, Office Of Environmental Policy And Compliance	
A-198	Concurrence about no feasible and prudent alternative to use of parks, recreation areas and wildlife refuges
U.S. Department Of The Interior, Fish And Wildlife Service	
A-199	Concurrence on biological assessment
U.S. Department Of Housing And Urban Development	
A-200	Finding the draft EIS is adequate, provided HUD residential development is prohibited within 1,000 feet of center line of highway

COMMENT NUMBER	TOPIC(S)
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A-203	Wetlands
A-204	Water quality, floodplains and stream crossings
A-205	Land use and preferred alternative
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Joel Marshik, Manager, Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Ave
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

June 27, 1995

Dear Mr. Marshik,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Evaro to Polson project. These are our general comments:

A-1 It is apparent that many past Tribal letters have been ignored, at least in part. Some of the comments in this letter have been expressed previously, some more than once. We are distressed that this is the case. In order to assure that the Final EIS addresses these comments fully, we are requesting that we have the opportunity to review corrections to the document before it is again released to the public (see letter dated June 22, 1995).

A-2 As always, highway safety is the Tribal Council's primary concern with regards to Highway 93. The Tribal Council has special concern for schoolchildren who must travel on, and cross, Highway 93. For example, due to safety concerns for children the Tribal Council on June 23, 1995 took a position in favor of the two lane design with a center turn lane in the town of Arlee.

A-3 The Council is also still concerned about speed limits in Elmo and Pablo and would appreciate an update on the results of the speed studies in these communities. A Pow Wow is scheduled in Elmo July 20 - 24, 1995 and the Council would like to see pedestrian crossing caution lights installed in Elmo by that date if at all possible.

NEPA Considerations

A-4 To be "adequate", an EIS must consider not every possible alternative, but every reasonable one. Friends of Endangered Species v. Jantzen, 760 F.2nd 976 (9th Cir. 1985), quoted in Citizens for a Better Henderson v. Hodel, 768 F2d 1051 (9th Cir. 1985). The existence of a viable but unexamined alternative renders an EIS inadequate. Brooks v. Coleman, 518 F.2d 17 (9th Cir. 1975). The superiority of any one alternative, in terms of efficiency, cost, or desirability to the project proponent, is irrelevant to the reasonableness of the omitted alternative. Kleppe v. Sierra Club, 427 U.S. 390 (1976). A reviewing court must look exclusively to the EIS itself to determine whether adequate information has been collected to allow the decision maker to make a reasoned determination on a particular issue, in this case an evaluation of various alternatives to improve traffic operation and safety on U.S. Highway 93. The purpose of an EIS, then, is to provide Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) with enough information to "aid in the substantive decision whether to proceed with the project in light of its environmental consequence" and to provide the public with information and an opportunity to participate in gathering information. Trout Unlimited v. Morton, 509 F.2d 1276 (9th Cir. 1974); Stop 3-H Ass'n. v. Dole, 740 F.2d 1442 (9th Cir. 1984), cert. den. 105 S.Ct. 2344 (1985)

A-4 In the DEIS MDT has neglected to thoroughly analyze all reasonable alternatives other than its preferred alternative. The Tribes have in the past requested that MDT conduct a more thorough analysis on an improved two-lane similar to the alternative proposed by the Flathead Resource Organization (FRO), Alternative A, the two lane alternative which is analyzed in the DEIS does not go far enough in providing decision makers with enough information regarding capacity and safety improvement of this proposed alternative. The FRO proposal differs from Lane Configuration A in that it includes other features, such as increased use of passing lanes, slow moving vehicle turnouts, increased signage and enforcement, that are not necessarily included in the analysis of Alternative A. We feel that the FRO proposal is worthy of a comprehensive analysis, which it did not receive in this EIS.

A-4 In our letter to the MDT dated August 3, 1993, we stated that we were disappointed that the DEIS does not include an alternative which includes a combination of lane configurations, and that we would like to see an alternative which recommends different designs in different areas as is appropriate. In the current version of the EIS, MDT is recommending a preferred alternative which includes a combination of four-lane alternatives, but there are virtually no two lane sections incorporated.

A-5 Furthermore, the preferred alternative is not actually compared to other alternatives in the EIS! The only alternatives which are reviewed are the all-one-design alternatives. Consequently, the reader is unable to determine, in detail, the environmental impacts of the preferred alternative. How many acres of wetland are impacted by the preferred alternative? How much will it cost to build the preferred alternative? What are the right-of-way requirements of the preferred alternative? Some of these basic questions are addressed in the summary, but not in the main body of the EIS. This is a flaw that must be corrected prior to the release of the final EIS.

A-5 The Reservation residents have a great stake in the outcome of this decision and have a right to know and to comment on all reasonable alternatives. MDT and FHWA as the decision makers have a right to know and a duty to disclose the environmental consequences of their decisions.

A-5 The Council on Environmental Quality has described the alternative evaluation requirement of NEPA as the "heart" of the environmental impact statement. 40 CFR 1502.14. MDT has not thoroughly analyzed these proposed alternatives nor has it adequately identified, analyzed, or compared other reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. By limiting its range of alternatives, MDT has not met the goals of NEPA in providing the agency decision maker with a full disclosure document of environmental impacts from the proposed action and an analysis of whether alternatives exist that meet the purpose and need for the improvements.

A-6 The DEIS glosses over social and cultural impacts to the Tribes that have been repeatedly raised by the Tribes. While FHWA's responsibilities to the public under NEPA are great, an additional special relationship exists between the United States and Indian Tribes. This trust relationship requires the FHWA (and MDT, since a substantial amount of federal funds will be used for this project) to carefully disclose and consider significant impacts of the proposed action on the Tribes. This trust responsibility imposes strict fiduciary standards on the conduct of federal executive agencies in their dealings with Indian Tribes. Northern Cheyenne v. Hodel, CV-82-116-BLG (D.Mont.1985), 12 Indian Law Reporter 3065.

A-7 At the very least, Northern Cheyenne requires the FHWA to investigate and consider the impacts of the proposed action upon the Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The Tribes have, on a number of occasions, warned that there are many potential impacts to the Tribal cultural environment of the Flathead Indian Reservation and the ability of the Tribes to maintain a cohesive Reservation community. The FHWA and MDT are required to consider and analyze these impacts and implement measures to mitigate these impacts if at all possible. Id. at 12.

A-8 Additionally, FHWA and MDT are bound to consider the extent to which the proposed action is consistent with the public interest in preserving the status of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes as a sovereign Nation and in preserving the Tribe's ability to "maintain itself as a culturally and politically distinct entity". New Mexico Navajo Ranchers Association, et. al. v. Interstate Commerce Commission 702 F.2d 227 (1983). The Tribes have, on numerous occasions, raised concerns about the impacts a reconstructed highway would have on population growth on the Reservation, in particular in the increased likelihood of bedroom communities being created, and irreparable social and economic changes to the character of the Flathead Reservation as the homeland to the Tribes. These concerns have not been adequately addressed and analyzed in the DEIS.

Secondary and cumulative impacts

A-9 The 1978 regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the general NEPA mandate of environmentally sensitive decision making require agencies to evaluate the potential environmental consequences of all proposed Federal activities and programs. This includes a requirement to examine indirect consequences which may occur in areas beyond the immediate influence of a proposed action at some time in the future. These secondary impacts include changes in land use, water quality, economic viability, and population density. Cumulative effects are impacts which result from incremental consequences of an action when added to other past and reasonably foreseeable future actions 40 CFR 1508.7 and 1508.8. Courts have determined that "secondary" impacts are often as significant as "primary" effects. Coalition for Canyon Preservation v. Bowers. 632 F.2d 774 (9th Cir. 1980).

A-10 Additionally, under the Intermodel Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, the FHWA must now work with MDT as never before to preserve and enhance environmental resources while implementing transportation projects. These commitments require that equal weight be given to environmental issues during the project decision making process that normally emphasizes engineering considerations. These decisions should represent a balance between environmental, socio-economic, and engineering issues. FHWA, Position Paper on Secondary and Cumulative Impact Assessment (1992).

A-11 In this regard, the current discussion of the environmental effects of new growth and development as a result of major highway reconstruction is not adequately analyzed. The DEIS does recognize that "Highway improvement will have an indirect effect with additional population growth due to improved travel conditions for commuters," and that highway improvements will "further increase the desirability of the area as a place to live". It also recognizes that in areas of moderate to rapid development, as is the case in the project area, highway improvement can be an important element of change leading to long term impacts." DEIS 7.4-2. It is likely that highway improvements will have a major effect on the rural character of the Reservation which has not been given adequate attention or detail in order for the decision maker to make an informed decision on the environmental consequences of the alternatives studied in the DEIS. We look forward to results of the Land Use And Growth Projection Study and we expect this information to address this critical issue.

A-12 Also, the Tribes have serious concerns regarding issues relating to access management, or lack thereof. A crucial safety issue identified in the DEIS is the high density of junctions on Highway 93 as a major contributor to the accident rate on this rural highway. The DEIS indicated that currently 34% of the accidents occur at intersections or driveways, and that this percentage is 60% higher than statewide averages. Also, the Tribes believe that the mitigation measures proposed - partial access control - are not sufficient to provide assurances that MDT will follow-up with an aggressive access control plan to address these issues. The DEIS simply states that MDT will develop recommendations on the number and spacing of public and private approaches that will be able to enter directly on the highway. Will MDT recommend elimination of offset accesses and accesses that are dangerous for other reasons, as well? We feel partial access control is grossly inadequate for dealing with this demonstratively dangerous safety issue. Without an enforceable access management plan in place, it is extremely difficult to assess what safety improvements, if any, can be anticipated. An access management plan needs to be developed regardless of the preferred alternative selected.

4(f) Evaluation

A-13 We find the 4(f) evaluation an inadequate discussion of the "feasible and prudent" alternatives to the use of 4(f) properties impacted by the proposed action. Congress has declared it a national policy in preservation of the natural beauty of public parks, recreation area, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges. 23 U.S.C. 138 and Section 4(f) of the Transportation Act of 1966, as amended, 49 U.S.C, 1653(f). Section 4(f) requires that the Secretary of Transportation "shall not approve any program or project which requires the use of any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge ...

unless (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land, and (2) such program includes all possible planning to minimize harm..." The implementing 4(f) regulations provide that 4(f) lands may be used only if unique problems or unusual factors are involved in the use of alternatives that avoid the 4(f) property, and further, if the cost, social, economic, or environmental impacts or community disruptions resulting from such alternatives, reach "extraordinary magnitudes" can the 4(f) lands be used. 23 CFR 771.135(a) (2).

A-13 The 4(f) analysis should have taken into account that "use" of parklands or recreation areas within the meaning of section 4(f) includes not only actual, physical takings of such lands but also significant adverse indirect impacts such as: noise, air pollution, and general unsightliness. Such determination of "use" should bear some relevance to the value, significance, and enjoyment of the lands at issue. This is particularly important for wildlife refuges and management areas because the values associated with them include tranquility and the opportunity to observe nature undisturbed by human activity.

A-13 The Tribes and others have proposed other "prudent and feasible alternatives" to the use of 4(f) properties such as the Ninepipes Refuge and Wildlife Production Areas in the Mission Valley. These alternatives (such as FRO's concept of an improved two lane or a combination two and four lane) are prudent and feasible routes that would avoid use of important 4(f) properties and which should have been analyzed in more detail. The existence of an unexamined but viable alternative to the proposed action could render the EIS inadequate and provide a basis for overturning the Secretary of Transportation's decision that these 4(f) properties can be used for highway purposes. Coalition for Canyon Preservation v. Bowers, 632 F.2d 774 (9th Cir. 1980). The 4(f) evaluation does not demonstrate that these alternatives result in cost, social, economic, and environmental impacts or community disruption that reach such an "extraordinary magnitude" that 4(f) lands would be permitted for highway use.

A-13 Inquiry under subsection (2) of section 4(f) requires a balancing of harm to the site by the proposed project, with the harm to the site by another alternative or plan to implement mechanisms to diminish that particular harm. Alder v. Lewis 675 F.2d 1085 (9th Cir. 1982). The 4(f) document is completely devoid of any of this required analysis. The section on avoidance alternatives does not discuss why any of the alternatives evaluated in the document are not "prudent and feasible" and does not provide an inquiry into this balancing of harm associated with each alternative, and does not demonstrate that all possible planning has occurred to minimize harm to these properties.

A-13 The courts have stated that great weight must be placed on the protection of parklands. In Citizens to Preserve Wilderness Park v. Adams 543 F. Supp. 21 (Neb., 1981), the Court held that the Secretary shall find a particular alternative to the use of parkland "feasible" unless it would not be so as a matter of sound engineering, and to find a particular alternative to the use of parkland "prudent" unless there are truly unusual factors present or the cost or community disruption would reach extraordinary magnitude. The primary focus of inquiry is upon the harshness of the problems inherent in the alternative and not upon the comparative freedom from those problems by the use of 4(f) properties. Id. at 27.

A-14 The 4f analysis is incomplete in its identification of properties to be impacted as it does not include the Regatta grounds along the Flathead River. This is the only regatta grounds in Montana, and it would be rendered unusable by two of the three alternatives. This site needs to be considered a 4f property.

Other general comments

A-15 The EIS uses a 20 year time frame for analysis. This may be too short a time period, particularly with regard to cultural issues. The analysis would also be strengthened by looking to the past. What was the impact of the existing highway on cultural issues?

A-16 We wish to reiterate that we want to review wetlands mitigation and that wetlands mitigation strategies should be disclosed in the EIS.

A-17 The EIS does not address road maintenance. Who will pay and where does the money come from?

A-18 We believe that the decision to defer all design issues until the community teams are formed is a mistake. Community involvement in these issues is important, but many are too significant to defer until later. For example, landscaping is a design feature that would beautify the highway, and would also have an impact on the environment.

A-19 The photos that are supposed to show how the highway will look when the preferred alternative is built are misleading. They do not accurately represent the width of the new highway and the degree of change that will take place when the construction is complete.

A-20 Are there plans to take intermediate steps to improve the highway during the next ten to fifteen years? These steps could include elements that would need to be done anyway, such as widening shoulders and appropriate left and right turn bays.

A-21 Overall, it is difficult to get around the document and find the information the reader is looking for. Headers and/or footers that identify the topic addressed on the page would help, as would tabs at the beginning of each section. In our letter of August 3, 1993 we requested an index an glossary be added to the document. This version has an index, but no glossary. Given the large number of technical terms that are used a glossary would be helpful to the public.

Our page-by-page comments are as follows:

Section 2, Summary

A-22 Page 2-1 - title- This should read "Purpose and need for action". Delete "proposed". The EIS should explain why any action is necessary, not just the proposed action.

A-23 Page 2-1, paragraph 4 - Add "proposed" before National Highway System.

A-24 Page 2-1, paragraph 6 - The 3% growth rate is lower than the 4.5% annual growth rate found in the Flathead Lake, East Shore/West Shore Corridor Study. Between 1989 and 1993, MDT figures show ADT increasing between 4.6% and 11%, depending on the segment of the highway. The rate of growth may need to adjusted to more accurately reflect the recent highway trends.

A-25 Page 2-1 - paragraph 7 - Accident numbers per mile as compared to statewide averages (also discussed on Pages 4-1 and 4-6) are misleading. The statewide average is skewed by the large number of highway miles in the sparsely populated eastern 2/3 of the state. It would be more accurate to compare Highway 93's accident numbers per mile with accident numbers for highways located in areas with similar population characteristics.

A-26 Page 2-6, last paragraph - There should not be passing lanes constructed in the 3.8 miles of highway through Polson. This should be changed to continuous left turn lane?

A-27 Page 2-9 - paragraph 7 - The statement "congestion will be eliminated" is not necessarily true. Even with a four or five lane highway, congestion may still occur in urban areas, in areas with multiple approaches, or on holiday weekends and when slow-moving vehicles pass even slower vehicles.

A-28 Page 2-9 - paragraph 9 - This statement assumes all jurisdictions are willing to work together to create these controls, and that landowners would be willing to negotiate closure of accesses. Recent lawsuits by the state and Lake County indicate an unwillingness to work with the Tribes on water quality and other land use related issues. In addition, because the Flathead Reservation is uniquely located between two of the fastest growing areas in the state, new businesses continue to develop along rural stretches of the highway. The commercial potential of land along the highway makes access an even more valuable asset which landowners may not be willing to sell.

A-29 Page 2-9 - paragraph 14 - CO emissions may decrease per vehicle, but by creating additional capacity, won't emissions increase overall as more vehicles utilize the highway?

A-30 Page 2-11, third bullet - A separate ALCO permit will be needed for each action deemed a project by the Tribal Shoreline Protection Office. (see also Page 7.11-1)

A-31 Page 2-11, fifth bullet - Although PM10 conformance evaluations and determinations haven't been made, conclusions are drawn regarding PM10 impacts (see Page 2-10, first bullet). How were these conclusions made?

A-32 Page 2-11, Why are ALCO permit requirements listed as "a major unresolved issue."?

Section 4

A-33 Page 4-1, footnote - The earliest construction may be started is 1998 or 1999, not 1995. It is stated later in the document that construction will be in six phases with each phase taking two construction seasons for a total of 12 years. This places the completion of all construction close to the design year 2020. These figures should be changed to better reflect a closer approximation of the design year which should be closer to the year 2020 - 2025.

A-34 Page 4-2, paragraph 1, Include Tribal, rather than BIA, roads program

A-35 Page 4-4 - It should be noted that road deficiencies (substandard horizontal curves, substandard vertical grades, inadequate sight distance on vertical curves, inadequate shoulders, and an inadequate storm drainage system in Polson) can be corrected without the use of four or five traffic lanes.

A-36 Page 4-4, fifth paragraph - It should be noted (in the sentence about inadequate bridge shoulders on Polson bridge) that there is no passing lane on the Polson bridge

A-37 Page 4-7 - fifth paragraph - Was the high percentage of accidents that involve approaches taken into consideration when determining that the current LOS is "poor". If the number of approaches are not significantly reduced, is it realistic to predict that the LOS will substantially increase with the proposed action?

Section 5

A-38 Page 5-5 - It would be appropriate to explain why Polson was handled differently than the other communities along the highway.

A-39 Page 5-7 - A two lane alternative is down played in the DEIS. Without more development and analysis it can not reasonably be determined whether or not a well designed two lane with climbing lanes, passing lanes, turning lanes, and slow moving vehicle turn-outs , constructed in conjunction with the diversion of some traffic to Highway 83, and implementation of TDM measures would result in substantial improvements in LOS.

A-40 Page 5-8 - 5-5-10 - Although the eight foot shoulders suggested in the preferred alternative are a big improvement, they may not be adequate or the most safe for children when used as a bicycle/pedestrian lane. There is a significant percentage of large trucks and RV's that create aerodynamic lateral force winds that can be dangerous or at least unsettling enough to discourage bicycle use. AASHTO recommends that shoulders be 3.0 - 3.6

meters (10 - 12 feet) for "heavily traveled and high speed highways and those carrying a large number of trucks".

A-41 If it is economically feasible, a separate bike path should be provided to offer the greatest degree of safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, especially in the Ronan to Polson area where more of the bicycle traffic occurs. The path could be within the existing right-of-way slightly separated from the highway by a median, along a frontage road, and/or along segments of old Highway 93. The path would be close enough to the highway and wide enough for easy maintenance. At the least, a pedestrian pathway needs to be constructed between the Salish Kootenai Housing Authority offices and the Tribal Complex. The People's Center has specifically requested this path.

A-42 Page 5-11- first paragraph - Acceleration may be difficult from turnouts, but the same is true for all driveways and intersections. Could acceleration lanes be provided at these turnouts as well as at key intersections? Community members have stated at public meetings that they would use them more if available. More substantial information should be provided on this design option rather than the conclusion given from a telephone conversation.

A-43 Page 5-11- section on TDM - We believe that while TDM measures might not necessarily eliminate the need for highway improvements, such measures may improve LOS levels.

A-44 This section states that TDM measures could include pedestrian/bicycle facilities, air transit, and alternate highway routes, yet they are not considered in the TDM analysis attached in Appendix B. The appendix also notes that, "It will be difficult to remove many of the trucks from U.S. 93 by putting the commodities on the Montana Rail Link system." However, the number of trucks that could be removed should be quantified when it is possible to ship by rail or air. Information related to the aforementioned comments should then be included in a comparison of energy consumption rates among the alternative under consideration.

A-45 The preferred alternative, a combination of the various lane configuration alternatives, should include all TDM factors possible when analyzing energy efficiency. It is important to remember that the efficiency component of ISTEA not only includes the operating efficiency of vehicles, but also challenges transportation officials to evaluate the energy efficiency of alternative modes of transportation improvements. Oil reserves are limited and pedestrian, bicycle, and rail transportation modes are much more fossil fuel efficient than most other forms of transportation (see attached Congressional data (graphic)). Add this comparison to Section 7.19 of Table 5.2-1 as well.

A-46 Page 5-11, fourth paragraph under TDM - It should be noted that there are people from outside the immediate area that drive Highway 93 on a daily basis, so the population figures quoted are lower than the total base population.

A-47 Page 5-12 - alternate highway routes - Was it reasonable to not evaluate in detail alternative highway routes to divert some traffic from Highway 93 to other highway such as Montana 83? We support additional signing and designation of special routes to encourage use of these alternative routes to relieve some of the demand on Highway 93.

A-48 Page 5-12- sixth bullet- MT 200 should include Highway 382 and 28

A-49 Page 5-14, second paragraph - What evidence is there that traffic will not shift to alternate routes in sufficient numbers to reduce volume on Highway 93?

A-50 Page 5-14, paragraph four under design options - Frontage roads would need site specific NEPA documentation.

A-51 Page 5-16, first full paragraph - This section appears to state that MDT will not enforce the speed limit if it is lower than "the speed the majority of drivers are comfortable with". Part of the safety of a highway is determined by the three E's of engineering, enforcement, and education.

A-52 Pages 5-17 - 5-33 - The preferred alternative must also be shown in the matrices in order to better compare impacts.

A-53 Page 5-39 - Lane Configuration A - The Purpose and Need portion of this document states that action is needed to improve safety, level of service, and capacity on Highway 93. Pages 4-3 to 4-7 mention the following points that should be considered for this Lane Configuration:

A-53 The section on roadway deficiencies indicates that Highway 93 has two substandard horizontal curves and substandard vertical grades on four different sections that reduce capacity, level of service, and safety. Twenty substandard vertical curves and "substantially" less than adequate shoulders also create safety problems on Highway 93. In addition, the section on safety states that over 1/3 of the recorded accidents on the highway involved approaches; the number of accidents associated with driveways is 60% higher than the statewide average. This section also states that "high junction density also contributes to substantial reductions in the capacity, service level, and driving comfort of the highway."

A-53 To what degree then would safety, level of service, and capacity be affected if improvements were made in these areas only? Was this analysis, in combination with any potential improvement from feasible TDM strategies, considered in the capacity and LOS analysis for Lane Configuration A?

A-53 Shoulder widths alone can affect capacity. The Traffic Engineering Handbook (Institute of Transportation Engineers, 1992, p. 138) states that each one foot increase in shoulder width increases capacity by 2%. The average shoulder width at present is about 4 feet. Installation of a truck climbing lane improves LOS one step for each 3% of heavy vehicles (See attached information from the 1992 Traffic Engineering Handbook) . The EIS states that TDM measures could further improve capacity by as much as a 40% reduction in volume. This analysis of the aforementioned

capacity, safety, and LOS improvements must be included for Lane Configuration A for comparison with the other alternatives.

A-54 Page 5-40 - paragraph 1 - More specific information is needed as to why access control is not practical for the areas recommended for Lane Configuration C. How does this justification compare to the potential safety hazards of a continuous center turn lane in high speed areas with staggered approaches that could create head-on conflicts? Page 788 of the 1994 AASHTO manual states that "continuous left-turn lanes should be used only in an urban setting where operating speeds are relatively low...". The Federal Highway Administration (6/12/92 correspondence to Edrie Vinson) states that this design, "does not hold up in a rural area. A five lane highway with a continuous two-way left turn median should only be used in urban or suburban areas with extensive development and running speeds 45 miles per hour or less." The document lists several "problems with a 5 lane section" such as: an increase in accident severity if constructed on high speed roads, problems with effective marking when snowpacked, and older drivers having difficulty judging speed of approaching vehicles and making left turns. Your document already states that there is a high rate of accidents involving older drivers on this highway. It would also be safer if businesses could reorient their accesses to side streets or county roads where feasible. Another alternative is to bypass communities.

A-55 Page 5-40-section on TDM- This page (as well as Page 2-11) indicates that a TDM study is being done for Lake County only. Residents from other counties also utilize this segment of Highway 93 for commuting and should be included for analysis.

A-56 Page 5-41- first paragraph - This page, as well as Page 2-6, mentions that community teams will be continued to help select design options. How will the teams be selected? Will meetings be open to the public? Will all of the design options listed on Page 5-14 actually be available for consideration? For example, could right-of-way restrictions preclude the use of wider landscaped medians, frontage roads, or separate bicycle paths in some communities? What other restrictions could apply? What guarantee is there that the community's recommendations will be followed and how will these preferences be documented for the public review process? The Tribes should of course be included in any and all design review teams that may be formed.

A-57 Page 5-41 - Pablo Design Options - A separate bicycle/pedestrian path was recommended by design team members. The wider raised median was recommended to accommodate pedestrians and storage in the median openings for vehicles crossing the highway.

A-58 Page 5-41- Access Control - Why is partial access control not being considered for these communities? There are certain stretches in some of these communities, especially Pablo, where frontage roads, or reverse frontage roads would be possible. If over one-third of the accidents on this highway are access related, why are so many areas being precluded from access management?

A-59 Page 5-41 - under traffic signals - The traffic light at the Hwy 93/Hwy 35 junction has been installed - this should be noted. (Also see Page 6.1-27)

A-60 Page 5-41 - under traffic signals - Add Clairmont/Pablo West Road. (Several changes are planned in the Pablo area that may generate enough traffic to warrant traffic signals sooner)

A-61 Page 5-42 - end of page - Bicycle facilities will likely need a NEPA analysis as well.

A-62 Page 5-43 - under wildlife crossings - We suggest "closure of dead end roads and rerouting through roads from other accesses".

Section 6

A-63 Page 6.1-4- third paragraph - The LOS of Highway 93 is listed as "D". This seems to overstate the time delay (75% of the time a vehicle is on the road). Although there may be substantial delays during peak seasons and commuting hours, 75% of the time seems exaggerated.

A-64 Page 6.1-4 - ninth paragraph - The document incorrectly states that there are no schools on or near the highway. Both Two Eagle River School and Salish Kootenai College are on the highway. Document also states that there are only "a few" businesses. Please state the number of businesses that are present on a given date.

A-65 Page 6.1-5 - third bullet - School bus stops along the highway should be listed here with the other school concerns. Turnouts for school buses should be included in the preferred alternative.

A-66 Page 6.1-5 - fourth paragraph- The speed limit is also a major concern in Pablo, as discussed at every community meeting. This was also raised as a concern at the community of Pablo's meetings regarding land use planning and at several Tribal Council meetings and in multiple correspondence to MDT. Why isn't it listed here as a specific concern?

A-67 Page 6.1-7 - reference - Did the analysis use the most recent (1994) AASHTO guidelines?

A-68 Page 6.1-9 - On this page numerous problems are described with many of the existing approaches. However, in the first paragraph it states that permits for new approaches are only issued if they will not create a safety hazard. Why did the State grant the permits for the existing approaches if they created a safety hazard?

A-69 Page 6.1-13 - accident history - In the Tribes letter of September 14, 1993 we stated, "To adequately evaluate the safety considerations we will need more detailed information and the factual basis or assumptions of the accident data used in the DEIS

and supplemental documents...We strongly recommend that MDT complete a safety audit of the project route." Although the DEIS does include a general aggregate data on traffic accidents, it does not provide a complete picture of why accidents are occurring or identify current inadequacies in the highway and may not give an accurate description of safety considerations and what counter-measures might be effective in addressing them. Collision diagrams combined with traffic data and physical and environmental information can provide a tool for analysis of accident causes and determination of effective safety improvements to the highway.

A-70 Page 6.1-16 - comparison of 4 lane vs 2 lane - This does not provide an accurate comparison of accident rates for the following reasons: 1. the Evaro section is not typical of conditions on the rest of the highway. This section is less developed, has no major intersections, and much steeper terrain with more demand for passing, and 2. While the density of junctions may be similar to other areas along the route, the type and use of these intersections may be quite different. There are no major intersections with county or state roads in the Evaro section with high usage as there are in other areas of the proposed route.

A-71 Page 6.1-18 - Why isn't it noted that the number of accidents involving snowy or icy conditions jumped more than 50%?

A-72 Page 6.1-18 - third paragraph- Discussion of passing lane accident rates: How would the percentage of accident rates differ if proper shoulder widths were in place? Are there other factors that affect the transition areas, such as that all three end, and two begin, on curves? The conclusion that the existing passing lanes in the project area are high-accident locations is contrary to the experience of passing lanes nationwide. Our research shows that, in general, the use of passing lanes on a two lane rural highway reduces accidents by approximately 30%. It appears that design deficiencies and engineering of the current passing lanes and transitions lanes, as well as lack of appropriate signing, is a likely cause of the problems related to their use.

A-73 Page 6.1-19- Use of the 30th highest hourly volume of the year to determine ADT may not be an accurate measure in an area, such as the project area, which experiences seasonal fluctuations in ADTs. Please quantify these seasonal fluctuations and take this into account in the highway design recommendations.

A-74 Page 6.1-20 - reference - MDT relies on the 1985 Highway Capacity Manual for the basis for its LOS analysis. These procedures have been updated recently to take into account the number of access points per mile, with the capacity and level of service reduced as the number of access points increase. Taking into account the number of access points is particularly critical on this project route where 681 approaches have been identified and the accident rate related to approaches is significantly higher than state-wide averages. Applying the new procedures, without limited access, could result in a lower LOS for the 4 lane alternatives identified in the DEIS.

A-75 Also, use of the Traffic Along Rural Routes (TRARR) procedure could provide more accurate information on two-lane capacity and LOS.

A-76 Page 6.1 - 25- first paragraph - To what degree could slow moving vehicle turnouts improve this problem?

A-77 Page 6.1 - 26 - The capacity analysis using level of service is not quite adequate. Several staff members commented that their driving experience on the highway was better than LOS D. Please show data to backup your conclusions that passing capacity is zero, and that drivers are delayed up to 75% of the time. What are current vehicle speeds? Analysis should be done to determine speeds on highway segments using the 10 mile per hour pace, median, and 85th percentile methods. This would tell if people are traveling at design speeds or are truly being delayed.

A-78 In addition, quantifying the absolute capacity of the highway in traffic volume numbers (using the Highway Capacity Manual) and comparing those with the current and projected traffic volumes could give a better idea of the problem of when capacity exceeds design. It is also more reasonable to develop a more sophisticated method of traffic volume projections than using past growth. Capacity analysis should also consider various development scenarios and the resultant trips generated. This section is important in the EIS because lack of capacity and poor LOS is the basis for the purpose and need for the project. In addition, capacity should be linked to safety concerns.

A-79 Page 6.2-2, land status table - This table is very misleading. Nearly 1/3 of the total area of Lake County does not even fall within the Reservation boundary, whereas the entire study area for this project does. This data ignores the Missoula County portion of the project area and is very outdated. In addition, allotment land is trust land owned by individuals, whereas "Tribal" land is owned in common by all Tribal members. Tribal land status data would be much more accurate here. The Tribes have previously requested that this data be changed.

A-80 Page 6.2-3 - first paragraph - A senior citizens center is also adjacent to the existing alignment through Ronan.

A-81 Page 6.2-3 - second paragraph - The only stretch of undeveloped land in the area is a one mile section just south of Schley which the Tribes manage as a wildlife corridor.

A-82 Page 6.2-3 - third paragraph - In the first sentence add "agricultural" to "mostly open land". In the second sentence add "and some commercial development" to "adjacent to the highway in the Post Creek area".

A-83 Page 6.2-3 - fourth paragraph - In the second sentence change this to read " A lumber mill at Pablo and concrete plant at Polson create the heaviest concentration of industrial activity, with commercial strip development scattered between the two communities".

A-84 Page 6.2-6 - eighth paragraph - River should be capitalized. MRL should be spelled out as it is not commonly used.

A-85 Page 6.2-9 - Reference should be made here and on the following pages to the Tribes' Draft Comprehensive Resources Plan. Goals and objectives for use of all land related resources are included in the last chapter of Volume II. Reference should also be made to the Tribal/County Land Use and Growth Projection Study, especially with regard to the study's public opinion poll on land use and Highway 93 issues and a more comprehensive list of measures for managing growth and development.

A-86 Page 6.2 - 10 - first paragraph - SCS data also shows Mud Creek, Spring Creek in Ronan, and Agency Creek, as well as other areas, as having flood hazard potential.

A-87 Page 6.2-10 - sixth paragraph - Narrative is misleading and inaccurate. (See comments on the table on Page 6.2-2).

A-88 Page 6.2-10 - under Wildlife - Revise to: "Two 1992 surveys conducted by the Tribal Wildlife Management Program and a survey conducted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), independent of the community opinion survey in the Lake County General Plan, found local residents support measures to protect wildlife".

A-89 Page 6.2-10 - Add citations: Non-Indian Bird Hunters on the Flathead Reservation: Patterns of Use and Wildlife Management Scoping Issues. David Rockwell and Dale Becker. Unpublished report prepared by the Tribal Wildlife Management Program, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Pablo, Montana, October 1992.

A-89 Patterns of Use and Wildlife Management Scoping Issues: Tribal Member Hunting on the Flathead Indian Reservation. David Rockwell and Dale Becker. Unpublished report prepared for the Tribal Wildlife Management Program, Pablo, Montana, October 1992.

A-90 Page 6.2-11-first full paragraph - This paragraph should be prefaced with the following facts: Until 1904, all land in this area was owned in common by the Salish, Pend d'Oreilles and Kootenai Tribes. The Flathead Allotment Act then forced Tribal people to become enrolled and take land allotments. Amendments to the Act gave several hundred acres of land to church organizations, thousands to the State of Montana for school purposes, and thousands more were set aside for townsites, power reserves, the National Bison Range, general government needs, and 2 to 5 acre lots around Flathead Lake. In spite of Tribal protest, the federal government opened the Flathead Reservation to settlement in 1910.

A-91 Page 6.2-14 - first paragraph - The Tribes have built and maintain several community water and sewer systems for homesites in the non-urban portion of the project area.

A-92 Page 6.2-14 - fourth paragraph - KwaTaqNuk is one of the larger land developments in the area. The golf course and Pamida store may cover larger land areas than KwaTaqNuk. The grocery store, Tribal People's Center, elementary school expansion, and housing development have all been completed in the Pablo area. The Salish Kootenai Housing Authority office has moved to the industrial area near Salish Kootenai electronics. Other development is the possible expansion of Mission Valley Power across from the new IGA store and expansion of Salish Kootenai College behind Joe's Jiffy Stop. The new development near the golf course in Polson may have up to 249 residential units.

A-93 Page 6.4-1- social - Discussion of the social setting is wholly inadequate as it should provide a background on the project area being a Reservation community. Generally, the following factors should be considered: social institutions (educational, family, economic, political, religious, and recreation), ways of life (leisure and cultural opportunities, personal security, stability and change, basic values, community identity). This is of special importance because FHWA has a heightened legal obligation to consider the project's social and cultural impacts on the Tribe.

A-94 Also, the Tribal Council has expressed concerns about the impacts the project will have on its homeland which is not adequately addressed in the document.

A-95 Page 6.4-1, lifestyle - Is there any more recent information than June 1983?

A-96 Page 6.4-5 - Flathead Indian Reservation - Indian Health Service eligibility figures provide a more accurate figure regarding the proportion of the Indian and non-Indian population on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

A-97 Page 6.4-9 fifth paragraph - Are the numbers 145 (2%) in 1980 to 1,500 (18%) in 1990 correct? That seems like a tremendous change for ten years.

A-98 Page 6.4-11- last paragraph - The rates of population and housing increases since 1990 should also be noted. There appears to have been substantial growth between the Wye in Missoula and Arlee.

A-99 Page 6.4 -13 - second paragraph - The Tribes operate community water and sewer systems at Turtle Lake (east of Polson), St Ignatius Southside, and three homesites east of Ronan. They also operate community water systems in Arlee, Schley, Evaro, and the Mission Dam area east of St. Ignatius, as well as other systems outside the highway project area.

A-100 Page 6.4 - 13 - third paragraph - The Indian Health Service is now called the Tribal Health and Human Services Department.

A-101 Page 6.4 - 13 - fourth paragraph - Ambulance services may also be available in St. Ignatius.

A-102 section 6.6 - overall - This section should take into consideration the greater need for bicycle and pedestrian facilities on Indian Reservations. See the letter from the Federal Highway Administration to MDT dated August 26, 1992, which states: "It is important to keep in mind the needs on Indian Reservations. Indian homes are often spread out along a major road, not grouped together in a subdivision...The exposure rate is high and separate bike paths need to be considered between housing developments and local communities on Indian Reservations."

A-103 Page 6.6 - 1 -table - Why were these the only areas where bicycle use was counted? Most are rural, whereas greater use occurs in or near communities. The table is misleading.

A-104 Page 6.6 - 1 - footnote, last sentence - On what basis have you made this assumption?

A-105 Page 6.6 - 2 - sixth paragraph - Staff mentioned that they had witnessed pedestrians and bicyclists utilizing the highway right of way south of Arlee between town and the Jocko Road. Didn't Arlee businessman Tony Hoyt recommend a bicycle/pedestrian facility be constructed here?

A-106 Page 6.6-2- eighth paragraph - At the most recent public hearing for the highway in St. Ignatius, comment was made about the need for safe pedestrian crossing to and from Doug Allard's store and museum.

A-107 Page 6.6 - 3 - fourth paragraph - Community team members recommended a bicycle/pedestrian facility for the east side of the highway in Pablo. A facility between Pablo and Ronan has also been recommended due to the fact that middle school and most high school students living in Pablo attend school in Ronan and need safe, alternative transportation if unable to drive to and from extracurricular activities.

A-108 Page 6.6 - 4 - Didn't a bicycle fatality occur just south of Ronan within the last few years?

A-109 Page 6.6 - last paragraph - last sentence - Near which senior apartment complex?

A-110 Page 6.9-1 - first paragraph- The description of how water flows does not read clearly and is confusing if you are unfamiliar with the area and its water resources.

A-111 Page 6.9-1 - fourth paragraph- The discussion of lake levels would be more complete if the required time periods for specific elevations were also listed. (This is in the license for Kerr Dam).

A-112 Page 6.9-3, Table 6.9-2 - Water quality standards by the State of Montana do not apply on the Flathead Indian Reservation. On February 27, 1995, the Environmental Protection Agency approved the TAS (Treatment as a State) application from the Salish and Kootenai Tribes to administer Section 303 of the Clean Water Act. The Tribes have now adopted water quality standards of Reservation-wide applicability. These became effective April 27, 1995.

A-113 Page 6.9-5 last paragraph - The statement that none of the shallow wells have any commercial or domestic use is in conflict with the statement on Page 7.9-5 that says that wells in Arlee mostly draw water from a shallow aquifer developed in sand and gravel of the alluvial fan deposited by the Jocko River. Also note that this problematic wording was commented on by the Tribes in their August 3, 1993 letter (Page 4).

A-113 It is likely that shallow water is used for domestic purposes at several locations along the route. Pablo was not singled out in the EIS as an area of concern. However, Pablo has many shallow wells, many of them very old, hand dug wells, which are not recorded. These wells in the Pablo area are mostly in the shallow aquifer.

A-114 Page 6.11-1 - fish passage - There are no instream flow requirements for Spring Creek near Ravalli, Sabine Creek, or Spring Creek near Ronan as yet, although these streams do have fisheries values. This comment was made in the Tribes August 3, 1993 letter (Page 5). These same creeks are not referenced in Table 6.12-1 - are they not being considered for fish passage?

A-115 Page 6.12-1- fifth and sixth paragraph - There is some incorrect information as to the fisheries of the Jocko River. The Jocko River, upstream of Arlee, is managed primarily for native species. The Jocko River below Arlee is a non-native rainbow and brown trout fishery. Lake trout have also been recently discovered within this area. Eastern brook trout are scattered throughout this drainage. Fishing regulations are catch-and-release for all species except brook and lake trout. Also please note that the Jocko River does not flow between the towns of Arlee and Ronan (Ronan is not within the Jocko River drainage).

A-116 Page 6.12-1 - seventh paragraph- This paragraph refers to the section of the Flathead River that is crossed by the existing highway bridge at Polson only. The facts presented in this paragraph can not be correctly extrapolated to the entire South Bay of Flathead Lake.

A-117 Page 6.12-2 - second paragraph - This paragraph speaks to the fisheries resources of Ninepipe Reservoir which is much more diverse that the stated largemouth bass and yellow perch populations.

A-118 Page 6.12-3 - table - As mentioned in the Tribes letter of August 3, 1993, the instream flow listed for Crow Creek is incorrect. In order to make this table meaningful, the specific location for each stream should be listed, as several of these streams have different instream flow requirements at different locations within the drainage. The most logical choice would be to list the instream flow requirement at the location closest to the highway crossing.

A-119 Page 6.12 - 5 - table - Note that cutthroat trout and the three other fish species listed in the table are incorrectly identified as "amphibians".

A-120 Page 6.14 - 1 - second paragraph - Subsistence activities are not just an activity conducted in the past as this paragraph indicates.

A-121 Page 6.14-1 - third paragraph - Add "and cultural" after "history".

A-122 Page 6.14 - 2 - second paragraph, first sentence - Delete this sentence and add: "The Salish and Kootenai also retained the exclusive right to hunt, fish, and gather resources according to their traditions within the Reservation boundaries, and a right, held in common, to hunt and fish on open and unclaimed lands within their ceded territory"

A-123 Page 6.17 - 1 - first paragraph - Salish Ranges should be changed to Salish Mountains.

A-124 Page 6.17 - 1 - last paragraph - Some attempt has been made to coordinate building character with a rustic theme (cedar siding on several buildings, spilt rail fence at community center).

A-125 Page 6.17 - 2 - The Reservation boundary on the southern portion of the map is incorrect. The divide forms the Reservation boundary to the east and should also be labeled properly.

A-126 Page 6.17 - 3 - fourth and sixth paragraphs - Although development has impacted the viewshed in many areas, the majority of the Mission Valley corridor remains outstanding aesthetically, especially in the undeveloped agricultural and wildlife management areas. The Mission Mountains, devoid of clearcuts due to Tribal wilderness status, along with the kettle ponds along the roadside, attract tourists and locals for their photogenic appeal.

A-127 Page 6.17 - 4 - first paragraph - This should be corrected to say, "Tribal forest lands to the west". The word "climbs" should be dropped in the last sentence.

A-128 Page 6.17 - seventh paragraph - The scenery of the Mission Valley is a primary asset for living and working in this valley.

A-129 Page 6.17 - 5 - visually sensitive resource areas - Aren't the Mission Mountains a visually sensitive area?

Section 7

A-130 Page 7.1-1- fourth paragraph - Left turns from the county roads will also be impacted by increased traffic volumes. Will there be mitigation for this impact? Will warrants for traffic signals for Highways 200, 212 and major county roads be studied as well?

A-131 Page 7.1-3 - 7.1-6 - Page 7.1-3 states that roadway deficiencies will not be improved for the No Action Alternative and Page 7.1-6 states that roadway deficiencies would be corrected for the Lane Configuration A alternative. Given the comments provided above for Page 5-39, there should be some difference in level of service for the two alternatives, however, they are rated the same on Page 7.1-5. This should be corrected.

A-132 Page 7.1-3 - table - Page 6.1-26 states that much of the highway currently operates at LOS D. Page 7.1-5 states that in 2020 with Lane Configurations B, C, and D, the highway will operate at LOS B. Why then are the estimated travel times to Missoula, listed here, almost identical for today and 2020 with Lane Configuration B,C, and D if the LOS will be two steps different?

A-133 Page 7.1-6 - fourth paragraph- Will there be any improvement for the four grades in Polson listed on Page 6.1-8? If not, why not?

A-134 Page 7.1-6 - last paragraph - Will the relocation of the railroad bridge create any impacts that will need to be addressed?

A-135 Page 7.1 - 7 - second full paragraph - See comment for Page 5-41, fourth paragraph.

A-136 Page 7.1-7 - sixth paragraph - The EIS quotes AASHTO as stating that the accident rate is higher on multi-lane arterials than on two lane arterials. This could be clarified by adding the reasons for this (because of heavier volumes, more intersections and development along multi-lane undivided arterials than on two lane arterials).

A-137 Page 7.1-7 - Intersections and driveways - See other comments in this letter regarding the Tribes concern about access control issues and the need to further address these concerns in this document.

A-138 Page 7.1-7 - Safety - This section is inadequate in that it does not provide a comparison of the lane configurations relative to safety issues. Since safety has been a major issue of the Tribes and is stated as a purpose for the need for the proposed project, this section should provide a substantial analysis of the possible safety hazards related to the number of approaches and intersections, or increased hazards to pedestrians and school children along the proposed route and in the rural towns, and hazards related to crossing a wider highway.

A-139 Page 7.1-8 - Level-of-Service - Use of level of Service B to establish the capacity for this rural highway may be high and could lead to over design of the highway. Other states in this region have used LOS C for rural highway capacity analysis (Idaho, Nevada, Washington, Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska), while South Dakota and Utah use Level of Service D.

A-140 Also, some communities may be willing to accept a lower level of service in return for an alternative that has less environmental impacts. Certainly ISTEA recognizes this and does not require strict adherence to national design standards but rather emphasizes community desires in designing a highway that will effect the character of their region.

A-141 Page 7.1-8 - third paragraph, last sentence - This sentence conflicts with Page 788 of the 1994 AASHTO manual which states, "continuous left-turn lanes should be used only in an urban setting where operating speeds should are relatively low..." Use of these lanes should not be encouraged unless speed limits are reduced.

A-142 Page 7.1-9 - Discussion on Arlee, Ronan, and Polson Alignments - If access problems contribute to over 1/3 of the accidents on this highway, why will there be "little or no opportunity to [control access] to the highway in these communities on the existing alignment"? As the highway is widened, it would seem the perfect opportunity to encourage access onto side streets or to at least consolidate the number of approaches for each business.

A-143 Page 7.1-9 - first bullet - Will the speed limit in Ravalli stay at 45 mph? A speed zone study is soon to be undertaken for the Pablo area, for possible speed reduction. Wherever raised medians, continuous left turn lanes, and/or curbing (urban typical) are proposed, speeds should be reduced from 55 mph.[1] "In general, continuous left-turn lanes should be used only in an urban setting where operating speeds are relatively low..." (AASHTO 1994, p 778).

A-144 Page 7.1-10 - third paragraph - This section (7.1.3) does not state that deficiencies will be corrected on the existing alignments if alternative alignments are constructed.

A-145 Page 7.1-10 - last paragraph - Again, why will "there be little or no opportunity to improve grades and alignments of approaches and intersections, nor to reduce their numbers"? Why couldn't access be purchased as with alignments 3 or 4?

A-146 Page 7.2-1 - second paragraph - As the Missoula and Kalispell areas continue to grow, however, the rate and pattern of land use and development will most likely be accelerated with Lane Configuration B,C, or D in areas within an hours commuting distance of these major employment centers.

A-147 Page 7.2-2 - first paragraph- No Action and Lane Configurations A,B, and C will allow traffic to make uncontrolled left turns across opposing lanes of traffic. They will also require vehicles to slow down and stop in the left lane, which is usually thought of as the faster passing lane. For safety, left turns should only be allowed at designated left turn bays at major intersections. "Traffic safety is greatly enhanced if turning vehicles can be stored clear of the lanes used by through vehicles" (AASHTO 1994, p 537).

A-148 Continuous two way left turn lanes should not be used on high volume, high speed highways either, such as is proposed in Evaro and Post Creek. All discussion of Lane Configuration C must include the fact that it is only recommended in areas "where operating speeds are relatively low" (AASHTO).

A-149 Page 7.2-3- fifth paragraph- Will there be a limit to the number of approaches in an area for safety?

A-150 Page 7.2-3 - sixth paragraph - Lane Configuration D (by creating barriers and restricting left turn access) and access management (including creation of frontage roads where feasible) would limit strip development. Partial access control could help manage the rate of sprawl.

A-151 Page 7.2-4 - second paragraph - last sentence- Change to read: "Efforts by ... to develop the Land Use and Growth Projection Study (to be appended to the Final EIS) could be ... However, recent lawsuits by the state and Lake County have dampened the cooperative spirit considerably." See comments for Page 2-9, ninth paragraph.

A-152 Page 7.3-1 - How many acres of Tribal agricultural lands will be impacted? Where are these areas located? Why were the farmland conversion impact ratings done for segments of the highway rather than the entire length? If the highway was reviewed as a whole, would it change the total points and perhaps raise the points above 160?

A-153 Page 7.3-1 - mitigation- This should also include purchase of development rights on prime and other important farmlands to mitigate for the loss of these and a percentage of future farmlands lost to development from growth spurred by highway development.

A-154 Page 7.4-2- third and fourth paragraphs - Lane Configurations B,C, and D could accelerate growth, as seen in the southern part of the project study area. Land Configuration A, with TDM and road deficiency corrections could improve capacity on an interim basis until resource management strategies are negotiated.

A-155 Page 7.4-2 - fifth paragraph, second sentence - This sentence seems very biased. What is the basis for determining which factors have more influence?

A-156 Page 7.6-3 - second paragraph - Of course the path for alternative, no-motorized transportation proposed by the petitioners would have some physical separation between

equestrians and others, and a soft surface for equestrian use. It should also be noted that due to a short time frame for comment at the time, the petition was never widely circulated.

A-157 Page 7.6-3 - fifth paragraph - If bicycle paths are separated far enough from the roadway, the concern that one direction of bicycle traffic must ride against motor vehicle traffic is not a problem.

A-158 Page 7.6-3- sixth paragraph - Proper signing could mitigate the possibility that when the bicycle path ends, bicyclists will tend to continue to travel on the wrong side of the road.

A-159 Page 7.6-3 - seventh paragraph - If the separate bicycle path is utilized with Lane Configuration A it will have less environmental impacts than would occur with Lane Configuration B,C, or D.

A-160 Page 7.6-3 - eighth paragraph - If maintenance is a concern with a separate bike path, then communities can "adopt a walkway" for maintenance.

A-161 Page 7.6-3 - ninth paragraph - Safety for children should be the primary concern for decision about the method for providing for bicycle travel.

A-162 Page 7.6-3 - tenth paragraph - Why would bicyclists traveling on a bike path be required to stop or yield? Wouldn't this path be considered the through traffic and the cross traffic would be required to stop?

A-163 Page 7.6-3- eleventh paragraph - Signage and education could mitigate the possibility that stopped cross street motor vehicle traffic or vehicles exiting side streets or driveways may block the bicycle path crossing.

A-164 Page 7.7-1 With twice as many lanes to sand and gravel, won't air quality impacts be greater during winter periods with regard to PM10? What about quality impacts during construction - hot batch plants, gravel crushers, and activity in gravel mines?

A-165 We request the opportunity to evaluate the air quality conformance evaluations on Ronan and Polson once they are complete.

A-166 Page 7.7-2 - references - Was air quality modeling done using the most updated model available (based on FHWA 1981 guidance)? have new models been developed since the enactment of ISTEA?

A-167 Page 7.8-1 - references- Is the STAMINA 2.0 noise model the most updated model based on FHWA administrative guidance issued in 1978?

A-168 Page 7.9-1- last paragraph- "are properly implemented" is repeated twice.

A-169 Page 7.9-2 - table - The fisheries program notes that the predicted sediment yields are alarming from a salmonid management perspective. The MDT should make a commitment to using all available technologies and practices to minimize sediment yields during after construction. Note that there is no information in this table about sediment yields from the preferred alternative.

A-170 Page 7.9-2, second paragraph - What are proposed for the improved erosion control measures?

A-171 Page 7.10-2 - under Mitigation - We suggest, " Permits for placing fill in wetlands along any alternative...". Also, add an "and" between 11990 and section, and delete "amended" after Clean Water Act.

A-172 Page 7.10 - 2 - under Replacement Wetlands - citation of the source of acreage needs to be added.

A-173 Page 7.10 - 7 - Cumulative impacts - The wetlands to be created or enhanced for mitigation for highway projects will be of much lower quality, because they will be the cattail ditches so near roads they are dangerous for wildlife, and less diverse than some of the other wetlands destroyed. This will partially mitigate for losses in functions and values. The last sentence of this paragraph should read - No net loss in wetland resources is (unofficial) national policy with respect to wetland mitigation.

A-174 Page 7.11-2 - last paragraph - The DEIS makes a strong commitment to fish passage at all stream crossing for the existing alignment (except Arlee, Ronan, and Polson). This commitment must be met regardless of the final alternative chosen.

A-175-176 Page 7.11-3 - Spring Creek near Ravalli - In their letter of August 3, 1993, the Tribes stated that the reconstruction of Jocko Spring Creek is a major issue that will need to be addressed. The DEIS states that all lane configurations will require relocation of the channel for at least 300 to 400 feet. The MDT should commit to a policy of no net loss of stream length for this and all other stream channelization projects. A tentative design for this stream crossing, including mitigation measures, should be included in the Final EIS.

A-177 7.12-1 - seventh paragraph - Draws the conclusion that lane configuration A may provide slightly less impact risk to wildlife than will the wider lane configurations. Doesn't address the recommendations made by the Tribal biologists in their wildlife study on the Evaro corridor which stated that Alternative A is the preferred alternative for mitigating wildlife impacts in the Evaro area due to the minimum potential to impact wildlife habitat.

A-178 Also the statement that "the types of habitat that will be lost with all lane configurations are not especially important" is also contrary to the wildlife study which documents the Evaro area as an important habitat linkage area and movement corridor.

A-178 Page 7.12-5 - The Migratory Bird Act prohibits more than just killing - it includes such things as harm, harass, wound, pursue, etc. It applies to all birds except house sparrows, pigeons, and starlings.

A-179 Page 7.12-7 - second paragraph under Wildlife passage structures - Modify with the following addition:

> "Although this design provides adequate features to allow for passages of ungulates and small and medium-sized mammals, similar designs have not been used by grizzly bears and wolves in crossing the Trans-Canada Highway in Banff National Park. In fact, gray wolves there have been segregated on either side of the highway by its construction, according to wildlife research biologists with Parks Canada. As a result, the need exists to re-evaluate the proposed design and potential alternative designs.

A-180 Page 7.13-1 - Bald eagles are attracted to road kills.

A-181 Page 7.15-1 - The EIS states that highway improvements will improve access to parks. What about the quality of the recreational experience? Highway improvements could increase the number of tourists. More tourists and increased use will mean decreased recreational quality.

A-182 Page 7.15-2 and 7.15-3 - Mitigation - Additional acreage should be purchased and dedicated as parkland or recreational land to replace those parks and recreation acres lost to construction and right-of-way.

A-183 Page 7.19.1 - There is no discussion on energy savings for each alternative with TDM, alternative modes of transportation, speed limit enforcement, etc.

A-184 Page 7.20 -1 - What about the number and location of gravel pits, and how they will be reclaimed?

A-185 Page 8-2 - under list of preparers - update Becker's experience to six years of experience as Tribal Wildlife Program Manager, and add Sue Ball - B.S., M.S. Wildlife Biology - six years as Tribal Wildlife Biologist. Similar updates are probably appropriate for all preparers. Even though some Tribal staff worked under a contract with Morrison Maierle on some special projects, Tribal staff should not be listed as representatives of Morrison Maierle but under: list of preparers, agencies, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

Appendix B

A-186 No consideration is given to park and ride facilities in the TDM section. This would be a beneficial and timely opportunity now to include these facilities at relatively little cost. A significant number of people seem supportive of car/vanpooling. Several strategic locations could be identified, such as Arlee, St Ignatius, Ronan, and Polson. A TDM coordinator will soon be hired in Lake County who could assist in this endeavor. This person should work on a reservation-wide basis rather than limiting their efforts to Lake County.

The Tribes appreciate the opportunity to comment on this EIS and all other highway projects in Montana. We hope to review a substantially improved final EIS.

Sincerely,

Michael T. Pablo, Chairman
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

attachments

TABLE 5-1
Facility Types

Facility	Chapter
Uninterrupted Flow Facilities	
Freeways	
Basic Freeway Segments	3
Weaving Areas	4
Ramp and Ramp Junctions	5
Freeway Systems	6
Multilane Highways	7
Two-Lane Highways	8
Interrupted Flow Facilities	
Signalized Intersections	9
Unsignalized Intersections (2-Way STOP-YIELD-Controlled Approaches; 4-Way STOP-Controlled Intersections)	10
Arterials	11
Transit	12
Pedestrians	13
Bicycles	14

SOURCE: *Highway Capacity Manual*, 1985, Special Report 209 (Washington, DC: Transportation Research Board), p. 1-3.

unsignalized, urban arterials, bus transit, pedestrian facilities, and bikeways. Table 5-1 provides a summary of facility types included in the 1985 *Highway Capacity Manual*.

Capacity. The expression "capacity" depends on the units being observed (vehicles, passenger car equivalents, pedestrians), the time period, and the area of the facility being considered (lane, width in feet, area). Because each facility type covered by the 1985 *Highway Capacity Manual* has specific units for expressing capacity, Table 5-2 is presented as a summary.[a] In terms of passenger car units, capacity under ideal conditions is characterized by 2,000 passenger cars per hour per lane (pcphpl) for uninterrupted flow along freeways and multilane highways. On two-lane rural highways, capacity ranges from 2,000 to 2,800 passenger cars per hour (pcph), total for both directions of flow, depending on the directional split of volume. At signalized intersections, 1,800 passenger car units (pcu) can depart from the stop line for each hour of green time, on a per lane basis.

The 1985 *Highway Capacity Manual* lists some of the highest recorded traffic volumes by facility type. Although these values should not be considered typical, nor should they be considered as being achievable on all facilities of a given type, they do indicate the general upper limits of capacity. Note that in most cases the units are in terms of "vehicles" rather than passenger car units. Table 5-3 indicates the highest of the volumes listed in the 1985 *Manual*.

Levels of service. "Level of service" is defined as those operational conditions within a traffic stream as perceived by users of the traffic facility. The concept of level of service was originally defined as being a qualitative measure of operational conditions. Such a measure would ideally cover factors such as speed and travel time, delay, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience, and safety. In practice, levels of service have been and continue to be defined by one or two measures of effectiveness for each facility type. These measures relate much more to speed, delay, and density than they do to qualitative factors or to safety.

For each facility type, six levels of service, A through F, are defined. For uninterrupted flow along freeways and highways, Level of Service A represents free flow with individual vehicles being unaffected by the presence of other vehicles. Level of Service E represents operating conditions at capacity, while Level of Service F defines breakdown flow conditions. For facilities with interrupted flow, a measure of effectiveness is used to define level of service ranges. Table 5-4 lists the measures of effectiveness used for each facility type in the 1985 *Highway Capacity Manual*. The primary measure is listed, although secondary measures typically are used to complement the analysis of level of service.

TABLE 5-2
Capacity by Facility Type

Facility	Units of Traffic	Time Period[a]	Area	Capacity Units Expressed As	Capacity (Ideal Conditions)
Freeway-basic section	Passenger-car units	Hour	Lane	pcphpl[b]	2,000[c]
Freeway-weaving area	Passenger-car units	Hour	Lane	pcphpl	1,900
Freeway-ramp junction	Passenger-car units	Hour	Merge or diverge area	pcph	2,000
Freeway-one-lane ramp	Passenger-car units	Hour	Ramp roadway	pcph	1,700
Two-lane highway	Passenger-car units	Hour	Both lanes	pcph	2,800[d]
Multi-lane highway	Passenger-car units	Hour	Lane	pcphpl	2,000[e]
Signalized intersection	Passenger-car units	Hour of Green	Lane	pcphgpl[f]	1,800[g]
Unsignalized intersection—stop or yield controlled	Passenger-car units	Hour	Lane or movement	pcph	1,000[h]
Unsignalized intersection—four-way stop	Vehicles	Hour	Entering lane	vphp[i]	450
Urban arterial	(Capacity usually measured and controlled by most restrictive signalized intersection)				
Transit-freeway bus lane	Buses	Hour	Lane	bphp[j]	1,330
Pedestrians-walk way	Pedestrians	Minute	Foot of effective width	p/min/ft	35
Bikeway	Bicycles	Hour	Lane (one-way)	bike/hr	2,150[k]

[a]Time periods of 1 hour are usually based on a peak 15-minute volume expanded to an "hourly rate of flow."
[b]Passenger cars per hour per lane.
[c]Research completed in 1989 (NCHRP Project 3-33) indicates that capacity may be 2,200 pcphpl for multilane highways.
[d]For 50-50 volume split by direction.
[e]Saturation flow rate, in passenger cars per hour of green per lane.
[f]Potential capacity with no conflicting volume and critical gap of 6.0 sec.
[g]Middle of reported range.

TABLE 12.10
Service Flow Rates per Lane for Use in Planning Analysis of 70-mph Design Speed Highways with 12-Foot Lanes

Type of Terrain	Level of Service	Percentage of Trucks 0%	5%	10%	15%	20%
		Service Flow Rate				
Level	A	700	700	650	650	600
	B	1,100	1,050	1,000	1,000	1,000
	C	1,400	1,350	1,300	1,250	1,250
	D	1,750	1,700	1,650	1,600	1,550
	E	2,000	1,950	1,850	1,800	1,750
Rolling	A	700	600	550	500	500
	B	1,100	950	850	800	700
	C	1,400	1,300	1,100	1,000	900
	D	1,750	1,500	1,350	1,250	1,100
	E	2,000	1,750	1,550	1,450	1,250
Mountainous	A	700	500	400	350	300
	B	1,100	800	650	550	450
	C	1,400	1,050	850	700	600
	D	1,750	1,300	1,050	850	750
	E	2,000	1,500	1,200	1,000	850

SOURCE: TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD, *Highway Capacity Manual, 1985* (Washington, D.C.: TRB, 1986), Table 7-13, p. 7-20.

highways are the same as for freeways; however, since the speed-flow relationship is different, the resulting speeds and maximum flow rates are different. Level of service criteria for multilane highways are given in Table 12.11. Recent research has indicated that maximum flow on multilane highways occurs at a lower density than on freeways.[1] As a consequence, these values from the *Highway Capacity Manual* may be modified in the next few years.

Planning computation. In a typical planning application, an estimate of average daily traffic must be compared to a service flow rate to determine the probable number of lanes required for a desired level of service. The average daily traffic estimate is reduced to a directional design hour value by applying the design hour and directional factors.

[1]From Kelley, William R.; Harwood, Douglas W.; Shoen, James M.; Kuehl, Robert O.; Bauer, Karin; and St. John, Andrew D. Capacity and Level of Service Procedures for Multilane Rural and Suburban Highways, prepared for National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Transportation Research Board, National Research Council, unpublished work, May 1989.

If the roadway under consideration is to be of 70-mph design with adequate lane widths and clearances, the service flow rate is modified by the peak-hour factor, the facility type, and the development environment (f_E) obtained from Table 12.9. The adjusted service flow rate is then divided into the design hour volume (DHV) to determine the needed number of lanes.

12.4.2 Two-lane highways

A two-lane highway has one lane assigned to traffic in each direction. Passing of slower vehicles requires using the opposite lane when gaps in the opposing traffic stream and sight distance conditions permit. The two-lane highways discussed in this section are rural road sections not influenced by marginal activities, entering or turning traffic, or traffic signals. Sections with such influences should be analyzed as urban/suburban arterials.

Two-lane highways make up about 96 percent of all highway mileage in the United States; however, most of that mileage serves a land access function and is rarely subjected to traffic demands which tax its traffic-carrying capacity. About 275,000 miles of U.S. two-lane roads and streets perform an arterial function and thus may be subject to higher traffic demands and level of service expectations.

As flow rates in either direction on a two-lane highway increase and as sight distances are restricted, the need to pass slower vehicles in order to sustain a desired speed increases while the ability to pass becomes increasingly difficult. As a result, speeds are reduced below the drivers' desired speed, and queues form with increasing regularity.

Levels of service. Two measures of effectiveness are applied to two-lane highways to reflect these two phenomena: average travel speed (S) is used to estimate the decline from desired speed and percent time delay is used as a measure of the time spent in queues traveling at less than desired speed. These criteria are given in Table 12.12 and are illustrated in Figure 12.7.

Percent time delay is defined as the average percentage of time that all vehicles are delayed while traveling in platoons due to an inability to pass. Since this is a difficult

TABLE 12.11
Level of Service Criteria—Multilane Highways

Level of Service	Density (pc/mi./ln)	70-mph Design Speed (mph)	70-mph Design Maximum Service Flow (pc/hr./ln)	60-mph Design Speed (mph)	60-mph Design Maximum Service Flow (pc/mi./ln)	50-mph Design Speed (mph)	50-mph Design Maximum Service Flow (pc/mi./ln)
A	≤ 12	≥ 57	700	≥ 50	650	—	—
B	≤ 20	≥ 53	1,100	≥ 48	1,000	≥ 42	850
C	≤ 30	≥ 50	1,400	≥ 44	1,300	≥ 39	1,150
D	≤ 42	≥ 40	1,750	≥ 40	1,600	≥ 35	1,450
E	≤ 67	≥ 30	2,000	≥ 30	2,000	≥ 28	1,900
F	> 67	< 30	Var.	< 30	Var.	< 28	Var.

SOURCE: TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD, *Highway Capacity Manual, 1985* (Washington, D.C.: TRB, 1986), Table 7-1, p. 7-7.

TABLE 5-25
Operational Improvements for Two-Lane Highways

Action	Improves	Relative Improvement
1. Reduce "No Passing" zones	Capacity and LOS	2 to 10 pcph increase for each 1% of total length reduced
2. Increase lane width	Capacity and LOS	5% to 15% capacity increase per 1 ft increase
3. Improve shoulder width	Capacity and LOS	2% increase in capacity per 1 ft increase
4. Install truck-climbing lane	Capacity and LOS	1 LOS better for each 3% heavy vehicles

Note: All "relative improvements" are for a given set of base conditions and will vary widely as conditions vary.

current operating level of service. Consider a two-lane rural highway which carries 180 vph in the peak hour, with a 60-mph design speed, 11-foot lanes, and 2-foot shoulders, in mountainous terrain, with 80% of the 10-mile section having no passing zones. The directional split is 60/40, with 5% trucks, 10% recreational vehicles, and no buses.

First, the actual flow rate is computed as 180 vph/PHF. In this case, a PHF of 0.87 is taken from actual field data. The actual service flow rate is 207 vph. Using equation (5.7), the service flow rate for each level of service (A, B, C, D, E) is computed. The directional adjustment factor is 0.94 for all levels of service. The lane width/shoulder width factor is 0.75 for LOS A through D and 0.88 for LOS E. The factors for trucks and recreational vehicles are taken from Table 5-24 and the f_{HV} adjustment is computed for each level of service. Calculation of the service flow rate indicates 23, 127, 211, 371, and 941 vph for levels of service A through E, respectively. Comparison of the actual service flow rate of 207 vph with the calculated maximum flow rates shows that current conditions are operating just within Level of Service C. When the actual service flow rate exceeds 211 vph, conditions will move into Level of Service D.

Operational improvements for two-lane highways

In addition to factors that might be controlled by the highway agency, such as lane width, shoulder width, and to a lesser extent vehicle mix, there are a number of design and traffic treatments that are applied in practice. Among these are improvements in passing sight distance, paving shoulders, adding a third lane, constructing passing lanes, adding continuous two-way left-turn median lanes, and constructing climbing lanes. Better geometrics at intersections and turnouts for slow-moving traffic can also be used to improve operations. Table 5-25 provides a summary of operational techniques that can be used to improve level of service and capacity on two-lane highways. The table shows in a general way the impact a given improvement can have on two-lane highway operations.

Signalized intersections

Traffic signals provide a complex type of operation for traffic flow. Signals allocate green time between conflicting movements. This time allocation depends on signal timing and phasing and creates the need to stop each conflicting movement on a regular basis and then to allow it to flow. This stop-and-go operation creates not only lost time but also the need for change intervals between traffic phases. During the past several decades, several procedures have been developed for analyzing the capacity, level of service, and specific operating conditions at signalized intersections. Most of these procedures are based either on a series of equations and adjustments that lead to estimates of measures of effectiveness such as delay or queue length, or on a more simple calculation that provides a summation of traffic volume passing through the middle of the intersection. This latter type of procedure is generally termed "critical movement."

Regardless of the type of procedure used, the traffic, geometric, and control conditions at a signalized intersection all contribute to the operational efficiency. Thus, in the very simple "critical movement" type of analysis, a large number of these factors have simply been subsumed or have gone unrecognized. In the more complex and complete operational procedures that produce direct estimates of traffic measures, most or all of the measurable factors remain explicit in the analysis and can be varied and studied by the traffic engineer.

Critical movement analyses

This simple type of analysis provides a quick estimate of the ability of a signalized intersection to accommodate a total hourly volume of traffic. In the 1985 *Highway Capacity Manual*, this type of procedure is called the "planning procedure." For each phase of a traffic signal timed in a traditional manner, the analyst sums up the maximum volume per lane that conflicts on each of the two major streets. Thus, for the north-south street, the highest sum of a through-lane volume added to the opposing left-turn-lane volume is considered as the critical volume for north-south. The same summation is performed for the east-west street. The two critical sums are then added to obtain a critical volume for the intersection as a whole, in terms of vehicles per hour. The planning procedure does not contain a specific list of LOS A through F, but rather gives general ranges of operation defined by ranges of the critical volume. Table 5-26 lists the ranges used. Two other alternative critical movement procedures are briefly discussed at the end of this chapter.

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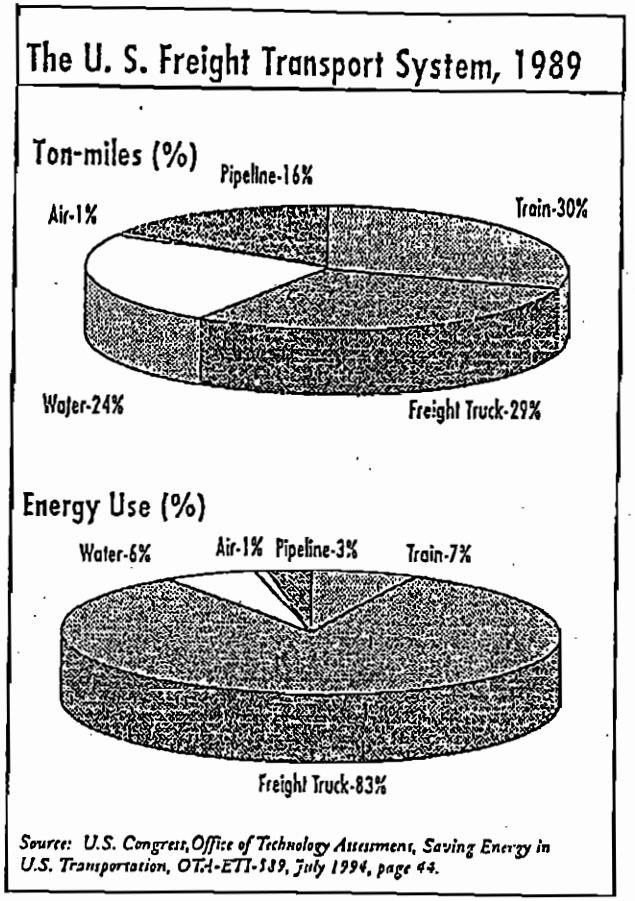
Traffic congestion, deteriorating facilities, and the development of new infrastructure in exurban areas have diminished the advantages of locating in the city. As a

To counteract these dispersing forces, community leaders have started implementing innovative measures aimed at retaining businesses and revitalizing



Source: U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, Saving Energy in U.S. Transportation, OTA-ETI-539, July 1994, page 44.

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THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, Montana 59855
(406) 675-2700
FAX (406) 675-2806

Joseph E. Dupuis - Executive Secretary
Vern L. Clairmont - Executive Treasurer
Bernice Hewankorn - Sergeant-at-Arms

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Michael T. "Mickey" Pablo - Chairman
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Carole McCrea - Secretary
Lloyd Irvine - Treasurer
Louis Adams
Elmer "Sonny" Morigeau Jr.
Henry "Hank" Baylor
D. Fred Matt
Donald "Donny" Dupuis
Mary Lefthand

Flathead Culture Committee
P.O. Box 418
St. Ignatius, MT 59865

(406) 745-4572

Clarence Woodcock, Director
Atwen Incashola, Assistant Director
Lucy Vanderburg, Language Specialist
Felicite McDonald, Translator/Advisor
Harriet Whitworth, Advisor
Germaine White, Cultural Resource Protection Manager
Terry Tanner, Cultural Resource Protection Assistant
Marie Torosian, Historical Collections Manager
Chauncey Beaverhead, Translator/Data Entry Technician
Gloria Whitworth, Secretary/Receptionist

June 23, 1995

Chairman Michael T. Pablo
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, MT 59855

Dear Chairman Pablo:

We are writing to you concerning our continuing concerns regarding the Montana Department of Transportation's plans for U.S. Highway 93 and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. In general, our concerns remain the same as we expressed in our review of the Preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

We would simply reemphasize a few points and add a few others in regard to this document.

A-187 1. We continue to have concerns about the highway's relationship to the long-term cultural environment of the Reservation, and our cultural survival. We feel the DEIS still does not make clear, objective comparisons between the different lane configurations and their impact on growth and development on

the Reservation. This is true in the chapter dealing with "Cultural Resources" as well as other chapters.

A-188 2. The MDOT essentially dismisses our concerns by saying the Culture Committees have only suggested mitigating the impacts by "avoidance" as if this were not possible. However, we feel different design alternatives may in fact make avoidance feasible, although this is difficult to clearly assess from the DEIS as it now stands.

A-189 3. Perhaps the biggest shortcoming of the DEIS continues to be the consideration of impacts for only 20 years into the future. The Tribes have been here for thousands of years and will, Creator willing, be here for thousands of years more. Whatever is done with this highway will impact our future for many generations to come. To restrict consideration of these impacts for less than the span of a single generation seems unwise and dangerous.

A-190 4. Again, we refer to our comments on the PDEIS. These have been nodded to in the DEIS, but it is apparent that they have in no way influenced or modified or even mitigated the basic gist of the document.

Sincerely,

Antoine Incashola
Assistant Director, Flathead Culture Committee

cc: Ginger Thomas, Karen Atkinson, Janet Camel

THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, Montana 59855
(406) 675-2700
FAX (406) 675-2806

Joseph E. Dupuis - Executive Secretary
Vern L. Clairmont - Executive Treasurer
Bernice Hewankorn - Sergeant-at-Arms

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Michael T. "Mickey" Pablo - Chairman
Rhonda R. Swaney - Vice Chairwoman
Carole McCrea - Secretary
Lloyd Irvine - Treasurer
Louis Adams
Elmer "Sonny" Morigeau Jr.
Henry "Hank" Baylor
D. Fred Matt
Donald "Donny" Dupuis
Mary Lefthand

June 26, 1995

Flathead Culture Committee
P.O. Box 418
St. Ignatius, MT 59865

(406) 745-4572

Clarence Woodcock, Director
Atwen Incashola, Assistant Director
Lucy Vanderburg, Language Specialist
Felicile McDonald, Translator/Advisor
Harriet Whitworth, Advisor
Germaine White, Cultural Resource Protection Manager
Terry Tanner, Cultural Resource Protection Assistant
Marie Torosian, Historical Collections Manager
Chauncey Beaverhead, Translator/Data Entry Technician
Gloria Whitworth, Secretary/Receptionist

Chairman Michael T. Pablo
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, MT 59855

Dear Chairman Pablo:

As an addendum to our letter of June 23 regarding the Highway 93 issue, we would like to raise two additional concerns about the Draft Environmental Impact Statement..

A-191 1) As the DEIS now stands, the chapters on "Cultural Resources" (6.14 and 7.14) make no mention of the highway's impacts on animal populations. These instead are restricted to the "Fish and Wildlife" and "Threatened and Endangered Species" sections. We wish to emphasize, however, that impacts to animal species also constitute cultural impacts. We maintain a special relationship with the animals that goes to the heart of our cultural ways. Our Elders have consistently expressed their distress and concern about the highway's impact on animals -- both directly, in terms of animals being killed by cars on the roadway, and indirectly, by animals being pushed out of their homes, which we fear may be spurred by certain design alternatives. Our

culture is hurt as these animals are hurt, whether it is turtles killed on the road, or by the roads and homes that follow the road being built where grizzly bears live.

A-192 2) We continue to have concerns about several of the other environmental impacts that are predicted in the DEIS. These include noise impacts, water quality, and air quality, all of which are crucial to our cultural ways.

Noise in the vicinity of the highway is predicted to double or triple if a four-lane road is built. This appears to be based on conservative estimates that do not anticipate higher traffic speeds or greater traffic volumes with this design, which would raise the noise levels even higher. It also does not appear to take into account the noise generated by secondary development that may be increased by such a design. We wonder how much noise levels would increase throughout the Reservation area, if all these factors were taken into consideration for each of the design alternatives. Solitude, a pristine environment, and privacy are required for many of our cultural practices. Traffic noise can already be heard by people high up on the western face of the Mission Range. Worsening this situation would also worsen the cultural impacts.

A-193 Likewise, air quality and water quality are also important concerns for our cultural survival. In these and many other areas, the DEIS does not seem to consider secondary and indirect impacts in estimating the changes that would occur with each of the design alternatives.

Thank you for your kind attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Antoine Incashola
Ass't. Director, Flathead Culture Committee

CC: Ginger Thomas, Karen Atkinson, Janet Camel

THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, Montana 59855
(406) 675-2700
FAX (406) 675-2806

June 22, 1995

Mr. Joel Marshik, Manager
Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Subject: F 5-1(9)6, Evaro-Polson, EIS

Dear Mr. Marshik:

A-194 On June 15, the Missoula County Commissioners and planning staff met with Tribal Council and Natural Resources Department representatives to discuss the Evaro wildlife corridor and other issues presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for U.S. Highway 93. As a result of this meeting, we agreed that there are several deficiencies in the document. These deficiencies must be addressed and followed by an opportunity for both of our governments to review the corrections to the document before it is released again for public comment. These deficiencies include but are not limited to:

* Several existing road deficiencies are mentioned in the DEIS, yet there is no mention as to what degree correction of these deficiencies could improve the safety and capacity of the corridor. This information is needed for evaluating the alternatives. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the Somers to Whitefish project recommend 10-foot shoulders where feasible. If wider shoulders are known to improve capacity, then 10-foot shoulders should be evaluated for this project as well.
* Although Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is described, it is not fully incorporated into the analysis of the alternatives. In addition, TDM studies are only being conducted in Lake County. These studies should be conducted for the other counties affected by the proposed highway reconstruction.
* The DEIS does not make an effort to correlate with other proposed highway projects and corresponding environmental documents in western Montana, such as on Highway 200 from Ravalli to Dixon and other sections of Highway 93, both south in Ravalli County and north from Somers to Whitefish.

* Table 6.2-1 outlines Land Use and Land Status in Lake County. This table is not very useful since much of the county is outside the Reservation boundary and, therefore, the DEIS study area.
* As a result of recent interagency meetings between biologists (including MDT staff), significant changes to the DEIS regarding wildlife mitigation, particularly at Evaro and Ninepipe, are forthcoming. We are unable to comment on several of the alternatives until this information is available.
* The preferred alternative is not shown in the Comparison of Impacts summary tables (pp. 5-17 through 5-21).
* One-third of the accidents on this stretch of Highway 93 are related to existing approaches. MDT should describe specific access management steps to improve the situation.

In addition to the deficiencies listed here, each of our respective governments has additional comments which have been mailed to you in separate correspondence. We look forward to working with you on revisions of the DEIS.

Sincerely,

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Michael T. Pablo, Chairman
Tribal Council

Missoula Board of County Commissioners

Fern Hart, Acting Chair

xc: Mr. Jim Weaver, MDT District Engineer, P.O. Box 7039, Missoula, MT 59807
Mr. Ray Brown, MDT Tribal Liaison; Montana Department of Transportation; 2701 Prospect Ave.; Helena, MT 59620-1001
Mr. Horace Brown, Missoula County Surveyor, 200 W. Broadway, Missoula, MT 59802
Ms. Ginger Thomas, DEIS ID Team CS&KT Liaison
Missoula Co. Rural Planning Office
Tribal Resource Planning Office
Chairman Chrono, DOL Chrono, Sam Morigeau, Karen Atkinson, Dale Becker

THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, Montana 59855
(406) 675-2700
FAX (406) 675-2806

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JUN 14 1995

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cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Montana
Mace

Joseph E. Dupuis - Executive Secretary
Vern L. Clairmont - Executive Treasurer
Bernice Hewankorn - Sergeant-at-Arms

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Michael T. "Mickey" Pablo - Chairman
Rhonda R. Swaney - Vice Chairwoman
Carole McCrea - Secretary
Lloyd Irvine - Treasurer
Louis Adams
Elmer "Sonny" Morigeau Jr.
Henry "Hank" Baylor
D. Fred Matt
Donald "Donny" Dupuis
Mary Lefthand

May 24, 1995

Mr. Joel Marshik, Manager
Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Subject: F 5-1(9)6, Evaro-Polson, EIS

Dear Mr. Marshik:

A-195 On April 18, representatives from the Polson community met with our Council to express concerns about the proposed truck bypass around Polson for U.S. Highway 93. They wish to preserve the cliffs and wildlife along the river, and voiced concern over the amount of traffic that would be routed through the area and the resulting noise level between the cliffs. As a result of this meeting, the Tribal Council voted to oppose the proposed truck bypass around the City of Polson, as presented in the Draft EIS for Highway 93. Please accept this letter as documentation of that opposition.

Sincerely,

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Rhonda Swaney

Michael T. Pablo, Chairman
Tribal Council

jmc
xc: Mr. Ray Brown, MDT Tribal Liaison; Montana Department of Transportation; 2701 Prospect Ave.; Helena, MT 59620-1001
Chairman Chrono
Sam Morigeau
DOL Chrono
Karen Atkinson
Ginger Thomas
Planning File
ref: form.letter.mdot

No. 5

LAKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
106 4th Ave East
Polson, MT 59860
Phone 406-883-7204
Fax 406-883-7283

MAR 28 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Consultant Doug Morrison + Maierle
Jim Weaver

March 23, 1995

Joel Marshik
Montana Department of
Transportation
P. O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Dear Mr. Marshik:

A-196 The Lake County Board of Commissioners wishes to offer our support for the recommended improvements for Highway 93 after three years of study.

The need to begin the major improvements continually grows with increased local population and tourist activities. It is also apparent that the project rights-of-way need to be secured as soon as possible before development complicates the purchases such as the case in the Kalispell/Whitefish area.

We urge the state to pursue the recommendations as soon as possible after final public review!!

If we can be of assistance feel free to call on us.

Sincerely,
BOARD OF LAKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Dave Stipe, Chairman

Mike Hutchin, Member

Barry Baker, Member

jd

MISSOULA COUNTY

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
200 W BROADWAY ST
MISSOULA MT 59802-4292
(406) 721-5700

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JUN 26 1995
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

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JUN 26 1995
MORRISON-MAIERLE/CSSA, INC.

MASTER FILE COPY

June 22, 1995

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

Mr. Joel Marshik, Manager
Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Re: F 5-1(9)6, Evaro-Polson, EIS

Dear Mr. Marshik:

A-197

We have reviewed and evaluated the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Highway 93. This is a major project which will have significant impacts on our County and we appreciate your attention to items we would like to see addressed more comprehensively. Some of our concerns are shared with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and are expressed in a joint letter mailed to you under separate cover (copy attached). A number of other concerns, however, are felt especially by Missoula County. It is the purpose of this letter to outline those concerns and request appropriate action.

The EIS should present more data that compare benefits and consequences of an expanded highway. Projections indicate population will grow and traffic will increase. The DEIS recognizes these trends but does not fully address the social and cultural impacts of the preferred alternative. At a minimum, the DEIS should address the potential affects a multiple lane highway may have on the settlement and traffic patterns of an increased population. We understand that research has been conducted regarding these impacts as part of the development of the DEIS, but results have not been incorporated into the text. This information should be made available.

Our understanding is that once the final EIS is accepted, it will be valid for two years. If construction has not begun in that time, the EIS will be re-opened for comment. In that event, we would like to reserve the opportunity to comment again. We are particularly interested in securing the opportunity to comment so that if new data is available to support a wildlife overpass, that section of the EIS may be re-evaluated.

We also feel that more attention should be paid to non-motorized transportation and request that local communities be given an opportunity to further evaluate these needs before the EIS is completed. Pathways leading into and out of communities should be incorporated into the design. Plans should be developed to allow for continuing these pathways to accommodate future growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this document. Please keep us informed of the process steps and timelines related to the EIS and possible highway construction.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Barbara Evans, Chairman

Fern Hart, Commissioner

Michael Kennedy, Commissioner

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

ER-95/209

JUN 8 1995

Mr. Henry D. Honeywell
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park Street
Helena, Montana 59626-0056

Dear Mr. Honeywell:

A-198 This is in response to the request for the Department of the Interior's comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Section 4(f) Evaluation for US-93 between Evaro and Polson, Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana.

We concur that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the parks, recreation areas and wildlife refuges named in Table 12.4-1 on page 12-18 and the two historic sites, Ravalli School and the Northern Pacific Railroad, the Dixon - Polson Branchline. We also concur with the proposed measures to minimize harm to the above Section 4(f) resources. Mitigation measures to parks, recreation areas and wildlife refuges should be coordinated with and approved by the appropriate administering agencies, and evidence to that effect should be included in the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation. A signed copy of the Memorandum of Agreement concerning measures to avoid or minimize harm to the Ravalli School and the Northern Pacific Railroad, the Dixon-Polson Branchline should be included in the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation.

The Department of the Interior has no objection to Section 4(f) approval of this project by the Department of Transportation, providing that the mitigation measures discussed above are adequately documented in the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

Willie R. Taylor
Director, Office of Environmental
Policy and Compliance

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ECOLGICAL SERVICES
100 N PARK, SUITE 320
HELENA MT 59601

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cc: Consultant file

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ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

December 4, 1995

Mr. Joel Marshik, Manager
Environmental Services
MT. Dept. Of Transportation
2701 Prospect Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Dear Mr. Marshik:

A-199 This is in response to your letter of October 16, 1995, received October 18, requesting Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) review of the biological assessment pertaining to your proposed reconstruction of U.S. Highway 93, Evaro-Polson (F 5-1(9)6) in Missoula County and Lake County, Montana.

The Service has reviewed the biological assessment and concurs with your determination that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect the threatened grizzly bear (Ursus arctos horribilis), the endangered gray wolf (Canis lupus), the endangered peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus), and the endangered bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus). Therefore, pursuant to S402.13 (a) of 50 CFR, formal consultation is not required.

If, after public review and comment, the final project design is changed so as to have effects on threatened and endangered species other than those described in the October 1995 biological assessment, a revised evaluation will need to be prepared. The Service will then issue a concurrence/nonconcurrence letter addressing the revised biological assessment.

We appreciate your efforts to ensure the conservation of these endangered species as a part of your responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act, as amended.

Sincerely,

Kemper M. McMaster
Field Supervisor
Montana Field Office

cc: Kalispell ES Suboffice

406 444 7245

Hodnik H20 19

APR 17 1995

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
ROCKY MOUNTAIN, DENVER
FIRST INTERSTATE TOWER NORTH
633 17TH ST.
DENVER, COLORADO [illegible]

MASTER FILE COPY

April 12, 1995

cc: Missoula District
Reconstruction
Marion Haile

Post-it® Fax Note 7671	Date 4-17-95	# of pages 4
To Brad Peterson	From Jill Marshik	
Co./Dept.	Co. MDT	
Phone #	Phone # 444-7632	
Fax #	Fax #	

Dear Mr. [illegible]

A-200 This is in response to your request for comments on the U.S. Highway 93 Evaro-Polson, Montana, F 5-1(9)6 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), has reviewed your DEIS with consideration of the areas of responsibility assigned to HUD. This review considered the impact of the project on housing and community development in the area. Within these parameters we find the DEIS adequate for our purposes provided that residential development is prohibited within 1000 feet of the centerline of Highway 93 to prevent adverse noise effects from highway vehicle traffic.

If I may be of further assistance, please contact me at (303) 672-5285.

Sincerely yours,

Howard S Kutzer

Howard S. Kutzer
Regional Environmental Officer
Office of Operational Support

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION VIII, MONTANA OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, 301 S. PARK, DRAWER 10096
HELENA, MONTANA 59626-0096

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MAY 1995

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cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstructio
Massile & Mai

Ref: 8MO

May 2, 1995

Mr. Joel Marshik, Manager, Environmental Services
Montana Dept. of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, Montana 59620-0001

Re: Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Statement, U.S. Highway 93-Evaro-Polson, Montana, F 5-1(9)6

Dear Mr. Marshik:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VIII, Montana Office (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the U.S. Highway 93, Evaro-Polson project.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) propose to improve 56.3 miles of U.S. Highway 93 between Evaro and Polson, Montana. The DEIS states that the project is needed to improve transportation on U.S. Highway 93, which is important to local, regional and nationwide travel. The proposed highway project is located within the Flathead Indian Reservation.

The DEIS analyzes several alignment alternatives, including various alignments through and around Polson, Ronan, and Arlee, several lane configuration alternatives, and transportation demand management measures. A preferred alternative, of a four-lane highway, with varying lane configurations, on the existing alignment from Evaro through Polson has been identified. A truck bypass around Polson has also been recommended as part of the preferred alternative. We are enclosing our comments for your consideration as you complete the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

In regard to air quality conformity for the Polson and Ronan nonattainment areas, we draw your particular attention to the need to show either that projected PM-10 emissions from construction activities and/or normal use and operation associated with the highway "build" scenario are lower than those for the "no-build" scenario, or that emissions from building the

project will be lower than emissions in 1990. Any emissions increase from the project over the "no-build" scenario in the future years must be mitigated in order for the project to conform. The FEIS must identify a specific mitigation strategy, quantify its emission benefits, include written commitments to carry out the mitigation measures (e.g., use of chemical deicer) from the agencies which will be responsible for implementation, and include a schedule for implementation of the mitigation measures. These commitments must be obtained prior to making a conformity determination for the project.

Based on the procedures EPA uses to evaluate the adequacy of the information in the EIS and the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives, the DEIS for the U.S. Highway 93-Evaro-Polson project will be listed in the Federal Register in category EC-2 (environmental concerns, insufficient information). This category indicates that EPA has identified areas of potential impacts, specifically concerning air quality, water quality, and the preservation of wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas, which should be mitigated in order to fully protect the environment. Also, the EIS requires resource information in order to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided.

The EPA appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the DEIS. If we may provide further explanation of our concerns please contact Mr. Steve Potts of my staff in Helena at (406) 449-5486 ext. 232; or if you have questions regarding the air quality conformity issues please contact Mr. Jeff Houk in our Denver Regional Office at (303) 293-1766; or for questions regarding air dispersion modeling please contact Mr. Shawn McCaffrey at (303) 293-0958. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John F. Wardell, Director
Montana Office

Enclosures

cc: Bill Geise/Arlene Butler, EPA, 8WM-EA, Denver
Jeff Houk, EPA, 8ART-AP, Denver
Gene Reetz/Dave Ruiter, EPA, 8WM-WQ, Denver
Bob McInerney/Doug McDonald, COE, Helena
Bob Nebel, COE, Planning Division, Omaha
Dale Paulson, FHWA, Helena
Kevin Shelley, USFWS, Kalispell
Jeff Chaffee/Gretchen Bennitt, Montana AQB, Helena
Lee Roberts, EPA, Denver, 8OEA
Michael T. Pablo, Chairman, CSKT, Pablo
Shawn McCaffrey, EPA, 8ART-TO, Denver

EPA Comments On Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the U.S. Highway 93, Evaro-Polson Project

ORGANIZATION

1) We encourage inclusion of a comprehensive Table of Contents at the beginning of the FEIS. This would allow the reader to more easily locate specific sections or topics of interest, and enable the reader to identify the entire content and organization of the EIS at a glance. It would also be helpful to include tabs identifying new Chapter and Appendix headings. It is unwieldy to the reader to scatter the Table of Contents throughout the EIS.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES WITH OTHER AGENCIES

1) We note for Section 2.6 of the DEIS that the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) has recently received Clean Water Act (CWA) approval to establish tribal Water Quality Standards. The CSKT will also obtain CWA Section 401 certification authority over Federally licensed or permitted activities that may result in a discharge to waters of the U.S., including wetlands.

A-201 AIR QUALITY

Conformity

1) Both Polson and Ronan are classified as PM-10 air quality nonattainment areas. The segments of the proposed highway project located within the Polson and Ronan nonattainment areas must be shown to conform to State or Federal Implementation Plans. Since neither Polson nor Ronan has a PM-10 State Implementation Plan (SIP), there is no mobile source "emission budget" for PM-10. In such situations the FHWA and MDT must show either that projected PM-10 emissions from construction activities and/or normal use and operation associated with the "build" scenario must be lower than those for the "no-build" scenario, or that emissions from building the project will be lower than emissions in 1990. Emissions must be calculated within the Polson and Ronan nonattainment area boundaries.

While the analysis does provide traffic estimates and emissions rates for different scenarios, it does not summarize total emissions for the build and no-build scenarios, as required by the conformity rule. Also, the analysis must account for any other regionally significant roadway projects which are expected in the project area over the analysis timeframe similar to the regional analysis which was completed for Kalispell in 1994.

2) Any emissions increase from the project over the "no-build" scenario in the future years must be mitigated in order for the project to conform. The FEIS must identify a specific mitigation strategy, quantify its emission benefits, include written commitments to carry out the mitigation measures (e.g., use of chemical deicer) from the agencies which will be responsible for implementation, and include a schedule for implementation of the mitigation measures. These commitments must be obtained prior to making a conformity determination for the project.

Also, the FHWA and MDT should calculate the benefit of any transportation demand measures and apply them to the "build" scenario to make this demonstration. The public should have access to the emissions information upon which the record of decision is ultimately based, and the conformity rule requires the conformity determination to be accompanied by its supporting documentation. The control measures for limiting PM-10 emissions from the construction activities and/or normal use and operation associated with the project must be included in the final plans, specifications, and estimates for the project.

3) We draw your attention to the methodology used for the air quality impact analysis and conformity determination for the Whitefish portion of the U.S. Highway 93 Somers-Whitefish Project. We recommend that this same methodology be used for the U.S. Highway 93 Evaro-Polson Project. The results of the analysis and conformity determination should be disclosed in the FEIS in accordance with the above two comments.

A-202 Air Dispersion Modeling

1) On page 7.7-2 it is stated that the SCREEN model was used for the air dispersion modeling for the potential PM-10 impacts of the project. EPA believes that the CALINE 3 dispersion model should be used in lieu of SCREEN to model the potential PM-10 impacts of the project. If the modeling results show exceedances of the NAAQS, those particular road segments should be mitigated appropriately to show compliance.

2) The air quality analysis should indicate whether or not the baseline date for PM-10 has been triggered in the vicinity of the project. If this is the case, a Class I PSD increment analysis for PM-10 should be conducted to evaluate the effect of this project and other changes in emissions that have occurred since the baseline date was triggered.

3) A conservative screening visibility analysis should be conducted to determine if visibility impairment is expected within the Flathead Indian Reservation.

A-203

WETLANDS

1) The Wetlands Section 7.10 of the Environmental Consequences Chapter fails to clearly disclose the direct wetland impacts of the preferred alternative. Table 7.10-1 identifies wetland impacts of the alternative lane configurations along the existing alignment. The preferred alternative, however, involves a combination of lane configurations along different segments of the 56.3 mile highway project. A reader cannot clearly identify the wetland impacts of the preferred alternative by reviewing Table 7.10.

The FEIS should correct this deficiency and include a clearer display of the wetland impacts of the preferred alternative, including acreage, and function and value of impacted wetlands to the extent that function and value information is available. This information is needed to assess the functions and values of impacted wetlands, and the adequacy of the wetlands mitigation plan in replacing these lost functions and values. We note that mitigation to provide compensation for unavoidably lost wetlands should focus upon replacement of lost wetland functions and values.

We recommend that the individual wetlands in the proximity of the highway, shown in the Appendix A aerial photographs, that will be encroached upon due to implementation of the preferred alternative, be specifically identified (i.e., To what extent will each wetland shown in the aerial photos be impacted?). This will allow the EIS reader to better evaluate avoidance/minimization measures, and individual wetland impacts.

2) It is stated on Page 7.10-2 that the wetland mitigation goal is "no net loss of wetland area or quality." As noted above it would be more consistent with National Wetlands Policy to state that the goal of wetland mitigation is "no net loss of wetland function and value."

3) The analysis and disclosure of less environmentally damaging alternatives to placement of fill in wetlands or other aquatic resource habitats needs to be strengthened. The discussion of avoidance on page 7.10-3 should include a more thorough analysis of all possible alternatives to avoid and minimize wetland and aquatic resource habitat impacts. These alternatives can include project design changes including roadway alignment reconfiguration, modifications to size and configuration, bridges, construction on pilings as opposed to fill, abandonment of realignment proposals in

highly sensitive areas, or use of safety devices to meet road safety objectives.

4) We understand from discussions with Corps staff that the proposed site for the new Polson truck bypass Flathead River bridge may impact a special aquatic site possessing valuable ecological characteristics (such sites are defined in 40 CFR Part 230 Subpart E). Particular attention should be paid to avoidance of impacts at special aquatic sites. We recommend evaluation alternative bridge locations that avoid special aquatic sites.

5) A specific detailed wetland mitigation plan that provides for adequate replacement of lost wetland functions and values will need to be prepared and approved by the appropriate agencies before implementation of the proposed project. This mitigation plan should include consideration of both direct, indirect, and cumulative effects. It should contain a statement of goals, a monitoring plan, long-term management/protection objectives and a commitment to conduct additional work, if required, to meet the goals of the plan. The wetland mitigation plan may be prepared and submitted under separate cover and referenced in the FEIS.

6) The draft 404(b)(1) Evaluation in Appendix C does not fully address 404(b)(1) requirements. Among the more important information missing from the draft US 93 Evaro-Polson 404(b(1) Evaluation are the following:

* Identification of the location, size, and type of the individual of 404 discharge sites in waters of the U.S., including wetlands, and the estimated quantity of fill placed in each site, for the preferred alternative.

* Adequate discussion of "appropriate and practicable steps to minimize potential adverse impacts of the discharges on the aquatic ecosystem" (i.e., specific discussion of project modifications to avoid and minimize discharges to streams and special aquatic sites, and a detailed mitigation plan to provide compensation for unavoidable wetland impacts).

* Adequate discussion and evaluation of individual 404 fills for findings of compliance for 40 CFR Part 230.11, Subpart B, Factual Determinations, and potential impacts for Subparts C, D, and E (i.e., Endangered Species Act determinations; evaluation of individual river and creek culverts, bridge spans, and other fill encroachments for adequate flood flow capacity, sediment and bedload transport, fish & wildlife passage; etc.,).

* Evaluation of timing and duration of 404 discharges to streams during construction to determine that disruption of

the migration or other movement of indigenous aquatic species shall not occur, and that discharges in spawning areas shall not occur, unless no other practical alternatives exist.

We also refer the FHWA and MDT and their consultant to the draft 404(b)(1) Evaluation for the US 93 Somers-Whitefish Project (included in Appendix B of the Somers-Whitefish FEIS), which addresses 404(b)(1) matters for a highway project more completely than the draft Evaro-Polson 404(b)(1) Evaluation.

A-204 WATER QUALITY/FLOODPLAINS/STREAM CROSSINGS

1) It would be helpful if the project maps in the Appendix (Figure A-2) that show stream locations in relationship to proposed project alignments were referenced at the beginning of Section 6.9. Review of these maps allows for better understanding of water quality, watershed, and fisheries impacts.

2) It is stated on page 6.9-5 that Polson is in the process of delineating a wellhead protection area to the south and east of town surrounding the municipal water supply wells and including a buffer area. It is also stated that a wellhead protection area is proposed on property owned by the public schools on the east side of Arlee. We recommend that the boundaries for these proposed wellhead protection areas be identified on a map that shows these areas in relation to proposed highway alignments. This will assist in evaluation and understanding of potential highway impacts upon these areas.

3) The discussion of wellhead protection areas on page 7.9-5 and 7.9-8 does not clearly describe or disclose the potential for contamination of ground water in these areas and potential risks to public health. An assessment of activities and potential contaminants used in the highway project should be conducted to determine risk of the project to ground water. Mitigation measures should be developed to assure that the potable ground water is adequately protected from the identified risks.

4) Section 6.11.3 (page 6.11-1) neglects to note that the Flathead River is also crossed with a bridge.

5) The statement on page 7.9-2 (end of 1st paragraph) that, "expected sediment introduction into the river resulting from a major storm occurring during construction will amount to three to four percent of current sediment loadings", is unclear. Does this refer to three to four percent of the 115 tons per day noted in the previous sentence? (i.e., Is it predicted that sediment delivery to the Jocko River during construction could be 3.5 to 4.6 ton per day?)

Sediment loadings to area streams from storm water runoff during construction should be described more clearly. We note that the FHWA and MDT should assure that all appropriate sediment and erosion control measures are provided for during project planning and design, and implemented during construction to minimize sediment delivery to streams and to assure protection of water quality and aquatic habitat. Stormwater runoff permit and pollution prevention plan requirements should be prominently identified and described in the FEIS. We encourage MDT to contact Mr. Paul Montgomery of the EPA Office in Helena at (406) 449-5486 ext. 234 regarding storm water permitting requirements.

6) Maintenance and Debris Disposal - Road standards and design have a major effect on scheduled and unscheduled maintenance needs. The needs for normally scheduled maintenance and debris disposal from ditch cleaning, sanding as well as anticipated but unscheduled maintenance, such as debris from slumps, should be analyzed and planned for during the design phase of construction and reconstruction projects. Practices of expediently sidecasting material over the shoulder, filling depressions and widening shoulders can have an adverse effects upon streams, wetlands, and riparian areas, and are inappropriate. Plans for long term normal as well as emergency maintenance programs should be disclosed in the NEPA document. Plans for management of roadside vegetation through the use of herbicides also require disclosure.

7) Winter maintenance - The EPA is concerned about the proximity of streams, wetlands and riparian areas to roads. Winter maintenance often results in the introduction of sediment either directly or indirectly to the stream and associated riparian and wetland resources. The impacts of winter maintenance activities are more a matter of a long term indirect and cumulative effects than of one specific incident. Snow plowing subsequent to sanding moves sand off the roadbed to the adjacent ditch line and fill slopes. When this sand moves into streams and wetlands adverse impacts occur. When winter highway maintenance activities potentially affect streams and wetlands the effects of the program should be disclosed in the NEPA document. This should include the steps taken to minimize and mitigate the unavoidable effects on waters of the United States (i.e. sediment traps, reuse of sanding material, maintenance program requirements, etc.) as well as a discussion of the effects themselves.

8) We support widening of the existing bridges at the Flathead River, Jocko River, and Post Creek stream crossings as noted in Section 7.11.3. We also support provision of an adequate span on the proposed new Flathead River bridge, wherever it may ultimately be located (note our comment # 4 under WETLANDS), to provide sufficient flood flow capacity, improved fish passage, and minimal encroachment upon the river channel and riparian area.

We also note from review of Table 6.11-1 (page 6.11-2) that Mission Creek and Crow Creek have significant drainage areas (48.6 and 49.3 square miles, respectively). Both streams are stated to have "important fishery values" (page 6.12-1). It is noted (page 7.12-3) that a 40-75 foot bridge span is being considered for the Mission Creek crossing for bear and other wildlife passage. We recommend that the FHWA and MDT construct a bridge at the Mission Creek crossing, and also consider construction of a bridge at the Crow Creek crossing with adequate spans to provide flood flow capacity, improved fish passage, reduced channel/riparian area encroachment, and opportunities for wildlife passage.

9) The unavoidable channel change for Spring Creek near Ravalli should be carefully planned and designed to allow construction of a stable and biologically functional stream channel (e.g., incorporating aquatic habitat features such as pools, riffles, spawning gravels, etc.,). Enclosed is a copy of the publication "Handbook for Reclamation of Placer Mined Stream Environments in Western Montana," Inter-Fluve, Inc., 1991. This Handbook (prepared to provide guidance for reconstruction of stream channels disturbed by placer mining) provides instruction on planning, design, and construction of stable, biologically functional stream channels. This guidance is useful for planning, designing, and constructing channel changes.

9) Provisions for hazardous waste containment in case of a spill should be described.

A-205 **LAND USE AND PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

1) The EPA is concerned that construction of a four lane highway from Evaro to Polson may induce and hasten changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, which may result in adverse effects to air and water resources, wetlands and wildlife habitat, and other natural systems. We believe a more thorough analysis and disclosure of the potential for the preferred alternative to induce or hasten land use changes and growth rates, that result in adverse effects to air and water resources, and wetlands and wildlife habitat, and other environmentally sensitive areas should be included in the FEIS.

A-206 2) EPA encourages the FHWA and MDT to use access control to the greatest extent possible to support compact development within existing communities rather than strip development, and to discourage induced development in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, riparian areas, floodplains, important wildlife habitat, and in prime and unique farmland.

A-207 3) We agree with the recommendation of Alignment 1 along the existing US 93 corridor from Evaro to Polson. We believe utilization of this existing highway corridor for an improved highway is environmentally preferable to construction of a new highway along alternative alignments.

4) We suggest that FHWA and MDT analyze the potential for traffic congestion at the transition of the two lane (lane configuration A) to four lane highway (lane configuration C) at Polson, and plan and design accordingly to minimize such congestion.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, OMAHA DISTRICT
215 NORTH 17TH STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-1978

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF

March 5, 1996

Regulatory Branch
PO Box 5, Omaha, Nebraska 68101-0005

A-208

Mr. Dale Paulson
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park, Room 448
Drawer 10056
Helena, Montana 59626-0056

Dear Mr. Paulson:

This letter is in response to your request that the Corps of Engineers comment on the two-lane highway improvement alternative that is stated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). As stated in your letter of January 23, 1996, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes requested that the two-lane highway analysis be included in the EIS.

The National Environmental Policy Act requires that reasonable alternatives be presented and evaluated in detail in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Reasonable alternatives are defined by the Council on Environmental Quality as those that are practical or feasible from a technical or economic standpoint.

As a cooperating agency, we recognize that the lead agency retains the right to determine what alternatives should or should not be carried forward in the DEIS for further consideration. We feel, however, that you should be made aware of our needs as it pertains to an alternative (b)(1) perspective.

The 404(b)(1) guidelines (40 CFR Part 230.10 (a)), are the substantive criteria for evaluation of discharges of dredged or fill material under the Clean Water Act and provide that no discharge or dredged or fill material be permitted if there is a practicable alternative that would have less adverse impact upon the aquatic ecosystem, as long as the alternative does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences. Practicable alternatives are those that are reasonable from a logistical, technical, and economic standpoint.

With regard to the two-lane highway alternative--you will have to determine if it is a reasonable alternative. If it is, we would like the EIS to show the comparison of the two-lane

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highway alternative presented in relation to the other alternatives from a environmental perspective with regard to its impacts on aquatic resources (acres, functions, and values) from a technical, logistical and economic analysis.

If this alternative is dismissed as not being reasonable, based upon the preliminary assessment of these comparisons or other screening criteria (possible safety, capacity, etc.), it would still have to be included in the write-up for alternatives considered and dismissed as part of chapter two narrative in the EIS.

We would like the opportunity to review your screening criteria; especially any environmental criteria. If you determine that the two-lane alternative is a reasonable alternative which meets your purpose and need, then we will likely have to identify it as a practical alternative for purposes of 404. Once this is done we will have to compare its impacts to the other alternatives and, if its impacts to the aquatic ecosystem are less than the other alternatives, then the two-lane alternative would be the one we would have to permit.

We believe it is inappropriate for us to comment on whether or not the two lane alternative is a reasonable one or not. We believe that this is essentially a purpose and need determination for which your agency is better suited than ours. Recognize, as I have stated above, that if you determine the two-lane alternative to be a reasonable one under NEPA, then we will have to consider it a practical alternative under 404.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Gorton
Chief, Regulatory Branch
Operations Division

Copy Furnished:

Mr. Joel Marshik
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena, Montana 59620-1001

THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, Montana 59855
(406) 675-2700
FAX (406) 675-2806

April 5, 1996

A-209

Mr. Joel Marshik
Manager, Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

RE: TRIBAL COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE HIGHWAY 93 - EVARO TO POLSON PROJECT

Dear Mr. Marshik:

Please accept this letter as the official comments of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes on the Draft Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Highway 93 - Evaro to Polson Project. The Tribes' comments are these (all citations are to section and page numbers within the DFEIS):

VOLUME I

Page 2-7: Paragraph 9: Given the number of towns and access points along the highway, it is unrealistic to say that "congestion will be eliminated" with a four-lane design. Granted, additional travel lanes will increase capacity, but even interstate highways experience congestion during peak travel times without the access conflicts that exist on Highway 93.

Page 5-35: Second paragraph: Delete the third sentence which reads: "The CSKT, which is also a member of the ID Team, has not made a recommendation for a preferred alternative." Substitute a statement which identifies that the Tribes have recommended a preferred alternative and identify how the Tribal preferred alternative is incorporated into the EIS. Upon review of this section and the Tribes' statement of preferred alternative, it appears that the Tribal preferred alternative could easily be inserted section by section in the existing format. To do so would only require subsection headings denoting the ID Team preferred alternative and the Tribes' preferred alternatives within each substantive section.

Page 5-48: Table 5.3-2, second row, change Unnamed Road to Kicking Horse Road.

Section 6.1: Speed plays a key role when considering stopping distances for access and other traffic operation and is a critical factor when judging LOS. Little mention is given regarding average travel speeds along different segments of the highway. Average travel speeds should be included in the substance of this section delineated by highway segment.

This EIS fails to fully meet the spirit and intent of ISTEA with regard to energy efficiency. The EIS should more adequately analyze this project's potential impact on energy consumption with regard to different modes of transportation and the different alternatives. For instance: (a) no analysis of the relative efficiency of alternative modes of transport is made (i.e. rail vs. auto/truck); (b) no estimate of increased fuel consumption related to highway stimulated growth is made; and (c) no analysis of what impact increased capacity will have on the incentive to carpool, walk, bicycle or take fewer trips is made.

MDT proposes more than six miles of continuous left-turn lane in areas without a quantified daytime speed limit. As the Tribes commented previously (6/12/92 correspondence), FHWA recommends this design only "in urban areas with extensive development and running speeds of 45 miles per hour or less." FHWA lists problems such as an increase in accident severity, ineffective marking when snowpacked and difficulty for older drivers in judging approaching vehicle speeds and making left turns. In response, this document should stipulate that speed limits must be lower in all areas where continuous left-turn lanes are built unless access is designed so that simultaneous deceleration by two vehicles travelling in opposite directions in the turn lane can be safely accomplished at the pace speed.

Page 6.1-3: Table 6.1-1, the column regarding speed limits should be changed to reflect recent changes in Montana Traffic law. The segments with a speed limit denoted as "55" now are 55 mph at night and "reasonable and prudent" during daylight hours. Also, research by the Tribal Planning Office shows that many more highway segments have only 1-2 feet of paved shoulder than is indicated in the column regarding shoulder width.

Page 6.2-6: Second paragraph, reference should be made to Table 6.2-4 here, otherwise no reference is made to it.

Page 6.4-3: This section has been amended to state that the Indian population is steadily increasing on the Flathead Reservation. The Tribal Planning Office concurs with this general thesis, but objects to the percentages used to support this thesis in the DFEIS because that data as stated is misleading and fails to fully account for cumulative effects on Indian population density. While the Indian population grew 36% from 1980 to 1990, when compared to the total Reservation population, the growth rate was only 7%. And although the rate was higher than non-Indian growth in the 80's, the trend throughout this century has been that non-Indian growth has outpaced Indian growth. For example, using the EIS population data for 1970-1980 and defining the percentage of Indian growth as it relates to the whole Reservation population, should result in showing that Indian population increased only 6% while non-Indian population increased 15%. The culture committees and elders can attest to the impacts of this disparate growth rate.

Page 6.7-1: Fifth paragraph, delete the last sentence which states "EPA regulations, NAAQS regulations and local tribal regulations apply." Insert in its place the following: "EPA regulations, and NAAQS regulations apply and are supported by local Tribal Air Quality Program oversight. The federal government maintains enforcement authority. Such authority necessarily recognizes Tribal Class I Air Quality Redesignation for the Flathead Reservation."

Page 6.7-2: Regarding section 6.7.4: The control strategies to prevent NAAQS exceedence contained within the TSD should be added to the mitigation activities which MDT has committed to in writing. At present, there is no Federal Implementation Plan in place for remedying Non-Attainment Areas within the Flathead Indian Reservation. The State Implementation Plan is only enforceable against off-Reservation sources. In the absence an enforceable implementation plan, the simplest and clearest method to assure enforceability of the control strategies is for MDT to identify the control strategies in this section and commit to carrying such control strategies out as mitigation in section 7.7.5 of this document.

Page 6.14-1: Second paragraph, delete the term "gathered" and replace it with "harvested". Representatives of the Kootenai Culture Committee believe that the term "harvested" more accurately represents the historical activities undertaken by their ancestors.

Fifth and Sixth paragraphs, delete the last three sentences of the fifth paragraph (begins with "In signing") and the entirety of the sixth paragraph. Replace with: The Hellgate Treaty provided that the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes "ceded, relinquished, and conveyed" to the United States their "right, title, and interest" in much of what is now Western Montana, reserving the present Flathead Indian Reservation to the exclusive use and occupancy of the Tribes. Pursuant to the Hellgate Treaty, the Tribes also retained certain specific proprietary and usufructuary rights to the use of their off-Reservation aboriginal homelands. The Tribes reserved to themselves hunting , fishing, harvesting and grazing rights in their aboriginal territory, as well as the right of passage through such aboriginal territory, in perpetuity, among other rights. The Tribes reserved as their "permanent homeland" an area of land known today as the Flathead Indian Reservation.

Sections 6.14 and 7.14: The following comments are submitted by the Flathead Culture Committee: We repeat our concerns from our letter to then-Chairman Pablo on June 26, 1995, which were not responded to by the MDT:

"1) As the DFEIS now stands, the chapters on "Cultural Resources" (6.14 and 7.14) make no mention of the highway's impacts on animals populations. These instead are restricted to the "Fish and Wildlife" and "Threatened and Endangered Species" sections. We wish to emphasize , however, that impacts to animal species also constitute cultural impacts. We maintain a special relationship with the animals that goes to the heart of our cultural ways. Our Elders have consistently expressed their distress and concern about the highway's impacts on animals -- both directly, in terms of animals being killed by cars on the roadway, and indirectly, by animals being pushed out of their homes, which we fear may be spurred by certain design alternatives. Our culture is hurt as these animals are hurt, whether it is turtles killed on the road, or by the roads and homes that follow the road being built where grizzly bears live."

"2) We continue to have concerns about several of the other environmental impacts that are predicted in the DFEIS. These include noise impacts, water quality, and air quality, all of which are crucial to our cultural ways."

"Noise in the vicinity of the highway is predicted to double or triple if a four-lane road is built. This appears to be based on conservative estimates that do not anticipate higher traffic speeds or greater traffic volumes with this design, which would raise the noise levels even higher. It also does not appear to take into account the noise generated by secondary development that may be increased by such a design. We wonder how much noise levels would increase by such a design. We wonder how much noise levels would increase throughout the Reservation area, if all these factors were taken into consideration for each of the design alternatives. Solitude, a pristine environment, and privacy are required for many of our cultural practices. Traffic noise can already be heard by people high up on the western face of the Mission Range. Worsening this situation would also worsen the cultural impacts."

"Likewise, air quality and water quality are also important concerns for our cultural survival. In these many other areas, the DFEIS does not seem to consider secondary and indirect impacts in estimating the changes that would occur with each of the design alternatives."

We would add only that the MDT's response to Tribal comments seems to continue their pattern of presenting (and shoring up) an argument for a multi-lane highway, rather than an objective and even-handed assessment of all the alternative and the various impacts.

Page 7.7-1: Generally: The Air Quality Section of the DFEIS is deficient relative to supporting assumptions of decreased tail pipe and PM/10 emissions. One case in point is the Polson bypass (Section 7.7.2, paragraph 1, page 7.7-1). This section purports that the bypass will reduce emissions in Polson. The conformity analysis found in appendix F of the DFEIS states "the diversion of just 1,000 vehicle per day, for example, would reduce daily PM/10 emissions in Polson by approximately 160 pounds." Such assumptions should be supported by quantitative modeling data which incorporates prevailing wind speed, wind direction, the location of the bypass, etc.

Section 7.7.1: Although Appendix F of the DFEIS issues a decision on the required conformity analysis, no quantification data as provided to support the decision. There should be condensed data table available to the reader to view and verify the conformity analysis decision.

Page 7.7-2: The mitigation measures should not be discretionary. The word "considered" should be deleted and replaced by "undertake."

Page 7.15-1: Third paragraph, delete "quantity" and replace it with "quality".

Page 7.20-1: Third paragraph, delay the construction start date of "no earlier than 1996" to 1999 or other more realistic year.

VOLUME II

Page 2.3-3: A-14, the statement: [t]he regatta grounds are part of the Lake County Fairgrounds" is not correct. The regatta is an event that has been cooperatively sponsored by several local government entities in the past. The regatta historically has been held annually, but has not been held since 1993. The actual race occurs on the Flathead River, just downstream from the bridge at Polson. There are boat launch and grandstand facilities for the regatta located on the north bank of the River within the Lake County Fairgrounds. The bed and banks of the River are beneficially owned by the Tribes, with title held in trust by the United States. The surfaceof the River is under regulatory jurisdiction of the Tribes and is not a part of the Fairgrounds. In the past, the Tribes have issued special Tribal Recreation Permits sanctioning the event. However, there has been no special designation of the reach of River upon which the regatta occurs as either a park or a recreation ground by the Tribes. Federal law (49 U.S.C. § 302) authorizes "the Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction over the . . . site" as the appropriate body to make the determination of whether or not the site is a park or recreation area for purposes of 4(f) designation. State and county officials have no jurisdiction over the Flathead River. Either the Tribes or the Superintendent of the Flathead Agency, BIA are the "officials" with such jurisdiction in this instance. Neither the Tribes, nor the Superintendent have specifically reviewed this site with regard to its 4(f) status, thus it is premature to conclude that this not a 4(f) site until it is reviewed and a determination made.

Page 2.3-6: MDT's response #A-38 to the Tribes is not accurate. Polson was in fact handled differently from the other communities. A special study was commissioned early in the NEPA process for Polson. A separate consultant was hired for the project who, among other things, conducted an exit poll at voting places during an election to gather opinion regarding the Polson bypass issue. No other communities had similar study.

Page 2.3-22: A-187 (A-6), the following comments are submitted by the Flathead Culture Committee: The MDT argues that a multi-lane configuration, by making commuting easier for tribal members and so preventing the need for them to leave the Reservation, "may contribute to the retention of 'the preponderance of tribal people in certain areas of the reservation.'"

The MDT knows and has admitted that the four-lane would make commuting far easier. They know and have admitted this would bring in many more non-Indians (we feel they have underestimated these numbers). They know that these new non-Indians would dwarf whatever tiny numbers of tribal members might turn to commuting to Missoula after construction of such a highway (if indeed any would). So they know their plan would further reduce the percentage of tribal members among the Reservation's total population, especially in crucial areas for our tribal survival such as for our Salish language to survive, for our people to raise their children with a clear and strong sense of their identity, of who they are as a people and as a sovereign nation. They know their plan would strike a devastating blow to our people, to our culture which is now already under siege. We are working hard to hang onto our ways against great odds, but if this highway is built, it will become even more difficult.

The MDT knows all of this; they acknowledged it already. So their statement in A-6 is, to be frank, just a grotesque lie. They show themselves willing to resort to any level of falsehood and misrepresentation to sell their product. This statement seems to us only further proof that the MDT, an extremely powerful agency, is completely unfeeling and indifferent toward the effect of their road-building upon a people who have been lied to, manipulated, and abused by virtually every white agency and white official we have been forced to deal with in our history.

We can imagine only one truth in the MDT statement. A four or five-lane plan might lead to termination in a couple of decades, just as the railroad led to the opening of the Reservation. If that were to happen, we would all have to commute to Missoula seeking jobs, since the Tribes would no longer exist.

Page 2.3-22: A-189 (A-15), the following comments are submitted by the Flathead Culture Committee: If the EIS cannot estimate its impacts farther than 20 or 30 years, but it is clear that will have some kind of impacts far into the future beyond that point, then the project should not be built. That is the wisdom of the Elders. Consider the impacts for many generations to come. If one cannot anticipate the impacts, then a conservative approach is best -- hold off. The failure of non-Indian society to abide by this simple wisdom has brought repeated, unanticipated disasters to our country and our world.

This section mentions the EIS's discussion of the historical impact of the railroad (6.14). We are concerned, however, that this remains merely a discussion. Essentially, the EIS has acknowledged the devastating impact of the railroad on the Reservation, and the many ways in which we could expect their plan for Highway 93 to have a similar impact. The MDT essentially is saying, who cares? They realize they could not possibly "mitigate" such an impact. They appear to be arguing that some small cultural "education" programs would offset the impact of $200 million construction project.

Regarding the last paragraph: the point must be repeated that while yes, the transportation system is not the only factor affecting growth, it is the biggest single factor that we have the power to control.

We trust that these comments will be duly noted and incorporated in the Final EIS. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Joe Hovenkotter, Tribal Legal Department at (406)675-2700 ext. 460.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Swaney

Rhonda Swaney
Chairwoman - Tribal Council

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

A-1 Revision of the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) has been coordinated with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Revisions have been developed with tribal staff, and pertinent new information is available for review by the tribal council. A copy of the final EIS has been provided to the Tribes for review before it is released to the public.

A-2 Comment noted.

For the communities Arlee, Ronan and Polson, the draft EIS and final EIS identify a highway bypass as the safest alignment alternative. This is because traffic (most importantly heavy truck traffic) will be removed from inside the communities where homes and businesses are congregated and where school children and other pedestrians cross the highway.

Bypasses are not designated as part of the preferred alternative at Arlee and Ronan because of opposition from the community teams (including representatives of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes), officials of local schools and government, residents of the communities, and business persons in the communities. The opposition is due mainly to concern about adverse impacts to businesses.

A-3 A private engineering firm, designated by the Tribes, has been hired by the MDT to conduct the referenced speed studies. No results of the studies are available at this time. Results will be provided to and discussed with the tribal council when they are received.

A-4 There probably is an infinite number of combination alternatives that can be evaluated with the proposed action. For that reason, tables in the document show, segment by segment, what impacts will occur with each lane configuration. A reader can readily extract information from the document for each specific segment and determine what impacts will occur.

The preferred alternative, which includes mostly Lane Configurations B and C, was developed by the Interdisciplinary (ID) Team. Two-lane sections were not included in the preferred alternative (except through Polson where substantial traffic will be removed by a bypass) because two lanes will not adequately accommodate existing or projected traffic volumes.

Lane Configuration A includes all features of the proposal made by the Flathead Resource Organization for an improved two-lane highway, except slow-moving vehicle turnouts.

A-5 Impacts of the preferred alternative are listed in tables in the final EIS.

A-6 Additional information was added to Sections 6.4 and 7.4, Social, and 6.14 and 7.14, Cultural Resources, to address the social and cultural issues of impacts associated with growth and development.

Section 7.4 in the final EIS presents an estimate of commuter-related population growth for the Flathead Indian Reservation. The estimate of commuter-related population growth is based on assumptions about increasing rates of growth for the overall population and economy of the region, including the Flathead Indian Reservation and Missoula County.

The estimate represents the effects of improvement of the transportation system combined with a mix of other factors that are a part of overall growth and development. The total amount of growth in the estimate should not be attributed solely to the proposed action to improve US 93.

A number of variables will influence the "ability of the Tribes to maintain a cohesive reservation community." However, growth in the population of the reservation (with all its attendant secondary effects), is of particular concern.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Cont'd)

The rate of population growth is increasing in many rural areas of western Montana. It is likely the rural areas and small towns of the reservation will be attractive to anyone seeking to live in such an environment. An increase in population within the reservation could result in an increase in the types of social problems that one typically associates with larger cities (drug abuse, youth gangs, etc.) Such social problems are not compatible with the cultural values and practices of the Salish and Kootenai people.

Alternatively, an improved transportation corridor also may produce positive effects on the cultural environment of the reservation. With an improved roadway, tribal members may find it is possible to retain their residency on the reservation while working in urban areas such as Missoula. This and other factors (such as the proportionately higher rate of increase in the Indian population of the reservation) may contribute to the retention of the preponderance of tribal people in certain areas of the reservation. This is a concern of the Flathead Culture Committee.[1]

Also, there are people employed on the reservation who prefer to live in an urban area to be closer to university facilities, larger schools, shopping and other amenities. Improvement of the transportation system facilitates this.

Analysis of the effects of an increased commuter-related population for cultural resources in Sections 6.14 and 7.14 has been coordinated with the Flathead and Kootenai culture committees.

A-7 Refer to Response A-6.

A-8 Refer to Response A-6.

A-9 Comment noted.

A-10 Comment noted.

A-11 Refer to Response A-6.

A-12 Section 7.1.3.2 discusses the process MDT will use to provide access management for the proposed action. An access control plan will be developed for the proposed action after completion of the final EIS and record of decision (ROD). The Montana Department of Transportation will coordinate the access control plan with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Lake and Missoula counties and incorporated communities St. Ignatius, Ronan and Polson.

A-13 As explained in Section 12.1 of the Section 4(f) Evaluation contained in the draft EIS and final EIS, impacts such as "noise, air pollution, and general unsightliness" are considered "constructive use" of the site. In Section 12.4 of the Section 4(f) Evaluation, it is indicated, for each site, whether constructive use will occur.

Lane Configuration A, a two-lane improved highway similar to the Flathead Resource Organization's (FRO) concept, has been evaluated in the Section 4(f) Evaluation and elsewhere in the draft EIS and final EIS.

As indicated in Section 5.3.2 of the draft EIS and final EIS, an improved two-lane highway will not meet the purpose and need of the proposed action and is therefore not considered a reasonable and prudent alternative.

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[1]Letter from Flathead Culture Committee to Mr. Michael T. Pablo, Chairman of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. June 4, 1992.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Cont'd)

A-14 The Section 4(f) legislation applies to publicly owned land of public parks or recreation areas; wildlife/waterfowl refuges; land of a historic site of National, State or local significance.

Section 4(f) use can occur in two ways. One is a "use" when land from a Section 4(f) site is acquired for a transportation project. The other is when the proximity impacts of the transportation project on the Section 4(f) site, without acquisition of land, are so great that the purpose for which the Section 4(f) site exists are substantially impaired (constructive use). Such substantial impairment would occur when the proximity impacts of Section 4(f) lands are sufficiently serious that the value of the site in terms of its prior significance and enjoyment are substantially reduced or lost.

The following addresses both potential 4(f) uses regarding the regatta grounds:

1. Direct Use - The alignment including the new bridge proposed as part of the preferred alternative, Alignment 3, would not require the use of any property from the Lake County Fairgrounds. The regatta grounds are part of the Lake County Fairgrounds. The route of Alignment 3 is located just south of Polson airport, several hundred feet south of the fairgrounds.

The Flathead River is not a 4(f) site. In general, rivers are not subject to the requirements of Section 4(f), with the exception of wild and scenic rivers and publicly-owned rivers which are designated as recreational trails.

2. Constructive Use - The regatta grounds viewing area is located on the Lake County Fairgrounds. The fairground site is 47 acres; activities include rodeos, county fairs, livestock displays, powwows, and regatta races. Facilities include an enclosed rodeo arena, a half-mile track, an announcer's box, bleachers, animal pens, corrals, a barn, a powwow ring, and a regatta dock. The fairgrounds are owned and managed by Lake County. Under the 4(f) definition, the fairgrounds, including the regatta area, is considered a 4(f) site.

The annual regatta event is viewed from the regatta grounds as well as other locations along the Flathead River. The regatta grounds are not used solely for the annual regatta viewing, but are used for other events throughout the year including fireworks viewing. The boat access is used by boat recreationists during summer months.

The regatta grounds are a portion of the Lake County Fairgrounds [a 4(f) site] containing a variety of facilities and uses. The regatta grounds are used for recreation other than the annual race boat event. The value of the fairgrounds and the regatta grounds in terms of its prior significance and enjoyment would not be substantially reduced or lost. Therefore, constructive use does not apply to the regatta grounds.

A-15 The analysis in the final EIS uses the mechanisms available through national transportation policy to address current needs for the transportation system. The analysis in the final EIS does not make assumptions about change that may occur over a period as long as 50 years for cultural and transportation issues.

The current needs of the transportation system do not present any indication that there will be further expansion of US 93 after the 20-year design period.

The Montana Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration provide commitments in the final EIS to coordinate transportation and access management with tribal and local land use planning and regulation. MDT and FHWA also provide commitment to participate in mitigation measures to support cultural preservation through education.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Cont'd)

The impact of the construction of the current highway and the railroad are discussed in Section 6.14 of the draft EIS and the final EIS.

For the existing development adjacent to the roadway, people with commercial interests have taken advantage of their proximity to the highway. Strictly commercial establishments (a bar, several restaurants, a restaurant/motel complex), as well as complexes that combine businesses/residential units (e.g., an art gallery, a post and pole plant, a trailer sales lot, a trading post/historic village) are prominent along the roadway.

When the roadway was rerouted around St. Ignatius, new development occurred not within town but adjacent to the new road. Based upon the character of existing development adjacent to the roadway, the highway has been a factor in drawing commercial development.

The importance of the roadway to existing businesses (some of which are owned by tribal members) can be seen by the comments received during the scoping meetings. Virtually all business owners demanded that the proximal relationship between the business and the roadway be maintained. The financial success of some of these businesses may be dependent upon the retention of unrestricted access.

A few residential subdivisions also have occurred adjacent to the roadway, where parcels of a few acres in size have been subdivided from larger landholdings. Typically they contain single family residences and a few outbuildings. However, the amount of residential development that has resulted from the presence of the roadway appears to be less than the commercial development. Much of the land adjacent to the highway remains in agricultural use.

Although an improved highway may influence some people in their decision to move to a rural area, in many cases, development occurs in spite of a lack of infrastructure. A "carrying capacity study" prepared for Missoula County within the past few years shows that virtually all privately owned riparian lands within the county had been subdivided, even though infrastructure such as roads, sewers, water, gas and electric services were not assured. Although development had not taken place, the structure within which development could occur had already been superimposed upon areas containing elements that are desirable for homesites (i.e., proximity to a water source or the availability of a view). Although an improved roadway may result in the development of rural subdivisions, it would have to be counted as only one contributing factor in the trend towards rural subdivisions.

A-16 The Montana Department of Transportation is coordinating the development of a wetlands mitigation plan with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, based on the terms and conditions contained in the wetlands memorandum of agreement (MOA).

A-17 Existing US 93 and any improvements to it are maintained by the Montana Department of Transportation using state and federal funding.

A-18 With nearly 60 miles of highway involved with the proposed action, it is not practical nor desirable to address all design issues in the draft EIS and final EIS. Major issues, however, such as the roadway alignment and the number of lanes to be constructed, are discussed in detail. The ID Team and the community teams have recognized this and have proposed that close coordination continue after the record of decision has been completed for the proposed action -- this will allow valuable citizen involvement in all phases of the proposed action.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Cont'd)

A-19 These photo representations were completed by independent photographers and graphic artists using computer simulation software and equipment and based on preliminary engineering plans that have been completed. No attempt was made to influence the outcome of the representations. They attempt to provide an approximate visual representation of changes that may occur with various alternatives.

A-20 This type of work has occurred and will probably continue to occur, as part of normal highway maintenance activities, in areas where it is most needed.

A-21 Footers have been added to the bottom of each page identifying the chapter and section. A list of abbreviations is included in Section 11 of the draft EIS and final EIS. A glossary with definitions of technical terms has been added to the final EIS.

A-22 The change was made in Section 2.1 in the final EIS.

A-23 It is correct that, at the time of publication of the draft EIS, the NHS only was proposed and had not yet been designated by the U.S. Congress. The NHS, including US 93, was approved by Congress in late-1995.

A-24 It is recognized that growth rates currently are higher than three percent per year. A careful study of highway growth rates over the past 50 years indicates that there historically have been periods with higher growth rates, but there also have been periods with very low growth rates. This growth rate study indicates that, during the 50-year period and during any given 20-year period, growth rates (taking into account years with high and low growth rates) have been very close to three percent per year.

A-25 US 93 has the highest volumes of traffic for rural primary highways in Montana.

The final EIS presents an analysis that shows safety has been improved where two-lane highways with high volumes of traffic have been widened to four lanes. Other rural primary highways with volumes of traffic similar to US 93 already are, or in the near future will become, four-lane highways; two-lane highways were not adequate for their volumes of traffic.

A-26 The change was made in Section 2.3.2 in the final EIS.

A-27 If the preferred alternative, as described in the draft EIS, is constructed, the capacity of the highway will be increased to several times that of the existing highway. Congestion will be reduced for through traffic, including on busy holiday weekends and for passing slow-moving vehicles. The draft EIS and final EIS acknowledge access to the highway from multiple approaches will continue to be difficult.

A-28 Comment noted.

A-29 The referenced text in Section 2.4 has been changed to indicate comparison between No Action and the preferred alternative is made for predicted concentrations of CO and PM_{10}. It is true that the CO emission factors for each vehicle will decrease from 1994 to 2020 and that the number of vehicles will increase over that same time period. On balance, CO concentrations in 2020 for the preferred alternative are expected to be substantially less than No Action and approximately the same as 1994 conditions. CO concentrations with No Action in 2020 are expected to be substantially more than 1994 current conditions. The referenced text also reflects the change regarding the relative PM_{10} concentrations which results from using the new model, CAL3QHC.

Total CO emission increases as a result of an improved highway will be very minor and will be more than offset by improved operating efficiency.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Cont'd)

A-30 The change was made in Section 2.7 in the final EIS.

A-31 The conformity analysis must demonstrate that the proposed action will reduce the total emissions in the area when compared with No Action. It does not otherwise address impacts of alternatives on air quality.

A-32 The draft EIS discloses that ALCO permits will be required. In the final EIS, this is listed as a required tribal action.

A-33 This footnote has been revised in the final EIS to indicate the year 2000 as the earliest year construction may be completed and the year 2020 as the design year.

A-34 The change was made in Section 4.1 in the final EIS.

A-35 This section, along with Section 6.1.2, discusses existing conditions of the highway and makes no attempt to discuss methods of correcting deficiencies. Methods proposed for correcting deficiencies are noted in Section 7.1.3.1 of the draft EIS and final EIS. It is noted that, with any of the proposed lane configuration alternatives (including Lane Configuration A, the improved two-lane highway), geometric design standard deficiencies will be corrected.

A-36 The change was made in Section 4.3 in the final EIS.

A-37 The high percentage of accidents that involve approaches was not taken into consideration when determining that the current LOS is "poor" -- there is no technique, in the 1985 or 1994 Highway Capacity Manuals, or elsewhere, to do so.

The number of approaches also was not taken into account because, at the time the draft EIS was published, there was no standard technique in the Highway Capacity Manual to do so. Since the 1994 Highway Capacity Manual has been published and made available (in May 1995), the number of approaches per mile has been considered for LOS evaluation of four-lane highway alternatives.

As indicated in Section 7.1.3.4 of the final EIS, even with the high number of existing approaches, LOS will be substantially improved with a four-lane highway and will be LOS B or better through the design year 2020.

There is still no standard technique to evaluate the effect of number of approaches per mile on LOS for a two-lane highway.

A-38 The study of three communities, Arlee, Ronan and Polson, and the study of the existing alignment, outside Arlee, Ronan and Polson, were completed to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

There were some differences in the study of Polson. A separate consultant was hired to complete the environmental analysis of the proposed action for Polson. Also, a survey that was conducted in Polson on election day 1992 was not conducted in other communities.

Other types of special studies were done that included Polson, Arlee and Ronan. For example, the evaluation of economic effects for alternate highway routes was completed for each community.

Though results of the evaluation of alternatives through Polson may be different from other communities (a bypass is recommended as part of the preferred alternative), the process used to study Polson was not handled differently than other communities along the route where bypasses are under consideration.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Cont'd)

Chapter 10 in the final EIS presents details about the coordination of studies for Polson, Arlee, Ronan and other communities of the Flathead Indian Reservation.

A-39 A two-lane highway is not downplayed in the draft EIS. However, it is noted in various sections that an improved two-lane highway will not accommodate existing or projected traffic volumes and therefore does not meet the purpose and need for the proposed action. Despite various efforts and evaluations, no combination of climbing lanes, passing lanes, turning lanes, slow moving vehicle turn-outs or TDM measures has been developed that will produce any substantial improvement in traffic operation on an improved two-lane highway in this area.

A-40 The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) indicates that bicycle lanes in areas without curb and gutter should be at least four feet wide; a width of five feet wide or greater is preferable, and additional widths are desirable where substantial truck traffic is present or where vehicle speeds exceed 35 mph[2].

As indicated in Section 7.6.3 and Figure 7.6-1, the eight-foot-wide shoulders will provide approximately a 6.75 foot wide separation between trucks and bicyclists. This is considered adequate and is in accordance with AASHTO.

A-41 Providing for bicyclists on the shoulder is generally more accommodating in rural circumstances and may be better than providing a separate parallel bike path in rural areas between communities. This is explained in Section 7.6.3 of the draft EIS and final EIS.

A-42 According to AASHTO[3], where slow-moving vehicle turnouts exist,

> *"The driver of the slow-moving vehicle, if there are following vehicles, is expected to pull out of the through lane and remain in the turnout only long enough for the following vehicles to pass before returning to the through lane. When there are only one or two following vehicles this maneuver can be accomplished without it being necessary for the driver of the vehicle in the turnout to stop. However, when this number is exceeded it will require the driver to stop in order for all the following vehicles to pass. Turnouts are most frequently used on lower volume roads where long platoons are rare and in difficult terrain with steep grades where construction of an additional lane may not be cost effective."*

With the high traffic volumes on this road, platoons of more than two vehicles are frequent. When slower moving vehicles pull into the turnout, they will frequently be required to come to a complete stop. Most of these slower-moving vehicles will be RVs and trucks which accelerate slowly -- with the high traffic volume on the through lane, it will be difficult for them to re-enter the traffic stream. Because of these difficulties, few drivers will use them and, when they do, additional safety problems will be created as slower-moving vehicles try to re-enter the main traffic stream.

A-43 This question has been addressed in Section 7.1.3 of the final EIS. As indicated in that section, traffic operation may be improved, but not sufficiently to provide an acceptable LOS without improvements to the highway.

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[2]American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Guide to the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 1991.

[3]American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 1990, page 270.

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A-44 The effects of TDM on energy efficiency are discussed in Section 7.19 of the final EIS.

A-45 The effects of TDM on energy efficiency are discussed in Section 7.19 of the final EIS.

A-46 The change was made in Section 5.1.4 in the final EIS.

A-47 Alternate highway routes were evaluated in sufficient detail to determine that, though signing and designation of special routes may be good ideas, it is not practical or desirable to transfer sufficient traffic to these routes to substantially improve operation on US 93.

A-48 References to MT 200 in the sixth and seventh bullet statements should have been to MT 28 instead. The change was made in Section 5.1.5 in the final EIS.

A-49 As indicated in the draft EIS and final EIS, these alternate travel routes have longer travel distances than US 93 from Missoula to Polson and Kalispell. Even though these routes currently have better levels-of-service than US 93 (LOS A and B on these routes compared with LOS D and E on US 93) and similar scenery, particularly in the Seeley-Swan area of MT 83, substantially fewer travellers use the alternate routes. It would be difficult to change the current condition where, even though these travel routes are very desirable and less stressful, travelers choose to use the congested US 93 route because of much shorter travel distances, with less travel cost and travel time.

A-50 Comment noted.

A-51 The comment concludes something that is not stated or implied in the referenced paragraph. The paragraph states what is known to law enforcement and transportation agencies throughout the country in saying that ". . . enforcement of speed limits lower than the speed the majority of drivers are comfortable with has, in the past, normally proven unsuccessful".

A-52 The preferred alternative is identified in Tables 5.2-1 through 5.2-4 of the final EIS.

A-53 Traffic volumes have been updated to the years 1994 and 2020 in the final EIS (from 1991 and 2015 in the draft EIS). Analysis of LOS has been updated using the 1994 Highway Capacity Manual. LOS also has been refined to show the differences between No Action and the improved two-lane highway.

Results of these new analyses are included in Section 7.1.3.4 of the final EIS and show a slight improvement in LOS and capacity with an improved two-lane highway. The updated analyses also consider TDM measures and impacts.

Increasing the width of a narrow shoulder improves LOS until the width reaches six feet. As shown on Table 5-23 of the 1992 Traffic Engineering Handbook and Table 8-5 of the 1994 Highway Capacity Manual, wider shoulders are treated the same as six-feet-wide shoulders in LOS and capacity analyses.

A-54 As shown on Tables 2.3-1 and 5.3-1, Lane Configuration C, a four-lane highway with a continuous two-way left-turn lane (C2WLTL[4]), is part of the preferred alternative mostly in areas where speed limits and operating speeds are lower. These include areas where the highway approaches and passes through the communities of Arlee (speed limit 35 miles per hour {mph}), Ravalli (speed limit 45 mph), Ronan (speed

[4]The final EIS refers to this lane Configuration as Lane Configuration C, a four-lane highway with a continuous two-way left-turn center median.

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limit 25 mph) and Polson (speed limit 25 mph). This comprises 8.1 miles of the total 14.5 miles of Lane Configuration C proposed in the preferred alternative.

Another 5.1 miles of Lane Configuration C is proposed within and approaching the communities of Evaro, Post Creek, and Pablo. These are areas where substantial development already has occurred along the highway and elimination of existing access points will be difficult. These also are areas where (particularly in Pablo) travel speeds may be reduced in the future.

As discussed in Section 5.3.4 of the draft and final EIS, construction of the raised median, curb and gutter, pedestrian crossings and possible future traffic signals is likely to cause a decrease in vehicle speeds and a decrease in the speed limit.

Approximately 1.3 miles of Lane Configuration C are proposed in areas where substantial numbers of approaches already exist, but where travel speeds are similar to the remainder of the highway between communities.

The following information is from a literature search provided to the ID Team by the Federal Highway Administration[5]:

> *"Considerable evidence shows that a C2WLTL is a cost-effective method of increasing the operational efficiency and safety of a highway where there is a demand for left-turns off of and onto the major roadway."*
>
> *"Speed limits from 25 to 55 mph will accommodate C2WLTLs.[6]"*
>
> *"Accident reductions averaging about 35% have been attributed to C2WLTLs."*
>
> *"C2WLTLs also increase capacity and are well accepted by the driving public."*

A-55 The transit development plan (TDP) for Lake County is being prepared independently of this EIS and is for the purpose of assessing existing transit services and developing recommendations for future improvements. It is expected the study will account for residents of other counties that use this segment of US 93.

A-56 With the nearly 60 miles of highway involved with the proposed action, it is not practical or desirable to address all design issues in the draft EIS and final EIS. Major issues such as the roadway alignment and the number of lanes to be constructed are discussed in detail the EIS. The ID Team and the community teams have recognized this and have proposed that close coordination continue after the record of decision has been completed for the proposed action -- this will allow valuable citizen involvement in all phases of the proposed action.

A-57 As documented in the minutes of the Pablo Community Team meetings, a footpath or a bikepath is recommended on the east side of US 93 from College Street to Clairmont Road. This was noted in Section

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[5]Federal Highway Administration, Montana Division, Studies on Safety Concerns of 5-lane C2WLTL vs. 4-Lane Divided Highway, letter, with attachments, dated 22 July 1991.

[6]After Congress repealed the national speed limit of 65 mph on interstates and 55 mph on other highways in 1995, Montana automatically reverted to its former law that has the "basic rule." A driver may not drive at speeds exceeding what is "reasonable and prudent" for traffic, road and weather conditions.

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7.6.5 of the draft EIS, remains in the same section in the final EIS and has been added to Section 5.3.4 of the final EIS.

A-58 It is noted that it will be desirable to implement partial access control wherever practical. Within the heavily developed sections of Arlee, Ravalli, Ronan, Pablo and Polson, curb and gutter is proposed to be installed to effectively limit and control access to the highway. Outside these more heavily developed areas, access control should and will be considered and implemented wherever practical.

A-59 This has been noted in the final EIS.

A-60 Clairmont/Pablo West Road is included on the following page.

A-61 Some bicycle facilities may need a separate NEPA document.

A-62 "Closure of dead-end roads," has been changed to read "Closure of dead-end roads and rerouting through roads from other accesses,".

A-63 As indicated in Sections 6.1.4 and 6.1.5, LOS was calculated using techniques in the 1994 Highway Capacity Manual. It is based on the 30th highest hourly volume (30 HV) in accordance with nationally accepted standards and practices.

The 30 HV probably does represent volumes during peak seasons and commuting hours. The uses of these standard methods makes it possible to compare the operation on this highway with others throughout the state and nation. As indicated in Section 6.1.5, with LOS D, the percentage of time vehicles are delayed approaches 75%, but does not necessarily equal 75% and may be less.

A-64 The paragraph refers to areas outside communities. The schools referenced in the comment are considered to be in Pablo. A change was made in the final EIS to clarify the paragraph.

A-65 These bullet statements describe characteristics of traffic within the existing communities. School bus stops along the highway are outside of communities and are not discussed here. Discussion of school bus stops has been added to Sections 5.1, 6.6 and 7.6.3 of the final EIS.

A-66 As indicated in the paragraph preceding these bullet statements, they describe characteristics of traffic in the existing communities and were not intended to list all concerns at specific sites. It is indicated in the first bullet statement that the speed limit in Pablo, as with the remainder of the highway outside Arlee, Ravalli, Ronan and Polson, is 55 mph.[7] Speed concerns and proposed mitigation measures in Pablo are discussed in Sections 5.3.4, 6.6 and 7.6.5 of the final EIS.

A-67 As indicated by the footnote on Page 6.1-7 of the draft EIS, the 1990 Edition of AASHTO's "A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets" was used. The 1994 Edition is the same as the 1990 Edition, except that the 1994 Edition uses metric units.

A-68 This paragraph was intended to show that, under current policies and regulations and with no access control resolutions in-place, it is very difficult for the Montana Department of Transportation to control the approaches being constructed along the highway. As indicated in Section 7.1.3.2, the purchase of partial

[7] After Congress repealed the national speed limit of 65 mph on interstates and 55 mph on other highways in 1995, Montana automatically reverted to its former law that has the "basic rule." A driver may not drive at speeds exceeding what is "reasonable and prudent" for traffic, road and weather conditions.

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access control from landowners along the highway will be desirable and will help reduce the number of existing approaches and control the number of future approaches. In Section 5.3.4 it is indicated that partial access control is recommended along most of the highway as part of the preferred alternative.

A-69 Using a computer data base consisting of all reported accidents investigated by the Montana Highway Patrol, the Montana Department of Transportation identifies accident cluster areas on all state and federal highways in Montana. When a cluster area is identified, an evaluation is conducted of accidents at the site to identify trends in what may be causing the accidents.

An evaluation also is conducted to identify highway and other site conditions that may contribute to the accidents. Any highway revisions or improvements that will help reduce accidents are then identified and a cost/benefit analysis is performed. The proposed improvements are compared to and prioritized with other accident cluster sites, based on the cost/benefit ratio, and decisions are made concerning which sites can be improved with available funding.

This type of audit was conducted for US 93 from I-90 to Polson and is presented in the report "Highway Traffic Collision Countermeasures on U.S. Highway 93 Corridor, P-5 Milepost 0 to Milepost 59.3", completed in January 1992 by the Montana Multi-disciplinary Traffic Safety Task Force. This report identifies several different cluster sites and other concerns, particularly related to elderly drivers, and proposes countermeasures. Recommendations of the report are summarized in Section 6.1.3 of the draft EIS and the final EIS.

As indicated in the draft EIS and the final EIS, implementation of some of these recommendations occurred in 1994. Others are more extensive and expensive and will be implemented as sections of the highway are reconstructed. As final design for each section of US 93 is completed, these countermeasures and others identified by future traffic and accident data will be incorporated in the plans.

A-70 It is acknowledged that not all characteristics of US 93 from I-90 to Evaro are exactly the same as from Evaro to Polson. However, US 93 from I-90 to Evaro generally has conditions that are typical of conditions found on segments of US 93 between Evaro and Polson.

Evaluation of this section of highway was completed, at the request of the ID Team, because of concern expressed that four-lane highways may be less safe than two-lane highways. The ID Team consensus, at the inception of the study, was that US 93 from I-90 to Evaro would
be a very good highway section to evaluate because of its proximity to the proposed action and because driver characteristics, traffic volumes and characteristics, weather conditions, terrain and junction densities are similar (not necessarily identical) to US 93 from Evaro to Polson.

There are approximately 10 intersections per mile on this section of highway compared with approximately 10 intersections per mile on the section from Evaro to Polson. There also is an intersection with a major county road, and two campgrounds that are commercial developments that generate traffic turning on and off the highway. There also is a long level segment of highway that is typical of segments north of Evaro. Evaro Hill has a steep grade typical of the grades on Ravalli, Post Creek and Polson hills.

A-71 It is noted in Table 6.1-10 that accidents on icy or snowy roadways increased from 16 to 25.

A-72 It is correct and was acknowledged in the draft EIS that shoulder widths are not adequate on existing passing lanes. It is acknowledged that transition lengths and other factors may not be in accordance with current design standards on existing passing lanes.

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It is likely that accident rates would be reduced if these areas were improved to meet current standards, but actual numbers are not known and cannot be calculated with reasonable accuracy. An attempt to follow-up on and review the referenced research showing a 30% reduction in accidents where passing lanes are used was not successful because the source of the comment could not be determined by tribal staff.

A-73 The 30th highest hourly volume is a standard used throughout Montana and the United States. This allows proper comparison of traffic volumes and operation on this highway with other highways throughout the state and nation.

Other reasons for the use of the 30th highest hourly volume are explained in Section 6.1.4 of the draft EIS and the final EIS. Use of the 100th or the 200th highest hourly volume, though not standard, would reduce volumes by approximately 10 to 15% and would not substantially change results of LOS computations.

A-74 The 1994 Highway Capacity Manual did not become available until spring of 1995. For that reason, the analysis of LOS in the draft EIS used the 1985 Edition. Analysis of LOS in the final EIS used the 1994 edition and takes into account the number of access points per mile on the four-lane alternatives. The 1994 Highway Capacity Manual does not include techniques for evaluating the effects of access points on two-lane highways.

A-75 The Traffic Along Rural Routes Procedure (TRARR) is a method of analyzing two-lane highways which was developed in Australia and is promoted by UMA Engineering, a private traffic engineering firm. UMA indicates that the procedure would carefully analyze each mile of the highway to help determine if sections of the existing two-lane highway could, for possibly the next 10 to 15 years, continue to operate at an acceptable LOS if improvements such as passing lanes are added[8].

UMA recognizes that, by the design year 2020, projected traffic volumes will warrant a four-lane highway throughout the length of the corridor, but interim improvements may be useful. UMA estimates it will cost $50,000 to $60,000 to complete the TRARR analysis for this highway.

The TRARR model was used to evaluate a range of design options for improving traffic performance on two-lane rural roads in Australia[9]. Options for improvement included auxiliary lanes, widening to four-lanes and improving alignments. The study indicated that addition of auxiliary lanes was effective for improving travel times and reducing delay on highways with lower traffic volumes, but at traffic volumes ranging from 5,000 to 6,800 vehicles per day, widening to four lanes was preferable to adding auxiliary lanes or improving alignments.

Traffic volumes on the existing highway already range from approximately 5,300 to 10,700 vehicles per day and are projected to more than double by 2020, the design year. It is likely the use of the TRARR model will indicate that a four-lane highway is warranted on most sections of the highway with current traffic volumes and will be warranted on all sections of the highway well before the 2020 design year.

The concept of the TRARR model is not substantially different from the preferred alternative and current proposal for construction scheduling by the Montana Department of Transportation. The proposal is to first convert the highway between Ronan and Polson (with the heaviest traffic volumes) to four lanes and then convert other sections. This process is estimated to require 10 to 20 years to complete, and by the time the design year 2020 is reached, the entire highway would be converted to four lanes.

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[8]Miller, Ed, UMA Engineering, telephone conversations in August and September 1995.

[9]Hoban, C. J., Simulation Study of Guidelines for Rural Road Improvements, Transportation Research Record 971, Pages 93-95, 1984.

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A-76 Slow-moving vehicle turnouts would have little or no effect on this problem. According to AASHTO[10], where slow-moving vehicle turnouts exist,

> *"The driver of the slow-moving vehicle, if there are following vehicles, is expected to pull out of the through lane and remain in the turnout only long enough for the following vehicles to pass before returning to the through lane. When there are only one or two following vehicles this maneuver can be accomplished without it being necessary for the driver of the vehicle in the turnout to stop. However, when this number is exceeded it will require the driver to stop in order for all the following vehicles to pass. Turnouts are most frequently used on lower volume roads where long platoons are rare and in difficult terrain with steep grades where construction of an additional lane may not be cost effective."*

With the high traffic volumes on this road, platoons of more than two vehicles are frequent. When slower moving vehicles pull into the turnout, they will frequently be required to come to a complete stop. Most of these slower-moving vehicles will be RVs and trucks which accelerate slowly -- with the high traffic volumes on the through lane, it will be difficult for them to re-enter the traffic stream. Because of these difficulties, few drivers will use them and, when they do, additional safety problems will be created as slower-moving vehicles try to re-enter the main traffic stream.

A-77 As indicated in Section 6.1.5 of the draft EIS and the final EIS, existing LOS for each section of the highway was determined using standard, nationally accepted methods based on existing traffic volumes and characteristics and existing physical conditions of the highway. As indicated in Section 6.1.4 of the draft EIS and the final EIS, the 30th highest hourly volume has been used for the calculations. It is recognized that this volume probably occurs mostly during the summer during the peak traffic season. During other times, particularly during winter months, traffic volumes are lower, passing opportunities are greater, delay is less and LOS is better.

A-78 The capacity (LOS E) of the existing highway is discussed in Section 6.1.6 of the final EIS. The capacity of the improved two-lane highway and the preferred alternative is discussed in Section 7.1.3.4 of the final EIS.

As discussed in various meetings of the ID Team, at public meetings and public hearings, and with tribal staff, the method of projecting future growth, based on the past 50 years of traffic records on US 93, seems to be the best representation of future growth at this time.

No method for linking safety with LOS has been identified.

A-79 Land use information available from the *Flathead Reservation Comprehensive Resources Plan* has been added to the final EIS. Table 6.2-1 has been changed to include information about the Flathead Indian Reservation in the area of the proposed action.

A-80 The change was made in Section 6.2.3.4 in the final EIS.

A-81 The change was made in Section 6.2.3.4 in the final EIS.

A-82 The change was made in Section 6.2.3.4 in the final EIS.

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[10]American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 1990, page 270.

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A-83 The change was made in Section 6.2.3.4 in the final EIS.

A-84 The change was made in Section 6.2.3.5 in the final EIS.

A-85 Information from the *Flathead Reservation Comprehensive Resources Plan* about goals and objectives of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes for land use has been added to Section 6.3.3.6 of the final EIS.

Reference is made to the availability of information from the *Tribal/County Land Use and Growth Projection Study* for future planning activities, such as developing an access control plan for the proposed action. Specific information from the *Tribal/County Land Use and Growth Projection Study* has not been released for publication in the draft and final EIS.

A-86 The change was made in Section 6.2.3.7 in the final EIS.

A-87 Information from the *Flathead Reservation Comprehensive Resources Plan* has been added to Section 6.2.4 of the final EIS.

A-88 The change was made in Section 6.2.3.7 in the final EIS.

A-89 The change was made in Section 6.2.3.7 in the final EIS.

A-90 The change was made in Section 6.2.5.1 in the final EIS.

A-91 The change was made in Section 6.2.5.2 in the final EIS.

A-92 The change was made in Section 6.2.6 in the final EIS.

A-93 Additional information was added to the beginning of Chapter 6, Affected Environment, and Section 6.4.1 to provide emphasis about the importance of the social setting for the Flathead Indian Reservation.

Sections 6.4 (Social), 6.5 (Economics), 6.14 (Cultural Resources) and 6.15 (Parks and Recreation) of the draft and final EIS contain information to address the items in this comment.

A-94 Additional information was added to Section 6.14 (Social) and 7.14 (Cultural Resources) to address this issue in the final EIS.

Sections 7.4 (Social) and 7.14 (Cultural Resources) in the draft and final EIS contain information to address the issue of impacts on the homeland of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

A-95 No additional information is available about lifestyle for Section 6.4.2 in the final EIS.

A-96 The Tribal Health and Human Services Department, which was formerly the Indian Health Service, does not maintain information about the proportion of the Indian and non-Indian population on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Their records are for persons who use their services rather than for the entire population. The Tribal Health and Human Services Department recommended contacting the Tribal Office of Administration and Budget to determine whether to adjust information from the U.S. Census. The Tribal Office of Administration and Budget indicates it maintains only records of enrolled tribal members. It should be noted the *Flathead Reservation Comprehensive Resources Plan* refers to information in the U.S. Census when discussing the population of Native Americans on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

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A-97 These numbers are from information in the U.S. Census for 1980 and 1990.

A-98 Information was added to Section 6.4.3.4 to discuss the recent patterns and rates of growth for the period 1990-94.

A-99 This information has been added to Section 6.4.5 in the final EIS.

A-100 The change was made in Section 6.4.5 in the final EIS.

A-101 The change was made in Section 6.4.5 in the final EIS.

A-102 The Federal Highway Administration statement has been included in Section 6.6.

A-103 These counts were conducted as part of the license plate survey that was conducted by Morrison-Maierle, Inc. to determine geographic origins of vehicles traveling the highway. The count locations were near the intersections of US 93 and other major federal and state highways to obtain the fullest possible counts of vehicles. Section 6.6 of the draft EIS and the final EIS recognizes that bicycle traffic is concentrated in communities.

A-104 Inexperienced bicyclists, including children, do not commonly travel long distances on highways.

A-105 This is acknowledged in Section 6.6 in the final EIS.

A-106 This is acknowledged in Section 6.6 in the final EIS.

A-107 It is correct that the community team indicated that, with the recommended alternative at Pablo, a foot or bicycle path would be appropriate from College Street to Clairmont Road. It is also acknowledged that a bicycle path has been recommended from Pablo to Ronan.

A-108 Since 1991 (the last year of accident data provided in the draft EIS), several accidents involving pedestrians and bicyclists have occurred. This paragraph has been revised and a table has been added which lists the type, location and injury severity with these accidents.

A-109 Refer to Response A-108.

A-110 This paragraph has been reworded in Section 6.9.1.1 to read more clearly.

A-111 A discussion of time periods for specific elevations has been added.

A-112 It is acknowledged in the draft EIS and final EIS, in a footnote to Section 6.9.2.1, that these data are presented for information only and Montana Water Quality Standards do not apply on the Flathead Indian Reservation. The information concerning the recent TAS application approval has been added to the footnote in the final EIS.

A-113 The paragraph has been reworded to resolve the conflicts, and the additional information provided has been added to Section 6.9.2.4 in the final EIS.

A-114 Section 6.11.4 has been revised to clarify that fish passage is important for various streams along the proposed action. Specific streams and proposed crossings are described in Sections 6.12.1 and 7.12.2.1

A-115 The change was made in Section 6.12.1 in the final EIS.

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A-116 This has been clarified in Section 6.12.1 in the final EIS.

A-117 The referenced paragraph in Section 6.12.1 has been revised in the final EIS.

A-118 The instream flow for Crow Creek has been corrected in Section 6.12.1 in the final EIS.

A-119 The change was made in Section 6.12.6 in the final EIS.

A-120 Information has been added to Section 6.14.1 in the final EIS to indicate both the Salish and Kootenai people continue to practice various subsistence activities, as well as other traditional cultural activities.

A-121 The change was made in Section 6.14.1 in the final EIS.

A-122 The change was made in Section 6.14.2 in the final EIS.

A-123 The change was made in Section 6.17.1 in the final EIS.

A-124 This has been noted in Section 6.17.1 in the final EIS.

A-125 The reservation boundary has been corrected on this figure in Section 6.17.1 in the final EIS.

A-126 This information has been added to Section 6.17.1 in the final EIS.

A-127 The change was made in Section 6.17.1 in the final EIS.

A-128 This information has been added to Section 6.17.2 in the final EIS.

A-129 This paragraph has been revised to list the Mission Mountains as a visually sensitive resource area.

A-130 Where it is determined the volume of left turns from a county road or other important intersection is sufficient to warrant, separate left-turn lanes can be considered. As indicated in Section 5.3.4 of the draft and final EIS, approximately 46 left-turn bays are recommended. At this time, traffic volumes and characteristics at Highways 200, 212 and other county roads do not meet warrant criteria for consideration of traffic signals. In the future, traffic volumes will be monitored and, as warrants are met at these intersections, traffic signals can be considered.

A-131 Traffic volumes have been updated to the years 1994 and 2020 (from 1991 and 2015 in the draft EIS). LOS analyses have been updated using the 1994 Highway Capacity Manual. LOS analyses have also been refined to account for the differences between No Action and the improved two-lane highway. Results of these new analyses are included in Section 7.1.3.4 of the final EIS and show that the differences are small and are generally not great enough to change LOS.

A-132 Sufficient information is not available to accurately estimate travel times to Missoula with a new highway and increased traffic volume. Table 7.1-1 in the draft EIS has been removed and tables have been renumbered in Section 7.1 of the final EIS.

A-133 The four grades in this area are short (0.1 to 0.6 miles) and are only slightly above the four percent maximum recommended for 60 mph design (4.2 to 4.8%). Speeds through Polson will be lower. With the preferred alternative, as described in Section 5.3.1 of the draft EIS, the existing highway will not be reconstructed in this area; these grades will not be improved with the proposed action.

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A-134 As indicated on the referenced page in Section 7.1.3.1 of the draft EIS and final EIS, this bridge will not be relocated but will be reconstructed and/or widened at its existing location. Impacts are described and evaluated and mitigation measures are proposed in Section 7.11, and in other locations, of the draft EIS and final EIS.

A-135 Refer to Response A-58 for Page 5-41, fourth paragraph.

A-136 As suggested, this paragraph has been clarified in Section 7.1.3.3 in the final EIS.

A-137 Comment noted.

A-138 Additional information discussing the safety hazards related to the number of approaches and intersections has been added to Section 7.1.3.3 of the final EIS. The effects of a wider highway on pedestrian convenience and safety are discussed and evaluated in Sections 7.1.4, 7.6.3, 7.6.4 and 7.6.5 of the draft EIS and final EIS.

A-139 AASHTO recommends LOS B for the design of arterial highways in rural areas with level or rolling terrain, LOS C in mountainous terrain and LOS C for urban or suburban highways[11]. AASHTO further explains:

> *"As may be fitting to the conditions, the highway agency should strive to provide the highest level-of-service (LOS) feasible. In heavily developed sections of metropolitan areas, conditions may necessitate the use of LOS D for freeways and arterials, but such use should be rare and at least LOS C*
> *should be strived for. For some urban and suburban highways, conditions may necessitate the use of LOS D."*[12]

Discussions with other highway agencies of states in this region indicate use of policies to design to LOS B and LOS C in rural areas.[13]

A-140 Comment noted.

A-141 As shown on Tables 2.3-1 and 5.3-1, Lane Configuration C, a four-lane highway with a C2WLTL, is part of the preferred alternative mostly in areas where speed limits and operating speeds are lower. These include areas where the highway approaches and passes through the communities of Arlee (speed limit 35 mph), Ravalli (speed limit 45 mph), Ronan (speed limit 25 mph) and Polson (speed limit 25 mph). This comprises 8.1 miles of the total 14.5 miles of Lane Configuration C proposed in the preferred alternative.

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[11]American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 1990, Table II-6.

[12]American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 1990, Page 89.

[13]Other states in the region use LOS B and LOS C as guidelines for design of rural highways. States using LOS B include Idaho, New Mexico, South Dakota, and Wyoming. States using LOS C include North Dakota, Nevada and Oklahoma. Colorado is changing from LOS C to LOS B because highways with growth in traffic have been under-designed with LOS C. Utah doesn't specify a guideline and uses cost, safety, environment and operation as factors to consider. Officials of the departments of transportation of these states were contacted by telephone to obtain this information.

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Another 5.1 miles of Lane Configuration C is proposed within and approaching the communities of Evaro, Post Creek, and Pablo. These are areas where substantial development already has occurred along the highway and elimination of existing access points will be difficult.

These also are areas where (particularly in Pablo) travel speeds may be reduced in the future. As discussed in Section 5.3.4, construction of the raised median, curb and gutter, pedestrian crossings and possible future traffic signals is likely to cause a decrease in vehicle speeds and a decrease in the speed limit.

Approximately 1.3 miles of Lane Configuration C are proposed in areas where substantial numbers of approaches already exist, but where travel speeds are similar to the remainder of the highway between communities.

The following information is from a literature search provided to the ID Team for the proposed action by the Federal Highway Administration[14]:

> *"Considerable evidence shows that a C2WLTL is a cost-effective method of increasing the operational efficiency and safety of a highway where there is a demand for left-turns off of and onto the major roadway."*
>
> *"Speed limits from 25 to 55 mph will accommodate C2WLTLs.[15]"*
>
> *"Accident reductions averaging about 35% have been attributed to C2WLTLs."*
>
> *"C2WLTLs also increase capacity and are well accepted by the driving public."*

A-142 If the highway is constructed on the existing alignment through these communities, it will be necessary to continue to provide access to the highway for business and residences. There will be little opportunity to construct frontage roads or alternative accesses.

Limiting access to the highway in these communities would create a barrier that would divide the community. It would be practical to provide a highway with very few access points outside the communities if one of the alternative alignments (other than the existing alignment) were selected in these communities. However, experience at scoping meetings and public hearings indicates that the public is opposed to bypass routes in Arlee and Ronan.

A-143 It is not known, at this time, if the speed limit in Ravalli will stay at 45 mph. Refer to Response A-141 for a discussion of continuous two-way left-turn lanes.

A-144 Comment noted.

A-145 If the highway is constructed on the existing alignment through these communities, it will be necessary to continue to provide access to the highway for businesses and residences. Because of the proximity of homes and business to the highway, there will be little opportunity to construct frontage roads or alternative

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[14]Federal Highway Administration, Montana Division, Studies on Safety Concerns of 5-lane C2WLTL vs. 4-Lane Divided Highway, letter, with attachments, dated 22 July 1991.

[15]After Congress repealed the national speed limit of 65 mph on interstates and 55 mph on other highways in 1995, Montana automatically reverted to its former law that has the "basic rule." A driver may not drive at speeds exceeding what is "reasonable and prudent" for traffic, road and weather conditions.

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accesses. Limiting access to the highway in these communities would create a barrier that would divide the community.

A-146 Refer to Response A-6.

A-147 It is correct that, where no left-turn bay is provided or if Lane Configuration A, B or D is constructed, vehicles turning left will be required to slow down in the through traffic lane. If Lane Configuration C is constructed, the C2WLTL will provide a safe area for vehicles to decelerate and turn left.

As explained in Section 5.3.4, existing intersections and the warrant for protected left-turn bays have been carefully evaluated. As a result, the preferred alternative therefore includes approximately 46 intersections where protected left-turn bays are recommended in addition to the approximately 14.5 miles of the highway that are recommended to be constructed using Lane Configuration C, which includes the C2WLTL.

A-148 As shown on Tables 2.3-1 and 5.3-1, Lane Configuration C, a four-lane highway with a C2WLTL, is part of the preferred alternative mostly in areas where speed limits and operating speeds are lower. These include areas where the highway approaches and passes through the communities of Arlee (speed limit 35 mph), Ravalli (speed limit 45 mph), Ronan (speed limit 25 mph) and Polson (speed limit 25 mph). This comprises 8.1 miles of the total 14.5 miles of Lane Configuration C proposed in the preferred alternative.

Another 5.1 miles of Lane Configuration C is proposed within and approaching the communities of Evaro, Post Creek, and Pablo. These are areas where substantial development already has occurred along the highway and elimination of existing access points will be difficult. These also are areas where (particularly in Pablo) travel speeds may be reduced in the future. As discussed in Section 5.3.4, construction of the raised median, curb and gutter, pedestrian crossings and possible future traffic signals is likely to cause a decrease in vehicle speeds and a decrease in the speed limit.

Approximately 1.3 miles are proposed in areas where substantial numbers of approaches already exist, but where travel speeds are similar to the remainder of the highway between communities.

The following information is from a literature search provided to the ID Team for the proposed action by the Federal Highway Administration[16]:

> *"Considerable evidence shows that a C2WLTL is a cost-effective method of increasing the operational efficiency and safety of a highway where there is a demand for left-turns off of and onto the major roadway."*
>
> *"Speed limits from 25 to 55 mph will accommodate C2WLTLs.[17]"*
>
> *"Accident reductions averaging about 35% have been attributed to C2WLTLs."*
>
> *"C2WLTLs also increase capacity and are well accepted by the driving public."*

[16]Federal Highway Administration, Montana Division, Studies on Safety Concerns of 5-lane C2WLTL vs. 4-Lane Divided Highway, letter, with attachments, dated 22 July 1991.

[17]After Congress repealed the national speed limit of 65 mph on interstates and 55 mph on other highways in 1995, Montana automatically reverted to its former law that has the "basic rule." A driver may not drive at speeds exceeding what is "reasonable and prudent" for traffic, road and weather conditions.

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A-149 With limited access control, the number of approaches will be limited to those approved by the Montana Transportation Commission.

A-150 Comment noted.

A-151 The change has been made in Section 7.2.1.3 in the final EIS.

A-152 The conversion impact ratings were done, by the US Natural Resources Conservation Service, by sections over a period of several years, as requested by various consultants working on each specific project. If all of the ratings were combined, the resulting rating would be close to an average of the separate ratings. Total area impacted by a project is not one of the factors that determine the rating.

Information provided by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes has been used to estimate impacts of lane configurations on tribal farmland.

The preferred alternative will affect 80 to 85 acres of tribal agricultural land. Approximately one-half of this amount is required by the new roadway proposed on Polson Alignment 3.

Lane Configuration A, a two-lane highway, will affect 10 to 15 acres of tribal agricultural land on the existing alignment.

A-153 Comment noted.

A-154 Refer to Response A-6 and Response A-13.

A-155 The sentence has been revised to indicate the importance of factors that affect growth and development will vary, depending on local and regional conditions.

A-156 Comment noted.

A-157 Comment noted.

A-158 Comment noted.

A-159 It is documented throughout the draft EIS and final EIS that Lane Configuration A will have less impact on land use, wetlands and many other resources because it is narrower than Lane Configurations B, C and D.

A-160 Comment noted.

A-161 Comment noted.

A-162 At an intersection of a public road and a bicycle path, away from US 93, it is assumed that bicycle traffic will be required to stop. It may be possible, depending on the desires of tribal and local governments, to require motor vehicles to stop and allow bicycles to travel through the intersections.

A-163 Comment noted.

A-164 It is true there will be twice as many lanes to sand with a four-lane roadway. However, traffic volumes and speeds will be approximately the same so approximately the same amount of dust will be stirred by

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motor vehicles. Air quality impacts and mitigation measures are discussed in Section 7.7 of the draft EIS and final EIS and Appendix F of the final EIS.

The analysis shows four-lane highways will result in slightly lower impacts than an improved two-lane highway. Current sanding practices do have sand applied to the passing lane upon occasion, depending upon road and weather conditions. Since the analysis considers the worst-case situation, it was assumed that sand was applied in the same amount to the driving lanes and passing lanes.

A-165 The air quality conformity analysis was completed by the Montana Department of Transportation. It has been coordinated with tribal staff, and copies of the draft and final document have been provided to tribal staff.

A-166 The analysis of air quality impacts in the final EIS does use the most current model. The analysis uses CAL3QHC Version 2.0, which was released in September 1995. The model used in the draft EIS also was the most current model available at that time.

A-167 As indicated in the draft EIS and final EIS, Stamina 2.0 is consistent with methods outlined in the Federal Highway Administration Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model, Report Number FHWA-RD-77-108, December 1978.

A-168 The change was made in Section 7.9.2 in the final EIS.

A-169 As indicated in Section 7.9.2, the Montana Department of Transportation has committed to completing a storm water erosion control plan and a plan for runoff control of hazardous materials for each project. Each plan will be prepared in accordance with the most current version of the Montana Department of Transportation's Standard Erosion Control Work Plan.

This standard plan has been developed over a number of years with use on a variety of projects. It is regularly updated based on actual project experience in Montana, and it includes the use of current best management practices in the state and nation.

The Montana Department of Transportation has committed to use all available technologies and practices to minimize sediment yields during and after construction.

A-170 The improved erosion protection measures are described in Section 7.9.2 of the draft EIS and final EIS under the subheading Mitigation.

A-171 The change was made in Section 7.10.2 in the final EIS.

A-172 Sites and potential for producing replacement wetlands are continually being updated and expanded for the proposed action and other transportation projects in the region. This section has been revised accordingly and, where appropriate, citations have been added in the final EIS.

A-173 The comment that "wetlands to be created or enhanced will be of much lower quality, because they will be the cattail ditches so near roads they are dangerous for wildlife, and less diverse than some of the other wetlands destroyed" is not correct. As indicated in Section 7.10.2 of the draft EIS and final EIS, wetland replacement will be diverse and will replace filled wetlands with wetlands of equal or better functions and values.

Many of the replacement wetlands will be away from the highway where it is more efficient to restore and enhance wetlands in large, off-site tracts and where wildlife will be farther away from the highway.

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Biologists for tribal, federal and state governments that have been involved with the preparation and review of the draft EIS and final EIS are in agreement that this concept will provide wetlands that are equal to and, in some cases, better than existing conditions.

A-174 The last sentence of the referenced paragraph in Section 7.11.3 has been revised in the final EIS as suggested.

A-175 Several options for relocation of Jocko Spring Creek have been discussed with the Tribal Natural Resources Department and with other biologists. Acceptable solutions are discussed in Section 7.11.3 of the final EIS.

A-176 Refer to Response A-175.

A-177 As indicated in Section 5.3.2, Lane Configuration A will not meet the purpose and need for the proposed action.

A-178 The referenced paragraph in Section 7.12.2.3 has been revised in the final EIS to more accurately reflect the wording of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

A-179 As discussed in Section 7.12.2.4 of the final EIS, the crossing design has been reevaluated and includes an overpass for wildlife instead of an underpass. It has been documented by Parks Canada that similar overpasses have been used by grizzly bears and wolves.

A-180 Comment noted.

A-181 This potential impact is noted in Section 7.15.2 of the final EIS.

A-182 Comment noted.

A-183 Section 7.1.3.4 of the final EIS discusses TDM measures.

A-184 As indicated in Section 7.20.2 of the draft EIS and final EIS, no specific borrow sites have been identified for fill materials, gravel base courses and asphalt concrete aggregate. As final design is completed for each of the construction projects, these borrow sites will be identified and evaluated.

Borrow material removal will be subject to applicable rules and regulations of the Montana Open Cut Mining Act -- a mine reclamation plan will be required. An erosion control plan, as described in Section

7.9 also will be required and will be developed by the Montana Department of Transportation. Table 7.20-2 summarizes gravel, plant mix and borrow quantities required for each section of the roadway.

A-185 The changes were made in Tables 8-2 and 8-4 of the final EIS.

A-186 As indicated in Section 5.3.3 any highway improvement should be designed to ". . . accommodate and promote increased use of TDM." Increased use of car-pooling is an important component of TDM.

The Montana Department of Transportation is interested in providing park-and-ride facilities where they will be used by the public. It agrees that this (a time when major highway improvements are being contemplated) would be a beneficial and timely opportunity to include these facilities at relatively low cost.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Cont'd)

The transit development plan currently being prepared for Lake County is expected to include recommendations for the location of park-and-ride facilities, as well as any needed pull-outs or parking areas for buses.

A-187 Refer to Response A-6.

A-188 Text discussing the process for minimizing impacts to cultural resources has been added to Section 7.14.1 The process to identify and avoid cultural resources will have to be balanced with the need to maintain confidentiality with regard to cultural properties.

A-189 Refer to Response A-15.

A-190 Comments were not received from the Flathead and Kootenai culture committees about the preliminary draft EIS.

A-191 Text discussing the effects of fish and wildlife impacts on traditional cultural practices has been added to Section 7.14.1.

A-192 Text discussing the effects of noise impacts on traditional cultural practices has been added to Section 7.14.1.

A-193 Text discussing the effects of water and air quality impacts on traditional cultural practices has been added to Section 7.14.1.

A-194 Refer to Response A-40 and Response A-186 for information about highway shoulders.

Refer to Response A-39 for information about TDM.

Comment noted. The environmental analysis for US 93 from Evaro through Polson will be used by the Montana Department of Transportation in conjunction with the environmental documents for other projects planned for western Montana.

Refer to Response A-79 for information about Table 6.2-1 and land use.

Comment noted about the Evaro wildlife corridor. Information has been added to Section 5.3.4 and Section 7.12.2.4 about mitigation of impacts for the Evaro wildlife corridor.

Comment noted about the Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge. Information has been added to Section 7.10 about mitigation of impacts for the Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge.

Refer to Response A-4 and Response A-5 for information about presentation of information about the preferred alternative in tables.

Comment noted about safety. Refer to Response A-69 for information about accidents and safety.

A-195 Comment noted.

Lake County Board of Commissioners

A-196 Comment noted.

Missoula County Board of Commissioners

A-197 Additional applicable information has been added to the final EIS to address social and cultural impacts that may result from the preferred alternative.

The referenced wildlife overpass is recommended, in Section 7.12.2.4 of the final EIS, as part of the preferred alternative.

As indicated in Section 5.3.3 of the draft and final EIS, any highway improvement should be designed to ". . . accommodate and promote increased use of TDM." Also, as indicated in the draft and final EIS, highway design will allow for continuation of existing pathways, such as the pathway north of Arlee. Pathways leading into and out of communities may be a good idea, and proposed highway improvements will be designed to accommodate them where appropriate. As indicated in Section 7.6 of the draft and final EIS, the preferred alternative, with eight foot wide shoulders, will adequately and safely accommodate bicycles and pedestrians throughout its length.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance

A-198 Comment noted. Refer to Response A-6.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

A-199 Comment noted.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

A-200 Comment noted.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

A-201 The air quality conformity analysis and determination has been completed as discussed in Section 7.7 and Appendix F of the final EIS. It has been coordinated with tribal staff, and copies of the draft and final document have been provided to tribal staff.

A-202

1) The CAL3QHC Version 2.0 release of CALINE 3 was used in the current analysis to permit modeling the impacts at intersections as well as on the free flow traffic segments of the highway. The necessary mitigation strategies on each segment are included in Section 7.7 and Appendix F of the final EIS.

2) The baseline date and concentrations have not been triggered on the Flathead Indian Reservation as of January 1996.

3) The primary visibility impacts on the Flathead Indian Reservation are related to regional agricultural burning, local slash burning, residential heating, and fugitive dust from wind erosion of agricultural fields during periods of high winds or stable conditions. Additional visibility impacts may be contributed by traffic on US 93 during periods of inversion. However, the prevailing meteorology of the area keeps the atmosphere mostly clear.

A-203 1) The impacts of the preferred alternative on each specific wetland, including acreage and function and value, are specifically identified in the final EIS.

2) The goal of "no net loss of wetland function and value" is stated in the final EIS.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Cont'd)

3) The mitigation measures suggested are discussed in Section 7.10 of the final EIS.

4) The wetland on proposed Polson Alignment 3 of the preferred alternative has been carefully evaluated and, as with all wetlands that may be impacted by the proposed action, particular attention has been paid to avoidance of impacts.

5) As discussed in Section 7.10 of the final EIS, a specific detailed wetland mitigation plan has been prepared that meets EPA and COE specifications.

6) The draft 404(b)1 evaluation is included as Appendix C of the final EIS. No revisions have yet been made to the draft 404(b)1 evaluation because the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have identified a CSKT Preferred Alternative that is different from the MDT Preferred Alternative in the final EIS. When MDT and CSKT agree on a single preferred alternative, a final Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation will be prepared.

A-204 1) Reference to Figure A-2 has been added, as suggested.

2) Figure 6.9-2 has been added to show the boundaries of the wellhead protection area in Polson. Calls and inquiries have been made to various state and local agencies, but no information on the wellhead protection area in Arlee has been found.

3) Information on potential impacts to groundwater has been added to Section 7.9.

4) The Flathead River bridge crossing is now noted in Section 6.11.3.

5) The statement on page 7.9-2 at the end of the first paragraph has been clarified in the final EIS.

As indicated in Section 7.9.2, the Montana Department of Transportation has committed to completing a storm water erosion control plan and a plan for runoff control of hazardous materials for each project. Each plan will be prepared in accordance with the most current version of the MDT's Standard Erosion Control Work Plan. This standard plan has been developed over a number of years with use on a variety of projects. It is regularly updated based on actual project experience in Montana, and it includes the use of current best management practices.

MDT has committed to use all available technologies and practices to minimize sediment yields during and after construction.

6) Refer to Paragraph 5) above.

Expediently sidecasting material over the shoulder is not allowed by the Standard Specifications of the Montana Department of Transportation. Construction of widened shoulders and filling depressions is done in a systematic manner that involves carefully placing material in layers and then compacting each layer to specified densities.

7) Refer to Paragraph 5) above.

A-205 Refer to Response A-6.

A-206 Comment noted.

A-207 Comment noted.

U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

A-208 Comment noted.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe

A-209 Response to the comment from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes is presented on the following pages.

Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena MT 59620-1001

Marc Racicot, Governor

May 30, 1996

A-209 Rhonda Swaney
Chairwoman - Tribal Council
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, Montana 59855

Re: F 5-1(9)6, Evaro - Polson EIS, 05 April 1996 letter from CSKT

Thank you for your review and comment in the referenced letter concerning the preliminary final environmental impact statement (EIS).

As summarized in Attachment A, we have used information in your letter to revise and improve the final EIS.

Please contact me with any comments or questions.

Sincerely,

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Joel M. Marshik, P.E.
Environmental Services Manager

Attachment

Copies, with attachments: Federal Highway Administration
Morrison-Maierle, Inc.

ltcsk01.fin

May 30, 1996

Attachment A
Responses to Comments
CSKT Letter of 05 April 1996
Tribal Review of Preliminary Final EIS

Volume I

Page 2-7, Paragraph 9: The suggested revision has been made.

Page 5-35, Paragraph 2: As suggested, the entire 29 February 1996 letter from the Tribal Council which outlines the Tribes' preferred alternative, has been included in the document. The MDT Preferred Alternative (generally a four-lane highway) and the CSKT Preferred Alternative (generally Lane Configuration A, a two-lane highway) are now discussed and evaluated throughout the document.

Page 5-48, Table 5.3-2: The suggested revision has been made.

Section 6.1. Information concerning average travel speeds, segment by segment, on this highway is not available at this time.

Section 5.1.4 and 7.1.3.4. and Appendix B in the draft EIS and final EIS discuss the limited potential for alternative forms of transit to reduce traffic volume or increase operation of highways in rural areas. The analysis of TDM applied theoretical rates of ridership for mass transit that approximately double the rates that studies show are reasonable for considering TDM in rural areas. Even with "inflated" rates of ridership, the analysis shows TDM will not allow an improved two-lane highway to obtain adequate level-of-service for current and expected volumes of traffic.

As indicated in Section 7.19.2 of the final EIS, a four-lane highway will provide better energy efficiency than an improved two-lane highway because traffic operation, or level-of-service, is better for the four-lane highway than for the two-lane highway. Vehicles on the four-lane highway will operate with less congestion of traffic, with less demand for acceleration and deceleration than will occur on an improved two-lane highway.

Even with the current poor levels-of-service on the existing highway, no substantial amounts of carpooling, walking, bicycling or reduction of trips is occurring for travel between towns along the highway or to areas such as Missoula or Kalispell. Increasing the level-of-service of the highway will probably not be a factor that will encourage these conditions. It may be correct to assume that as conditions deteriorate further, possibly to a point where highway travel becomes very undesirable, carpooling, walking, bicycling and reduction of trips may increase significantly.

The Tribes' comment is noted about inclusion of Lane Configuration C with MDT's preferred alternative for locations with speed zones higher than 45 miles per hour (mph). As indicated in the response to Comment A-148 in the final EIS:

"Considerable evidence shows that a C2WLTL is a cost-effective method of increasing the operational efficiency and safety of a highway where there is a demand for left-turns off of and onto the major roadway."

"Speed limits from 25 to 55 mph will accommodate C2WLTLs."

"Accident reductions averaging about 35% have been attributed to C2WLTLs."

"C2WLTLs also increase capacity and are well accepted by the driving public."

The response to the Tribes' Comment A-148 in Volume II of the final EIS provides additional discussion about the proposed locations of Lane Configuration C with the MDT preferred alternative.

Page 6.1-3, Table 6.1-1: The final EIS will note that after the federal government rescinded the national 55 mph speed limit, Montana reverted to a prior traffic law that establishes a discretionary guideline of reasonable and prudent speed to observe traffic, road and weather conditions. Table 6.1-1 has been revised to reflect this.

Any information available from the Tribal Planning Office, regarding existing widths of paved shoulders, will be appreciated.

Page 6.2-6, Paragraph 2: The reference to Table 6.2-4 has been clarified.

Page 6.4-3: The text that was added to the preliminary final EIS has been revised to present information from the Flathead Conservation Resources Plan about population growth for 1980-90.

Page 6.7-1, Paragraph 5: The recommended change has been made to clarify applications of regulations for air quality.

Page 6.7-2, Regarding Section 6.7.4: Committed mitigation measures are identified in Section 7.7. of the final EIS.

Page 6.14-1, Paragraphs 2, 5 and 6: The change has been made to replace "gathered" with "harvested" in Paragraph 2.

The recommended changes to Sections 5 and 6 have been made.

Sections 6.14 and 7.14: We have previously noted the comments of the culture committees about cultural values associated with wildlife, noise, air quality and water quality. In response to these comments, changes were made previously and were included in the preliminary final EIS. These changes are shown as shaded text on Pages 7.14-2 and 7.14-3 of the preliminary final EIS. These changes will be included in the final EIS.

Page 7.7-1: As stated in the analysis in Appendix F, implementation of the MDT Preferred

Alternative with committed mitigation measures will include several items that will reduce PM_{10} emissions. Since this demonstrates that implementation of the MDT Preferred Alternative will improve air quality emissions in Polson, as compared with the No Action Alternative, no further quantification is necessary.

Page 7.7-2: Committed mitigation measures are identified in Section 7.7. of the final EIS.

Page 7.15-1, Paragraph 3: The change was made to replace the word "quantity" with "quality."

Page 7.20-1, Paragraph 3: The change was made to indicate 1999 instead of 1996 may be the earliest start date for a construction project.

Volume II

Page 2.3-3, A-14: Comment noted about Section 4(f) properties, the Regatta Grounds and the Flathead River.

Page 2.3-6, A-38: The response to Comment A-38 has been revised.

Page 2.3-22, A-187 (A-6): These comments, stating the viewpoint of the Flathead Culture Committee, are noted. The referenced paragraph has been removed.

Page 2.3-22: A-189 (A-15): These comments, stating the viewpoint of the Flathead Culture Committee, are noted.

3. Written Public Comment

Received Before Public Hearing
Received At Public Hearing
Received After Public Hearing

COMMENT NUMBER	AUTHOR	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
1	Webb Taylor Harrington	Missoula resident	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation
2	Stephen S. Ellis M.D.	Polson property owner	Favor a four-lane highway Safety/traffic operation Traffic volume
3	LaVonne Bennett	Bandon, Or. resident	Land ownership
4	Dixie and Gary McLaughlin	Missoula residents	Favor highway improvement Safety/traffic operation Wildlife structures
5	Mrs. Charles Scott	Ronan resident	Safety/traffic operation Construction schedule
6	Lila Normandeau	Ronan resident	Favor preferred alternative
7	Sonia Jarrett	Missoula resident	Favor highway improvement Safety/traffic operation High traffic volume
8	Barbara Hesler	Polson property owner	Favor bypass of Polson Economics and tourism High traffic volume Access and left turns
9	Greg Jacobson Detective	Missoula Police Department	Favor four-lane highway Safety/traffic operation Wildlife
10	Warren L. Little	Missoula resident	Pedestrians and bicyclists
11	Allowee Briggs	Polson resident	Favor four-lane highway Safety/traffic operation
12	Elizabeth and Dale Smith	Arlee residents	Information on specific parcel
13	Jack Cheatham	Arlee resident	Request information
14	Horst H. Schwarz	Polson resident	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation
15	Dorothyann L. Schwarz	Polson resident	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation Wetlands
16	Ron Petet	Arlee resident	Favor Arlee Alignment 2
17	John T. Felton	Felso Industries	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation
18	Meggen Ryan Hartse	Evaro resident	Wildlife Request information
19	Robert Flansaas	Trout Creek resident	Favor four-lane highway Safety/traffic operation
20	John W. Browne	Belmont, CA resident	Request information

COMMENT NUMBER	AUTHOR	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
21	Tony Hoyt	Flathead Resource Organization	Oppose preferred alternative[2,3] EIS process and public involvement Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Social Land use
22	Ruby Vanderburg	Arlee resident	Oppose preferred alternative Land use Social Construction and maintenance cost Wildlife Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Right-of-way
23	Lilie Willison	Arlee resident	Oppose Arlee alternative alignment Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Economics and tourism Social Wetlands
24	Jackee Johnston	Arlee property owner	Favor Arlee Alignment 2 Safety/traffic operation and control/speed
25	Mort Lytle	Arlee property owner	Highway design
26	Wayne McCreesh	Yellowstone Pipeline Company	Request information

3.1 Index For Written Public Comment Received At St. Ignatius Public Hearing

COMMENT NUMBER	AUTHOR	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
27	Bill Bick	St. Ignatius resident	Development Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Highway design
28	P. Murphy	St. Ignatius resident	Favor alternative alignment at St. Ignatius
29	John Yatchak	St. Ignatius property owner	Wildlife Highway design
30	Thelma Olsen	St. Ignatius resident	Favor four-lane highway Safety/traffic operation Construction schedule
31	Al Roesch	St. Ignatius resident	Favor four-lane highway Safety/traffic operation Construction schedule
32	Marie B. King	Ravalli resident	Favor four-lane highway Safety/traffic operation
33	Jeanine Allard	Allard's Trading Post	Safety/traffic operation Access and left turns Economics and tourism
34	Esther V.M. Hamel	St. Ignatius resident	Favor Ronan and Polson alternative alignments Safety/traffic operation Construction schedule Wildlife
35	Goldie Knuppel	St. Ignatius resident	Favor Arlee, Ronan and Polson alternative alignments Safety/traffic operation Social

COMMENT NUMBER	AUTHOR	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
36	Art Mangels	Pablo property owner	Access and left turns Highway design
37	Dan Bartel	Ronan Ace Hardware	Favor Ronan existing alignment Economics and tourism
38	Ben Adams	Polson resident	Wetlands Irrigation
39	Shannon Burke	Pablo resident	Oppose preferred alternative Cultural resources
40	Mary Herak	Charlo resident	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Wildlife Access and left turns
41	John Plouffe	Flathead Irrigation Project	Favor Ronan and Polson alternative alignments Wildlife
42	Joe McDonald President	Salish Kootenai College	Oppose four-lane highway Noise Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Access and left turns Pedestrians and bicyclists
43	Karen Krogstad	Ronan resident	Safety/traffic operation

COMMENT NUMBER	AUTHOR	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
44	Dudley H. Page	Polson resident	Favor preferred alternative, except favor Arlee and Ronan alternative alignments Economics and tourism Access and left turns Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Highway design
45	Jens Gran	Polson resident	Favor Polson preferred alternative High traffic volume Highway design Land use Social
46	Clarence Brazil	Polson resident	Favor preferred alternative Economics and tourism Safety/traffic operation and control/speed
47	Rocky Shriver	West Polson Mall	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Economics and tourism Recreation Noise Visual
48	Geraldine Bayh	Polson property owner	Favor Polson preferred alternative Economics and tourism
49	(No first name given) Shriver	Polson resident	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Highway design Economics and tourism Social
50	Joan Bennett	Polson resident	Favor Polson preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Highway design Economics and tourism Land use Social
51	Hettie B. Beumett	Polson resident	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Economics and tourism Construction and maintenance cost
52	(No name given)	--	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Safety/traffic operation and control/speed High traffic volume Construction and maintenance cost Highway design
53	Albert Poloson	Poloson Equipment Co.	Favor alternative alignment west of existing alignment Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Safety/traffic operation and control/speed
54	Everett Parsons	Ronan trucker	Favor preferred alternative, except Arlee existing alignment and Polson Alignment 3
55	Helen Brazil	Polson resident	Favor Polson preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Economics and tourism

COMMENT NUMBER	AUTHOR	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
56	Ann M. Page	Polson resident	Favor Polson preferred alternative Economics and tourism
57	Peter Walther	Polson resident	Favor Polson preferred alternative
58	Karen Welch	Big Arm resident	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation and control/speed
59	Tom Mercer	Polson real estate broker	Favor Polson preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation and control/speed
60	James Boyle	Polson resident	Favor Polson preferred alternative High traffic volume
61	Irene Marchello	Polson business owner	Favor Polson Alignment 2 High traffic volume Land use Social Wildlife
62	(No name given)	--	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Economics and tourism Wildlife

COMMENT NUMBER	AUTHOR	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
63	Marc Gullickson	Polson property owner	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Land use Social Economics and tourism
64	Maren Rae	Polson business owner	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Construction and maintenance cost Highway design Economics and tourism Access and left turns
65	No Name Given	Polson resident	Favor Polson preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Social Pedestrians and bicyclists Highway design Economics and tourism
66	R.T. Sterling	Polson resident	Favor four-lane highway Safety/traffic operation Construction schedule
67	Elizabeth C. Preston	Ronan resident	Favor preferred alternative Oppose Ronan Alignments 3 and 4 High traffic volume Safety/traffic operation
68	Jay W. Preston	Ronan resident	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation
69	Jerry Shepard	Arlee property owner	Favor Arlee alternative alignment Safety Air quality Noise
70	Marlys Shepard	Arlee property owner	Favor Arlee alternative alignment Safety/traffic operation Access and left turns
71	Curt Rosman	St. Ignatius resident	Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Speed limit enforcement Access and left turns
72	Barbara Steele	St. Ignatius resident	Oppose preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Social Cultural resources General environment Pedestrians and bicyclists Wildlife Access and left turns Construction and maintenance cost

COMMENT NUMBER	AUTHOR	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
73	Greg Hertz	Ronan and Polson business	Favor preferred alternative, except oppose Polson Alignment 3 Right-of-way Farmlands High traffic volume Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Economics and tourism Construction and maintenance cost Wildlife Social Noise Stream crossing Access and left turns Pedestrians and bicyclists
74	Corwin Clairmont	Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribal member	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement General environmental Social Wetlands Wildlife Noise Air quality Cultural resources Land use
75	William R. Magnuson	Polson resident	Highway design
76	Zane Kelly	Polson resident	Favor alternative alignment west of existing alignment Highway alignment and design Safety/traffic operation Economics and tourism Social Pedestrians and bicyclists Air quality Noise
77	Tom Nettleton Chair, Transportation Committee Michael Jaworsky Executive Vice President	Missoula Chamber of Commerce	Favor preferred alternative
78	Maryetta Bauer Manager	Folkshop	Favor Polson preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Economics and tourism
79	Ron Davis	Certified Public Accountant	Favor Polson preferred alternative High traffic volume Access and left turns
80	Robert Gauthier Director	Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Housing Authority	Favor extension of center lane north of Pablo Safety
81	Mike Bray	Missoula resident	Favor Arlee alternative alignment Safety/traffic operation Pedestrians and bicyclists Economics and tourism
82	Paul Gierach	Huson resident	Favor Arlee alternative alignment
83	Joe Weydt	Arlee resident	Oppose preferred alternative

COMMENT NUMBER	AUTHOR	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
84	Clarice Onsager	Ronan resident	Favor preferred alternative
85	Cheri Rowbury	Ronan resident	Favor preferred alternative Construction schedule
86	Ruth Bray	Missoula resident	Favor Arlee alternative alignment Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Access and left turns Economics and tourism
87	David Whitlock	Mission Valley Power	Provides a copy of environmental assessment for proposed utility complex at Pablo
88	DeeLaine and John Peterson	Polson business	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Construction and maintenance cost General environment Economics and tourism
89	George Knapp	Fort Connah Restoration Society	Cultural resources Access and left turns
90	Viola and Harold Tanner	Arlee property owners	Favor preferred alternative Favor Arlee alternative alignment
91	Dale Mahlum	Missoula business	Favor preferred alternative Construction schedule Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Wildlife
92	Mable Reum	St. Ignatius property owner	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Economics and tourism
93	Barbara Ward	Polson business	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Noise
94	Elaine M. and A.W. Corrigan	Polson residents	Overpass for Polson Alignment 3 Safety/traffic operation and control/speed High traffic volume Social Economics and tourism
95	Thomas C. Lindell	Polson resident	Favor preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Construction schedule Land use Economics and tourism Social Right-of-way
96	Glen R. Wunderlich	Ronan business	Oppose Ronan alternative alignment Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Right-of-way
97	Odette Gasser	Ronan business	Oppose Ronan alternative alignment Economics and tourism
98	Norman Reum	St. Ignatius rancher	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation and control/speed General environment

COMMENT NUMBER	AUTHOR	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
99	J.C. Heglie	Polson resident	Land on Polson Alignment 3 Right-of-way
100	Stanley Peterson	Polson resident	Favor Arlee, Ronan and Polson alternative alignments
101	June Normandeau	St. Ignatius resident	Access and left turns Safety/traffic operation Highway design
102	Duane Olsen	Polson business	Favor preferred alternative Economics and tourism Safety/traffic operation
103	Willard and Virginia Steinkraus	Polson residents	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation
104	Arlene and Kenneth Doepke	Polson residents	Favor Polson preferred alternative Economics and tourism
105	Bob Yetter	Evaro resident	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process Visual Noise Social Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Wildlife
106	Dorothy L. Preston	Polson resident	Favor Polson preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation and control/speed EIS process Recreation Economics and tourism
107	Dorothy and Dwight Preston	Polson residents	Favor Polson preferred alternative Access and left turns High traffic volume
108	Millie and Fred Mielke	Polson residents	Favor Polson preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Access and left turns
109	Daniel Howlett	Polson resident	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 EIS process Right-of-way Construction and maintenance cost Highway alignment Noise Visual Wildlife Economics and tourism High traffic volume
110	Lois and James Aznoe	Polson residents	Favor preferred alternative High traffic volume

COMMENT NUMBER	AUTHOR	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
111	James A. Haynal	Polson resident	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Stream crossings Economics and tourism Social Wildlife Wetlands Noise Construction and maintenance cost Right-of-way
112	Terri Haynal	Polson resident	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 EIS process Social Economics and tourism Wildlife Wetlands Noise Stream crossings
113	Victor and Geneva Samples	Arlee residents	Favor Arlee alternative alignment Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Access and left turns Economics and tourism Construction and maintenance cost
114	Maurice Malone	Arlee resident	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation and control/speed Access and left turns Pedestrians and bicyclists
115	Susan Jan Rooy	Evaro resident	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process Social Cultural resources Wildlife Wetlands
116	Michael Kennedy	Missoula County Commissioner	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Highway design TDM Safety/traffic operation and control/speed High traffic volume Access and left turns Social Economics and tourism Cultural resources Wildlife Wetlands Air quality Construction schedule Construction and maintenance cost
117	Gary Steele Owner	Rising Wolf Expeditions	Oppose preferred alternative

COMMENT NUMBER	AUTHOR	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
118	Doug Baty Chairman	Flathead Resource Organization	Proposal for an improved two-lane highway and opposition to a four-lane highway Refer to Response 118 for detailed list of topics contained in the comment from the Flathead Resource Organization (FRO)

3.2 Written Public Comment

MAR 24 1995

Jul 3/27

To: Joel Marshik
Manager, Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, Montana 59620-1001

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Morrison & Maierle
Consultant Design

From: Webb Taylor Harrington
P.O. Box 8421
Missoula, Montana 59807

P.O. Box 1068
Polson, Montana 59860

Re: Highway 93 EIS

Date: March 23, 1995

1 This letter is in response to an article written by Ron Selden and appearing in today's *Missoulian.*

The article was of great interest to me because I own property in Polson and in Missoula and I work in both communities. "Close calls" are frequent on the "ribbon of death" and I've seen and experienced many because I travel 93 on a regular basis - sometimes daily.

The proposal outlined in the *Missoulian* article makes sense to me. The plan is well thought out and researched. I support the Evaro-Polson highway expansion and improvements as well as the 5.8 loop around Polson from Caffrey Road to north of Polson.

Thank you for the opportunity to send in written comments as I am unable to attend the scheduled hearings.

Jul 3/27

STEPHEN S. ELLIS, II, M.D., F.A.C.S., P.C.
GENERAL SURGEON
1170 WESTWOOD DRIVE, SUITE A
HAMILTON, MONTANA 59840-2396

TELEPHONE 363-5104

MAR 24 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Morrison-Maierle
Consultant Design

March 22, 1995

Montana Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59602-1001

Attn: Joel Marshik, Manager

Dear Mr. Marshik:

2 I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Highway 93 development from Evaro to Polson. I am totally in favor of a four lane highway. I support your efforts strongly. It is my opinion that this is not only needed for obvious safety reasons, but also to increase the flow of traffic to one of our most beautiful national parks and lakes.

Respectfully,

Stephen S. Ellis, M.D.
SSE/lkl

regulation; purchase of easements or right-of-way; or other public/private cooperative methods.

A four-lane highway is recommended from Evaro to Polson. A continuous two-way left-turn center median will be included, mostly in areas with a large number of intersections and turning vehicles. Through Polson, the recommended roadway will include a two-lane roadway with a continuous two-way left-turn center median on the existing alignment and a four-lane highway on Alignment 3, south and west of the community.

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

The capacity of the highway will be increased substantially, resulting in traffic operation at level-of-service (LOS) B in the design year, instead of LOS F with No Action. Operating efficiency will be improved substantially, and congestion will be eliminated.

Based on experience near the proposed action, accident rates and frequencies, particularly accidents involving injuries and fatalities, are expected to decline.

With partial access control and land use planning and regulation, strip development and other highway-related development can be better controlled.

Approximately 370 acres of land will be converted to new highway right-of-way.

Approximately 46 acres of farmland that is prime or unique farmland or farmland of statewide or local importance will be converted to highway right-of-way.

The physical prominence of the highway will increase with related barrier effects and visual effects.

The highway will be more desirable for commuters, which may encourage population growth.

Relocation of several buildings, including approximately eight residences, will be required.

About 40 acres of wetlands will be filled or otherwise destroyed. They will be replaced by wetlands that provide similar or better functions and values.

Special wildlife crossings will be constructed in the Evaro area and other areas. This is to benefit grizzly bear and other wildlife by improving migration routes and decreasing or avoiding highway mortality.

Direct use of land from several Section 4(f) properties will be required.

Continuation of major highway traffic through Arlee and Ronan will continue adverse traffic operation and safety conditions. Short-term impact to some businesses will occur during construction.

Carbon monoxide (CO) emissions will decrease. PM_{10} emissions will not differ substantially from No Action, except in Polson where traffic volumes in the city will be substantially reduced.

3-25-95

3 The parcel of land involved in the reconstruction of US 93 was sold about a year ago to a man from Pablo. Please check Clerk Recorder or Lake Co. Court House for information. Thanks.

[signature]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

RECEIVED
MAR 23 1995
MORRISON-MAIERLE/CSSA, INC.

MAR 27 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Morrison Maierle Consultant [illegible]

Dixie & Gary McLaughlin
203 Pattee Canyon Drive
Missoula MT 59803

April 23, 1995

Joel Marshik
Manager, Environmental Services
Montana Dept. of Transportation
P.O. Box 201001
Helena MT 59620-1001

Dear Mr. Marshik:

4 I am writing to express our total support for the Highway 93 construction project. We are more than willing to have our tax dollars go toward this long overdue proposal. It seems especially timely now that the Medicine Tree Clinic is getting ready to open, right off of 93 in St. Ignatius. This clinic will be attracting people from all over the state to use its facilities, with a concentration of people coming from Missoula and Polson. It will be even more necessary to have -at the minimum- a turning lane for this clinic to avoid many possible future collisions.

Human life is the most precious of all, and it is our duty as citizens to do what we can to safeguard it. Western Montana's population is increasing, that is a fact. We cannot put our heads in the sand and hope it goes away, but rather we must plan and prepare for growth. Our native Montanans are being killed on this treacherous stretch of highway at the same rate as "out-of-staters." We owe it to the children of our state to help protect them in the ways we can, and improving the driving conditions on 93 is one way.

I applaud your efforts to preserve wildlife with the special use of "underpass tunnels." I understand the concern for the environment along 93, but first and foremost must be the greatest amount of good for greatest number of people (to borrow from John Rawls) and that is to do whatever it takes to improve this stretch of highway.

If you need to contact us, we may be reached at (406) 721-1322.

Sincerely,

Dixie & Gary McLaughlin
Dixie & Gary McLaughlin

MAR 27 1995

March 23, 1995
Ronan, Mt 59864

RECEIVED
MAR 29 1995
MORRISON-MAIERLE/CSSA, INC.

MASTER FILE COPY
cc: Morrison & Maierle Consulting Design

Dear Mr Joe Marshik,
Why? Why? another hearing

5 or study?

The proposed plan from Evaro and Polson should be started immediately. It is critical to human life.

Were lived here 38 years, & seen death, injury, & experienced close calls, & you still having hearings, year after year.

What a waste of taxpayers money, plus cost are going up, & up.—

This is from a Lake County family, that hopes they live long enough to see a safer, Hwy 93, & not more crosses.

Sincerely—
Mrs Charles Scott &.
4300 N. Foothills Dr. families
Ronan, Mt 59864

---

406 444 7245

APR 24 1995

April 22, 1995

MASTER FILE COPY
cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

To whom it may Concern:

6 I do not agree with Tom Smith, the FRO, or Richard Eggert.

Please go ahead and build Highway 93 from Missoula to Ronan just like you had planned, 4 lanes & a 5th where it is needed.

We need a road so badly and through the reservation also.

Post-it® Fax Note 7671	Date 4-24-95	# of pages ▸ 1 of 1
To Brad Peterson	From Joel Marshik	
Co./Dept.	Co. MDT	
Phone #	Phone # 444-7632	
Fax # 442-7862	Fax # 444-7245	

Sincerely
Lila Normandeau
1033 Terrace Lk. Rd.
P.O. Box 618
Ronan, Mt. 59864

MAR 2 1995
MAR 2 1995

RECEIVED
MAR 31 1995
MORRISON—MAIERLE/OSSA, INC.

620 Big Flat Rd
Missoula, MT
59801
3-27-95

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Consultant
Jim Weaver
Morrison &

Joel Marshik, Manager
Environmental Services
Montana Dept. of Transportation
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Dear Sir,

7 We travel Highway 93 between Evaro and Polson often as we have a lake home on Flathead Lake. It would be wonderful to have improvemen made on that road. It's a very dangerous stretch of road and is so heavily traveled. We will be waiting to hear what decisions are made to improve the situation.

Sincerely,
Sonia Jarrett
(Mrs. James E. Jarrett

MAR 28 1995

MAR 29 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

March 27, 1995

cc: Consultant Design
Morrison & Maierle
Jim Weaver

Joel Marshik
Montana Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Dear Mr. Marshik:

8 My family has owned a condominium in Polson for the past four years. During that time, the traffic from May through September has increased to the point that it is almost impossible to make a left turn (across traffic) onto the main road going through Polson.

I applaud the decision to reroute the traffic around Polson!!

For those business owners who feel they will suffer from less exposure, I can assure them as a consumer that I would be more inclined to go into Polson and shop with this rerouting. As it is now, I hate to make a stop because of the very frustrating hassle involved in returning to traffic.

Best of luck in getting this project completed in the forseeable future!

Sincerely,

Barbara Hesler

Barbara Hesler
#17 Country Club Shores
Polson, MT 59860

MISSOULA POLICE DEPARTMENT
435 Ryman
Missoula, Montana 59802-4297
"Professionalism With Pride"

GREG JACOBSON
Detective

Phone: (406) 523-4693
FAX: (406) 728-6690

March 28, 1995 MAR 2 ? 1995

Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Atten: Joel Marshik

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Consultant Design
Jim Weaver
Morrison Maierle

Dear Mr. Marshik,

9 I recently read in the *Missoulian* that a recent study is calling for a four lane highway from Evaro to Polson. As a person who drives that particular stretch of highway quite often, I can tell you that a four lane highway is long overdue! My wife and I have relatives in both Columbia Falls and Kalispell, as well as having property in Lake County. I would estimate that we drive the so called " Ribbon Of Death " an average of twice a month, and I could recount several very close calls that endangered my life and the lives of my family that were the direct result of too much traffic on the road.

I have been a police officer in Missoula for eight years, and I feel that I am qualified to know dangerous traffic situations when I see them. As a trained observer in such matters, I can tell you that there simply is too much vehicle traffic between Evaro and Polson for a two lane highway to handle safely. Even a person obeying the speed limit is in peril. There is a tremendous amount of semi-trailer traffic on the road at all times of the year. Their inability to maintain a steady speed means that there soon is a long line of vehicles backed up behind them. There are few safe stretches to pass on the road, and the huge amount of oncoming traffic makes it almost impossible to pass when there is a straight stretch. Soon the level of frustration of drivers stuck behind the semi-trailers, starts to rise. Then drivers are making unsafe passes in an attempt to get ahead of the semi-trailers and maintain a steady safe speed. Add the incredible amount of recreational vehicle traffic that the road receives in the summer months, and the resulting slowing of traffic that occurs behind many of them, and you compound the problem many times! I can't tell you how many times we've been stuck behind recreational vehicles going as slow as 35 to 40 miles per hour. In no time, the line of traffic behind them is literally a mile long. Unfortunately, few of the drivers of the slow driving vehicles have the common sense to pull over and allow the traffic behind them to proceed. Again, driver frustration in the following vehicles reaches a high level and people start passing in an unsafe manner trying to get around the slow moving vehicles. I have seen many oncoming vehicles run off the road by vehicles passing unsafely as a result of such traffic back up, and I have had to take to the shoulder of the road several times to avoid colliding with vehicles passing in such a manner. Add to these conditions the drivers who insist on driving above the speed limit and seem to be even more impatient to maintain a high rate of speed no matter how unsafe the traffic conditions, and you have the recipe for disaster each and every day. Every year, the paper is filled with obituaries of unfortunate drivers who failed to beat the odds, and the problem only increases as vehicle traffic on the road increases.

I realize that there will be environmental concerns over widening the road along the existing corridor. As a native Montanan, I would like to see these matters addressed in a way where wildlife and the scenic beauty of the area are taken into account. According to the article in the paper, this is possible in a way where all of the above concerns can be met. I'd also like to stress that I feel that the human concerns in this case must take precedence over the others. Lives are being wasted and will continue to be until this stretch of highway is upgraded to meet the flow of vehicle traffic that now must travel in such hazardous conditions. Knowing that such a dangerous problem exists but failing to address and correct the problem would be criminal.

If there is anything I can do to further the efforts to widen the " Ribbon Of Death " to meet current and future demands for safe traffic flow, please feel free to contact me. I'd be more then happy to help.

Thank you for our concern,

Greg Jacobson
2409 56th Street
Missoula, MT 59803
(406) 251-4835

RECEIVED
APR - 5 1995
MORRISON—MAIERLE/CSSA, INC.

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APR 4 1995
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

WARREN L. "DITE" LITTLE
8127 HILLGATH STATION
MISSOULA, MONTANA 59807

MASTER FILE COPY
cc: Consultant Design, Jim Weaver, Manuscript Mgmt.

3/29/95

Dear Mr. Marshik,

10 I'm a 65 year old retired lawyer. I love to ride my bike & I want to lobby you re the new highway you're working on between Polson & Evaro. (Highway 93)

Please leave a healthy shoulder & also do not put in those little noise bumps on the side of the road. It's not good for bikes.

There is alot of bike traffic on that road & especially the TOSRV run up through the Blackfoot & back down 93.

Please insure the design of your highway takes the bike traffic into consideration.

Thank you,

Warren Little

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APR - 3 1995
MORRISON—MAIERLE/CSSA, INC.

RECEIVED
MAR 3 1 1995
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

MASTER FILE COPY
cc: Consultant Design, Jim Weaver, Manuscript Mgmt.

March 29, 1995

Joel Marshik
Montana Dept of Transportation,
P.O. Box 201001,
Helena, MT 58620-1001

Dear Mr. Marshik,

11 I am writing you to plead for the people of Lake and Flathead Counties in regards to a purposed four-lane highway to be constructed (hopefully) between Evaro and Polson. This highway is long over due. In the past the traffic did thin out during the winters months, but as of late it is heavy all year 'round.

It seems that the public is getting too hung up on protecting wildlife. I am certainly not against doing that within reason, but what about us? Those who make such an issue of saving a bird's nest or a deer trail probably haven't lost a son or a daughter or a loved one on Highway 93. Those lives are precious too, and I feel that we should do everything in our power to protect people's lives. The heartbreak of the families of accident victims should certainly be considered.

A well constructed four-lane highway would enhance this beautiful valley, and make a safer, healthier environment.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,

Allowee Briggs

Allowee Briggs
1032 North Finley Point Road
Polson, Montana 59860

406 444 7245

RECEIVED
MAR 3 1 1995
ENVIRONMENTAL BUR.

Dale H. & Elizabeth D.B. Smith
17898 U.S. Highway 93N
Arlee, Montana 59821
406/726-3214

MASTER FILE COPY

March 29, 1995

Joel Marshik, Manager, Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

RE: U.S. Highway 93, Evaro - Polson, Montana

Dear Mr. Joel Marshik:

12 We are most interested in obtaining as much information as possible about the proposed action to take place on US 93 between Evaro and Polson, most specifically on the action to take place in and around Arlee.

As we live on the highway, the construction that is proposed for the area will affect not only our property and its value, but our family's lifestyle as well. We are most anxious to learn what, in all likelihood, is planned for the area.

We realize that the Record of Decision is to be based after the final environmental impact statements are prepared, sometime after the April meetings, but we are in the middle of remodeling our basement and if there is any possibility of our house being relocated we do not want to put any further time or money into these efforts.

Can you assist us in providing information that would be relative to these issues?

1. In all probability, will the highway be reconstructed through Arlee?
2. If so, how much area will be required for the roadway, in relation to what is currently used? (Four lanes plus a turn lane? Sidewalks? Curbing?) How much footage is required? Where will it be required?
3. Would the improvements continue through town and north of the newly established bank? How far north? As far as the bowling alley?
4. Will highway access land be needed in additional to the roadway, in the form of barrel pits or other?
5. Is the residence at 17898 Highway 93 proposed to be relocated?
6. Is the property at 17898 Highway 93 proposed to be reconstructed in any fashion?
7. When is construction scheduled? When is construction scheduled to be completed?

We would be most appreciative of any information you could offer. If your department can not assist us, please forward this inquiry to the correct department.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dale & Elizabeth Smith

Dale & Elizabeth Smith
Residents of U.S. Highway 93 Impact Area.

406 444 7245

Jack Cheatham
Box 204
Arlee, MT 59821

APR 8 1995
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

MASTER FILE COPY

Department of Transportation
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Attn: Joel Marshik

Dear Mr. Marshik:

13 I am very interested in the proposed 4-lane highway between Evaro and Polson (Hwy 93). Could you please let me know <u>what</u> is proposed?

Thank you,

Jack Cheatham

Jack Cheatham

John —
Would you please send this person your one page flyer + tell him of our Arlee meeting plans.
June 4/5/95

Sent on 05 Apr. 95 BGP

cc: Consultant Design
Morrison-Maierle
sent to Missla District

28 March 1995

Montana Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

SUBJECT: Highway 93 between Evaro and Polson, MT

14 I agree with the state and federal preference to expand the "ribbon of death" between Evaro and Polson into a four lane highway with continuous center turn lanes in the route's most congested areas.

As studies have repeatedly found, this corridor is among the most dangerous in the state. The roadway in many areas fails to meet current standards for safety and design. I personally feel that this stretch of existing highway NOW exceeds capacity for the current traffic. This is a very dangerous highway.

Horst H. Schwarz
1300 W. Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802

cc: Consultant Design
Morrison-Maierle
sent to Missla District

28 March 1995

Montana Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

SUBJECT: Highway 93 between Evaro and Polson, MT

15 I agree with the state and federal preference to expand the "ribbon of death" between Evaro and Polson into a four lane highway with continuous center turn lanes in the route's most congested areas..

As studies have repeatedly found, this corridor is among the most dangerous in the state. The roadway in many areas fails to meet current standards for safety and design. I personally feel that this stretch of existing highway NOW exceeds capacity for the current traffic.

Get farm equipment moving at a slow rate of speed, tourists, and many camper-motor homes caravaning down the highway, and a very dangerous situation exists. Someobne in a hurry (or just desires to drive 55 miles an hour) will attempt to pass.

I hope you will listen to the working and tax paying people--not the usual group that is pounding nails into trees, pushing hunters around at Yellowstone Park, etc. There are plenty of ponds/wetlands to accomodate our thriving duck population. People and their safety need to be protected.

Dorothyann L. Schwarz
Dorothyann L. Schwarz ("Ginger")
P.O. Box 195
Polson, MT 59860-0195

gs

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APR 7 1995
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

Ron Petet
P.O. Box 354
Arlee, MT 59821

Morrison & Maierle

RECEIVED
APR 10 1995
MORRISON

Apr 7 1995

MASTER FILE
COPY

cc: Jim Weaver (Consultant Morrison + Maierle)

Sirs:

16 Thank you for giving the public a chance to respond. After all it is the public that is effected, and catching the bill.

I can not figure out why you would even consider running the new hiway 93 through Arlee. Except for the pressure you may be getting from a half dozen, or less merchants. I assure you they will survive.

As you must know Arlee is a major bottle neck now. The traffic is only going to increase. Local residents have a hard time getting on and off 93. The local bussiness are a congested mess. Most of all we have lost the lives, and others injured by all the traffic. Most cars and most all trucks do not stop at the cross-walks and many exceed the speed limit.

Why in the world would even consider coming through Arlee, when you have the funds to go over by the Rail Road tracks where the new road should be. We may not have the funds at a later date. to move it over there.

Thank you very much
Ron Petet

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APR 4 1995
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

RECEIVED
MAR 29 1995
MT. DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
DIRECTORS OFFICE

cc: Consultant Design
Morrison & Maierle
sent to Missoula District

(25)

28 March 1995

Montana Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

SUBJECT: Highway 93 between Evaro and Polson, MT

17 I agree with the state and federal preference to expand the "ribbon of death" between Evaro and Polson into a four lane highway with continuous center turn lanes in the route's most congested areas..

As studies have repeatedly found, this corridor is among the most dangerous in the state. The roadway in many areas fails to meet current standards for safety and design. I personally feel that this stretch of existing highway NOW exceeds capacity for the current traffic. This is a very dangerous highway.

John Felton

John T. Felton
Felso Industries
3660 Grant Creek Road
Missoula, MT 59802

RECEIVED
APR 13 1995
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

MASTER FILE COPY

4-11-95

To: Joel Marshik, Manager
MT Dept. of Transportation

18 Please send a copy of the draft E.I.S for the proposed highway improvements between Evaro & Polson, MT to my address below:

17925 Beargrass Rd.
Evaro, MT 59802

I am especially interested in the proposal for a wildlife crossing in the Evaro area.

Thank you.

Meggen Ryan Hintze
MEGGEN RYAN HINTZE

RECEIVED
APR 12 1995
MORRISON—MAIERLE/CSSA, INC.

RECEIVED
APR 11 1995
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

MASTER FILE COPY

April 8, 1995

19 This Letter is in support of the building Highway 93 a Four Lane from Evaro to Polson the existing two Lane is insufficient for todays traffic. One 50 MPH truck and you got a line of traffic a mile long

Robert Flansaas
P.O. Box 1369
Trout Creek, Mt.
59874

cc: Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle
Jim Weaver

John W. Browne
1509 Solana Drive
Belmont, California 94002
(415) 591-0916
(415)

APR 17 1995

ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU 4-15-95

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Morrison-Maierle
Reconstruction
Jim Weaver

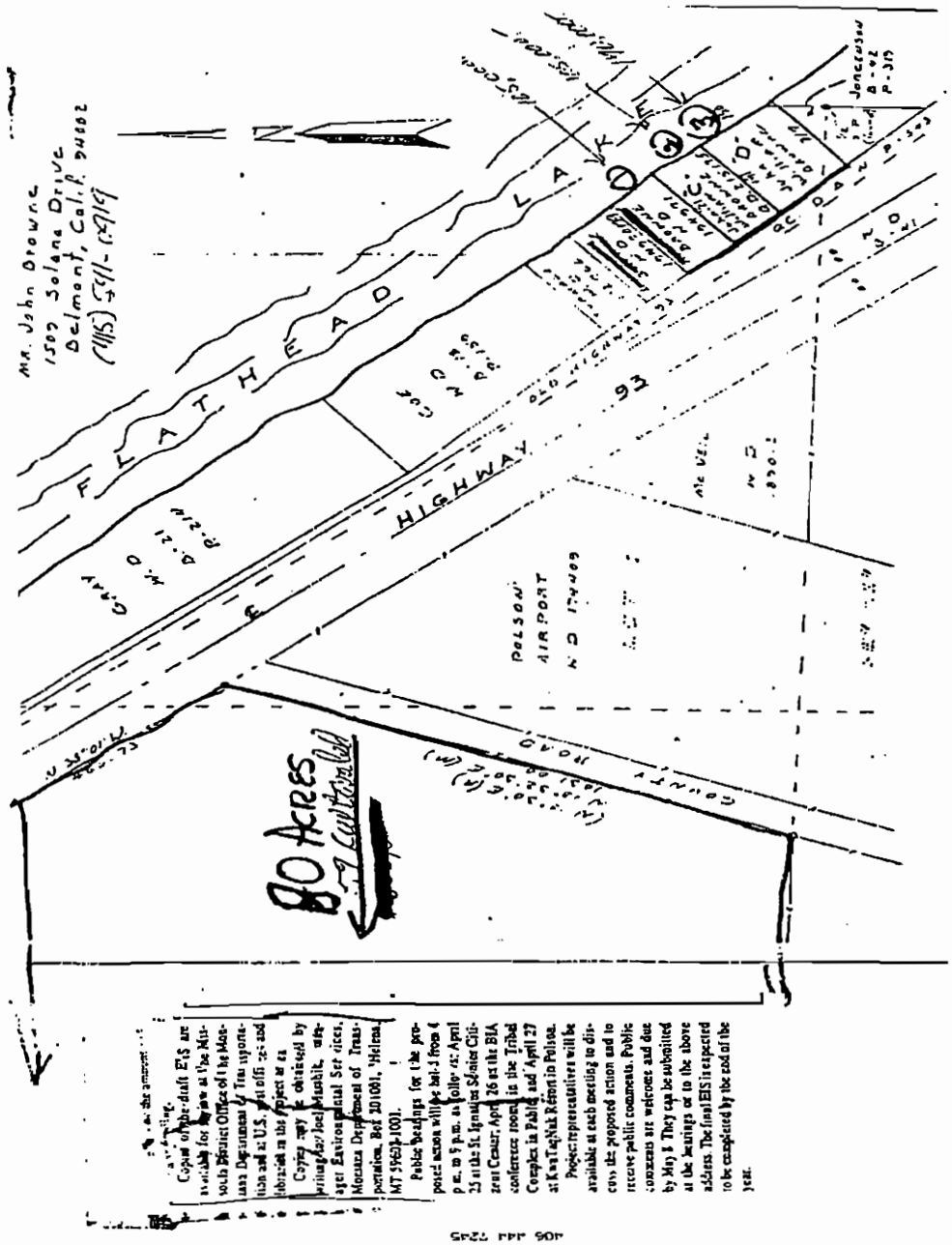
Dear Mr. Marshick;

20 Can you tell me how the proposed new highway (93) at Polson & Mt. will be located in relation to our 80A property as shown on the enclosed?

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

John W. Browne



PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

This page is available for members of the public to make written comments. The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Montana Department of Transportation are seeking information from users of the highway, property owners and other members of the public. For more information please contact:

Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Tony Hoyt
Affiliation: FRO
Address: Po Box 281
City/State/Zip: Arlee, MT 59821

21

TOPIC	COMMENTS
I Lane configurations in Arlee	The Arlee Sub I D Team consisting of 2 tribal councilmen, 1 business rep & 2 community members + the superintendent of schools overwhelmingly recommended 3 Lanes thru Arlee. This Recomendation was totally disregarded and Arlee will have 5 Lanes all for the sake of more speed ~~5~~ 5 lanes thru Arlee totally against what the sub I D team recommended.
II	The FRO proposal has never been given a fair treatment in the EIS it is always compared to the no action Alternative when in reality it has many improvements to no action and would not only be safer but would Improve

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

03PUBLHR.MOD

3.2-12

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
level of service	without making Arlee such a bedroom community to Missoula + development will happen regardless but a 5 Lane highway will make it worse

THANK YOU

03PUBLHR.MOD

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
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Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Ruby Vandeburg
Affiliation:
Address:
City/State/Zip:

22

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Highway 93	I feel the road should stay where it is. Put in turn out lanes. When the Tribes gets it to gether they will buy back the land and the growth will slow down. I don't feel it is fair to the people who own the land now should have to give it up to make other people happy. Up grade the highway we now

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.MOD

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	have and save the tax payers money. I do agree with the idea for Evaro.

THANK YOU

93PUBLHR.MOD

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Lylie Wellison
Affiliation: Interested in rural preservation
Address: Box 82
City/State/Zip: Arlee MT 59821

23

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Alt # 2	Would divide good farmers.
	We do not need more pavement
	Would increase speeds.
	Would divide railroad lands into
	narrow waste land strips.
0	Would go through proposed
	waste treatment.
	Ruins some wet lands.
Alt #1	Best route.
	needs one stop light.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Jackie Johnston
Affiliation: land owner
Address: P.O. x 143
City/State/Zip: Arlee, MT 59821

24

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Hwy. 93	I am a property owner in the town of
	Arlee & my property is located on
	the highway. I am interested in
	having a 3 lane hwy go through
	Arlee with a stop light, as I
	am concerned about safety of
	children & others with the Elem.
	school so close by (one block).
	I am interested in having the
	hwy go around the town of Arlee
	& not through the town.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

Written Public Comment Received At Public Hearings
Arlee Public Hearing

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
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Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Mort Lytle
Affiliation:
Address: 24375 Hwy 93N
City/State/Zip: Arlee, MT 59821

	TOPIC	COMMENTS
25	MP 12.4	Re. Vernabell Lytle owner Requesting underpass be constructed to serve their property Property on both sides of MP 12.4 - Drainage culvert could be installed large enough for cattle to be moved from one side to other. See attached letter from CSKT

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.MOD

THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, Montana 59855
(406) 675-2700
FAX (406) 675-2806

Joseph E. Dupuis - Executive Secretary
Vern L. Clairmont - Executive Treasurer
Bernice Hewankorn - Sergeant-at-Arms

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Michael T. "Mickey" Pablo - Chairman
Laurence Kennedy - Vice Chairman
Elmer "Sonny" Morigeau, Jr. - Secretary
Antoine "Tony" Incashola - Treasurer
Louis Adams
Lloyd Irvine
Patrick Lefthand
Henry "Hank" Saylor
John "Chris" Lozeau
D. Fred Matt

M E M O R A N D U M

Date: June 18, 1993

To: Janet Camel, Tribal Planner

From: Dennis Clairmont, Range Conservationist

Thru: Douglas Dupuis, Agricultural Manager
Virgil Dupuis, Division of Lands Manager

Subject: Livestock Underpasses, Proposed Highway 93 Expansion Project, Evaro to Polson

The only existing underpass serving Tribal lands is located on Ravalli hill West of St. Ignatius (NW¼NW¼ Sec. 28 T. 18 N., R. 20 W.) This underpass is in use and needs to remain when the highway is reconstructed. All other existing stockcrossing underpasses should also be retained.

Mort Lytle, husband of Tribal member Vernabelle Lytle has been in contact with this office several times since the planning process for Highway 93 reconstruction was started. He is requesting that an underpass be constructed to serve their property that lies on both sides of Highway 93 south of Arlee near Schley(S½NE¼, part of NE¼SE¼ Sec 31 T. 16N., R. 19W). He recommended that a drainage culvert that crosses beneath the highway south of his residence (SW¼NE¼ Sec 31 T. 16 N., R. 19 W.) could be installed large enough to accommodate the livestock. This drainage has a different land owner on the west side of the highway and negotiations might be needed for an easement if this site is used.

Mr. and Mrs. Lytle have lived at their present residence for over 40 years and have moved their livestock across the highway several times a year during that time. Increasing the width of the highway will make it more difficult to cross the highway. Anticipated increases in traffic will create a larger safety hazard than exists now. The alternative of trucking the livestock across the highway is an unrealistic burden. I recommend that the Highway Department work with Lytle's to install a livestock crossing.

dc.061893.mem

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: WAYNE McCABE
Affiliation: YELLOWSTONE P.L. Co. Company
Address: 6855 S. HAVANA Suite 180
City/State/Zip: Englewood, CO 80112

26

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Highway 93 EIS	I would like a copy of the Draft / Final EIS as well as the Profile, Grade and Design of the Wildlife Crossing and Road Design between MP 10 + MP 11. YPL P.L. Co. crosses Highway 93 at this point. I would also like ~~the~~ of the Details Alternatives at Arlee and Ronan

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

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PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
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MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Bill Bick
Affiliation:
Address: 37301 Hwy. 93
City/State/Zip: St. Ignatius, MT 59865

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Passing lane	at Post Creek hill ~~[illegible]~~ to
	allow traffic to spread out
environment	a 2-lane highway never stopped
	development in the Bitterroot
4. Bar area	Needs traffic control to slow
	down accident rate

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLIHR.STI

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PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: P Murphy
Affiliation:
Address: 1605 E Post Ck Rd.
City/State/Zip: St Ignatius, Mt 59865

TOPIC COMMENTS

I would like to see the road by-pass ~~By Pass~~ — ~~Hames~~ St Ignatius, and cutting off at Old Freight Road, (only turn off's at towns) Dream On I have problems as I visualize the area growing faster than is anticipated. I feel that this road would handle the fast traffic. The community growth would sustain the business centers.

P. Murphy

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLIHR.STI

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: John Yatchak
Affiliation: Land Owner
Address: 104 E Post Creek Rd.
City/State/Zip: St Ignatius, MT.

29

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Wildlife Crossing	We need to preserve the wildlife corridors at Post Creek.
Bridge @ Post Cr	Suggest you consider a divider between opposite lanes. Area is known to be very Icy Roads.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

03PUBLHR.ST3

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Thelma Old S.E.N.
Affiliation: Chairman St. Luke Hospital
Address: 600 Griffiths Ln N E
City/State/Zip: St. Ign. Mt. 59865

30

TOPIC	COMMENTS
4 Lane Highway	from Missoula to Polson. I travel this road daily. The traffic is terrible. People take chances, it's hard to pull on the road. They ignore no passing zone it is dangerous. Please - Make a 4 lane highway its long overdue.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

03PUBLHR.ST3

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PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Cl Ford
Affiliation:
Address: P.O. Box 536
City/State/Zip: St. Ignatius, MT 59865

TOPIC | COMMENTS

I travel 30,000 miles per year, the majority is on Hwy 93. I am in favor of a 4 lane highway and ask only one question: WHEN? Hwy 93 has become unsafe, overcrowded, too many trucks, RVs, and crazy drivers in a hurry.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.STI

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Marie B King
Affiliation:
Address: Ravalli Mt
City/State/Zip: Bx 1034 59863
745-2788

TOPIC | COMMENTS

about the 4 lane Hiway. I'm all for it as I have seen recently or rather lived near a girl 23 yrs old have a fatal accident on that 2 lane rd. She fell asleep as she was tired for working in Missoula. She might have lived if she hadn't run in front of a truck. It would be more convient for the people working in Missoula also, That have to drive that rd 5 days a wk.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.STI

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Jeanine Allard
Affiliation: Allard's Trading Post
Address: P.O. Box 460
City/State/Zip: St. Ignatius MT 59865

33

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Access to Our Business	I have previously commented on the fact that we currently have two (2) accesses to our business from Highway 93. We feel that it is mandatory that we retain both accesseses - for revenue as well as safety reasons - Much of our traffic is comprised of tour busses and RV's, also - travel trailers - They are unable to turn around in our parking lot. Before we had the 2nd access - Busses, RVs + even semi-trucks would pull partially into our driveway or worse - park along the side of the highway - causing congestion and dangerous obstides. Persons interested in stopping at our establishment are often approaching from the north - They see us, slow down, may be miss the 1st access BUT instead of slamming on the brakes - they simply turn into the 2nd access. The curve in the road to the north of us also poses a problem - visibility of long lines of southbound traffic - is limited - very dangerous in incident mentioned above. There are Several businesses on our premises - They should all recieve equal access - It is my hope that someone please contact us to discuss our concerns - We can then inform you on events which happened prior to the time we had 2 accesses however the 2nd access has improved matters and also about problems we are still seeing. THANK YOU

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Esther V M[illegible]
Affiliation:
Address: 2037 Airport Rd
City/State/Zip: St Ignatius 59865
Ph - 406 745 [illegible]

34

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	we can kill a lot of people in 10 yrs!
Post Creek Hill -	It is unconscionable to wait 4-12 yrs before redoing this extremely dangerous stretch
St Ignatius/Airport Rd -	Believe the present plans will solve this stupid bottleneck - IF the steep incline is lowered - The current slop at the top means a slippery start in the winter,
Ronan alt 3 + 4 versus Town	These two bypasses (either) is a much more viable solution then going thru town - the town route will take parking from businesses on the street and do not believe business will be much affected by either of Alt. #

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

over

PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Polson	Believe the proposed routes will be workable
Evaro -	Bear Underpass - I have been driving this stretch of road since 1939 - I have seen 1 bear & have heard of maybe 5 others in all those years - Who is going to train the bears to use this 1/2 mile tunnel - Will the cost be justified? 1-2 million dollars - Could be used much more efficiently somewhere else - like speeding up the Postcreek Hill work

THANK YOU

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Goldie Knuppel
Affiliation: St. none -
Address: St. Ignatius
City/State/Zip: MT 59865

35

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Highway thro towns (1)	why spend money gang thro towns when it is already planned to by-pass later. I'm concerned about children & adults walking across hi-way Even if there are stop lights, will care stop!
Population (2)	Increase of people moving into the valley and increase in school attendance which means higher taxes for the elderly on fixed incomes.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

(over)

9IPUBLHR.STI

PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Highway 200 (3)	Highway 200 and highway to Missoula will be very bad conditions if tankers continue to use them for hauling gas to Thompson Falls due to the Flathead Tribe not accepting millions of dollars for the Yellowstone Pipe Line - Maybe Highway 200 should be fixed & straighten too. When will a bad accident occur or gas spilled into the river - ??

THANK YOU

9IPUBLHR.STI

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Art Mangels
Affiliation: Farmer - Pablo area
Address: 7434 Farm Rd
City/State/Zip: Polson MT 59860

36

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Hwy 93 from Ronan To Polson	Hiway Studies 4 years old - have had enormous growth in last couple years ✓
	Need controlled access - especially at Pablo ✓
	Need wider exits for Trucks onto county roads ✓
	Need more room for large Trucks To Turn at Stop light in Ronan ✓
	Reducing length & weight of Trucks puts local business such as farmers at big disadvantage. Railroads can't provide quick enough service for business To survive ✓

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.PAB

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	Traffic Ronan To Polson Hwy 35 Junction is very heavy ✓
ESA & EIS	Peoples safety must also be considered ✓

THANK YOU

93PUBLHR.PAB

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Dan Bartel
Affiliation: Ace Hardware
Address: 705 Hwy 93 S
City/State/Zip: Ronan MT 59864

37

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Ronan Area	My wife and I own a business in Ronan. It is on Highway 93 and if you move the highway it would hurt our business. Please leave it where it's at Thanks Dan Bartel

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.PAB

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Ronan Area	Please leave the highway where it's at

THANK YOU

93PUBLHR.PAB

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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Commenter Name: Ben Adams
Affiliation: USAF/EAID
Address: 2380 Courville Tr
City/State/Zip: Polson, MT 59860

38

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Wetlands	Mitigation of lost reservoir storage in Nine Pipe Reservoir. ~~For loss of~~ The wetlands along the highway there are part of the Nine Pipe Reservoir storage pool. How will you mitigate that?
Irrigation Canal Crossings	Must be of adequate size to convey irrigation water. Must have adequate access for maintenance and repair. There must be a strong commitment by the state to repair problems immediately.
Some commentors	I take exception to commentors saying "We all...". Since when does someone I don't even know speak for me?

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

THANK YOU

03PUBLIC.PAB

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

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Commenter Name: Shannon Burke
Affiliation:
Address: Box 1153
City/State/Zip: Pablo MT 59855

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TOPIC	COMMENTS
	See Back

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

95PUBLHR.PAB

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	My opinion for improving the roads on and through the Flathead Reservation is to remain with two lanes. For more specific improvements I favor the Flathead Resource Organization recommendations. I am a tribal member concerned for preserving the Indian way of life.

Shannon Burke
Box 453
Pablo, MT 59855

THANK YOU

95PUBLHR.PAB

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Mary Hrok
Affiliation:
Address: 6101 Marsh Crk. Rd.
City/State/Zip: Charlo MT 59824

40

TOPIC	COMMENTS
1) ERO Plan	Please consider it seriously.
2) Turn bays	Provide left turn bays outside of turns;
	a center lane is a 'suicide lane.'
3) EIS	Needs to be redone to consider
	pros & cons of all alternatives, incl. ERO plan.
4) Eagle Pass Trail	Please provide left turn bay.
	It's a paved road that gets a lot of use.
	Many use it instead of McDonald Lake Rd
	or Gunlock Rd for highway access,
	because it has better visibility.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

It's very dangerous now.
The state has built a scenic area to [illegible] Eagle Pass Trail →

PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	If Eagle Pass Trail is going
	to be the access pt. to Allentown
	that will greatly increase
	use of that turnoff.
5) Wildlife.	I'm very concerned about
	wildlife ~~[illegible]~~ being able to
	cross the highway.
	The Ninepipe/Kicking Horse area
	has lots of ducks & turtles. What
	will happen to deer, bears, wildlife?
6) EIS again	We (my husband and I) went to
	the early hearings & our
	impression was that the
	consulting firm who prepared
	the EIS was 'selling' the 4-lane
	plan. Our impression
	is that they're still 'selling' it.
	Community groups who've proposed
	alternatives feel they've been
	largely ignored; that this is a
	p.r. effort, to get thru legally
	requirements/hurdles, with [illegible]
	[illegible] from the beginning [illegible]

THANK YOU

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: JOHN PLOUFFE
Affiliation: FLATHEAD IRRIGATION Proj.
Address: 7238 FEARSON RD.
City/State/Zip: RONAN MT 59864

41

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Polson	I FAVOR the PLAN to improve HW 93 THRU TOWN + CONSTRUCT A TRUCK BY-PASS W/ NEW BRIDGE S. of TOWN. ✓
RONAN	I WOULD FAVOR ALT. 3 OR 4 RATHER THAN HAVING A NEW H.W. REDUCED TO A BOTTLENECK IN TOWN, ADDING TO CONGESTION, DISRUPTING BUSINESSES, ETC. ✓ The LOSS of SOME GOOD AGRICULTURAL GROUND is the ONLY DRAWBACK, BUT the BENEFITS WOULD OUTWEIGH this

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.PAB

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
RONAN (cont)	LOSS, in my opinion. IN ANY EVENT, I FEEL THERE IS ALSO A NEED FOR A NEW TRAFFIC light AT the S. END of RONAN, NEARY MOODYS, MISSION MART, CYNNS DRIVE-IN, ETC.
ANIMAL CORRIDORS	A RIDICULOUS IDEA hatched by A TREE-Hugging, GRANOLA ✓ CRUNCHING EARTH PERSON. A WASTE of TIME + MONEY.

THANK YOU

93PUBLHR.PAB

Pablo Meeting
4-26-95

STATEMENT TO HIGHWAY 93 ENGINEERS AT PABLO, MT., APRIL 26, 1995 BY JOE MCDONALD, PRESIDENT OF SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE AND RESIDENT OF RONAN.

42 Personnal comments. I would like to make the following statement as my own personnal statement and is not a statement on behalf of the College.

1. I am opposed to the entire idea of a four lane highway through the Flathead Indian Reservation. I feel that this a highway construction method that is used effectively in urban areas and for inter-state highways. We have our north-south interstate highway in Interstate 15.

a. I feel that a four lane highway would encourage high speed driving and thus endanger the safety of the local residents of the Reservation

b. A four lane highway interrupts the rural life style we have here and cherish. It is the very reason most of us choose to live here. It interrupts the rural life style in a number of ways which include: increased noise pollution, increased population growth, unsafe working conditions for agricultural workers using the highway, high speed travel, increased use of the highway, and on and on.

c. It is going to be very difficult for migrating wildlife such as deer, elk, bear, water-fowl with hatches, turtles, and others.

d. The scenic drive will be interrupted. Existing ponds will be filled and relocated as will sloughs. People will be driving so fast, they won't take time to enjoy.

2. I feel that an improved two lane highway with eight foot shoulders, passing lanes on hills, rumble strips to protect bicycle riders, and better traffic enforcement would serve this area well for a long period of time.

Statement on behalf of Salish Kootenai College. The following comments are made with the good of the College in mind, and I feel that the Board of Directors concur.

1. The College is very concerned with the traffic entering the highway from the east side. We hope that east side traffic will not be encouraged to or be designated to drive through the College campus to get to the Jiffy Stop and enter the highway there. We hope that the main entry point will be at Clairmont Lane. We also hope that there will be a stop light at Clairmont Lane so that traffic can safely enter the highway when turning left.

2. The College is very concerned how pedestrians are going to safely cross the highway south from Clairmont Lane to Division Street. There are several handicapped students and employees that attend or work at the College. A raised median for a rest area does not meet their needs. The College favors stop lights and overhead pedestrian crossings constructed for handicapped access.

3. The College is very concerned with the increased noise pollution that is estimated to be 2-3 times greater than it is with a two lane highway. There should be consideration given to decreasing the noise. In some areas this accomplished with heavy foliage or a specially constructed wall.

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

This page is available for members of the public to make written comments. The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Montana Department of Transportation are seeking information from users of the highway, property owners and other members of the public. For more information please contact:

Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Karen Krogstad
Affiliation:
Address: 531 1st Av SW
City/State/Zip: Ronan MT 59864

43

TOPIC	COMMENTS
stop Lights	It is very difficult to get across or to get on highway 93. We are in need of another stop light, which will also allow people walking, to get across the highway without danger.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

91PUBLHR.PAB

PUBLIC HEARING AT Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Dudley H. Page
Affiliation:
Address: [illegible] Hi. Rd.
City/State/Zip: Polson, MT 59860
(406) 883-2647

44

TOPIC	COMMENTS

General — The proposed highway in its entire length is excellent. Would prefer to see a divided highway the entire length except where turn lanes are needed for side roads and existing businesses. The rest of the highway should be limited access. Some areas frontage roads will need to be considered for existing homesteads. Any new businesses or homesteads will have to provide their own frontage road access according to highway department policies.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT ______, MONTANA: APRIL __, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS

Arlee Bypass — a must. If not built immediately the land for it should be purchased now!

Ronan Bypass — alignment #4 is the best alternative. Will allow Ronan more room for orderly expansion. Zoning a must. With proper development of town and advertising by local businesses it will have no detrimental affect on business.

Polson Bypass — an absolute must. Again with good zoning of Polson, clean up and face lift of downtown, town adequate parking facility downtown and attractive advertising Polson will blossom. Bypass will take away [illegible] traffic which today makes Polson a nightmare for people wishing to shop or stay in town (motels-hotels). Bypass will also display Polson as one of the loveliest towns in the state.

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Jens GRAN
Affiliation: resident
Address: Box 210
City/State/Zip: Polson MT

45

TOPIC	COMMENTS
By pass -	Polson need a by-pass (alternate route is a better word) ✓
	With the amount of growth in traffic Polson need an alternate route - land needs to be agreed now!
	Case in pt - #3 has to be realigned due to

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

99PUBLHR.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	New housing developm..
	With current annual growth in traffic 3 - 4½/yr - ✓
	Polson will not benefit from having 4 lane through town -
	It will be dangerous and unpleasant ✓
	Give the driving public a chance! ✓

THANK YOU

99PUBLHR.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Clarence Brazil
Affiliation:
Address: 748 S Finley Pt Road
City/State/Zip: Polson Mt 59860

46

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Bypass	I bleive you should ByPass Polson
And Relieve	Congestion in Town by people +
tracks traveling through and Not Planning to	
Stop any How.	If they want to stop
For Food	gasoline or Merchandise they can
use the	Business Route. This would
sure make	it Easier For the people that
Live Here	To better shop the Local
Merchants	I believe The Local merchants

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

Would Eventially Do much better.

PUBLIC HEARING AT ________, MONTANA: APRIL __, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Highway From	Polson to Evero Hill should
definitly be	A 4 Lane to prevent the
Accidents +	Deaths Caused by the crazy
People that	pass Illegaly A Four Lane
would	Eleminate this and save many
Lives	And suffering I belive it is
A must	that it be 4 Lanes it will
have to	be sometime in The Future
so why	Not Now?

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
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MARCH 1995
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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Rocky Shriver
Affiliation: West Polson MALL
Address: 61531 thr 61549 Hwy 93
City/State/Zip: Polson, MT. 59860
mailing # 115 5th Ave W.

47

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Alt #3	Any Bridge Structure Crossing the River would create a Navigational Hazard prohibiting any future aquatic Event from Taking Place in a very Unique section of Safe water Naturaly protected from Storms.
Alt #3	Would Hide the Tourist Destination Point of Polson from View of Motorists on Route To Glacier Park from points South And the Same holds true from Travelers heading South to Yellowstone Park
Alt #1	Should be the Perfered Route with a Duplicate Bridge Constructed Lakeside of Existing Bridge and North Bound Lanes could easyly go on Undeveloped Greenbelt area East of Hwy 93 To Rocky Point Road.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

(over)

93PUBLIC.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Alt #3	If Constructed - Should Remain on The Lake Side of the Ridge and west of the Airport Runway - a bridge at the "Rock Island" north of the Pumping Station would be a befer Choice for Recreational Safty And Noise Concerns, At that Point alignment of the Road Could Junction at Rocky Point Rd And US 93 with City of Polson Visiability maintained for a good distan
	Visability Impacts All Travelers about Flathead Lak when the Top the hill at Readymix Concrete and I have Seen many Photos Taken from the ~~Tour~~ Turn out at that Point of Interest. Polson Can Not - Afford To Lose this Visibility IF ~~they~~ It Ever wants to Achieve that Full on Tourist Destination Point Status.

Rocky Shriver

THANK YOU

93PUBLIC.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT ~~ST. IGNATIUS~~ Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Geraldine E. Boyle
Affiliation:
Address: 501 Scenic Dr
City/State/Zip: Polson, MT 59860

48

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Hi way 93	I live between Super 1 Grocery
& By Pass	Store & Ben Franklin. At times,
	especially summer, 1st of the
	month & the 15th and starting
	& quitting of work hours, I may
	never get onto the Hiway to go
	to town. I must make a right
	& go up over Hillcrest – if I
	can even get out.
	We must do something to

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

09PUBLHR.STI

PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	alleviate the congestion. Most
	cars coming from Kalispell or
	Missoula continue right
	thru town & I cannot see
	where the Business will
	lose business.
	We need the By-pass

THANK YOU

93PUBLHR.STI

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
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Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Shriver
Affiliation:
Address: 115 5th Ave West
City/State/Zip: Polson, Mt.

49

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Highway 93 by-pass	We do have a problem with traffic. Mostly summer. I would like to see passing lanes through the valley to help traffic flow. In Polson I do not see the need for a 4 lane highway. I think slower speed limits and at least 2 traffic lights would take care of our problems. I think a by-pass around town would hurt the economy. The town now depends on tourist traffic flow in the summer months in order to survive. There are other ways to take care of the problem - it would change our life style dramatically to put a by-pass around town. But I am all for highway improvements from Evaro to Polson.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

THANK YOU

93PUBLHR.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
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MARCH 1995
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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Joan Bennett
Affiliation: private citizen
Address: 507 - 1 Ave W
City/State/Zip: Polson MT 59860

50

TOPIC	COMMENTS
by-pass	Polson needs something to relieve
	the press of traffic not only trucks
	but some of the through traffic
	Some business will be impacted
	no matter which plan is implemented
	either they lose customers or they
	lose their business
traffic light	a light @ 4th Ave. will
	not truly handle the Super I
	problem but will aid the senior

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	citizens in going the South side
	of Highway 93. Locating it at
	Super I would allow those
	customers wanting in or out,
	in or out and the Senior citizens
	at Lake View Village would still
	have access even though would
	have to walk 50 to 100 feet more.
	if Polson is growing where will
	it grow — South - toward the
	proposed route - it will happen

THANK YOU

93PUBLHR.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
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Helena, MT 59620-1001
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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Vette R Bennett
Affiliation: Private Citizen
Address: 507 7TH AVE W
City/State/Zip: Polson MT 59860

51

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Stop Lights (for the near future)	Put one in at Super I because one at 4th will block the entry to the store by traffic back up. Or put another stop light in at 3rd which would break up the flow of traffic into smaller segments. ✓

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
By Pass	I think that the cost of a by pass is a big factor to consider as well as impacting a farm area. So it is my opinion to put in more traffic lights in town Polson. ✓

THANK YOU

93PUBLHR.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT ~~ST. IGNATIUS~~ Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
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Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Commenter Name: ________
Affiliation: ________
Address: ________
City/State/Zip: ________

52 1,2

TOPIC	COMMENTS
By Pass	- I feel strongly that TSM
	improvements through town will
	be inadequate for the level
	of traffic. any less than four ✓
	lanes through town will inadequately
	handle town traffic. If
	they By-Pass is built ~~[illegible]~~ Before
	~~not~~ adequately addressing town
	traffic my fear is that ✓
	93 through town will never

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

be dealt with. The State Department of transportation has ~~at~~ a long history of this.

20%

PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	The By Pass will not be
	cause trucks to take 93
	versus 35. Simple. fuel costs ✓
	It is around 9 gals/trip
	Trucks gone - no through trucks
	anyway
12,000 ✓	3,000 vechiles
	~~200~~ 1000 Vechiles
	4-#9 Trucks 1,800
excess	5
	6,000 3,000

THANK YOU

PUBLIC HEARING AT Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
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Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Albert Polson
Affiliation: Polson Equip Co.
Address: 2557 Flathead Dr.
City/State/Zip: Polson Mt. 59860

53

TOPIC	COMMENTS
bypass route	Highway 93 is the only / Practical route for trucks through Polson. Much safer & better grade. Trucks will either use highway 35 or 93 : we need an alternate route from Big arm area south to buffalo bridge & on to Moiese & Dixon to Ravalli. This

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Pablo &	route will bypass Polson, Ronan & also bypass Ravalli Hill. ~~[illegible]~~ It will take truck traffic off the east shore, highway 35 & get truck traffic well out of Polson & Ronan. Distance about the same but no traffic lights & cheaper right of way no new expensive bridge to build.

54

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Everett Parsons
Affiliation: Trucker
Address: 172 Red Sky Sundown Ln
City/State/Zip: Ronan, Mt 59864

TOPIC	COMMENTS
By Pass	arlee it would be good to By pass
	to south
〃	Ronan & Polson I think it
	ok like it is work with
	what there is.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLIM.POL

55

PUBLIC HEARING AT Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Helen Brazil
Affiliation:
Address: 748 S. Finley Pt. Rd
City/State/Zip: Polson MT 59860

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Highway By Pass –	I am definitely
or through town –	in favor of the by pass
	route. Those people
	who wish to stop in
	town will & those who
	are passing through will
	be able to do so without
	causing heavy traffic
	problems in the city

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Ann M Page
Affiliation:
Address: 906 So Finley Point Rd
City/State/Zip: Polson,

56

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Polson By Pass vs Improving & widening 93	It is my opinion That following The present route of Hwy 93 would be A MISTAKE for Polson. Alternate #3 would be in the very best interest of our town - It would provide Polson The opportunity to develope it's True RESORT potential. Thank You

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

Polson
~~St Ignatius~~

PUBLIC HEARING AT ~~ARLEE~~, MONTANA: APRIL ~~24~~ 25, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
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Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Peter Walther
Affiliation:
Address: 173 CLAFFEY DR
City/State/Zip: POLSON MT 59860

57

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	Overall design it appears reasonable assumptions have been made in the EIS study and preliminary design. I approve of this approach.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Karen Welch
Affiliation:
Address: 5th Loot Dusty Rd.
City/State/Zip: Big Arm MT 59910

58

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Widening Hwy.	Please do it ASAP. I drive from Big Fork to Kalispell or Missoula every day & even the improvement done between Elmo & Kalispell isn't enough. Too many people are choking the highway. Too many close calls especially trying to pass long trucks with no visibility.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

9/PUBLHR POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

This page is available for members of the public to make written comments. The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Montana Department of Transportation are seeking information from users of the highway, property owners and other members of the public. For more information please contact:

Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Tom Mercer
Affiliation: Real Estate Broker
Address: 302 Main St
City/State/Zip: Polson Montana 59860

59

TOPIC	COMMENTS
By Pass Hiliq 93 Polson Area	I am totaly supportive of the proposed By Pass Route Hiliq 93. For Safty sake long Range Bene Fits No other reasonable alternatives

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT ~~ST. IGNATIUS~~ Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: James Boyle
Affiliation: Resident
Address: 501 Scenic Lane
City/State/Zip: Polson Montana

60

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Polson Highway	Go with bypass around Polson
	the traffic is bad enough now

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.STI

Commenter Name: Irene Marchello
Affiliation: Business Owner
Address: 214 Main Street
City/State/Zip: Polson, MT 59860

61

I believe that the traffic issue on 93 has to be addressed and that people will be offended no matter which route is selected. I understand the bypass and feel it is inevitable. However, I think that alternative #2 would offend fewer homeowners, as it bypasses the river and would not affect the wetlands and wildlife.

PUBLIC HEARING AT Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 27 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: _____
Affiliation: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____

62

TOPIC	COMMENTS
WILD LIFE - Tom Tunker Jr. 1250 Highland Dr.	The third Alternative route would put our family ranch out of business - In the past 6 years the wild life has continued to grease again in this area. The river is in geese nesting area. The Tribes closed the river to motor boats during this period. A bridge at this crossing the river at this point would disturb the water fowl, Coyotes, foxes, deer, bear, Blue Herons + eagles.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

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P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Marc Gullickson
Affiliation: Property Owner
Address: Lot 1, Highland View Tracts
City/State/Zip: Highland View Dr
Polson, MT 59860

63

TOPIC	COMMENTS
US 93 Polson By-Pass	We are opposed to the bypass alternative which crosses the river directly south of the Flathead County Airport. The proposed route will impact many more residences and residents lots than were indicated at the time the original study was conducte the area has now become a prime residential area and many residences will suffer a significant decline in value. Other alternatives should be considered which are not going to destroy the view and appearance of the Flathead river at the sand cliffs. In addition, a by-pass will result in a severe blow to the town's economy. As history has proven, when a small resort town like Polson deals with its traffic problems via a by-pass, the result is just that -- everyone who may have stopped at restaurants, gas stations etc." bypasses" the town. An improved highway through the town provides for continued visability of the town's businesses and good growth potential. Towns with good "through-city" traffic prosper while those with bypasses suffer with declining economics and stagnation. (Not to mention, a lower tax base.)

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

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PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maier

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Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: MARLEN FAE
Affiliation: BUSINESS OWNER
Address: P.O. 1144
City/State/Zip: Polson MT 59860
883-4600

64

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Route 93 through Polson	I find it a mystery why the State is considering spending huge $$ to build a long bypass. It seems much less $$ could be spent to ① widen the highway for the 1½-2 miles Pablo → bridge. ② Easy to eliminate parking on 93 between Kwa Tuk Nuk and the bridge. ③ Add another lane to bridge on Lake side. ④ Form a one-way system on Main and 1st Streets so local traffic could not attempt left turns into uncontrolled streets. Safe! Cheap!

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

THANK YOU

93PUBLHR.POL

RECEI PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

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Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name:
Affiliation:
Address:
City/State/Zip:

65

TOPIC	COMMENTS

Highway 93 is a very dangerous avenue of public transportation. I fear each time I drive to Missoula or Ronan because of the many deaths and accidents that occur on it. With increasing population and tourists who are not aware of it's dangers one often must drive deffensively to stay alive. I have been involved with a task force in Polson to study a Bike/Pedestrian Pathway. I have met with Jim Weaver, Jerry Sorensen, County Commissioners, etc. and over the years have come to the conclusion that a safe Bike/Pedestrian

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

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PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS

Pathway is impossible with the present layout of Highway 93 in Polson. If the road ~~were~~ was widened through Polson I don't see how this would accomplish any safety and could only imagine ~~to~~ more congestion & fatalities. I feel a By Pass as proposed is the only answer with developement of transportation avenues for Bike/Pedestrian and minimal truck traffic near the lake. I feel this can be done so businesse are not hurt. Often I have asked children for comments to problems I would suggest you canvas some of our youth they often see things we adults don't. I would suggest meeting with Sunday School groups Girl/Boy Scout, recreation teams etc. Thank you for this opportunity, I didn't feel I could make these comments to our community with out negative relations occuring to me or my business

Dr. Gayle Siemers

THANK YOU

1PUBLHR.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

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WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

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Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: R.T. STERLING
Affiliation: NONE
Address: 1323 BAYVIEW DR
City/State/Zip: POLSON, MT. 59860

66

TOPIC	COMMENTS
1. 4 LANE HIGHWAY	It would be silly to keep this a 2 lane highway. A four lane highway has been needed for several years and will be even more needed in the future. In the summer I have had to follow a slow moving recreational trailer for miles because of oncoming traffic.
2. Priority of Segments	We were told at the Polson meeting that the first segment to be built would be Ronan to Polson. It seems reported the first segment would be from Evaro. I think traffic counts will show the most pressing need is Ronan to Polson.
2nd Segment	I think that traffic counts and consideration of the terrain (hills and blind dips) would indicate the second segment should be Ronan south.

Yours truly,
R. T. Sterling

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

THANK YOU

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312 Main St SW
Ronan, Mt 59864
May 8, 1995

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MAY 9 1995
MT. DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
DIRECTORS OFFICE
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Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Ave
P.O Box 201001
Helena, Mt.

cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

Dear Sir,

67 I would like to register my comments on the proposed highway project from Evaro to Polson. I would support the preferred Alternative presented at the recent public meeting in the Mission Valley. I do not believe that doing nothing is an option, because the traffic continues to increase every year. Thus it becomes continually more risky to travel to Missoula and to Polson. I would also prefer to have the highway reconstructed on its existing alignment, to prevent tourists & through-traffic from bypassing Ronan.

Very truly yours
Elizabeth C. Preston

312 Main SW
Ronan, MT 59864
May 10, 1995

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cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

Mont Dept of Transportation
2701 Prospect Ave.
P. O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Dear Sir/Madam:

68 I attended your Highway 93 meeting in Pablo on April 26, 1995.

I believe your dept has taken all things into Consideration and I agree. your "PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE" is the best solution to the future traffic on Highway 93. Safety is my main consideration, and I believe your statistics on the 4 lane S. of Evaro prove a 4 lane highway from Missoula to Polson would save many lives and injuries. I definitely agree with using the existing corridor.

Very truly yours
Jay W Preston

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

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WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

MAY 1 1995

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison G. Maierle

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Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: JERRY SHEPARD
Affiliation: HOME OWNER ON US93
Address: BOX 176
City/State/Zip: ARLEE, MONT. 59821

69

TOPIC	COMMENTS
HIWAY 93	MAKING THE HIWAY 4 LANES
BEING WIDENED	THRU THE TOWN OF ARLEE MAKES
THRU THE TOWN	NO SENSE TO ME, BECAUSE!!
OF ARLLE	1. SAFTEY WOULD BE A MAJOR PROBLE.
	2. EMISSIONS IN ARLEE WIULD BE
	HIGHER.
	3. WHY WIDEN US 93 IN ARLEE
	NOW, AND THEN BY PASS IT IN ~~FUTURE~~
	THE FUTURE. DOESN'T IT MAKE M E
	SENSE TO BY PASS IT NOW (OVER,

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

AND DO IT ALL AT ONCE.

FROM A TAX PAYERS AND HOME OWNER'S POINT OF VIEW, THIS MAKES A LOT MORE SENSE.

ALSO THE NOISE LEVEL IS BAD NOW. IT WILL BE WORSE IF THE HIWAY IS WIDENE

will it be like with five lanes!!

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

MAY 1995

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cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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MARCH 1995
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Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Marilyn Sheppard
Affiliation: Live on 93 [illegible]
Address: PO. Box 176
City/State/Zip: Arlee, Mt. 59821

70

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Hiway thru	I can't unstand how the state
Arlee	can use tax payers money to
	put a five lane highway thru
	town & then in a few years
	have it go around, crazy!!
	I have been thru Polo & you
	have to slow down to 25 mph, so
	why have the same thing here.
	I live here in Arlee on 93 &
	you can't get on or off, what

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

MAY 1 2 1995

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cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

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P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Curt Rosman
Affiliation:
Address: 20 Hawkins Rd
City/State/Zip: St Ignatius 59865

71

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	I drive Hwy 93 5 days a week to Missoula. Some observations: Most traffic speed is in the low 60's, and traffic generally flows quite well. The primary hazard is those few who insist on going faster and pass at inappropriate times, or tailgate until they have an opportunity to pass. While driving about 62 MPH, I have been passed by vehicles from both Flathead Co & Lake Co. Sheriffs office, and also by the State Patrol. None had their lights or sirens on. The county vehicles appeared to be transporting prisoners. In each case they were going faster than the majority of traffic for no apparent reason. This example by law enforcement is not conducive to safety.
	I am concerned about the proposal to make left turns from the passing lane on a 4 lane highway. I often make a left turn onto Hawkins Rd North of St Ignatius. 5 times in the past year I have been passed in the left lane while signaling for a left turn. I have observed and on occasion made left turns on the 4 lane between the Y and Evaro. This is hazardous and should be corrected rather than creating more of the same.
	THANK YOU

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

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PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

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WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Barbara Steele
Affiliation: Lake County resident - 18yr.
Address: 6454 St Marys Lake Rd
City/State/Zip: St Ignatius MT 59865

72

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	Dam willing to give my comments on the future of Hwy 93, + the Future of the community that has been my home for almost 20 yrs. The preferred plan put up "for sale" to the resident of the area, Do not feel is appropriate for the rural area that the proposed construction runs thru. The "preferred plan" accomplishes 1 thing - faster traffic. It does not create a safe hwy, just bigger one that invites high speed, + loss safety, + absolutely NO concern for the local area from pedestrian traffic, environmental, wild life changes that will be brought about by this

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	local area in general, is opposed to a proposed 4-5 lane hwy. I do not support the preferred plan. I support the plan put out by FHO. It is a much more conscientious plan, in that it takes into consideration the local communities + environment. We know that change is inevitable but HOWEVER we can choose what kind of change. Period. Hwy 93 needs change. The rural character, local culture, + wild + scenic environment must be preserved at all costs, in these changes.
	This means, creating a safer hwy, with all precautions necessary to insure protection of wild life, culture, + community. The "preferred plan" does not do these things.
	The FHO plan does. We are not here, to create a faster lane for those to "get there faster" as we are a community here, living our lives, + those who come here, will find, that a slower pace, + safer pace will also enhance their lives in more ways than a 5 lane hwy.

THANK YOU

There must be safe access to pedestrians who cross 93 on a daily basis. Many are children. There must be over the hwy walk ways. I was amazed that a presenter of the "preferred plan" said these were found too costly! We are talking about millions + millions of dollars to fix this Hwy. How can the safety of children be too costly! This is really sick, + another indication of how your "preferred plan" does not take into consideration the needs of local people.

Again + again it is very apparent, that the preferred plan is no more than a high speed death trap idea.

It spells out death to pedestrians, drivers of the hwy, death to our rural lifestyle, our local cultures both native american + others. Death to a our incredible wildlife + natural beauty.

I support the FRO Plan. I absolutely do not support the "preferred plan" of MDOT.

Thank you,

Barbara Steele

April 28, 1995

Joe Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

RE: Highway 93 Improvements - Missoula to Polson

73 Dear Mr. Marshik,

Highway 93 from Missoula to Polson has long been neglected and is in need of immediate improvements. I believe all of those improvements should follow along the path of the existing Highway. Expanding along the existing path would provide the least amount of environmental impact and reduce property displacement.

I am opposed to the EIS suggested preferred alternative of a bypass around the city of Polson. After visiting with employees of the MDOT, consultants, and reviewing the traffic counts I do not understand how a bypass will help the traffic congestion in the City of Polson. The traffic counts suggest that only 20% of the traffic entering Polson is thru traffic. Thus a bypass would only reduce the traffic congestion by a minimal amount. Your own traffic studies show that Highway 93 north of Polson does not have a traffic problem. I have lived in the Mission Valley for nearly 37 years. Currently and during a majority of those years I have lived on the West Shore of Flathead Lake. I have driven the highway from Polson to Ronan for the last several years. Even during the peak traffic periods of July and August once you reach the bridge heading north on 93 out of Polson the traffic congestion all but disappears. Thus I do not understand how a bypass will help traffic congestion in the City of Polson. I believe the majority of those supporting the bypass are doing so because they believe that this will help relieve the traffic congestion in Polson. The numbers show that a bypass will not relieve traffic congestion in Polson.

I believe a better use of our tax dollars would be to improve the existing highway through Polson. A bypass would be very costly to obtain the property, it would displace irreplaceable farm land, it would disturb waterfowl flyways and hunting ground, it would displace numerous residential areas, it would increase noise levels, and it would disturb some of the most beautiful lands along the Flathead River.

A better alternative is to expand the existing Highway through Polson along with controlling access along the Highway. This would require negotiating with the tribe to extend the Highway into the Flathead Lake bed along the shores of Flathead Lake and at the same time creating a walking and bike path along the Lake. The highway thru Polson will have to be expanded to fours lanes at some time during the next ten to twenty years because according to the traffic projection the two lane road will not handle the traffic. We should deal with the problem now and not in ten to twenty years when more businesses will have expanded along HWY 93 which will result in more access and right of way problems.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Hertz

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

MASTER COPY

MAY 2 1995

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Monica & Muerle

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
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Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Corwin Clairmont
Affiliation: Tribal member (CS+KT)
Address: 2151 Emory Rd
City/State/Zip: Ronan, Mt. 59864

TOPIC	COMMENTS

Public Hearing at Pablo, Montana
April 26, 1995
Personal comment

To whom this may concern,

74 Brad Peterson and his fellow presenters gave a very good report of their concerns and preferred highway plan. If FRO had not been active in seeking alternatives and researching on their own time the misleading projections and data presented by Brad, you would think that we had no choice but the preferred plan. It seemed unfair that Brad and his fellow presenters took better than an hour to present their side of things and then allowed only five minutes for each person to give public comment. There appeared to be several items in the preferred plan that was terribly misleading and could be and needed to be refuted if individuals had been given enough time to do so. I became very frustrated as it appeared to be another railroad job on the area residents. It was a clear example of area residents being the sacrificial lamb for the greater commercial cause, because it certainly didn't take into account very strong local opposition to the preferred plan. Nearly all those who spoke from the community were against the preferred highway construction plan.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.PAS

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS

It was brought out by several area residents during the public comment period how devastating the preferred highway would be on the plants and animal as well as on the human residents. Many examples were given regarding the animal corridors, wet lands, noise and air pollution, cultural sites and safety considerations especially in the Pablo area as it would impact the Salish Kootenai College and Tribal Complex.

The very rapid and possible uncontrolled development that would occur because of the preferred highway, would only fuel the already tense relationship between the Indian community and the non Indian residents. The statement in the MDOT report regarding Indian Culture as no longer alive or of much consequence on our reservation demonstrates this lack of understanding that outside agencies and people have. This makes me very upset as I am a tribal member who strongly supports the Salish and Kootenai cultures, and have a great respect for our ancestors who have lived here for many many generations. I participate in the many cultural activities when I can, and I know that it is very much alive.

In attending the public comment meeting on April 26 th., I fear that by what was presented, public opinion was being tolerated or ignored, and that the meeting was only being conducted to met some federal regulation or requirement but didn't really have to be taken seriously. I do hope that this is not the case as I feel that the FRO document contains many very valid alternatives to the Preferred Highway plan which once build can never be changed back.

Sincerely, Corwin Clairmont

Corwin Clairmont

THANK YOU

93PUBLHR.PAS

PUBLIC HEARING AT ~~St. Ignatius~~ Polson, MONTANA: APRIL ~~24~~ 25, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

MAY 08 1995

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Montana & Maine

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Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: William R. Magnuson
Affiliation: Self
Address: 346 Masumela Rd
City/State/Zip: Polson Mt. 59860

75

TOPIC	COMMENTS

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Hwy 93 Reconstruction	For all the time + money expended by the DOT I am amazed at the lack of thoughtfulness + creativity. These are highway people + they planned a highway. What we need is a transportation system. We will have growth + we don't all want to need to run up or down the asphalt for our needs. We have in place, a practically unused railroad track from Polson to Missoula. How about some light rail passengers + cargo service. Or possibly a bus system that could cover more than a highway. We could buy + operate a fleet of buses for 20 yrs (the life of a bridge) for a small part of the cost of building the proposed bypass bridge over the river. I think we need to think in terms of a "total" transportation system - not just a highway.

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

MAY 03 1995

ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

This page is available for members of the public to make written comments. The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Montana Department of Transportation are seeking information from users of the highway, property owners and other members of the public. For more information please contact:

Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name:
Affiliation: Zane Kelly
Address: Area Resident
City/State/Zip: 6742 Haystack Mt. Ln
Polson, Mt. 59860

76

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Hw. 93 Construction	The highway statistics (safety, usage, LOS, etc.) indicate that a highway should be constructed to carry the traffic safety through this area. Speaking as a Native American and a Professional Engineer, I believe road should be put into the best location to cross the country in the most efficient manner. This is the intention of the NEPA process, and will ultimately yield the most benefit to the travelling public who pays for the work. A location coming north from Dixon would bypass Ravalli hill, Post Creek hill, and would come out about where the alternative bypass comes down Back Road to cross the Flathead River west of Polson. If local road designers cannot envision the problem then they should consult others. When the state law prohibits good service to the motoring public, it seems that such law should be challenged. Somehow it seems basically wrong that I should be required by law to slow a 1 or 50 ton load from highway speed to a stop at every tiny business along the route. From my prospective it is ridiculous to expose residents, local trade, pedestrians, pets, and livestock to the hazard of high speed traffic, engine emissions, noise, dust, and congestion from transcontinental traffic (See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR PAB

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Local Access	Local access is necessary for all communities, but a highway transportation network is also essential for communities as well. Most competent traffic designers separate slow speed local deliveries, or school bus routes from sustained high speed traffic. It does not seem proper to use highway funding to sponsor town street traffic, even when the state law says it must be done that way using federal funding, on an Indian Reservation. This seems to be an area of conflicting legislation requiring some good determinations to state the responsibilities for each component of government
Business	For me, the failure or success of a business is decided each time I enter their establishment. When I am given good service, value, and curtesy for for my money, then I will return.
"Strip Development"	State, County, City, and Tribal Zoning laws should be used to direct the subdivision of property, sizes of billboards, local weight and speed limits condition of local streams, and the hundreds of other issues from many rebellious people (imagining themselves as "free") who flee their far away cities. Cooperation is essential between all local governments, since one end of our social boat does not sink by itself.

THANK YOU

93PUBLHR PAB

The Missoula Chamber.

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JUN 07 1995

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cc: Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

June 5, 1995

RECEIVED
JUN 07 1995

Mr. James Weaver
Missoula District Engineer
Montana Department of Highways
P.O. Box 7039
Missoula, MT 59807

Dear Jim:

77 After reviewing the EIS for expansion and widening of U.S. 93 from Evaro to Polson, please be advised that the Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce is in complete support of this program. Improvements to this major arterial will greatly enhance the efficiency and safety of our regions motorized traffic.

Sincerely,

Tom Nettleton
Chair, Transportation Committee

Michael Jaworsky
Executive Vice President

825 E. Front St. P.O. Box 7577 Missoula, Montana 59807 (406) 543-6623 Fax (406) 543-6625

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

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JUN 07 1995

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson,
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: J. Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

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Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Marquetta Bauer
Affiliation: (Folkshop) Manager
Address: home 304 21st Ave W
City/State/Zip: Polson, Mt 59860

78

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Truck Route for Polson (By Pass)	I DO NOT want a multi-lane hiway through Polson. I have a difficult time as it is crossing in down town Polson. I think the bypass should be labled "TRUCK ROUTE" and the hiway through town labeled "Scenic Route". With a multi-lane, we would loose parking spaces and I won't shop down town because of the congestion + High speed Trucks. The multi-lane would ruin our city

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

mailed by 6-26-95 M.

RECEIVED
JUN 05 1995

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for MORRISON—MAIERLE/CSSA, INC

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ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

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Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Ron Davis
Affiliation: Ronnie R. Davis, CPA, PC
Address: 708 3rd Ave E.
City/State/Zip: Polson, MT 59860

79

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Polson Bypass	A five lane highway through Polson is not a good alternative. Traffic now is tedious in the summer and in ten-plus years it is hard to imagine the traffic burden we will have in Polson. Turning left to get access a business along Hwy 93 would seem to be virtually impossible. We need a by-pass to divert some traffic around Polson.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

Thanks

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MAY 18 1995

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

MORRISON—MAIERLE/CSSA, INC

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PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

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Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: ROBERT DAUTHIER
Affiliation: SALISH KOOTENAI HOUSING AUTHORITY
Address: PO BOX 38
City/State/Zip: PABLO, MT 59855

80

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Center Turn Lane Through Pablo:	Please consider extending center turn lane 1.25 miles North from present plans. This would increase safety for 100+ employees working at the Salish Kootenai Housing Authority and S&K Electronics. Thank you —

Robert Dauthier
5/15/95

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Mike Bragg
Affiliation: local traveler
Address: 3108 Eldora
City/State/Zip: Missoula MT 59803

81

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Hwy 93 N. at Arlee	It is my opinion that the new Hwy should not go through the town, it is better for traffic movement + safety to not go through Arlee. It is also safer for the local residents and pedestrians if there is no Hwy traffic through town. Any tourism or tourist traffic will go through town if that is there desire, little or no effect will be felt to the local businesses.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

MAY 1 1995

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P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Paul Gierach
Affiliation: Highway user
Address: 23495 Wapiti Rd.
City/State/Zip: Hudson, MT 59846

82

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Highway 93 through Arlee	To route the highway through Arlee with the idea of reacting in the future to bypass town makes no sense. You should bypass Arlee right now to avoid future added expense to the taxpayers. Let's do it right the 1st time.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

May 9, 1995

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MDOT
2701 Prospect Ave
P.O. Box 20001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

MDOT:

83 I am a long time resident of the Jocko Valley near Arlee. I strongly oppose the MDOT plan for highway 93 as it exists.

I support the Flathead Resource Organization FRO) plan. Please let those of us who live along 93 have the strongest voice in this decision.

Joe Weydt
JOE WEYDT
Arlee, MT

MRS. CLARICE OHSAGER
45308 US HIGHWAY 93
RONAN, MT 59864-9678

MAY 5, 1995

DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
2701 PROSPECT AVE
HELENA, MT

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cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

GENTLEMEN,

84 I would like to inform you that I agree with your highway plan for Hwy. 93 from Evaro to Polson. I don't like the alternative plan (FRO plan) as it seems to be too little - too late. I like the fact that you are planning to use the same alignment we have now. I think we need 4 lanes.

Thank you.

Clarice Ohsager
Ronan

Ms. Cheri Rowbury
45308 Highway 93
Ronan, MT. 59864-9678

5/5/95

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85

Joel Marshik —

The plan for Hwy 93 (Evaro - Polson) sounds great. The dissenters are few, but verbal. Dozens of people like myself like the plan & wish it were done instead of just beginning! Hope you get it approved & begun as quickly as possible.

Thanks for all your hard work on the plan! GO FOR IT!

Sincerely,
Cheri Rowbury

cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

Cheri Rowbury
93
45308 Hwy
Ronan, MT 59864

MAY

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

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cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

MAY 1 1995

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Ruth Bray
Affiliation: Traveler thru Arlee
Address: 3108 Eldora Lane
City/State/Zip: Missoula, MT 59803

86

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Hwy through Arlee.	Please do not route a Hwy through Arlee. We use this road to visit friends and to travel to the lake. It would be a great inconvenience to travelers to slow down to go through the town of Arlee w/ possibility of accidents due to people getting off and on the Highway. This would also create a safety problem for the local people having to cross several lanes to frequent businesses ect. Please route the proposed Highway around

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

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WRITTEN COMMENTS for
PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: DAVID WHITLOCK
Affiliation: MISSION VALLEY POWER
Address: P.O.BOX 890
City/State/Zip: POLSON, MT 59860
406-883-5361

87

TOPIC	COMMENTS
WARRENTS FOR LIGHT IN PABLO & ENCLOSED EA.	MISSION VALLEY POWER IS PROPOSING A NEW UTILITY COMPLEX IN A LOT AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF PABLO WEST ROAD & U.S. HWY. 93. WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO REVIEW OUR EA. AND COMMENT IF NECESSARY ALSO WE REQUEST A RESPONSE AS TO IF MDOT. MAY FEEL THE WARRENTS ARE THERE FOR A TRAFFIC LIGHT SOME--TIME IN THE FUTURE.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

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MAY 3 1995

Joel Marshik
Environmental Service
Montana Department of Transportation
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

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cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

Dear Mr. Marshik,

88 We received notice of the highway study being conducted regarding the expansion of highway 93 between Evero and Polson. We applaud the project addressing the driving problems between the two towns, but as business people and as taxpayers we question the proposal of a "loop" around the town of Polson.

Due to time restraints we are unable to secure the Environmental Impact Statement regarding the "loop" proposal, but we do question the cost to the taxpayers and the financial impact to Polson. Based on available information building the second bridge and loop would be far more expensive than "fixing" the current bridge and allowing tourist/business trade to enter Polson.

Alignment #1 would meet the objectives of the City of Polson and be more cost effective. Since it would be an expansion of the current bridge and business section of the downtown there would be less impact to residential neighborhoods surrounding the town. This would also reduce potential environmental concerns to the outlying areas surrounding Polson.

We appreciated being able to express our thoughts and opinions to you and thank you for you time and consideration.

Sincerely,
DeeLaine Peterson
John and DeeLaine Peterson
Riverview Estates
Polson, Montana 59860

PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

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WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

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Montana Department of Transportation
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P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: George Knapp
Affiliation: Fort Connah Restoration Society
Address: 2440 Blue Mtn. Rd
City/State/Zip: Missoula, Mt. 59801

89

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Approach to Hi-way #93	April 25, 1995 Please be advised that we are seeking to purchase acreage for our restoration project and will desire an approach to Highway #93 in the SW¼ NW¼ Sec. 13, T 19 R20W, just north of the irrigation ditch. George Knapp - Chairman Fort Connah Restoration Society

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

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WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
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MARCH 1995
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Reconstruction
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P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Harold & Viola Sanner
Affiliation: property owners
Address: Box 206
City/State/Zip: Arlee Mont 59821

90

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Hiway 93 at Arlee	As residents of Arlee we believe you are on the right track with your 4 lanes with a turning lane but believe it should be on the alternate route around the town of Arlee.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

MAY 3 1995

Mahlum
THOROUGHBRED FARM

3/25/95

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

Dear Sir:

I am writing my comments to you as per the Missoulian 3/23/95.

91 I would like to see the Hwy 93 project done as soon as possible because of the terrible condition the highway is now in. I certainly hope the EIS does not hold up the proposed project as the lives a new 4 lane highway would save is much more important than the minimal effect it would have on wildlife. This project is a must in so many peoples priorities.

Respectfully

Dale Mahlum

10955 Hwy. 93 North • Missoula, MT 59802
(406) 549-3115

PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

MAY 2 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
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MARCH 1995
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Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

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Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Mabel Reum
Affiliation: Homemaker
Address: [illegible]
City/State/Zip: St. Ignatius [illegible] 59865

92

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Hi Way 93	We are very pleased with the Hi 93 plan as it was presented to us this week. It is desperately needed. All one has to do is travel it a few times. It is impossible to pass anyone. On one trip to Polson last summer, we encountered 3 accidents & came home without doing our shopping we had intended to do.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

MASTER COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

MAY " 2 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
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MARCH 1995
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Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Barbara Ward
Affiliation: Toy Box a toy store
Address: 214 B Main
City/State/Zip: Polson, MT 59860

93

TOPIC COMMENTS

Highway 93 By Pass around Polson - I am concerned about the location of the proposed by-pass. The proposed route would be above the acceptable noise level for a highway, as a citizen of Polson I do not want to listen to noise pollution caused by traffic. There is a need for work on highway 93 but it should not adversely effect the environment.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

GPUBLIC.POL

MAY " 2 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

Polson, Montana
May 1, 1995

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

Joel Marshik
MT Dept Transportation
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, Mont. 59620-1001

Sir;

When and if the decision is made to put a highway 93 bypass south of Polson, we want to request that an overpass/underpass be constructed where the bypass would cross Kerr Dam Road.

94 There are almost 200 households in the Valley View and Kerr dam communities with several properties already approved for subdivision. The traffic from these areas are headed to Polson to go to work, school, shopping, church, recreation, etc. Kerr Dam Road is our only access to Polson, so consequently all the traffic will be crossing the bypass, not accessing it. Also, in the summer (tourist time) the traffic out our way doubles. There are busloads of rafters and others going to the river. This all originates in Polson and returns there also. In addition the Lake County landfill is on Kerr Dam Road, with all the trucks and people from town going back and forth.

Please, do not create a dangerous intersection at Kerr Dam Road, put in an overpass/underpass.

Thank you,

Elaine M Corrigan
A. W. Corrigan

ELAINE & A. W. Corrigan
7405 Valley View Rd.
Polson, MT 59860

PUBLIC HEARING AT Polson, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
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Evaro - Polson
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Montana Department of Transportation
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P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: THOMAS C. Lindell
Affiliation:
Address: 23 Marigold Lane
City/State/Zip: Polson, MT. 883-5063

COMMENTARTY AS IT RELATES TO HIGHWAY 93 AND THE CITY OF POLSON--FUTURE LOCATING AND CONSTRUCTION

Commentator: T. C. Lindell
23 Marigold Lane (Rocky Point road)
Polson.

95 (Note: I currently serve the Polson Community as Chairman of the Polson City-County Planning Board, and as Chairman of the Polson City-County Board of Adjustments.
My comments should not be construed as representing either Board).

Position on Polson area reconstruction of Highway 93:

Highway 93 through Polson was recently re-surfaced and paint stripped. It looks great, a big improvement. I am opposed to any further change (other than infrastructure improvements such as walkways, improved intersections, etc.) than it is today--a three lane street.

I further recommend the construction of a bypass south of Polson as described in your literature as Preferred Highway 93 alternate #3. I further recommend that this bypass be built at the beginning of the construction of the Polson-Ronan segment rather than 10-15 years from now.

Rationale:

On October 10, 1992 Polson began a long process that ended in the adoption of a new Polson Master Plan and Development Code by the Polson City Council and the Lake County Commissioners. I and many other citizens of the community were involved in this process--from the very first October 10 focus meeting to the final Planning Board meeting.

No where throughout the Master Plan development process was it envisioned that a five lane highway would be constructed through Polson. On the contrary, the constant theme was to have a Central Business District (CBD) that was easily accessible by foot traffic from parking areas and closely tied to a Salish Point development concept of existing and future water front parks and a large variety of tourist orientated specialty shops--as found in BigFork.

In other words, a CBD/Salish Point area where all areas of shopping and interest were with 4-5 blocks of each area--from the Courthouse to the water front.
Of course, a 5 lane Missoula Reserve Street type highway constructed through Polson would be a barrier that would destroy the CBD/Salish Point concept and Polson as we now know it.

Opposition to Highway 93 bypass alturnate #3 around Polson:

I really do not recall any opposition to the development of and the approval of the new Polson Development Plan and the Development Code. This is evidenced by the non-controversial nature in which everything came to fruition, except:
at the very end of the process, as I recall, two or three CBD/93 strip business men began voicing their concerns about a bypass construction and the possible effect it could have on their businesses.

Effect of Bypass on Polson Business Community:

In the first place, I think that transitory through traffic contributes very little if any to the traditional local business community. I submit that retaining the current three lane street through Polson and the construction of a bypass for through traffic will, in the long run, enhance the business community.

Access to businesses will remain relatively easy. The fear that some business owners have (or the CBD/93 strip as a whole) of losing business will in itself contribute to the success of the business community.
In this concept, the fear of losing business will push the business community and city fathers into paying some attention to the City's infrastructure problems and appearance. Polson, like many small towns across America, is a sleepy 1950's town that is suddenly being confronted by rapid growth yet still having sidewalks that were poured in 1910.

Fortunately, unlike most small American towns, Polson has an ace in the hole--its extensive water front and ever growing retirement community/lake shore community. This is where Polson's business opportunities and future is, not in 5 lanes of traffic roaring through mid-town Polson, not in having every through traffic truck passing through mid-town Polson.

Concluding summary:

1. The greatest favor that the state of Montana could grant the City of Polson is to leave Highway 93 through Polson as it is and construct a bypass around Polson for through traffic (of course making the necessary intersection improvements, limiting access, traffic lights and the like in town).
   a. in lieu of constructing a 5 lane highway through Polson, promise the City of Polson that the State will maintain 93 through town in perpetuity (say 30 years). The State can afford to do so because it will not have the cost of constructing a 5 lane highway through town.

2. Construction of a 5 lane highway through Polson will destroy all of the work and community approval of the CBD/Salish Point community development concept. A Reserve Street type project will forever destroy the small town feeling Polson currently enjoys and what the community expects to continue.
   a. it would eliminate badly needed parking spaces along 93, and the possibility of predestrian/bicycle ways, trees, grass and all the other things that make a community people compatible.

3. The Polson Business Community's future does not rest upon what it can glean from transitory though traffic.
   a. Its future lays with taking care of business in a growing community and providing the infrastructure and upgrading the appearance of the business areas and streets of the community, developing attractions for summer people.

Sincerely submitted by,

T. C. Lindell
Polson, MT.

My vision of a part of Hyw 93 in Polson, Mt.:

THAT PORTION OF HIGHWAY 93 THAT BORDERS FLATHEAD LAKE BETWEEN KWA TAQ NUK RESORT, EAST TO THE LAKEVIEW VILLAGE COMLEX, POLSON, MT.:

I assume that the State of Montana owns the right of way to the high waterline.

I would like to see an acommodation between the State and the Tribe wherein the breakwater retaining wall is extended east from its present ending on the east side of KwaTaqNut resort, east to Lake View Village. That the retaining wall be placed between 50' and 100' north of the present day high water mark and that the area be back-filled to the height (elevation) of Highway 93.

Then, (1) Highway 93, between present day Radio Shack and the junction of 4th Avenue East and Highway 93 be reduced to two-lane Traffic.

(2) The present day north lane be converted to a parking lane, and that the area from the north side of the present day north lane (west-bound lane) to the new waterline be converted to a prominade featuring a wide widewalk, lawn, trees and covered bench sites.

I can not think of another feature that could be more impressionable to a visitor driving through polson, for the guests of nearby motels and of course the people of Polson and Lake county.

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

MAY - 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison + Maierle

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

This page is available for members of the public to make written comments. The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Montana Department of Transportation are seeking information from users of the highway, property owners and other members of the public. For more information please contact:

Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Glen R. Wunderlich
Affiliation: Montana Auto Body
Address: Box T
City/State/Zip: Ronan mt 59864

96

TOPIC	COMMENTS
HW 93 thru Ronan Montana	Leave the HW where it is Now put in 3 (total) traffic Lights or turning Lanes. there will be Less impact than tearing up a whole New Right Away & moving the HW out of town.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLHR.PAB

PUBLIC HEARING AT PABLO, MONTANA: APRIL 26, 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Missoula Maint.

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
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MAY 1995

ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

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P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Odette Gasser
Affiliation: Ronan Auto Body
Address: B x T
City/State/Zip: Ronan, MT 59864

97

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Hwy 93 Thru Ronan, Montana	Please keep highway 93 through Ronan, May business is depend on out of town customers.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLIH.PAB

PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Missoula Maint.

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

MAY 1995

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Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: JOAN MAE RAUM
Affiliation: RANCHER
Address: 2111 McDonald Lk. Rd.
City/State/Zip: St. Ignatius, MT. 59865

98

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Highway 93	F.R.O. REPRESENTS ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE MISSION VALLEY + WHILE THEIR GOALS ARE NOBLE THEY ARE WRONG. THE PLAN FOR US 93 PUT FORTH BY THE MDOT IS AN EXCELLENT ONE THAT WILL SAVE LIVES AND AMPLY ADDRESSES ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

93PUBLIH.STI

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

MAY 1 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison + Maierle

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Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments.

Mr. & Mrs. J. C. Heglie
P.O. Box 444
Polson, MT 59860

Commenter: [illegible]
Affiliation: RETIRED
Address: 436 Shoreline Rd.
City/State/Zip: Polson, Mt. 59860

99

TOPIC	COMMENTS
PLAN 1, PLAN 2, PLAN 3	All three of these plans will cross property we own; no matter which is finally adopted we will be involved. We presently lease the property for agricultural purposes. Any fair appraisal should consider the long range negative effect on the lease. I suggest you employ your appraiser, we employ ours & the two appoint a third; then the 3 should be averaged to arrive at a fair figure.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

by J Heglie

93PUBLIC.POL

MAY 08 1995

130 Clearview Drive
Polson, Montana
May 5, 1995

Joel Marshik, Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

100

The enclosures with the signatures are the result of about two hours of effort. I had copies of the maps of the various alignments of by-passes. Most wanted to see them.

For the recommendation about by-passes there were three people who would not sign. One, a business man on Main Street, said he was against the by-pass at Polson because it would hurt business. One wouldn't sign because he said he didn't know enough about it, although he thought that having by-passes was a good idea. One said he would pass on signing although he was not against by-passes. Among people that signed were a few business people, two on Main Street. A number of people were very vehement about support for the Polson by-pass; they pointed out that the traffic through town is already terrible. They just couldn't understand people who are against the by-pass. On this sample, as you can see, there are 27 for and one against for a 96 percent approval, or you can look at it as 27 out of 30.

For the recommendation about bicycle paths I started out first with the idea of asking people I know who are cyclists. Then somebody, after signing the other, asked to see it and said, "Oh, I will sign that." I could have had more signatures than the other. Nobody refused to sign this document. Those who were not cyclists thought it much better to have separate pathways.

The reason that I decided to make this effort is that I went to the presentation at Kwataqnuk by your people. I asked somebody what had been the response to the by-pass idea at Arlee. I had not been able to make it to the meeting there. He said that most of the input was for no by-pass. I pointed out to him that the input was from the business interests along the route in town. He did not disagree. Those business interests do not represent the viewpoint of the people. I set out to prove this. You well know the apathy of people to do anything civic. Of all the people I asked for signatures, only one had been to the Kwataqnuk presentation or some other meeting by your department.

I understand that the city council of Ronan has voted against a by-pass. This, I hope can be changed; it does not represent the wishes of the people, only those in the mistaken idea that business would suffer. At the next legislative session, I intend to request my representative to submit a bill to cancel the authority that a city council has over highway placement.

Stanley Petersen

Stanley Petersen

copy: Jim Weaver

To the Montana Department of Transportation:

This is a recommendation that in the proposed expansion of Highway 93 that towns be by-passed entirely wherever possible. In order we prefer Alignment 3 at Polson, Alignment 3 or 4 at Ronan, Alignment 2 or 4 or 5 at Arlee. Alignment 5 at Arlee is the best because it by-passes both Arlee and Ravalli.

Stanley Petersen, STANLEY PETERSEN, 130 Clearview Dr., Polson
Shirley Jacobson 1114 S. Shore, Polson
Marilyn Coffee Box 966 Polson MT 59860
Albert E. Alexander 143 Fair meadow Lane 59860
Tom Brown Polson 78 Fair Meadow Lane
Robert E. Smith 10-5 Ave E Polson Mont 59860
Philip Stanley 1290 Rocky Pt. Rd. " " "
Jack J. Redekop 1117 3rd St East Polson Mont 59860
Bob Fulton 217 MAIN ST. POLSON
Sharon Fulton 217 Main St. Polson
Leslie Woldstad 456 S. Hills Dr. Polson
Catherine Kyat 73 Gilman Lane Polson
Carl McClu PO Box 969 Polson MT 59860
Jackie Palmer 507 4th Ave E. Polson
Richard W. [illegible] 507 4th AVE. E. Polson
Keith Hodges 8 14th Ave W. Polson
Marian Seidentopf 35 Seidentopf Lane Polson
Joshua Morrison 207 22nd Ave W. Polson
Lori Felton Box 1429 807 13th Ave Polson
Joyce Decker Wagner 501 6th Ave E. Polson
[illegible] McCulley 1101 8th Street East Polson

To the Montana Department of Transportation:

This is a recommendation that in the proposed expansion of Highway 93 that towns be by-passed entirely wherever possible. In order we prefer Alignment 3 at Polson, Alignment 3 or 4 at Ronan, Alignment 2 or 4 or 5 at Arlee. Alignment 5 at Arlee is the best because it by-passes both Arlee and Ravalli.

Sharon Kenitz 914 5th St E Polson, Mt.
Virginia Olson #1 2nd St E Polson
Dorothy L. Petersen 130 Clearview Drive Polson
Don Pollack 134 Clearview Drive Polson
Dick Uerlenda 300 Clearview Dr. Polson

To the Montana Department of Transportation:

This is a recommendation that in the proposed expansion of Highway 93 that there be bicycle lanes constructed completely separate from the roadway. Four feet of separate pathway is better than eight feet of shoulder. If a separate lane is not feasible then a wide shoulder is recommended.

Stanley Petersen	130 Clearview Drive	Polson
Sharon Fulton	217 Main	Polson
Leslie Woldstad	456 S. Hills Dr.	Polson
Jackie Ladner	507 4th Ave E.	Polson
Richard W. Cayman	507 4th Ave E.	Polson
Ruth E Hodges	8 14th Ave W	Polson
Jeanne Dopke	Box 1151	Polson
Marian Siedentopf	85 Siedentopf Lane	Polson
Johna Morrison	207 22nd Ave W	Polson
Lori Felton	807 13th Ave	Polson
Joyce Decker Wegner	501 6th Ave. E.	Polson
Mary McCauley	1101 8th Street E	Polson
Kathryn Elke	310 12th Ave. E.	Polson
Sharon Kentzer	914 5th St E.	Polson
Patti Kugler	1475 Rocky Point Rd	POLSON
DICK BRATTON	306 MAIN	Polson
Virginia Olson	#1 2nd St E	Polson
Dorothy J. Petersen	130 Clearview Drive	
Don Pollock	134 Clearview Drive	Polson
Dick Lindsey	310 Clearview Drive	Polson

US 93 (Evaro through Polson)
Final Environmental Impact Statement

PUBLIC HEARING AT ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA: APRIL 25, 1995

MAY 0 3 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

MASTER COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Maurice & Main

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

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Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: June Normandeau
Affiliation:
Address: 621 Red Horn Rd.
City/State/Zip: St. Ignatius, Mt. 59865

101

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Highway Evaro to Polson	Wouldn't a frontage road be advisable, at least from St. Ignatius to Ronan? There are so many approaches already and it's a long wait to get on the highway especially in summer. 44 Bar Crane and Post Creek Hill are dangerous both getting on and off the highway.

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

MASTER FILE COPY

MAY 03 1995

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maier

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Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Duane Olsen
Affiliation: Polson Auto Salvage
Address: 54826 Hwy 93
City/State/Zip: Polson MT 59860

102

TOPIC	COMMENTS

IN REGARD TO THE PROPOSED BY-PASS OF HIWAY 93 WEST OF POLSON, I AM DEFINITELY IN FAVOR OF IT. THE ROUTE THAT WAS SHOWN AT THE PUBLIC HEARING AT KWA-TUK-NUK ON APRIL 27 WAS PROBABLY AS GOOD A ROUTE AS THERE IS.

AS FOR THE FEAR OF LOST REVENUE TO DOWNTOWN BUSINESS, I DON'T BELIEVE IT WOULD BE NOTICEABLE. I DON'T THINK PEOPLE WHO SHOP DOWNTOWN WOULD DRIVE THE BY-PASS WHEN THEY NEEDED SOMETHING AND THOSE WHO DON'T WOULD LESSEN THE CONGESTION FOR THOSE WHO DO.

THE SAFETY FACTOR OF LESSENING THE TRAFFIC IN DOWNTOWN POLSON IS TO ME THE OVERRIDING CONCERN.

DUANE OLSEN, OWNER-POLSON AUTO SALVAGE
54826 HWY 93

Duane Olsen

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

91PUBLIC.POL

RECEIVED
JUN 26 1995
ENVIROMENTAL BUREAU

RECEIVED
JUN 26 1995
6-19-95 MORRISON—MAIERLE/CSSA, INC.

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
M+M

Joel Marshik
Manager: Environmental Services
Dept of Transportation

Dear Sir:

103 I am writing this note to urge the continuation of the plan for an alternate road to be built around the town of Polson, Montana.

A 4-lane highway is also desperately needed between Arlee and Polson. As you know, the town is growing at an unmanageable rate and has become a very dangerous place because of the lack of roads in and out of town. Many, many accidents have occurred on "Polson hill" this spring and the summer tourist season is just beginning.

Thank you for giving this your attention.

Most sincerely,
Willard Steinkraus
Virginia Steinkraus

Willard and Virginia Steinkraus
610 1st. St. E. Apt. #3
Polson, MT 59860

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JUN 26 1995
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

RECEIVED
JUN 26 1995
MORRISON—MAIERLE/CSSA, INC.

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

Joe Marshike
2701 Prospect Place
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, Mt. 59620-1001

104 We would like the reconstruction of U.S. Highway 93 to by-pass Polson.
There is just too much congestion and it causes too many problems. The businesses can be moved to the new routing and Polson has much to offer for tourists to drive into the city, anyway.

KENNETH/ARLENE DOEPKE
300 BAYSHORE DRIVE
POLSON, MT 59860

Sincerely,
Arlene Doepke
Kenneth L. Doepke

Bob Yetter
1012 Grizzly
Evaro, MT 59

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MORRISON-MAIERLE/CSSA, INC.

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6/23/95

RECEIVED
JUN 26 1995
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
M & M.

MDOT:

105 For the record, I oppose your plan for Highway 93 from Evaro to Polson as outlined in your DEIS. I attended one of your public meetings in St. Ignatius and am aware of the level of public opposition as well as the MDOT personnel's obvious determination to see this project through. Like the Forest Service & other Govt agencies MDOT seems to have decided what they wanted, wrote an EIS to support it, & then jumped through the hoops of public comment & notification which are required. You make a sham of democracy. The public's will, & in my opinion, the public good.

Your project certainly threatens to destroy the characteristics of the landscape, & many of the aspects of living in the area that are important to residents. I believe safety issues can be addressed with less impacts, & encourage you to reconsider your approach.

However, I don't think you will. Given the likelyhood of your continuation of this plan, I will only suggest/request that you consider planting natural trees & other vegetation in a natural manner along the roadway to reduce noise.

Finally, I think your wildlife overpass north of Evaro is an absurd attempt at "mitigating" the damage you are determined to inflict.

Must Highway 93 Become a Superhighway?

Must the Mission and Jocko Valleys Become Suburbs of Missoula?

Just Say No! There IS a Better Way!

Join the Flathead Resource Organization in advocating our sane alternative to the Montana Department of Transportation's plan to overrun this beautiful area.

Many people are not aware that the Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT) is pushing for a highway plan that will forever change our rural way of life. They plan to turn Highway 93 into a 4 and 5-lane Superhighway all the way from Evaro hill to Polson. This monstrous plan will split our valleys & our communities with a great barrier of concrete, lead to an uncontrolled rush of development beyond anything we've seen, worsen our air pollution, and more than double the noise pollution from highway traffic. And though they rationalize their plan with claims of improving safety, their superhighway would in some ways be *more* dangerous than the existing road, due to faster speeds and more dangerous crossings.

THE DRAFT EIS HAS NOW BEEN RELEASED.
THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW AND *YOUR* VOICE IS NEEDED!

The deadline for public comments is JUNE 23.

The FLATHEAD RESOURCE ORGANIZATION (FRO), a long-standing and diverse group of local citizens concerned about the health of our communities and our environment, has offered a sane alternative. It has two wings: short term, effective safety improvements, and long-term plans both to stem the growth of traffic, and to protect our environment and our communities.

THE FRO PLAN FOR HIGHWAY 93: A SANE CHOICE

1. Safety.

We support the recommendations of the Montana Traffic Safety Task Force for improving safety on Highway 93:

1. Good 8-foot shoulders for the length of the highway;
2. Left-hand turn lanes at key intersections;
3. Lengthening and improving the existing passing lanes;
4. Adding a passing lane on Post Creek hill;
5. Better lighting and signage;
6. Better enforcement of existing traffic laws;
7. Slow-moving vehicle turnouts;
8. Restricting truck traffic to certain times of the day, especially multiple-trailer trucks or "pups";
9. Facilities for safer pedestrian crossings in towns; Separate bicycle paths near to towns.

2. Stemming the growth of traffic and protecting our beautiful area:

1. Working with Glacier National Park and other officials to improve mass transportation facilities serving the park and to reduce, over the long run, the tourist traffic going to the park.
2. Vigorous research and development of all mass transportation options in the Highway 93 corridor, including light passenger rail service between Polson and Missoula.
3. Better mass transit in Missoula, to make the city more liveable & remove incentives for commuters to move to the Reservation.
4. Reconstruction of Highway 93 to permit safe animal crossings under or over the road at critical places. Avoiding any further destruction of the priceless wetlands of the Ninepipe area. Exploring the possibility of designating Highway 93 a National Scenic Highway.

The FRO plan will not worsen our underlying problems, as the MDOT plan would. And it will help ensure that our children inherit stable communities and a beautiful, healthy environment.

THE FRO PLAN IS AVAILABLE IN PABLO AT THE SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE LIBRARY, AND AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN RONAN, ST. IGNATIUS, ARLEE, AND POLSON -- OR OBTAIN YOUR OWN COPY BY CALLING 644-2547 OR 246-3222.

Don't let this gigantic government nightmare be imposed on the Jocko and Mission Vallies! Write the MDOT today in support of the FRO plan (2701 Prospect Ave., P.O. Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001).

June 20, 1995
42 Litler Lane
Polson, Mt. 9986
cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Service
Montana Dept. of Transportation
2701 Prospect Ave
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, Mt. 59620-1001

Topic: US 93: Polson Preferred Alternate Route

106 As a citizen of the city of Polson, I very much agree with the idea of the preferred alternative route around the city of Polson favored by the majority of the public and previously approved by the city council, the Polson Community planning team, and the Lake County Commissioners.

We live north of Hiway 93 on Litler Lane just off Bay Shore Drive. We find it very difficult, at present, many times to get onto hiway 93, especially during May to October. Any future increase in traffic will only make this present situation more dangerous and more susceptible to accidents.

Increased traffic will make it more unsafe for children and pedestrians to cross the hiway for school and library trips as the library is on the north side of the hiway and many children cross the hiway to go to school and for trips to store and parks.

We feel that the visual beauty of the golf course, parks, and lake are very important to us as citizens and to tourists who come to this area. Widening of the present hiway and providing no alternative route would certainly affect these concerns in a negative way.

Many people, excluding the Downtown Merchants association, are in favor of the proposed alternative route, but are not as vocal or organized as that group in expressing their views.

We all felt great relief when the former city council supported the alternative route and paid attention to the concerns of safety, comfort, and convenience expressed by the citizens of the community.

We do not feel that the businesses would be negatively affected by the alternative route and would actually find their business revenues increase as customers would find parking and safety increase by less traffic on the present road. They seem to have forgotten that the majority of their customers live, work and shop in this city.

Please consider the wishes of the majority of the citizens of this community and provide the preferred alternative route as previously agreed to by

the former city council, and supported by the planning committee and the Commissioners.

Sincerely,
Dorothy L. Preston
42 Liter Lane
Polson, Mt. 59860
(406) 883-4843

RECEIVED
JUN 21 1995
Joe [illegible]
Mgr. Environmental Sec.
MT. Dept. of Trans.
2701 Prospect Ave.
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT. 59620-1001

42 Liter Lane
Polson, Montana.
June 19, 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison Maierle

Dear Sir:

107 Please accept this Note As our comment on Highway 93 Project in Polson.

We Favor The Alternate Route Around Polson, My wife & I Are both retired and Live on The North side of Hiway 93 by The golf course. The summer traffic is so heavy That only right Turns are safe To get on 93, And I feel That As Time goes on it will be Almost impossible To safely drive on 93 To stores in Polson.

We feel To make A 5 Lane Thru Polson on The Existing Hiway 93 would be A very bad mistake And in years To come An Alternate Route would by necessary Anyway.

Sincerely
Dorothy & Dwight Preston
Phone# 883-4843

Dwight Preston
42 Liter La.
Polson, MT 59860-9654

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JUN 16 1995
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

MR. F. H. MIELKE
1211 5th ST. E.
POLSON, MT.
59860-4226

This page is available for members of the public to make written comments. The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Montana Department of Transportation are seeking information from users of the highway, property owners and other members of the public. For more information please contact:

Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Willis Mielke
Affiliation: Retired Water Board Director
Address: 134 5th St East
City/State/Zip: Polson, Montana 59860

108

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Alternate #3	We strongly support Alternate #3 for the following reasons:
	We presently have serious traffic
	in Polson area streets. It is difficult
	to get on and off U.S. 93 now and
	would be worse if through traffic
	were to be routed through existing
	routes. Serious problems are now
	arising at intersections of Bay Drive
	and Bay Shore Drive and U.S. 93

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

(over)

93PUBLHR.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	Traffic does not add loss to existing
	speed limits - more traffic control
	needed. Only sensible alternate
	is with Alternate #3 - Bypassing
	Polson with 4 lane Highway.

THANK YOU

93PUBLHR.POL

PUBLIC HEARING AT POLSON, MONTANA: APRIL 27, 1995

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
4-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

cc: Jim Weaver
Preconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department Of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Dear Mr. Marshik,

109 I'm submitting the following comments in regards to the public hearings, various site meetings, and an intensive review and investigation, into the draft EIS prepared by Carter & Burgess.

I am oppose to the "Preferred Alternative" bypass route as presented in the draft EIS and by officials of the MDOT at the Public Hearings.

The Polson ""Preferred Alternative" bypass section of the Highway 93 project, is the only area addressed in the following comments. It appears that over the last couple of months, various letters and faxes seem to have been misplaced in regards to this section of the project, so I have taken the liberty of distributing my comments to the people listed below. Thank you in advance for reviewing and verifying my findings, and also for including these comments in the report you will send to the Federal Highway Administration for preparation of the Final EIS.

Please list my address below to receive a copy of the Final EIS, as well as any pertinent correspondence. I hope that I can receive the FINAL EIS in more timely a fashion than I received the DRAFT EIS, as the PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD is much shorter in time.

Sincerely,

Daniel Howlett
P.O. Box 945
Polson, MT 59860

email: dhowlett@cyberport.net

DATA QUALITY in the EIS

In 1992, when the Polson City Council voted to approve that an EIS be preformed on all of the alternative routes, they were told that the draft EIS was going to be available in 6 months. It took over 2 years. Much of the data being reviewed by the public and Polson City Council is invalid. Much of the data is incorrect. This is not only due to population growth and economic trends, but what I believe to be a poorly researched project. How can the elected officials and the residents of the community, make an educated decision, that will have consequences for generations to come, with invalid, out of date information? It is irresponsible to reach a decision without revisiting the "key issues" listed below.

CARTER & BURGESS has been very helpful with getting draft EIS copies to people in our community and answering questions. However, whether it was due to the Corporation changing hands after the EIS was started, or perhaps having a new EIS coordinator take over in the middle, there are too many questions that have not been answered. The specific ones are "Right of Way", "Cost Estimates", and the "Preferred Alternative" Alignment.

HIGHWAY RIGHT OF WAY

On pages 7.2-5 thru 7.2-8, new right of way required for "Preferred Alternative" #3 is incorrect. Stated on these pages are lands required for lane configurations A thru D. It states, "NO PURCHASE OF RESIDENTIAL ACRES IS REQUIRED." This is not correct, as the route goes through a developed subdivision, Riverside Terraces. During the field visit by officials, they were not even aware of this development. It has had buried power, phone, and private streets, installed for more than 10 years. The "Preferred Alternative" goes through it. During the 2½ years that have passed since the Draft EIS data was collected, land values have increased considerable. This needs to be reviewed to see if the ROW acquisition is realistic to taxpayers. The Polson City Council agreed to studying the bypass on the condition that it would be a "Controlled Access Highway". Jim Weaver stated not only at the field site visit, but also at the City Council meeting on May 2, 1995; "ROW acquisition along the "Preferred Alternative" #3 would be cost prohibitive if the MDOT did not allow access to residents and agricultural users." This is not what the City Council agreed upon when they passed the Resolution to study the bypass route. It will create another HWY 93 with slow turning traffic and cross traffic, merging into high speed traffic. Why create another public safety hazard?

ESTIMATED COSTS

The DRAFT EIS states that the HIGHWAY 93 PROJECT will cost all of us around $83 million. It further states; "This estimate does not include construction of the bypass around Polson." How can we justify approving the project in the FINAL EIS, start buying ROW, if we don't even know the cost of ROW, or how much we need to buy? These issues are suppose to be addressed in THE DRAFT EIS. How much will it cost? As taxpayers we need answers.

ALIGNMENT

At a field site visit on April 26, 1995 Jim Weaver , Jeannette Lastracco, and other officials told a group of concerned residents that; "These are just lines on paper, aerial photographs. The bridge could be anywhere between here and there". (pointing to over a ½ a mile of shoreline) "We'll fine tune the exact location as we get further into the project". Considering there are homes, a developed subdivision with private roads, Special Aquatic Sites, Tribal Cultural Sites, Tribal property, and Bald Eagle foraging and perch sites throughout the river corridor, it seems like there should be a more specific idea on where the alignment will be.

The group of people gathered were speechless. At this point in the meeting, we've been told, "We don't know how much it will cost, we didn't know there was a subdivision, we don't know how much ROW will cost, and we don't know where the highway is going." ALL of these topics are what our tax dollars are supposed to buy when officials decide to contract a firm to do an EIS.

The most disturbing event was the following morning (4/27/95) when two officials from the Army Corps of Engineers, (one State, one Federal) who deal with Wetlands Management, came to visit. In standing along the river front they asked, "Do you know where this bridge is suppose to go?" I pointed to the route on the photos from the EIS and also explained it could be anywhere in the ½ mile area that was pointed out the day before. They were alarmed by the aerial photo in the EIS and stated, "There is a *Special Aquatic Site* located where the route is depicted on the photo." They were quite friendly and went on to get the Federal Regulations book out. It specifically states that, "All alternative routes need to be exhausted, prior to disruption of the Site." At the Public Hearing that evening, a whole new different alignment is on the aerial photo in red tape. I asked a Carter & Burgess employee what that was all about and he said, "Oh, that is another alignment that will work better." Then on Monday May 2, 1995 when Jim Weaver and Jeannette Lastracco presented the EIS findings to the Polson City Council, the route in red tape was off the map. I was told by Jeannette Lastracco that they found out it was a Tribal Cultural Site.

The following page is a letter from The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council. By unanimous vote, they are in opposition of the ""Preferred Alternative" " #3 alignment going through the river corridor. Jim Weaver stated at the Polson City Council meeting on May 2, 1995 that; "The Tribes have ultimate say on where Highway ROW can be located on lands owned by the Tribes. The land cannot be condemned." He further stated; "I'm not here to sell you the bypass, its easier for us to improve the existing route and it will cost less money." Yet at a meeting with the Rotary Club in Polson on May 23, 1995, Gregg Hertz said he had talked with you and you told him that you had received the letter from the Tribes. Jim Weaver said; "I know nothing about a letter and the MDOT will go as far as they can with the project until they are stopped." Mr. Hertz's questions went without an answer, "If MDOT knows the "Preferred Alternative" alignment is opposed by the Tribes, why are we still putting tax dollars into the route and not revisiting route selection? Why don't we improve the existing route, where all the problems exist and the MDOT owns the right of way?" ALL tax payers, including yourself, should receive an answer to this.

Some other key issues that are inconclusive in the draft EIS

NOISE IMPACTS

The Draft EIS states that the noise level will exceed the FHWA noise abetment criteria by 22dbA. No one at the site visit could tell us a baseline number to which we should add the 22dbA. I found out at the Public Hearing the baseline number is 66dbA. 88dbA is equivalent to the noise you experience listening to a siren while inside a police car, slightly higher it compares to operating a chainsaw. We were also informed that the geography surrounding the proposed site of a new bridge was not analyzed. The proposed bridge crosses the river in a narrow canyon over water. This will amplify traffic noise that will affect the entire West side of the City of Polson. The noise will have serious and permanent impacts to wildlife, such as the bald eagles and many species of waterfowl. The draft EIS did not do any noise studies in the canyon where the proposed bridge would go. How do you, we, they, even know what the levels will be? Further study is required to establish what the impacts to "Sensitive Receptors" would actually be.

WILDLIFE IMPACTS

(pg. 7.12-10) **"Bridge placement could displace waterfowl and shorebirds" , "A minor area of wetlands", and "Mitigation measures are those proposed for the bald eagle", I feel these statements are *"softly worded"* to get a project that is already behind, going full speed ahead. The wording in the draft EIS *(pg. 7.13-5)* about eagles in the new bridge area states, "Because the bridge will be in a previously undeveloped and undisturbed section of the river, the extent of impacts to eagles is not known." That doesn't appear to be a very thorough study of the impacts the new road will have. The dozens of bald eagles and ospreys that use the area for foraging will be displaced, due to the noise and habitat loss in the narrow canyon. This is a major flyway, all year long, for many species. The "Preferred Alternative" will displace hundreds of Canadian Geese that nest with their goslings each spring, in and around this large wetlands area. I am under the impression that the wildlife data used to reach these conclusions is from studies done in the past and do not represent the current conditions and population.**

VISUAL IMPACTS

(pg.7.17-15) **Motorists using the bypass will "Have decreased views of Flathead Lake, the River, and no view of the City of Polson". Also, "Due to the hilly terrain...,large cut and fill slopes will occur". The hill that everyone in town, on the Lake, and south bound traffic on the current Hwy 93, gets to see as the scenic backdrop for the City of Polson, will be changed forever. How large are, "large cut and fill slopes"? In this day and age of technology, it is mind boggling that all of us can't review a 3-d model produced by GIS today. We could see where the bridge crosses, how all the side cuts and fill slopes will look on the scenic Polson moraine, and have more constructive input on how we want the community to look. When I asked a Carter & Burgess employee at the Public Hearing if they had GIS capabilities, he said; "Yes, we just got it in 1993 and we are too far along with this project to supply any drawings."**

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

(page7.5-12) Economic impact from drive through travellers. These figures show that the "Preferred Alternative" #3 will have the greatest impact on the community, only surpassed by the alternative of NO action. Based on the numbers, a loss of $25 million will occur by the year 2015. This figure represents a loss of over $1 million per year. The EIS states that new businesses are expected to develop along the bypass and will recapture all lost trade within 15 years. This is incorrect. The city council and county commissioners have repeatedly stated to Carter & Burgess AND the citizens of Polson, that NO commercial development will be allowed along the "Preferred Alternative". Even if commercial development was allowed, by 2015, the "Preferred Alternative" will only capture 84% of the revenues expected to be produced by improving the existing route. The economic impacts are grossly under estimated by the EIS making new commercial strip developments part of the equation. This topic needs to be revaluated in order for all of us to know what the impacts realistically will be. Many businesses "make or break" their fiscal year with the three month summer tourist trade. This loss of drive through travelers will be devastating on the community.

TRAFFIC COUNT

Spending millions of taxpayer dollars on the bypass does not correct the problem. Even if the bypass gets constructed, according to the draft EIS numbers, the car and truck count is the same on the existing route in 10 years. And still, we have the problem within the City of Polson. We need the existing HWY 93 improved now. The tax dollars saved by not buying ROW and constructing the bypass as presented in the draft EIS, can be used to investigate another alignment that WILL handle the traffic in the future.

MORE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Why did the Citizen Survey only have 50% of the responses received, totalled in the results?
Why at the public hearings did the Business Surveys not get passed out, even after requesting it?
Where did the first letter go that the MDOT received from the Tribes?
Why did the draft EIS take two years instead of six months to complete?
How can the alignment of the "Preferred Alternative" be changed by a piece of red tape for a Public Hearing, then be removed again, prior to a Polson City Council meeting?
Who is responsible within the MDOT structure to check the quality of the draft EIS and the accountability of Carter and Burgess's end product?
If the Polson City Council votes against the bypass and requests to improve the existing route, how soon will that happen?
If the Polson City Council votes in favor of the bypass, how do you proceed into the Final EIS stage with the FHA when the draft EIS is incomplete and out of date?

cc:

John Glueckert	Mayor of Polson
Polson City Council	
Marvin Dye	MDOT
Dale Paulson	Federal Highway Administration
Jim Weaver	MDOT
Kevin Shelly	U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Janet Camel	CSKT
Fred Matt	CSKT
Roy Duff	Highway Commissioner

RECEIVED
JUN 20 1995
...THE BUREAU

June 19, 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

cc: Jim Weaver, Reconstruction, Morrison & Maierle

Dear Mr. Marchik and Those Concerned:

110

May we urge you to continue with the plans for the alternate road around Polson. It is desperately needed now for safety and with the expected growth in the future, think of what it will be like in ten years. We have talked to many and all feel it is the only way.

Also as you know, we need the four lane (with passing lane) hiway from Evaro to Polson as soon as possible.

Thank you for your help!!!

Sincerely,

Lois Ann Aznoe
Lois Ann Aznoe

James W. Aznoe
James W. Aznoe

Mr James W. Aznoe
264 Bayshore Dr
Polson, MT. 59860-9658

RECEIVED
JUN 23 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

James A. Haynal ~ BUILDER

(406) 883-2065 • 106 Terrace Court • Polson, Montana 59860

6-21-95

Mr. Joel Marshik Manager
Environmental Services
Montana Dept. of Transportation
2701 Prosperit Ave.
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

Dear Mr Marshik.

111 I am opposed to the proposed highway bypass of Polson, MT. I am in favor of improving the existing corridor through Polson. A bypass route, Highway 35 on the east shore of Flathead Lake, is already in place. Proper signing on either end of the lake could direct truck traffic to the east shore bypass route.

I object to the alternate route selected by the consulting firm of Carter + Burgess.

Low Home Construction

James A. Haynal ~ BUILDER

(406) 883-2065 • 106 Terrace Court • Polson, Montana 59860

I especially object to the site chosen for a new bridge crossing the Flathead River. As a resident and an investor in properties in the Riverside Terrace subdivision I will be negatively impacted by the proposed route.

The crossing point will destroy a sensitive wetland area that serves as a breeding and stopover destination for migratory birds and water fowl. The cliffs to be crossed are a unique scenic landmark of significance. The cliffs are unstable and subject to erosion. a bridge will contribute to the instability of this area.

The impact of highway noise and the amplification of that noise by the cliff

Low Home Construction

James A. Haynal ~ BUILDER

(406) 883-2065 • 106 Terrace Court • Polson, Montana 59860

face has not received enough attention. The crossing point will be audible throughout Polson and the surrounding residential areas.

Another reason I oppose the bypass is the cost to the taxpayers of acquiring highway right of way properties through the area. This cost will be minimized by improving the existing routes I mentioned earlier.

Finally, I feel it is a waste of taxpayers money to continue to pursue the proposed bypass route when the Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council has gone on record opposing the alternate selected. Jim Weaver told us that without their approval a bypass would not be considered.

Log Home Construction

James A. Haynal ~ BUILDER

(406) 883-2065 • 106 Terrace Court • Polson, Montana 59860

I think that if a bypass is needed much more time and consideration will be required to select a desirable route. I will continue to be involved in the selection process.

Sincerely,

James A Haynal

P.S. I am enclosing a copy of the letter from Tribal Council opposing the bypass route.

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

MASTER FILE COPY

WRITTEN COMMENTS for

PUBLIC HEARINGS for
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MARCH 1995
F-5-1(9)(6) U.S. HIGHWAY 93
Evaro - Polson
Missoula and Lake Counties, Montana

JUN 23 1995

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Missoula
Area

This page is available for members of the public to make written comments. The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Montana Department of Transportation are seeking information from users of the highway, property owners and other members of the public. For more information please contact:

Joel Marshik
Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001
Telephone: (406) 444-7632

Additional information can be obtained from or written comments can be sent to this address. Please provide your name, address and comments as indicated below:

Commenter Name: Susan VanRooy
Affiliation: home/land owner
Address: 1012 Grizzly Mtn. Rd.
City/State/Zip: Evaro MT 59802

115

TOPIC	COMMENTS
Highway 93	I support the Flathead Resource Organization's plan for Highway 93 between Evaro and Polson, MT. For concerned citizens of this area this plan makes good sense. The MDOT expansion plan is not what this area needs. Please read the FRO plan carefully and give it full consideration as a sane alternative!

(See reverse side to make additional comments)

PUBLIC HEARING AT ARLEE, MONTANA: APRIL 24, 1995

TOPIC	COMMENTS
	I also believe that your (MDOT's) planning process has been extremely unfair. Recent public hearings have made it clear that the people who live in this valley have little or no input on this highway plan. A thick DEIS was already prepared that doesn't represent all of the alternatives. The usual dog and pony show were used to from the USFS. Your plan will create the very problems you supposedly hope to avoid. I live in this area because of the wildlife, flora and fauna that I often have the opportunity to see and I try to find a sense of community here. This highway plan (MDOT's) will fragment both of these values and many more. Please don't use the MDOT plan.

THANK YOU

MISSOULA COUNTY

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
200 W BROADWAY ST
MISSOULA MT 59802-4292
(406) 721-5700

BCC 95-347
June 23, 1995

Joel Marshik
Manager, Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Dear Mr. Marshik,

116 Upon my review of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Evaro-Polson Highway 93 project, I was, in general, distressed at the limited focus of the study of the problem and proposed solution.

While the deficiencies of the EIS are numerous, only some will be outlined in this letter. Primarily, my opinion is that the proposed project would have significant impacts on the western Montana way of life that are not adequately addressed.

Western Montana is a mecca for many travelers who don't have what we have and it is contradictory to construct a highway system that would diminish our environment in the name of moving more traffic. This EIS, in a traditional sense, may meet the requirements of the law, although that is doubtful. It does not, however, respond to the demand that we want to travel safely and efficiently along the Highway 93 corridor without the losses to our environment which will result from selection of the proposed alternative.

Components in the overall solution puzzle for this project may include: 1) limitation of motor freight volumes with transfer to rail; 2) restrictions on recreational vehicle size, speed and frequency; 3) consideration of mass transit for certain traffic loads; 4) reduction of travel speed as a means of accommodating design constraints and safety issues among others; and 5) consideration of probably technology changes resulting in major adjustments in transportation patterns. All of these components (and more) need to be addressed in a globally focused way so that the result will be a solution that not only meets safety and traffic standards, but satisfies the western Montana community needs as well.

The tradition of highway engineering analysis has created a bias on the part of the EIS team which is evident from the reading. An example is the dismissal of Transportation Demand Management as a tool to address the projected capacity needs. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) goes beyond traditional systems that deliver structural solution to what are thought to be technical problems, i.e., if a highway is over capacity, build a bigger highway.

TDM, if properly employed, may recognize our finite ability to construct traditional highway systems as an answer to safety and volume problems. It may also discover new solutions to old problems and, if allowed to play out, reduce the high level of negative impacts resulting from the proposed alternative. I urge consideration of non-traditional approaches of transportation issues which will provide the levels of safety we all want with a minimum of negative consequences.

The technical defects within the EIS document are numerous and induce, but are not limited to the following:

1. The Highway 93 projects from Missoula to Polson and from Missoula to Hamilton do not adequately address nor support mitigation for the enormous cultural and social effects on Missoula and the project area.

2. The component of convenience miles driven resulting from an improved highway system has not been addressed.

3. The inconsistent treatment of safe speed vs. design speed will result in safety concerns that the alternative is meant to solve. That is to say that the alternative will "build in" safety problems that haven't been identified or evaluated.

4. Wildlife issues in the Evaro corridor are addressed in terms of technical solutions which are only estimated to have a level of success. Increased traffic at higher speeds will increase wildlife encounters with unacceptable results. This issue is far from being resolved in the EIS.

5. Increased traffic and pollution from the traffic related to reducing the commute time along the corridor has not been quantified or evaluated. And certainly, no mitigation suggestions were made.

6. The increase in traffic volumes will create safety issues due to the free access design proposal. With up to twelve access points per mile, safety issues are being built into the project.

7. Alignment considerations did not include the use of speed control to accommodate topographical (and wildlife) constraints. Even on the interstate (I-90 MP-0 to MP 30 from Lookout Pass) the design and safe speeds are significantly lower and out of standard. Slower zonal speeds through the Evaro area would reduce impacts and costs.

8. No consideration was given to protection or replacement of wildlife loss to the relocation of wetland areas.

9. The length of the project (55 miles) will require a long term construction commitment which will have an effect on wildlife and could be permanent. The discussion on this issue is incomplete and inadequate.

10. Future operation and maintenance costs along with inspection and patrol costs were not adequately addressed.

11. Assessment of the "No Action" alternative is biased in favor of a structural solution which will not solve traffic or safety problems. An objective comparison of the build and no-build alternatives which includes costs and consequences is needed.

12. Roadway deficiencies are discussed in terms of structural problems and solutions. The solutions do not include adequate treatment of reducing highway loads by reducing heavy highway traffic.

13. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) was dismissed without justification.

14. Tourism is a major component of Montana's economy and was recognized, albeit inadequately, in the EIS. Our transition to a service-based economy needs to be addressed as having significant effects. Both issues carry implications which need thorough additional exploration.

15. Since this EIS process was begun, major changes have occurred in the transport of petroleum products through the area due to closure of the Yellowstone Pipeline through the reservation. This action deserves serious analysis concerning the long-term effects on the transportation corridor.

In closing, the EIS falls far short of adequately addressing the costs and consequences of the preferred structural solution to this important traffic problem. The far-reaching implications of the proposed action are inadequately addressed and demand thorough quantification and analysis before sound conclusions can be drawn.

Sincerely,

Michael Kennedy/ss
Michael Kennedy, Commissioner

MK:ss

May 12 95

Rising Wolf
Expeditions
6454 St. Marys Lake Rd.
St. Ignatius, MT 59865
406-745-3212
Kayak Touring & Backpacking

Hi

117 This is to let you know I have been a resident of the Mission Valley since -79.

I don't like your plans to enlarge Highway 93.

It is largely inconsiderate for the people living here.

I support the FRO plan. It make alot more sence.

Thank You

Gary Steele

FLATHEAD RESOURCE ORGANIZATION
BOX 541
ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA 59865

June 23, 1995

cc: Jim Weaver
Reconstruction
Morrison & Maierle

Joel Marshik, Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

118

Dear Mr. Marshik:

Enclosed are the Flathead Resource Organization's comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Project F 5-1(9)6 U.S. Highway 93, Evaro-Polson. We hope they will be of assistance in improving the document. In this cover letter, we will outline our principal overall concerns with the DEIS and some actions we are asking of the MDOT.

The principal flaw in the DEIS is its consistent pattern of bias in favor of the MDOT's preferred alternative, a four and five-lane configuration for the full length of the project. We noted this problem of bias in our comments on the PDEIS. Most of what we cited as evidence of bias persists in the DEIS. In fact, in numerous cases, the bias seems even more marked, for there are many instances where statements in the PDEIS that seemed to raise questions about the multi-lane design were deleted or substantially watered down in the DEIS. In short, the MDOT seems to have simply used our comments to strengthen their argument on behalf of a multi-lane highway, rather than develop a more even-handed, scientifically valid document. This is in blatant violation of the EIS process. We have cited examples of this kind of problem in the body of our comments. As you are no doubt aware, the very purpose of an Environmental Impact Statement is to provide the public and official decision-makers with an objective assessment of the probable impacts of all the various alternatives. The DEIS, as it stands now, utterly fails to do this.

The public hearings were illustrative of the MDOT's, and Morrison/Maierle's, conception of this whole process as little more than giving official imprimatur to their preconceived design preference. Each hearing was preceded by an argumentative, extraordinarily biased presentation by Brad Peterson on why there is really no rational choice for U.S. 93 but a multi-lane highway. This went on for well over 30 minutes at the start of each hearing. The public was then limited to five minutes of comments. At the first hearing in Arlee, the first speaker, Richard Eggert of the Flathead Resource Organization, made comments challenging the wisdom of the multi-lane approach. Mr. Peterson then got up and issued a rebuttal of Mr. Eggert that lasted easily twice that long. This is an outrageous breach of NEPA regulations, and was hardly a fair public discourse on a very complicated issue.

Mr. Peterson revealed this pattern of bias on another occasion to Mr. Eggert, at the Arlee Community ID Team meeting at which the group, which includes FRO member

Tony Hoyt, opted for a three-lane road through town on the existing alignment. Mr. Peterson declared during the meeting that the "highway is for travelers, not communities." The DEIS subsequently ignored the ID Team's recommendation and selected a five-lane road through the center of Arlee, thereby throwing to the wind countless hours of volunteer time.

The pervasive bias of the MDOT, Morrison/Maierle, and of the DEIS in particular is further revealed by another problem of major importance in this document. In our letter of January 13, 1993 to Edrie Vinson of the MDOT, we explicitly asked that the FRO Alternative be included in the DEIS as a design alternative. The FRO Alternative is a full-fledged plan for Highway 93, developed by private citizens expending a tremendous amount of volunteer time, that advocates both a broad array of safety improvements to the highway within an improved two-lane design, *and* a multi-faceted set of TDM strategies and other approaches to deal directly with the underlying problem of traffic growth. Despite our request; the FRO Alternative was not given consideration in the DEIS. Lane Configuration A (an improved two-lane) *was* given consideration, but that only amounted to half of the FRO Alternative. It is as if the FRO plan were a bird, and that the MDOT took it in, cut off one wing, and then pronounced it unable to fly.

In fact, Appendix B in the DEIS, for all its pessimism, acknowledges that with a full slate of TDM's in place on a two-lane highway, the LOS in the year 2015 would be essentially the same as it is today. Although that LOS -- D -- is not what the MDOT has in mind for our area, we feel confident that most citizens of the Flathead Reservation would favor this plan and would find that LOS acceptable, given that the FRO plan would enable us to avoid many of the destructive effects of a multi-lane highway.

Another indication of the bias of this whole process has been the MDOT's consistent effort to sell this highway on the basis of safety questions, in spite of the fact that safety is not the primary reason for the project (something very few members of the public know). The MDOT has even resorted to employing highly irregular statistical methods, such as citing "accidents per highway mile" instead of the normal accident rates, to buttress these scare tactics. The MDOT has also not made public any of the safety *drawbacks* of a multi-lane design as noted in the AASHTO Green Book. We refer the readers to our enclosed piece on "Safety and Highway 93," which we distributed to the CS&KT Tribal Council on June 20, 1995.

A key part of the MDOT's argument for a multi-lane highway has been the consistent avoidance of the issue of growth and development. This continues to be a glaring problem, particularly in the "Social" impacts chapter of the DEIS, where the issue is directly addressed. Although the DEIS blithely makes predictions of traffic growth in order to justify the project, it is claimed that the issue of growth and development is too complex to issue any predictions. As such, there is no clear comparison of how the different lane configurations, alignments, or overall transportation systems would affect these critical issues. These so-called "secondary" or "indirect" or "cumulative" impacts would without question be the most far-reaching and long-term of this project. Yet the DEIS leaves readers completely unable to assess the impact of the project in these areas. Furthermore, other chapters of the DEIS, such as Threatened and Endangered Species, are as a result unable to assess and compare secondary and indirect impacts in those areas. This is a crucial flaw in the DEIS and it must be corrected before this can be considered an

acceptable document. Projections can be made on this issue of growth and development. We suspect that the MDOT is resistant to making them because it would not reflect well on their preferred alternative.

Given the above mentioned points, FRO is calling for another Draft of the EIS to be assembled and released for comment, and another full round of public hearings to be scheduled, at which the NEPA rules must be strictly adhered to. This DEIS is not ready to be upgraded to a Final EIS, and because of its failings, the public has been unable to get a clear picture both of what the true impacts of this project would be, and of what workable alternatives are available. We hope that by correcting the pervasive problems in the DEIS, we can all avert any need for legal challenge or remedies.

We would note that all these delays could have been averted if the proposal from the start was an appropriate one for this area. Highway 93 would be a far safer highway *today* had the MDOT opted for the FRO Alternative from the start.

We remained convinced that this would be a disastrous project for our area. Perhaps the greatest tragedy would be that it is also unnecessary. We still hope that we can take advantage of the opportunity to develop a real, working solution to this problem, rather than simply build our way into a more intractable problem of far greater dimension in fifty years' time. This is the lesson already learned by so many other places in the nation, where it and has produced nothing but sprawl, unhappiness, blight, and the destruction of community and environmental health. This widespread problem has prompted a thoroughgoing reexamination of US transportation and settlement policy since World War II by visionary planners like Andres Duany. We have the chance to learn from those mistakes rather than blindly repeat them.

FRO still hopes that this can be a chance to do something positive for our area.

Sincerely,

Doug Baty

Doug Baty
Chairman, Flathead Resource Organization

FRO LETTER - 3

Flathead Resource Organization
Comments on Highway 93 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
June 23, 1995

Chapter 4 (Purpose and Need for Action).

FRO concurs with the DEIS' statement of purpose: "to improve the transportation system on U.S. Highway 93." However, we strongly disagree with the argument that our only feasible option is to accommodate -- and encourage -- an ever-increasing traffic volume by constructing additional lanes. Indeed, throughout the country this has been shown to solve nothing in the long run -- but only to produce the same problem on a far greater magnitude.

We also disagree with the assessment that the current Level of Service on Highway 93 is unacceptable. While we feel safety improvements are needed, the current LOS is acceptable, given the trade-offs that this DEIS, however inadequately and incompletely, makes all to clear: a multi-lane highway would split our communities, generate a rush of development that would trample our environment, and in general worsen our quality of life. We don't need it, and we don't want it.

Indeed, although the FRO Alternative is not considered in this DEIS, as we requested in our comments submitted in response to the PDEIS in January 1993, we might glimpse the workability of our plan by combining Lane Configuration A with the TDM's described in Appendix B. Although we certainly don't endorse many of the statements and conclusions in Appendix B, we would note that Table 5 makes the prediction that traffic levels in 2015, with all these TDM's in place, would be only slightly higher than the 1991 ADT. The LOS would in most areas be "D" -- the same as today. Thus, it's clear that the FRO plan, if implemented, would result in a dramatically safer highway than the current road, with a LOS comparable to current conditions -- which we think most area residents would find acceptable, especially given that this alternative would *not* have many of the substantial negative impacts of the MDOT's preferred alternative.

We would point out here that what constitutes an acceptable Level of Service is a highly subjective matter that varies widely between communities and regions. The DEIS does not acknowledge this, but rather asserts that "the desired LOS" is B or A, as if this were an objective fact. In reality, many areas decide that other factors -- quality of life, safety, noise containment, prevention of subdivision and strip development -- is more important than LOS, and such these areas are happy to live with a lower LOS. Our area -- the Flathead Indian Reservation -- is precisely such an area. There are so many precious, irreplaceable, and unique attributes of this area that would be severely harmed by construction of a multi-lane highway, and improvement of LOS is an exceptionally poor reason to destroy them.

Construction of an improved two-lane, supplemented by a comprehensive, well-funded, and ambitious amalgam of TDM strategies, offers the best and most appropriate solution to the Highway 93 dilemma.

FRO - 1

Chapter 5 (Alternatives)

A review of the alternatives section in the DEIS gives the impression that the authors intended not to study and compare options but to justify their predisposed bias. Virtually all alternatives are either ignored (as in the case of the FRO plan), categorically excluded, or rejected without adequate justification (such as TDMs, speed enforcement, and traffic management options, such as slow vehicle turnouts). Unfortunately, this bias cascades through the entire document, making it more a sales pitch for a conventional four-lane highway than an objective review of alternatives.

FRO believes this flaw is so overwhelming that it skewed the public review process and rendered the DEIS valueless as a foundation for the final EIS.

We refer again to the last two paragraphs of our comments on Chapter 4 above.

Chapters 6.1 and 7.1 (Traffic Operation and Safety)

6.1.1, 6.1.5, 6.1.6 (Level Of Service)

We refer the reader to the FRO document attached to these comments on "Highway 93 and Safety," which was distributed to the Tribal Council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes on June 20, 1995.

The LOS is an attempt to quantify factors relating to road capacity. By entering factors such as terrain, no-passing zones, lane width, shoulder width, vehicle mix and directional distribution, it is desired to arrive at system capacity and functionality. This is understandably a difficult undertaking and unfortunately, the art doesn't seem to be perfected. Indeed, a jaundiced view could lead one the conclusion that the real purpose is to create a pseudo evaluation method which basically says that two lane roads are bad and four lane roads are good.

The LOS analysis considers only road capacity and traffic flow. Traffic flow is in terms of "convenience" to the driver, which means there should be no delays. It has no bearing on considerations of safety, alternate modes; impact on community, environment, etc.

Within this limited purpose there are still difficulties. One difficulty is in the description of a particular "level of service" not having any similarity to how a road which meets this definition actually functions. This results from the formula including only road characteristics, not performance characteristics.

Speed, queuing and delays are not included in the calculation. This leads to the formal or written definition of the LOS becoming the conclusion, rather than observation of that road segment leading to conclusions.

To illustrate this point we prepared an LOS evaluation for segment I, selected at random. The EIS lists this segment as level D. Our analysis was based in small ways on unknown information such as the split between north and south bound lanes. In this case we used a 70/30 split which is probably greater than actual. In any case these guesses don't influence the results.

We arrived at a number which would place this segment solidly in level D as did the consultant. Comparison of how this segment actually functions with the statement in

the LOS definition and the description in the EIS illustrates the disparity. First, the definition in the DEIS:

> "The two opposing traffic streams essentially begin to operate separately at higher volumes, as passing becomes difficult.....Turning vehicles and/or roadside distractions cause major shock-waves in the traffic stream. The percentage of time motorists are delayed approaches 75%." (page 6.1-21)

In reality, for drivers on the actual road, traffic speed is typically over 60 mph, and any "platooning" is due to a substantial proportion of the drivers wishing to travel faster than that. For drivers willing to drive at speeds approximating the posted limit there are few or no delays.

That our observation of traffic flow is not in error is confirmed by table 7.1-1, which indicates a three minute travel time difference between "no action" and the proposed four lane road between Ronan and Missoula, a distance of about 55 miles. Obviously, there are no serious delays now. Average speed, in fact, would correlate with LOS A or B.

The DEIS notes that this road's accident rate per mile being greater than other roads in the state; however, as the FRO piece on "Highway 93 and Safety" makes clear, this is a highly irregular statistical device and would have the effect of causing any busy highway, regardless of its actual accident rate, as being dangerous. The use of this statistical method we feel is further evidence of the pervasive bias and argumentative style of the DEIS. In other places, the DEIS briefly mentions that accident rates "did not vary greatly from the statewide average."

- 6.1.3.1 Four-Lane/Two-Lane Highway Comparison

  We again refer the MDOT to the FRO piece on "Highway 93 and Safety."

- 7.1.1. Impacts Common To All Alternatives

TRAFFIC PROJECTIONS: We must assume that there has not been a serious attempt to estimate future traffic demand, as the DEIS does not reflect such an effort and repeated attempts to obtain a copy of the origin-and-destination study have been ignored. Traffic is not simply a function of population. Only a serious effort based on interviews disclosing the origin, destination and purpose of trips; and an evaluation of existing and anticipated land use would provide useful projections.

Placing traffic projections in the section "Impacts Common To All Alternatives" implies that the design of the road would have no impact on traffic volume. Nothing could be further from the truth. An over-designed road would encourage exurban style development; increasing traffic, but slowing and distorting the economic development of Mission Valley. Goods and services which could be provided locally would continue to be in Missoula and people working in Missoula will be living in Mission Valley.

Chapter 7.2 (Land Use):

General comments for chapter: generally does not consider secondary impacts that would follow construction of various lane configurations, which would constitute the great bulk of the land use impacts from this project.

Specific comments:

- Page 7.2-3, Section 7.2.1.3 -- Partial Access Control

  This passage simply states that access control -- a crucial issue for safety on this issue -- "will be determined" in the future. This gives an inadequate sense of the future design and hence impacts of the project. The effort should be made to present a more specific and accurate picture

  This section states that "none of the lane configurations will restrict the type of development or the amount of land to be developed." This is a perfect example of how the FRO Plan is ignored in this DEIS and is mischaracterized as simply a "lane configuration." In fact, the FRO plan is much more than that, and includes extensive measures to try to contain the growth of traffic and development.
- Page 7.2-4, Section 7.2.2.1.

  This section measures amount of land converted for right-of-way with various lane configurations; you appear to have incorporated our comment on the PDEIS that "the amount stated for Lane Configuration A could perhaps be further reduced by constricting the width of shoulders through the Ninepipe area" by simply stating, on page 7.2-4, that in sensitive areas, "the width of total ROW may be reduced in some areas." This is inadequate. Decision-makers and the interested public need numbers, not vague promises, in order to clearly compare the various lane configurations. The DEIS should provide specific estimates of how much ROW could be reduced and in what specific places.

Chapter 7.3 (Farmlands):

Specific comments:

- Page 7.3-1, Section 7.3

  We note that your opening paragraph appears to have been adjusted to incorporate FRO's comment on the PDEIS that Lane Configuration C, with Alignment 4 at Arlee and Alignment 3 at Ronan, scored 165 in farmland conversion impact ratings.

  We repeat another comment we made regarding the PDEIS that has more serious implications and reflects more pervasive problems in the DEIS: *The DEIS should add a Table comparing estimates of secondary impacts on farmlands, which would constitute a far larger impact than these direct impacts.*

Chapter 7.4 (Social):

General comments:

In general, the problems we identified in the PDEIS in regard to these sections are even more marked in the DEIS. Although some improvements have been made in

examining issues relating to growth and development, the sections are more biased, less objective, and less clear. As with much of the DEIS. this section seems less an objective, even-handed presentation of the impacts -- positive and negative -- of the various alternatives than an extended polemic in defense of a multiple-lane highway, which has apparently been the MDOT's preferred alternative from the start of this project. The MDOT apparently responded to FRO's detailed comments on the PDEIS by deleting those sections or phrases that seemed to challenge the Department's foregone conclusion, and by linguistically tightening the argument on behalf of a multiple-lane configuration. Needless to say, this is fundamentally at variance with the letter and spirit of the National Environmental Policy Act. We would recommend a thorough redrafting of these sections in order to provide clear, objective, disinterested comparisons of the impacts of the various alternatives. We would emphasize in saying this that the comparisons should be between alternatives, not just lane configurations; the FRO plan is much more than "an improved two-lane highway", which is how it has been treated in both the PDEIS and the DEIS.

These comments apply in general to the DEIS, but they are perhaps even more crucial in regard to the sections on Social impacts, since it is these sections that are supposed to address so-called "secondary and cumulative" impacts. FRO has long asserted that environmentally, culturally, and socially, these impacts which will be the most serious and far-reaching of this project. In this section, the DEIS makes the startling admission of not even making a serious attempt to arrive at estimates of what those impacts will be for the various alternatives. It is merely stated that these things have "not been quantified." This radically impairs the ability of the DEIS as a whole to offer any clear assessment of the future impact of these various highway plans. Other sections -- particularly those addressing impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat, including wetlands -- must, as a result of this failure to offer prognostications of development impacts, confine their analysis of impacts to the direct impact of the roadway. In short, this is a crucial problem in the DEIS, and it puts this project very much at odds with ISTEA, among other relevant pieces of legislation.

Specific comments:

- Page 7.4-1, Section 7.4.1.1. Impacts Common to All Alternatives -- Overview of Barrier Effect.....

  This section blurs the differences in barrier effects of different lane configurations. The EIS should make clear comparisons of the barrier effects of different lane configurations. Moreover, the argumentative and biased style that is a problem throughout the DEIS is glaringly apparent here: the section points out that greater congestion on a two-lane would cause greater barrier effects and negatively affect "community cohesion," while omitting any mention of the effect on these attributes of more than doubling the width of the highway through the center of towns. This problem should also be addressed for a point further in the future -- say, 50 years -- when congestion on a four-lane design would be heavy, given the MDOT's estimates of indefinite 3% rates of growth. Such estimations of impacts would more clearly illustrate the futility, in the long run, of trying to "solve" the problem of traffic growth by merely accommodating it.

- Pages 7.4.1-2, Section 7.4.1.2 Discrimination: Isolation of Neighborhoods and Facilities/Services

  There are substantial flaws in this sub-section of the DEIS.

  The first paragraph does not offer any analysis of the effect of splitting towns in half with multi-lane roads. There must be studies of the effect this has had on other towns. The DEIS does not state clearly whether getting from the east to the west side of town -- especially in Arlee, Ronan, and Pablo -- will be significantly more difficult if a multi-lane road is built. Common sense would suggest that it will be more difficult. There should also be far more detailed study of existing conditions in Reservation communities. For example, are there existing differences in populations (racial/ethnic/income level/age) or services between the east and west sides of Ronan that would be exacerbated by the barrier effect of a widened road?

  We would also note that the issue of "discrimination" would seem to range far beyond that of "isolation of neighborhoods and facilities/services." As the Flathead Culture Committee has noted, a multi-lane highway would likely have a devastating impact on the very survival of Tribal cultures and languages. Does Federal law allow a federally-funded project such as this to proceed if it is apparent that such impacts will be the probable result? Is this not in violation of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and the Indian Reorganization Act (1934), both of which commit the U.S. Government to strengthening, rather than weakening, tribal cultural and political sovereignty?
- Page 7.4-2, Section 7.4.1.3 Impacts Common to All Alternatives -- Population Growth.

  The first paragraph is another example of how this document fails to provide clear comparisons of the impacts of different alternatives. It says, vaguely, that "highway improvement will have an indirect effect with [sic] additional population growth", but fails utterly to make any clear comparisons of what the impacts will be of the different alternatives. It also confines its analysis of the impact of highway on population growth to commuters, whereas a multi-lane highway would also be likely to generate substantial economic growth locally, causing great increases in locally generated traffic.

  Changes made from the PDEIS to us indicate only more deeply the bias of this document. In the PDEIS, it was stated that "Improvement of U.S. Highway 93, with reduced travel time and improved convenience, will combine with factors such as the rural lifestyle, natural environment, and small town atmosphere to further increase the desirability as a place to live for the project area and the Flathead Lake region." This at least acknowledges the obvious fact that Highway 93 will be a major factor in patterns of growth. In the DEIS, this sentence has been rearranged and split up so as to become even more vague. Now it is merely stated that Highway 93 will "support [rather than partially cause] any increase in the rate of population growth." What was the reason for this change? Have new facts come to light to merit stripping the highway of any causative role in population growth and development? Or is the MDOT merely trying to preempt criticism of its preferred alternative? If

the latter is the reason rather than the former, this raises further troubling issues about this DEIS as a polemic for a four-lane rather than a scientific analysis of impacts of road-building, which is what it is supposed to be.

The argumentative and biased style is further revealed in the next few paragraphs, which repeatedly state that "with or without highway improvement," growth will occur. This avoids the critical question of at what rate will growth occur, and in relation to which alternatives. If a multi-lane highway makes growth faster and much harder to control, generating a boom environment, it will constitute a significant growth impact on the area. We would note that there is no evidence offered to support any of the sweeping conclusions forwarded in this section.

Indeed, in numerous instances, the DEIS conveys an even *more* biased tone when compared with the PDEIS. In the PDEIS, for example, it was simply stated that "continued population growth will have a cumulative affect [sic] that makes it more difficult for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) to maintain their homeland on the Flathead Indian Reservation." In the DEIS, this sentence is prefaced with the "with or without highway improvement" phrase, apparently a catch-all designed to deflect attention from the comparative effects of the various alternatives. Is there any new evidentiary reason for this rephrasing, or is this merely another move to tighten the argument in favor of a four-lane highway? Similarly, the PDEIS stated (Section 7.4.3.2.1.) that "an improved highway will increase the rate of population growth by improving accessibility to the project area through reduced travel time and improved convenience," and also that the result would be "earlier development and more development." Why have these statements been deleted from the DEIS?

The MDOT and Morrison/Maeirle appear to have similarly deleted other potentially troubling sentences from the PDEIS, with no explanation or proffering of new evidence to support such changes. For example, the following sentence, which was present in the PDEIS, is omitted from the DEIS: "No Action will result in less long-term population growth than the other alignment alternatives." We request to know why this statement has been retracted.

It is said that "other factors, which are beyond the control of highway development, have more influence on growth and development than the highway." There is no evidence to support this stunning generalization. Beyond this, it is also a largely irrelevant point; what is important here, purely and simply, is that this project is *one of* the major factors shaping growth and development in the region. It is also the only major factor that is directly controllable by the people, at least in theory. This is the whole gist of ISTEA: transportation systems are supposed to be designed now with a consciousness of their profound effect on our communities and our environment. This DEIS, by contrast, appears dedicated to denying the very existence of these effects.

This section also states that "provision of public services" has "more influence" on growth and development than highway development. Does the

MDOT have any evidence to support the validity of this claim in regard to the Highway 93 area? It would seem to flatly ignore the common phenomenon of booming local economies outstripping local services, which then have to scramble to provide for the multiplying population. It could be added that what then follows in many cases are sudden rises in tax rates, thereby squeezing the poorer property-owning people in the community most severely. This would be a very likely scenario in the Arlee area, where there are many low-income land owners. This impact would fall disproportionately on the Indian people in the area, particularly those in fee ownership of their lands. This phenomenon should be addressed under "Discrimination."

- Page 7.4-2 to 7.4-4, Section 7.4.1.4. -- Pop. Growth and Workers Who Commute Outside the Area

This section in general seems incomplete and inadequate. The single biggest concern regarding this highway -- environmentally, socially, culturally, in all ways -- is in regard to growth, the so-called "indirect and cumulative impacts. This section is in this sense the linchpin of the DEIS. Yet here the DEIS abandons any attempt to arrive at solid estimates, saying merely that these figures have "not been quantified" or "measured." The reader, the decision-maker, the public official, the public citizen, is left to guess as to the comparative impacts of the various alternatives. And other sections, such as those regarding wildlife or noise or farmlands or cultural resources, are left without a basis on which to estimate these "secondary" impacts -- by far the most serious and far-reaching impacts of this project. The opening paragraph of this section, therefore, has an unfortunate and far-reaching effect on the DEIS as a whole.

In a real sense, this is indicative of the pervasive bias of the DEIS. If this were an objective, even-handed document, there would certainly have made a more concerted effort to arrive at these estimates. By way of contrast, the DEIS makes confident predictions of an indefinite 3% rate of growth of traffic in order to justify the LOS need for a multi-lane highway. The future rate of traffic growth clearly depends on a variety of factors as complex as those involved in making predictions of comparative rates of population growth and development. Yet the DEIS blithely makes the prediction of the 3% annual growth rate, in spite of the fact that it is a matter of plain common sense that such a growth rate cannot, from a sheer physical standpoint, continue indefinitely; since this would predict a quadrupling of traffic volume in something like a century. (The DEIS eludes this problem by confining its consideration of future impacts to the year 2015.)

The essential point, which we also made in our comments on the PDEIS, is this: the DEIS must come up with comparative, quantified predictions of the impacts of various alternatives on economic and population growth if the document is to have any use to readers attempting to judge the best course for Highway 93. Clearly, since the DEIS holds to a foregone conclusion -- four or five lanes, period -- such a sophisticated level of analysis was deemed unwarranted. More sophisticated solutions, such as the FRO plan, demand

more sophisticated analyses of the problems and conditions at hand. We would note, as we did in our PDEIS comments, that no comparison is made between the project area and the Bitterroot Valley in terms of accessibility, commuting time, development, and so on. This should be done.

The DEIS states that "Improvement of US 93 as a regional transportation facility is not planned specifically to promote growth and development." This is utterly irrelevant. The question is simply whether this project will *contribute* to such problems in ways that are significant and that can be foreseen. We made a similar point regarding this section in our comments on the PDEIS; the response appears to have been little more than a slight rearranging of words in an attempt to avoid the issue. We will quote from our comments on the PDEIS, which remain relevant: "Certainly, Highway 93 is the single biggest publicly funded -- and, in theory, publicly controlled -- contributor to settlement patterns and population growth rates in this area. One of the guiding ideas in ISTEA and other relevant legislation is that these projects should not contribute to the worsening of negative trends, but seek to use federal funds in creative ways to solve problems. The approach and attitude reflected in this section is contrary to the spirit if not the letter of the law." We would add here that the MDOT's continued evasion of responsibility on this issue appears to us to be in violation of the letter of a wide range of environmental and Indian affairs laws that commit the Federal Government to not damaging environmental resources or Indian cultures and sovereignty if such negative consequences can be reasonably avoided. Such consequences can obviously be avoided in this case.

On page 7.4-3, it is incorrectly implied that time is the only consideration for commuters. One should also consider winter driving conditions and the perceived commuting advantages of a multi-lane highway.

The final paragraph on page 7.4-3 is deeply troubling. It implies that the construction of a multi-lane highway north of Evaro will help alleviate development pressures on the Bitterroot Valley by making the Flathead Reservation area appear more desirable for commuters. In effect, you are suggesting the sacrifice of the Flathead Reservation on behalf of the Bitterroot Valley. Even though the reasoning is probably flawed (development simply generates more development), this is unacceptable and probably illegal under a wide range of federal Indian laws.

This section again fails to make clear, quantitative comparisons of the numbers of commuters who would move to the Evaro area if a four-lane, improved two-lane, or the multifaceted FRO plan were implemented.

As in the PDEIS, the subsection on "Terrain" is vague and muddled, and makes no quantitative estimates on the comparative effect of different lane configurations or highway plans on reducing the barrier to commuters posed by Evaro or Ravalli hills.

The section on "availability of land" is also vague, making no clear comparisons of impacts. It also seems to make little sense to assert that agricultural land-use patterns pose a significant obstacle to development. The

authors should look more closely at subdivision patterns in the state and the suburbanization of much agricultural land. The Bitterroot Valley is a good example. In regard to this subsection on land, we would also repeat what we said in regard to the PDEIS: "it is stated that 'there is limited land available for development in the project area.' This statement is obviously true anywhere and everywhere, and so is not particularly helpful. This section should be revised to provide a clearer, quantitative estimate of how much and how fast we can expect subdivision and development to occur with various lane configurations. For one thing, these rates will have a direct bearing on how successful the CSKT will be in their efforts, which you mention here, to 'purchase land' in order to prevent undue development."

This section should also consider the impact of a four-lane on further eroding the sense of the Flathead Reservation as a separate and different place, which is part of what has deterred undue development here over the past few decades. It is demonstrably clear that the building of the railroad in the 1880's had such an effect.

- Page 7.4-4, Section 7.4.1.5. Shifts in Population: Workers Who Commute Inside the Area.

  This section should give more precise, concrete estimates on where the anticipated surges in population growth would occur, and in what numbers. As it is now, it is impossible to estimate the probable cultural, environmental, and/or social impacts.

  As in the PDEIS, it is stated here that "reduced travel time and improved convenience will encourage workers to commute longer distances in the project area," with the clear implication that such impacts will be worse with Lane Configurations B, C, and D. If this is a conclusion, it should be clearly stated rather than vaguely implied. This is another example of unclear comparisons between alternatives.
- Page 7.4-4, Section 7.4.1.6. Students Who Commute to Colleges in Missoula and Kalispell.

  It seems odd that Salish Kootenai College, which is the only accredited college within the project area, would be omitted from consideration in this section. SKC officials, as the MDOT well knows, have expressed grave concerns about the impact of the multi-lane plans on the SKC campus, safety of student pedestrians, noise levels, etc. An objective inclusion of SKC's concerns could mitigate some of the bias in this section.
- Page 7.4-5, Section 7.4.1.7. Population Impacts of Highway Alignments at Arlee, Ronan and Polson.

  Why was the word "alternate" removed from this section as it was stated in the PDEIS?

  The focus on the impact of alignments on total population misses the point. Alignments have more impact on the kind of development that takes place -- the natural development of existing neighborhoods as opposed to the imposition of huge planned "subdivisions" or "housing developments." These create very different kinds of impacts -- positive or negative -- on communities.

Indeed, it is plainly stated in the chapter on Land Use (7.2) that impacts on change of land use in the area would be much greater with alternative alignments. This kind of impact should be addressed.

Various lane configurations, by contrast, do have clearly differing impacts on total population growth. This chapter of the DEIS, however, has already abandoned any attempt to estimate those crucial impacts. This is a key reason why this DEIS is inadequate and must go through at least one more publicly released draft before it may be considered complete.

As we state in our comments on the Land Use chapter (7.2), it is not acceptable to list planning by local agencies as "mitigation" for this project. That is not a measure over which this project can have any control. In fact, if the four or five-lane plan goes through, it will create a boom climate in which it is even more difficult to institute those kinds of planning controls. This is nothing more than an utter abandonment by the MDOT for their responsibility for the damages caused by this project.

We would add that there are clearly available measures under ISTEA for the MDOT to suggest and pursue real mitigations for this project -- that is, the kind that are built in to the plan for the highway. This is what FRO has long been advocating.

- Pages 7.4-5 to 7.4-6, Section 7.4.3.1. Existing Alignment -- Barrier Effects.

  There is again no clear comparison of the alternatives. Which poses greater barrier effects? Certainly this can be estimated. As it stands, the DEIS presents only a blurry picture. This is also a problem in Section 7.4.4.1 (Arlee), on page 7.4-6 and Section 7.4.5.1 (Ronan), on pages 7.4-7 and 7.4-8, where identical language has been employed to obfuscate the issue at hand.

  We would question whether this blurred comparison is intentional -- and as such constitutes further evidence of bias -- since in early public scoping hearings, Morrison/Maierle and MDOT officials admitted than on the whole, a four or five-lane design would bring greater barrier effects than an improved two-lane. Why has this conclusion been retracted or omitted from the DEIS?

  We would further question the assertion that Lane Configuration A would have reduced spacing between vehicles, thereby heightening the barrier effect. In other sections, it is stated that a two-lane would have worse traffic flow and greater platooning of vehicles. Would this not create *more* spacings in the traffic?

  Problems from the PDEIS persist, and we repeat them here: the discussion of Lane Configurations B, C, and D fails to discuss the difficulty of turning left onto a multiple-lane highway. In addition, the discussion of school buses is unclear, since the issue considered is "efficiency"; we thought the main concern with school buses was safety, not efficiency.

  This section, and the sections that follow for Arlee, Ronan, and Polson, give an utterly inadequate sense of the barrier effect that the MDOT's preferred alternative -- a five-lane design -- would bring both to rural areas and to towns like Arlee and Ronan. The MDOT is proposing something akin to what is now in place on Reserve Street in Missoula. This would split these

valleys and especially the towns in half. Not only would it be dangerous for people -- especially children -- who still will have to cross the highway for certain services such as school, but it would destroy the cohesion of these communities, turning them into little more than two separate clusters of buildings on either side of an immense superhighway. There is no consideration anywhere in this section of the impact of a multi-lane design on farmers using tractors and other slow-moving farm vehicles who must cross the highway. This section, and the ones that follow on the barrier effect, is just another example of the DEIS's pervasive bias, and its unwillingness to frankly acknowledge even the most obvious and undeniable problems that would result from the preferred alternative.

This section, and the other sections addressing barrier effects, also do not consider that a multi-lane design would both accommodate *and encourage* growth in traffic volume beyond what would occur with a two-lane. This would further worsen the barrier effect of such a design and should be factored into these considerations.

- Page 7.4-6, Section 7.4.4.1 -- Barrier Effects on Arlee, Existing Alignment

  See the first and fifth paragraphs of our comments on Section 7.4.3.1. above.

  We strongly question the conclusion, expressed in the third paragraph, that pedestrian and vehicular patterns will not be altered by any of the various possible lane configurations, even though "convenience will be reduced." It flies in the face of both precedent and reason to think that building a five-lane highway through the middle of a small town will create no such effects. We refer the MDOT to any of the studies conducted by people like Andres Duany, Peter Katz, or Harold Kulash, all of whom are eminent in the field and whose work has shown quite clearly the devastating effects on communities of road projects of this nature. This section, to the contrary, is implying that such a road would, in sum, produce no barrier effect. On what evidence or study is this based?

  This section makes no comparison between lane configurations of the effect on school buses, mail carriers, and so on. That comparison should be made, or it is of no use either to decision-makers or the public. Which would be best? A Ronan school bus driver, Jamie Bick, testified at the Pablo hearing that she felt strongly that an improved two-lane would be safest.

  It should be stated in this section that the Arlee Community ID team chose a three-lane configuration through town.

- Pages 7.4-6 to 7.4-7, Section 7.4.4.2. -- Arlee Alignments 2,3 and 4

  It should be stated here that the Arlee Community ID team not only opposed any alignments around town, but also opposed the buying of right-of-ways for future use of that option.

  As in the PDEIS, this section still does not address, in any level of specificity, the obvious issue of commuter settlement increases that would occur in the areas of the alternate alignments.

- Page 7.4-7, "Mitigation" for Arlee barrier effects

The main measure favored by the Arlee Community ID team, which should be mentioned here, is to restrict the highway design to three lanes with good shoulders through town.

- Pages 7.4-7 to 7.4-8, Section 7.4.5.1. -- Barrier Effects for Ronan, Existing Alignment

  See the first and fifth paragraphs of our comments on Section 7.4.3.1. above.

  We strongly question the conclusion, expressed in the third paragraph, that pedestrian and vehicular patterns will not be altered by any of the various possible lane configurations, even though "convenience will be reduced." It flies in the face of both precedent and reason to think that building a five-lane highway through the middle of a small town will create no such effects. We refer the MDOT to any of the studies conducted by people like Andres Duany, Peter Katz, or Harold Kulash, all of whom are eminent in the field and whose work has shown quite clearly the devastating effects on communities of road projects of this nature. This section, to the contrary, is implying that such a road would, in sum, produce no barrier effect. On what evidence or study is this based?

  This section makes no comparison between lane configurations of the effect on school buses, mail carriers, and so on. That comparison should be made, or it is of no use either to decision-makers or the public. Which would be best? A Ronan school bus driver, Jamie Bick, testified at the Pablo hearing that she felt strongly that an improved two-lane would be safest.

  It should be stated in this section that the Ronan Community ID team chose to stick with minor improvements to the existing three-lane configuration through town, unless multi-lane highways on either side of town forced construction of a multi-lane through the town.

- Page 7.4-9, "Mitigation" for all Ronan Alignments

  This section is far too vague. We need concrete proposals, preferably with accompanying visual depictions, of what is being proposed. There is no way to evaluate the impact with the current level of information.

- Page 7.4-10, Section 7.4.6.1. -- Polson, Existing Alignment

  There should be analysis in the final paragraph as to whether any improvements in pedestrian safety due to such devices as traffic lights and crosswalks would be offset a multi-lane design is chosen, due to increased speeds, traffic volumes, less attentive drivers, and other increased hazards.

- Page 7.4-10 to 7.4-11, Section 7.4.6.2. -- Polson Alignments 2 and 3

  We would question Jerry Sorenson's conclusion that the characteristics of future settlement would not be significantly influenced by a by-pass around Polson. Has the MDOT conducted any research to evaluate the validity of this conclusion? Do not most such highways contribute to subdivision pressures?

  The DEIS should specify the location, type, and number of traffic signals mentioned at the top of page 7.4-11.

The "Mitigation" measures mentioned are far too vague. In order to evaluate their efficacy, we need concrete descriptions and preferably visual depictions.

Chapter 7.5 (Economics):

Overall comments for chapter:

As in the PDEIS, this chapter reflects a lack of consideration of the way different transportation systems will generate different *kinds* of economic growth. We would refer the MDOT to the work of eminent planners and others involved in these issues: Andres Duany, Peter Katz, and Walter Kulash. These people have made it quite clear that these kinds of roads encourage subdivision-type development and are generally destructive of community cohesion and the long-term development of a mature economy. They point out that these kinds of designs are actually limiting of growth in the long run. While transportation systems are not the sole determinants of whether a town will develop as a town, or rather as a strip along a highway, they are powerful factors in the equation. It is exceedingly difficult to direct an economy in a direction not encouraged by the prevailing transportation system.

We would ask again whether it can be anticipated that a multi-lane highway would help transform Flathead Lake into another overdeveloped Lake Tahoe.

There appears to be nothing in this chapter addressing the impact of building such enormous highways into a region so dependent on a tourism economy whose principal strength is the relatively unspoiled, natural character of the area. This is a major shortcoming in this chapter. Will tourists still regard this as "the Last Best Place" when the region is paved over with enormous highways and by the development such roads will help generate? How will declining animal populations, the long-term result of such development, impact the tourism economy?

As with so many other chapters in the DEIS, this chapter, when confronted with an issue that does not bode well for the multi-lane design, avoids offering clear comparisons between the different lane configurations. Page 7.5-5 is a good example of this tendency. It is impossible to judge which lane configuration would have a more positive or negative impact on the economy of the affected area. We would again refer to the point made in our first paragraph on this chapter: it is more important and more relevant to discuss the different kinds of development that would be encouraged by different transportation systems.

As in the PDEIS, we would strongly question the claim (slightly rephrased in this draft) that " No Action will encourage more commercial strip development on U.S. 93 outside the existing commercial areas" (page 7.5-5). Since no such statement is made regarding a multi-lane design, it seems to be making the claim that there would actually be less strip development with a multi-lane design. This would appear to fly in the face of both precedent and common sense. On what is this claim based?

It is of concern to us that the section on "Cumulative impacts" from the PDEIS has been removed altogether from the chapter in the DEIS. Since cumulative impacts are already woefully ignored, this seems to be a movement in precisely the wrong direction. Indeed, in the section on "Agricultural Production Value," there is no consideration (as there should be) of the secondary and indirect impacts on agricultural land (in the form of subdivision and land use changes) that would be accelerated if a multi-lane highway is built through the area.

Chapter 7.6 (Pedestrians and Bicyclists):

General comments for chapter:

The FRO Alternative recommends full 8-foot shoulders along the length of the highway, with separate paths in the vicinity of all towns (1-2 miles north and south).

On page 7.6-6, it should be mentioned that the Arlee Community Team did not limit its comments to matters of traffic lights; it recommended three lanes through town, partly because this would be better for bicyclists and pedestrians, allowing full shoulders, unlike the MDOT's enormous five-lane plan. This was the Arlee Team's most important recommendation, as the MDOT well knows, since they pointedly disregarded it in developing their preferred alternative. Omission of it here indicates bias.

Similarly, the Ronan Team recommended three lanes unless multi-lane highways on either side of town forced the community to build a five-lane.

On page 7.6-7, we would ask whether the Pablo Team did not also have lane recommendations at variance with the MDOT plan.

Chapter 7.7 (Air Quality)

The air quality regulations, as put forth by the EPA in the December 1993 regulations, were not addressed for the Ronan and Polson non-attainment areas. These conformance evaluations and determinations were not available for evaluation and discussion by the public in this DEIS, and are not proposed to be until the final EIS is completed. This limits the time frame and leaves these sites at a disadvantage for public comment.

An dramatically widened highway would require additional sand being placed on the roadway. The allegation that PM10 emissions would not be effected because of vehicle travel passing any given point only once does not take into consideration more sand being available to be crushed on the roadway. In addition, the wider roadway allows the sand to be blown into the other driving lanes, rather than to the side of the road, which allows the sand to be crushed more than once. It is stated that a four-lane highway will allow for increased speeds (although this is contradicted in Table 7.7-1), and these increased speeds will allow for a higher "flushing efficiency" of accumulated sand. This increased

flushing efficiency means that more PM10 particles will be flushed into the air, creating a decrease in air quality. This section also does not consider the increased total traffic volume that would be generated by a multi-lane highway.

The idea of moving the highway to another alignment is novel, but all it does is move the air pollution to another area of the reservation, which in turn will effect the residents, plant, animal and human, in the proposed area. Is any area less important than another when it concerns breathable air? According to this DEIS, it seems acceptable to degrade one area to lessen the impact upon another area.

By promoting the increased commuter traffic brought by a wider highway, higher levels of emission and PM10 particles will be created. An increase in commuter traffic will increase travel on secondary roadways, which will also increase air pollution. Neither of these latter points are addressed in the DEIS.

We repeat a number of points we made regarding the PDEIS, which refer to problems that are still present in the DEIS:

- It is claimed that local population increases, and increases in air pollution associated with home heating, will increase with all alternatives, apparently to the same degree. This directly contradicts other statements in the DEIS that state that increases in the number of commuters moving into the area will result from a multiple-lane configuration for Highway 93. This statement also contradicts common sense: if a much bigger road is built, it will make possible a much larger increase in traffic, and make wintertime commuting more feasible.
- It is claimed that lower emissions from agricultural operations will result from conversion of agricultural lands to residential uses. We would question whether this takes into account increased emissions from vehicular traffic on unpaved section roads, already a major contributor to PM_{10} concentrations in the area.
- The repeated assertions that a two-lane design will result in "gridlock" or otherwise poor LOS in the near future rest on assumptions that we have questioned in our comments on the "Traffic Operation and Safety" chapters and on the lack of implementation of TDMs as described in Appendix B.
- In the "Mitigation" portion of this section of the chapter, the consideration of using chemical de-icers does not appear to weigh potential impacts on ground or surface water. This should be done, as the project runs through areas with wetlands of national significance, streams harboring a potentially endangered species (Bull Trout), and several areas, including Pablo, with notably shallow aquifers.

<u>Chapter 7.8 (Noise)</u>

<u>General Comments for Chapter:</u>

- Pages 7.8-1 to 3, Section 7.8.1.: Impacts Common to All Alternatives.

  <u>Our comments from the PDEIS for this chapter appear to have been ignored in the DEIS, so we repeat them here:</u>

As in the PDEIS, it is stated that "Speeds were assumed to be 55 mph for Lane Configurations B, C, and D" for purposes of estimating increases in noise levels. We repeat our comment: this seems highly questionable to us. Table 7.1-1 effectively admits that average driving speeds on the current two-lane highway (which the DEIS claims has a LOS of "D") range between at least 55 and 60 mph. The DEIS claims also that the LOS will improve with any of the multiple-lane configurations. Furthermore, the MDOT has stated at public scoping meetings that motorists tend to drive at the "perceived" design speed of the highway. It seems that for a four or five-lane highway with eight-foot shoulders, it is absurd to think that the average driving speed would be 55 mph. The information and projections of noise levels in this chapter should be revised upward accordingly, as noise levels would increase with the speed of traffic (page 7.8-7 states that "traffic noise decreases with lower speeds").

It also appears that this chapter assumes traffic volumes to be the same with all lane configurations, which is also a highly questionable assumption. According to the MDOT, a four or five-lane design could handle several times the capacity of a two-lane, and we think it is a matter of common sense that such a highway would generate heavier traffic volumes. This would also call for significant upward revisions in the estimates of noise levels that would come with a multiple-lane configuration.

Lastly, the estimates of noise impacts in this chapter only appear to address those that would come directly from the highway itself. There is no consideration of cumulative impacts. We think this should be revised to take into account the traffic and other noise generated by the development and growth that would be spurred by a multiple-lane configuration, including significant increases in traffic on section roads and other highway approaches.

It is unclear how the DEIS reaches the conclusion that if alternate routes are built around Ronan and Arlee, only 1% of remaining traffic in town will consist of trucks. If there is a research basis for this, it should be clearly stated.

Table 7.8-1 has a number of problems. First, it incorporates the above-stated assumptions of traffic speed, traffic volume, and exclusion of secondary impacts, all of which probably lead to under-estimation of noise levels with a multiple-lane configuration. Secondly, it lumps together "No Action" and "Lane Configuration A," when these would present very different highway designs and conditions. Thirdly, Lane Configurations B and C are altogether absent, for no clear reason. Fourthly, the table is incomplete, only extending as far as Segment N of the project. Fifthly, it should project noise levels farther into the future: say, the year 2050.

Even with all these built-in under-estimations of noise increases, we <u>note</u> that Table 7.8-1 projects a doubling of noise levels (3 or more dBA) within 300 feet of all rural sections of the highway with Lane Configuration D. This includes noise increases of 4 or 5 decibels over all rural sections of the highway within 100 feet of the road. In each rural section of the road, noise would rise above the federally-established noise abatement standard of 67 dBA at both the 100 and 150 foot distances.

This would constitute a severe impact on the environment of this area. The cherished qualities of rural quiet, important to both local residents and visitors, would be permanently impaired throughout much of the Mission and Jocko Valleys.

- Pages 7.8-4 to 8, Sections 7.8.3. (Existing Alignment, rural sections), 7.8.4. (Arlee), and 7.8.5. (Ronan).

The proposed "Mitigations" under each of these sections seem wholly inadequate. They serve to make it clear that avoidance -- Lane Configuration A -- is far preferable to mitigation. The dismissal of noise barriers, such as the planting of fast-growing trees, does not seem well-justified. The DEIS rejects this idea because the "low number of residences" make the expense of such an effort not "reasonable"; this ignores the impact of noise on outdoor recreation in the project area for both local residents and the tourists on whom our economy depends. Noise from Highway 93 is already audible in the Mission Mountains; if it is more than doubled and nothing is done in the form of barriers to muffle the noise, the value of these areas for solitude, a "wilderness experience," and Tribal cultural activities may be seriously harmed or destroyed.

Similarly, the dismissal of lowered speed limits as a mitigation measure seems poorly justified, on the basis of it being "difficult to enforce." Speed limits are always difficult to enforce, yet we impose them in the area of schools and congested areas for safety reasons. Building a multiple-lane highway, of course, will make it difficult to keep traffic even at 65 mph, let alone 55 or 45. We would note that if Lane Configuration A is selected and the speed limit is lowered to 50 mph, noise would be much lower and the LOS, given the established speed limit, would be at least B in the year 2015. We would repeat our suggestion for increasing law enforcement of traffic regulations, including dual jurisdiction over such matters for tribal police and higher fines within the Flathead Reservation for infractions. None of these options have been reviewed in the DEIS.

7.10 (Wetlands)

The examination of wetlands, while improved in ACOE permit application, remains vague in the Draft EIS. In both documents, actual impacts of the preferred alternative seem underestimated or understated. For example, it is still unclear how much wetland is involved because the arithmetic error in the width of the preferred alternative (64 ft instead of the actual 68 ft), which persists in most of the documents. Also, both documents admit that there will be impacts on waterfowl breeding, endangered species use, other wildlife and plant ecology, but blandly maintain that the impacts will be "minimal" or "negligible" without providing documentation or even explanation for this position.

Mitigation plans are also vague in the DEIS, and only slightly more detailed in the ACOE permit application. Both documents state that "studies" will be conducted and

sitings and designs will be completed "later", which gives the reader no basis for decision-making. Neither suggests timing of work to minimize impacts on nesting or migration. While the ACOE document does outline a monitoring plan, not present in the DEIS, neither states what parties will be responsible, what resources are committed, or what will be done in the event of failure of mitigation projects. Without specific commitment of persons and funding, mitigation and monitoring is merely a paper procedure.

7.11 (Floodplains/Stream Crossings)

Streams are the lifeblood of the Flathead Reservation, agriculturally, recreationally, socially, and culturally. The DEIS treats stream and ground water impacts in three pages, ignoring or minimizing potentially catastrophic indirect and cumulative impacts.

Ground water trapped by expanded roadbed could become organically and chemically contaminated threatening agriculture, wildlife and human health.

The recommended alternative would require three times the width and far more extensive stabilization as compared to an enhanced two lane, thus requiring significantly more stream realignment to avoid erosion. This would set off hydrological chain reactions up and downstream. This would contribute to the degradation of valuable fisheries such as the Jocko, Arlee Spring Creek (which would have to be moved some 400 feet during construction) Mission, Post, Crow, and Mud creeks.

Chapter 7.12 (Fish and Wildlife):

The DEIS asserts that differences in impact to fish and wildlife among Lane Configurations A, B, and C are minimal because "displacement...is dependent primarily on traffic volume." This assertion reflects the continued and illogical assumption throughout the DEIS that multi-lane highways do not attract additional traffic. This assumption taints the entire review of the impact to wildlife and demonstrates the bias in the DEIS towards the MDOT's original intent to build a multi-lane Highway 93.

Generally, this chapter does not consider so-called "secondary and cumulative" impacts adequately. For example, it is stated on page 7.12-1 that "Lane Configuration A may provide slightly less impact risk to wildlife than will the wider lane configurations, but the difference in impact potential will not be substantial." For some reason, the phrasing in this sentence was changed from the PDEIS, where the impact was characterized as "insignificant." In either case, the focus is not on what would undoubtedly be the most far-reaching impact of the MDOT's preferred alternative: the additional growth and development that would be encouraged and generated by construction of a multi-lane highway.

We would also challenge at the bottom of page 7.12-1 that with Lane Configuration A, there would be "fewer gaps in the traffic stream." This seems

contradicted by assertions elsewhere in the DEIS that in fact, there would be more platooning of vehicles with a two-lane, resulting in *more* gaps in the traffic -- particularly as traffic volumes increase and begin to fill up the multi-lane design. To fully see this point, it is again necessary to consider the tendency of multi-lane highways to generate increases in traffic volume beyond what would occur with an improved two-lane design.

Other points:

- 7.12.2.1 Fish -- As in the PDEIS, there appears to be no consideration of hazardous waste contamination, including the risk of more frequent and higher-speed transport of such materials should a multiple-lane configuration be constructed.
- 7.12.2.2 Reptiles and Amphibians--According to the DEIS, increased mortality of turtles, frogs and salamanders can be expected with wider highways when these animals cross the highway. No mitigation plan is described; plans are being "evaluated." Evaluation of plans is not an acceptable way of addressing mitigation in the Environmental Impact Statement process, according to CEQ regulations. Worse, the only commitment is that plans would be implemented only "If it is determined these designs will be effective and practical." This does not provide the reader with enough concrete information to assess the impact of the proposed project. Not addressed at all are the impacts of road run-off and loss of wetlands to the already precarious populations of amphibians in the Ninepipe area. The CS&K Tribes, Fish and Wildlife Service, Salish Kootenai College and Department of Energy National Laboratories (Los Alamos and Oakridge) have already made considerable investment in censusing amphibians on the Flathead Reservation, but none of these resources were utilized in the evaluation of impacts to amphibians. FRO repeats its call here for the MDOT to consider putting the highway through the Ninepipe area on short pylons to permit free migration of amphibians and ducklings under the roadway.
- 7.12.2.3 Birds. The DEIS recognizes the impacts to nesting and populations of many bird species. However, the mitigation section is devoted primarily to discussing why perches and culverts are not considered for mitigation. After listing 15 types of birds which would be affected by the preferred alternative, only mitigation identified is protection of cliff swallows by scheduling slope cutting before April 15. Slope cutting will have little effect on the other 14 types of birds, but there is no mitigation, either in design or timing, described. We would also note, of course, that implementation of the FRO Alternative would necessitate very little if any of this displacement, and that avoidance is the preferred strategy according to CEQ regulations. FRO repeats its call here for the MDOT to consider putting the highway through the Ninepipe area on short pylons to permit free migration of amphibians and ducklings under the roadway.
- 7.12.2.4 Mammals. The construction of Wildlife Passage Structures is recommended as mitigation for the barrier effect. These passages are 8-foot-high underpasses (the most "cost-effective design", designed after similar

structures for panthers and raccoons in Florida). Had the writers of the DEIS examined the literature more carefully, they would have discovered that antlered animals have repeatedly avoided structures as high as 12 feet, such as the Alaska Pipeline. The recommended structures are simply inadequate. This section should also contain far more detailed and specific projections of the comparative impacts of the various lane configurations on animal migration at key areas, including Evaro, Valley Creek, Post Creek, and other areas. It is noted that "extending bridges so there was at least 40 feet of land on either side of the stream was also recommended" in construction of wildlife underpasses in other areas. Considering this, we would restate from the our comments on the PDEIS our strong support for construction of bridges that would permit below-highway animal passage, not only at Post Creek, but also at the Jocko River and at Mission Creek. The latter is still actively used by wildlife; anecdotal evidence suggests bears and mountain lions continue to cross the highway along the creek. We would also ask why there is no apparent plan to provide for wildlife migration at Pistol Creek, Crow Creek, or Mud Creek.

- 7.12.2.5 Vegetation. Although the DEIS recognizes that Ravalli Canyon, Ravalli Hill and other areas may have sensitive plant populations, the mitigation plan only suggests that a survey be done, and if such plant populations happen to be discovered before they are bulldozed, those plants should be moved elsewhere. This survey should have already been completed. There are several native plant specialists available in Western Montana, but it appears that there was no effort on the part of MDOT to consult them and acquire existing information. Weeds appear to be the only serious concern of the MDOT. Extensive plans are described to control weeds through chemical applications along with other methods. Chemical herbicides are not identified, however, leaving insufficient information to evaluate the effects on fish, wildlife, and most especially threatened and endangered species.
- Page 7.12-10, Section 7.12.5. (Polson Alignments) As we stated in regard to the PDEIS: the statement made here, that "wildlife...are accustomed to Highway 93" and so would not be impacted by it being widened, does not appear to meet the requirements of an EIS to measure impacts, avoid them when possible, and suggest mitigation where necessary. It does not appear to be based on any scientific study. It also bears no sense of the EIS requirement to assess the impact of the project as part of the cumulative impacts as a whole. We note the explicit acknowledgment here that "long-term adverse impacts on wildlife," as well as a more impassable "barrier" due to "extensive development over the long term," would be caused by "improvement" of the highway. This contradicts Jerry Sorenson's statement in Chapter 7.5.
- 7.12.6 Cumulative Impacts. The MDOT clearly does not understand the CEQ regulation definition of cumulative impacts, as demonstrated in this section. The only "cumulative impacts" recognized are those of highways. Not addressed are the secondary impacts of increased populations, increased development, etc. which are to be expected with the expansion of the highway,

and actual cumulative impacts which may be generated by other activities in the area. We have been told that the author of this chapter was unable to make such estimations, because in the chapter on Social impacts, the DEIS abandoned any attempt to project the comparative impacts on growth and development of the various lane configurations and transportation alternatives. This section, as such, is of little use in evaluating the cumulative impacts of this project.

Chapter 7.13 (Threatened and Endangered Species)

Enormous federal and local (particularly CS&K Tribal) resources have been spent in maintaining grizzly bear and bald eagle populations in Western Montana, and considerable effort and expense recently has been devoted to the re-establishment of wolves and peregrine falcons in the area. Any action which would increase traffic volumes on Highway 93 and encourage land use changes in the Evaro, Jocko and Mission areas would jeopardize not only the recovery of these species, but the public investment in managing them. The recommended alternative described in the DEIS would result in a situation where the efforts of several public agencies in protecting these animals would be negated by the actions of another public agency (MDOT) in developing a barrier to the recovery of these species.

- 7.13. 2.1 Peregrine Falcon. Not considered in the discussion of the impacts of the recommended alternative is the increased use of pesticides to maintain roadside landscaping. Peregrines were sent to the brink of extinction during the 1960's by the biological amplification of the chlorinated hydrocarbons. This is the same class of chemicals which would be used to maintain the ROW.
- 7.13.2.2 Bald Eagle. If bald eagles are successful in re-establishing nesting in the Evaro, Jocko, Ninepipe, Kicking Horse and Pablo areas, nesting adults would be subject to risk in feeding on road kills which can be expected to become more plentiful with the preferred alternative. This is another impact which is not identified in the DEIS.

We repeat other comments we made on the PDEIS: This section asserts that widening the highway will not negatively affect Bald Eagles nesting within one or two miles of the road because they "probably have become accustomed to traffic and noise levels which will change little following construction."

First, on a technical level, it is directly contradicted by the information in Chapter 7.8 (Noise), which estimates that noise will more than double within 150 feet of the highway if a multiple-lane configuration is built; for every rural section of the road, the noise levels would be crossing the federally established threshold for noise impacts (67 dBA). As we have pointed out in our comments in this Appendix (Appendix B) for that chapter, even those estimates of increases in noise are probably too low.

Second, as we mention in Appendix A under "Failure to Assess Secondary and Cumulative Impacts," this statement appears to violate the requirement of an EIS to assess the impacts of a project as part of the cumulative impacts already

occurring in an area; instead, the DEIS appears to be taking the position that if an impact is already occurring, then there is no problem in this project worsening the situation. Such an approach would seem in conflict with the basic philosophy of both NEPA and the Threatened and Endangered Species Act. The statement also considers only the direct impacts of the highway on Bald Eagles, rather than including a consideration of secondary impacts, as directed by NEPA.

Third, though Bald Eagles are an Endangered Species, there is no evidence presented in the DEIS that this section is based on field research of actual conditions in the project area.

- 7.13.2.3 Grizzly Bear. The well-cited studies in the DEIS indicate that grizzlies avoid well-traveled roads. Since migration is necessary to maintain the Mission-Swan population, the only measure which would not endanger this population would be the reduction of traffic as proposed in the FRO integrated plan.

FRO also believes that there is sufficient evidence to assume there are important migratory crossings at Valley Creek and Ninepipe which warrant special consideration. The Ninepipe area was dismissed without reference to research as being "sufficiently distant" from the highway (despite the well-publicized presence there in the summer of 1994 of a sow and three cubs), and the Valley Creek area was not addressed at all despite reported sightings.

In our comments on the PDEIS, we noted our concern about the statement that "High levels of human activity and settlement in the Mission Valley west of the highway may not be compatible with long-term grizzly bear survival," and that therefore "displacement of grizzlies from habitat west of U.S. Highway 93 may benefit the bear by preventing human-bear lethal encounters." The first half of this quote appears to have been deleted from the DEIS. However, the second statement remains, as do our concerns about it:

1. First, this sounds as if the DEIS authors are either deciding to sacrifice Grizzly Bear access to a portion of their habitat in the area, or they are making a case for not having to address these impacts in a serious manner. We would ask whether the Endangered Species Act would permit the Montana Department of Transportation unilaterally to make plans for the bear or to conduct an EIS on the basis of its own conclusions about what parts of Grizzly habitat can be sacrificed.
2. Second, the DEIS does not offer any biological evidence to support the claim that preventing Grizzly access to the west side of the valley would "benefit" their populations. The claim that the creation of a nearly impassable barrier to Grizzly migration would help their chances for survival should be eliminated unless supported by solid research and evidence.
3. Third, this appears to be a continuation of the pattern in the DEIS to fail to envision ways in which the project could actually be used to improve the environmental health of the area. A possible example would be to use mitigation monies to purchase and protect Grizzly habitat in the west (and east) half of the valley -- rather than consign it to development and the local extinction of Grizzlies.

- 7.13.2.3 Gray Wolf. Wolves show much the same migratory requirements as grizzly bears and a similar aversion to heavily-traveled roads. The only way to protect current populations and to allow for the desirable expansion of wolf populations would be to encourage decreases in traffic volume as proposed in the FRO plan.
- Section 7.13.4. Arlee and Ronan Alignments.

  We repeat our comments on the PDEIS, where we noted the statement that impacts on these alignments "to threatened and endangered species will be the same as on the Existing Alignment; " this is still contradicted on page 7.12-9, where it is stated that Alignment 4 around Arlee would displace Bald Eagles from seasonal habitat near the Jocko River.
- Page 7.13-4, Section 7.13.5. Polson Alignments.

  We note here that there is an unusually clear comparison between lane configurations, and that it is shown that Lane Configuration A would cause far fewer impacts on Bald Eagles.

Chapters 6.14 and 7.14 (Cultural Resources)

FRO strongly supports the concerns of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes regarding the impact of this highway on the general cultural environment of the Reservation. We would add that Chapters 6.14 and 7.14 both seem to purposively avoid mentioning the direct bearing on these concerns of the different lane configurations. At numerous public meetings, Culture Committee staff members and Tribal Elders have made it clear that they see the improved two-lane as far less damaging to their interests in the long run, due to both direct and indirect (development) impacts. Chapter 7.14 notes that the Culture Committees favor avoidance. This is feasible with the FRO Alternative.

Chapter 7.16 (Hazardous Wastes)

We feel the question of hazardous material contamination posed by any configuration of highway 93 was not adequately addressed in the two and a half pages dedicated to the subject in the DEIS. We would note that the chapter was altogether missing from the PDEIS. Especially given the recent dramatic increases in shipment of volatile hydrocarbons between Missoula and Thompson Falls on Highways 93 and 200, this matter should be given serious and comprehensive attention.

There was no attempt to calculate the current risk by quantifying truck-tanker use. There was also no discussion of toxic spill preparedness by communities on the ROW nor were there origin-destination studies which could strengthen the case for the use of existing rail facilities.

Also not addressed in the DEIS are secondary impacts such as the use of pesticides to maintain noise reduction landscaping (recommended elsewhere in the document) and borrow pits.

Chapter 7.17 (Visual)

This chapter has been changed very little from the PDEIS, and in our view remains one of the most obviously biased in the entire document. Indeed, one of the few changes we found from the PDEIS was the bold deletion of a common-sense statement, which we had called attention to, that "the narrowest highway...will have the least impact on the visual environment." This is the frequent response of the MDOT to our comments: to see them not as opportunities to strengthen the scientific validity of the EIS, but to strengthen the argument for a multi-lane highway. This pattern is in blatant and egregious violation of NEPA and CEQ regulations.

As such, we repeat most of our comments from the PDEIS:

General comments:

There seems little awareness in this chapter of the real power that the visual landscape of the area holds for residents, both Indian and non-Indian, and the impact that a much wider highway would have upon this landscape. For that matter, there is little recognition of the value for tourists and travelers of the rural, spectacular visual environment of the area.

There appears to be no discussion in this chapter of possible Scenic Highway designation for U.S. Highway 93, which would provide possibly the strongest means of protecting the visual environment in the project area.

Specific comments:

- Section 7.17.1 Visual Impacts Common to All Alternatives.

  Under the "Landforms" sub-section, in the third paragraph, landscaping mitigation methods are suggested where "disturbance of landforms in unavoidable." However, with Lane Configuration A and No Action, there would be no significant disturbance of landforms, so there are no "unavoidable" cases with this project.

  Under the "Highway Structures and Appurtenance" sub-section, noise barriers should be mentioned.

  Under the "Access Management" sub-section, it is stated that "where space permits, frontage roads should be developed." It seems strange to advocate construction of such eyesores in a chapter assessing visual impacts of this project.

  Under "Community Interface," there should be comparison of the various lane configurations, particularly in regard to the proximity of the highway to storefronts and other community buildings and public spaces. There should also be discussion of the impact in this sense of wider visual barriers through the center of communities in the form of a much wider highway with higher speed traffic and increased volume of traffic.
- Section 7.17.2. No Action.

There is no mention in this section of any of the advantages of the No Action alternative in terms of avoiding significant visual impacts in the area.

- Section 7.17.3. Existing Alignment (rural areas).

  Note in this section that it is explicitly stated that Lane Configuration A will "result in only minor changes to the visual environment" while with Lane Configurations B, C, and D, will require significant alteration of "existing [visual] conditions."

  Indeed, in general, it would appear that there is an attempt to understate the visual impact of the wider lane configurations in this section.

  The statement that a wider road will result in drivers spending more time viewing the scenery, if true, should be mentioned in Chapter 7.1 as a safety hazard of the wider configurations. With the high number of highway entrances, the periodic speed zones in the area of towns, the high number of elderly drivers, the frequent presence of farm vehicles, and the many bicyclists, pedestrians, and horseback riders, it would be dangerous to create a highway here whose design lulls travelers into an "interstate" mentality with a more relaxed, less alert driving posture.

  Note, in the Mitigation section in the PDEIS, it was stated that "the narrowest highway...will have the least impact on the visual environment." This has apparently been deleted from the DEIS. Is there a reason for this change, other than the interest of the MDOT in omitting any information that might challenge its preferred alternative?

- Section 7.17.3.1. Evaro Canyon Landscape Unit.

  There appears to be no coordination between this section and the wildlife migration measures, including overpasses, discussed in Chapters 7.12 and 7.13.

- Section 7.17.3.3. Ravalli Canyon Landscape Unit.

  There appears to be no consideration given to lower speed limits, or even a lower LOS, through this limited stretch of the highway in order to avoid the tremendous visual, cultural, and other impacts that would result from significant widening of the highway. FRO would support such measures.

- Figures 7.17-1, 7.17-2, and 7.17-3 (Computer altered photographs of highway).

  The idea of computer generated images of how various lane configuration may look in the future is a good one for purposes of this chapter. However, the images in the current DEIS appear to have been carefully crafted to minimize the sense of visual change created by a multiple-lane configuration and put the best possible gloss on those changes. In each image, a normal point of view for a motorist, and the angle from which the viewer could get the best sense of visual change between lane configurations, would be from somewhere near the center line. The DEIS does something quite different, apparently choosing vantage points for their ability to mask, rather than reveal, the significant visual changes being contemplated. The angle reduces the sense of the width of the road and the barrier effect in terms of splitting the town in half.

For the Ravalli canyon shot, the picture is taken from the railroad tracks on the other side of the Jocko River -- a place from which almost no one would actually view the changed highway. Indeed, the highway is nearly invisible from that vantage point, and there is no way to judge changes in pavement width. The only aspect that is discernible is the significant portion of the mountainside that is removed in the second picture; however, though this is still unsettling to see, the distance of the vantage point serves to mute the impact of this change, compared to being on the highway.

For the pictures of Arlee and Ronan, an oblique angle is similarly used to mute the sense of the wideness of the multi-lane road. It seems at odds with textual description of the visual impact of a multiple-lane configuration through Ronan (see under Section 7.17.5. below).

All the computer generated pictures would be far more helpful if they were taken instead from near the center-line, with Lane Configuration A and then with one of the multiple-lane configurations. We have taken a photograph of Hungry Horse, which has a four-lane highway, from near the center-line. We think it convincingly demonstrates the distorted quality of the current images supposedly depicting a five-lane highway in Arlee and Ronan.

In addition, we would suggest adding a set of images from one of the highly valued scenic vantage points, such as the top of Ravalli hill looking north, the Ninepipe area, and or the Post Creek area. We recommend that pictures be generated from near the center line, and with comparisons of No Action, Lane Configuration A, and Lane Configuration B or C.

- Section 7.17.3.4. Mission Valley Landscape Unit.

  Note, under the "Mitigation" sub-section, that narrower highways "will be particularly desirable to preserve visual quality."

  There is no way to evaluate the suggestion here for "roadside parks" without more specific information.

- Pages 7.17-15 to 17, Section 7.17.5. Ronan Alignments.

  Note that "widening of the existing alignment to four lanes through Ronan will fragment an already discontinuous streetscape, removing 'edge' buildings and vegetation, diminishing views from adjacent properties and encroaching on adjacent businesses and pedestrians. The scale of the road will visually and functionally divide the community being incompatible with the scale of the community and roadside development, for view from the road."

- Pages 7.17-19 to 20, Section 7.17.7 Visual Impacts of Highway Design Options.

  The discussion as a whole in this section seems too vague and unspecified to serve as the basis of any conclusions.

  Under "Wildlife and Livestock Crossings," there is no mention of the wildlife overpasses proposed for the Evaro section of the highway.

Chapter 12 -- Section 4(f) Evaluation

The 4(f) requirement generally means that all areas or sites with significant public value and use must be preserved unless all feasible options are exhausted. The DEIS identifies 16.5 acres of 4(f) properties which would be disturbed by the preferred alternative. However, a valid argument could be made that the Highway 93 corridor through the Flathead Reservation is almost all 4(f) because of its cultural and historical significance to the Confederated Tribes. Indeed, at the forum on Highway 93 organized by Salish Kootenai College in 1993 in Ronan, Tribal Elders, including Harriet Whitworth, asserted that the entire Reservation was a place of spiritual significance and that it should be protected to the maximum extent possible.

We would also point out that the enhanced two-lane configuration, combined with the FRO recommended TDM plan, would cut the 4(f) property loss identified by more than half (eight acres). We contend this alternative was not proved inadequate and therefore the additional degradation of 4(f) properties should not be allowed. Neither the FRO Alternative nor Lane Configuration A were considered in section 12.5, Avoidance Alternatives.

Another enormous gap in the 4(f) evaluation is the absence of any consideration of the impact on Glacier National Park of expanding Highway 93. It has been shown clearly that a major portion of the summertime peak in traffic on 93 consists of tourists going to Glacier. Glacier Park has been struggling to deal with the increasing crush of visitors, who are threatening to destroy the park by their sheer numbers. The park's long-range plan calls for increasing proportions of visitors being shifted onto mass transportation -- precisely what FRO has called for all along. This section should consider these factors and the extent to which a multi-lane design on 93 would worsen these problems.

Appendix B (Transportation Demand Management)

Although FRO acknowledges that successful implementation of TDMs, particularly in a rural area, is never easy, we disagree with the pessimistic outlook that pervades this appendix. It should be born in mind that these are some of the only possible solutions to the underlying problems at hand on Highway 93. Only one thing is a clear certainty: the MDOT's preferred alternative would not solve the problem, but in fact only result in the same problem -- congestion and safety problems -- on a far bigger and more intractable scale. We have no choice but to do everything in our power and in our creative abilities to solve the underlying problem of traffic growth. The first step in that process is to prevent the implementation of a multi-lane design that would make the problem far worse.

In the "Transit" section, it should be noted that the high number of low-income people in the area, and the unusually large number of people with no reliable transport of their own, would probably significantly increase the percentage of people seeking to use a well-designed, cheap, and convenient transit system.

Under "Trucks," what "research" has indicated the difficulty of removing trucks from Highway 93?

Under "Capping Tourist Traffic," this section needs to be update to take into account Glacier Park's recently issued long-range goals or plans in the area of transportation.

The fact that tourist traffic comes from all over North America does not make it more difficult to manage; in fact, it probably means that it is easier to shape the transportation mode used by many travelers. If people see a huge road system being built to all sides of the park, they naturally will be encouraged to travel by their own individual vehicles. What kind of infrastructure we build has a direct bearing on how people choose to get to the park. There are countless world-class parks around the world to which people primarily travel by various kinds of mass transportation, because that is the only system available. We need to begin reorienting the transportation infrastructure in the GNP area in the direction of mass transit and away from huge roads.

Flathead Resource Organization
Safety and Highway 93

A. The Montana Department of Transportation is misleading people on the safety question.

1. Contrary to the impression they have been consciously creating, the MDOT is *NOT* pursuing the Highway 93 project primarily to improve safety on the road. The MDOT is pursuing the project primarily to improve the "Level of Service" or "LOS" of Highway 93 -- in short, the amount of traffic the road can handle at high speeds of travel. They have all along tried to make people think that "LOS" and safety are the same thing, when they are not. For example, the MDOT continues to oppose lowering the speed limit in the Pablo area because that would impede the "LOS" on Highway 93. However, anyone who works or lives in the Pablo area could tell you that a speed limit of 25 or 35 MPH would improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as motorists. "Traffic Operation" and "Safety" are not the same thing, and are sometimes in direct conflict with each other.

2. The MDOT is employing highly irregular statistical methods to try to support their scare tactics, while ignoring the normal statistics used in the industry. The accident rate for Highway 93 is about the state average. Seeing this, the MDOT has resorted to the measurement of accidents per highway mile -- which will always look bad for a busy highway, regardless of how safe it is. Even the safest highway in the world, if it is also the busiest, will have many accidents per mile. And indeed, if the MDOT really wanted to lower the number of accidents per mile, they would design their plan to reduce the overall traffic on the road -- not dramatically increase it, which is what they are doing.

3. The MDOT has falsely given the impression that a four or five lane highway will be much safer than an improved two-lane, when the Montana Multi-Disciplinary Traffic Safety Task Force said to the contrary that an improved two-lane would do all of the desired, feasible safety improvements for Highway 93, that is needed. In fact, on page 4-5 of the PDEIS, it is plainly stated that "Recommendations for improvements were made by the Task Force particularly to target and reduce accidents for elderly drivers which should, at the same time, benefit all drivers....If any of the proposed lane configurations are constructed on any of the proposed alignment alternatives, most, if not all, of these recommended improvements will be incorporated."

4. The MDOT has downplayed or hidden the well-known safety drawbacks and dangers of undivided, high-speed, mulitple-lane rural highways. These are known to be statistically more dangerous than two-lane roads, especially near intersections with the highway.

Already, 35% of accidents occurring on Highway 93 are related to intersections and driveways (page 4-3). Within the project area, there are an average of 12.14 approaches per mile (computed from Table 6.2-4).

In addition, it is clear that on Highway 93, unsafe speeds are a major factor in traffic accidents. In Arlee, where speeds through twon often exceed the 35 MPH speed limit, the accident rate is 2.38, the highest on Highway 93. But in Ronan, where there is a strictly enforced speed limit of 25 MPH, the accident rate is the lowest on Highway 93, 0.62. The MDOT design would dramatically raise speeds -- and so also raise both accident rates and the severity of accidents.

5. The MDOT has generated extremely misleading propaganda relating to safety improvments resulting from the construction of a four-lane to Evaro.

a. First, the MDOT points out the accident rate at Evaro declined from 2.28 to 1.38 accidents per million vehicle miles. This summary, however, fails to mention that the entire stretch of highway from the top of Ravalli Hill north to Polson Hill has accident rates that are lower than at Evaro even with a four-lane highway in place. For five out of the six highway sections from Ravalli hill to Pablo, the accident rate is at or below 0.90 (compared to Evaro's 1.38). This information was pointed out in the PDEIS (page 6.1-9), but was omitted in the heavily biased material given to the Tribal Council in July 1993.

b. Secondly, MDOT does not make clear that the Evaro section, as the above statistics suggest, is not typical of conditions on much of the rest of the highway. Not only does it have higher accident rates, but it is less developed, probably has fewer highway approaches, and has steeper terrain with more demand for passing, than does the majority of the highway in the Jocko and Mission Valleys. Therefore, it is a bit of a case of apples and oranges. What might help at Evaro could actually be a safety detriment in other areas, and vice versa. It is not necessarily a good basis for comparison.

c. According to statistics provided by MDOT/Morrison Maierle on June 16, 1993, since construction of the four-lane at Evaro, statistics suggest that the incidence of "angle accidents" -- accidents occurring around entrances and intersections with the highway -- has actually increased, despite the small number of intersections in the Evaro area compared to much of the rest of Highway 93. But in the charts compiled for the Council dated July 30, 1993, the information was manipulated to support the claim that angle accidents decreased after the four-lane was built at Evaro. This serious discrepancy should be investigated. Let us repeat the direct quote from the 6/16/93 document: for the Evaro area, "after the highway was improved to four lanes.....the number of angle accidents per year increased."

6. The MDOT has characterized passing lanes as inherently dangerous, but has not made clear that our existing passing lanes happen to be very badly designed. Could not design improvements solve most of the safety problems of these existing passing lanes, rather than the construction of an entire multi-lane highway?

Comparison of the FRO Plan and the MDOT plan on the safety issue:

ISSUE:	MDOT:	FRO:
Speeding:	Four or five lanes would encourage faster speeds.	Improved two lane road would not encourage faster speeds, a major factor in accidents.
Shoulders:	8-foot shoulders along the length of the highway except in towns where 5 lanes would make this impossible.	8-foot shoulders along the length of the highway.
Passing:	Nearly unlimited passing in the short run, until congestion & development catches up with the highway.	Improved passing (improv-ing existing passing lanes, plus a new passing lane on Post Creek hill).
Turning left off of the highway:	In developed areas, a center "suicide" lane; in most rural areas, left-turning cars must come to a dead halt in the fast lane.	Left-hand turn bays at all major intersections.
Turning left onto the highway:	Cars must cross three or four lanes of traffic; few gaps in the traffic due to more even flow.	Cars must cross one lane of traffic, with more frequent gaps due to less even traffic flow.
Crossing the highway:	Cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, and horse-rides must cross four or five lanes of pavement, plus shoulders (84 to 94 feet).	Cross two lanes of pavement, plus shoulders (44 feet).
Slow-moving vehicle turnouts:	None called for.	Recommended every 5 miles or so, with strict enforcement.
Law enforce-ment:	Not addressed.	Calls for full dual jurisdiction on all traffic infractions and higher local penalties, prominently announced on road signs.
Truck traffic:	Not addressed.	Explore ways to remove or restrict multi-trailer semis, and to shift more of truck traffic in general onto rails.
Bicyclists & pedestrians:	Only calls for 8-foot shoulders, with considerably less in towns (e.g., Arlee).	8 foot shoulders with rumble strip in rural areas, and separate bike paths within 1-2 miles of towns.

Comment Number	Response
1	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
2	Comment noted favoring a four-lane highway.
3	Comment noted.
4	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
5	Comment noted citing need to improve safety and traffic operation. The schedule for construction will depend on timing of completion of the final EIS, the record of decision (ROD), highway design and availability of appropriated funds.
6	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
7	Comment noted citing need to improve safety and traffic operation.
8	Comment noted favoring bypass of Polson.
9	Comment noted favoring a four-lane highway.
10	Design options for facilities serving pedestrians and bicyclists were developed in response to support at public meetings and in consultation with community teams and the ID Team.
11	Comment noted favoring a four-lane highway.
12	These questions, specific to this particular property, have been discussed with the landowners. The appropriate information has been provided to them.
13	Information requested and provided.
14	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
15	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
16	Comment noted opposing existing alignment as the preferred alternative at Arlee.
17	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
18	Information requested and provided.
19	Comment noted favoring a four-lane highway.
20	Information requested and provided.

Comment Number	Response
21	It is correct that the Arlee Community Team (a sub-committee to the ID Team) recommended a two-lane highway with a continuous two-way left-turn center median. However, because this lane configuration will not adequately accommodate projected traffic volumes, the ID Team recommended Lane Configuration C (a four-lane highway with a continuous two-way left turn center median) for the preferred alternative. The FRO proposal is included in the draft EIS and final EIS as Lane Configuration A. It is given the same treatment in both documents as the other lane configurations.
22	Comment noted.
23	Comment noted concerning Alignment 2 and favoring existing alignment (Alignment 1) as the preferred alternative at Arlee.
24	Comment noted opposing existing alignment as the preferred alternative at Arlee.
25	Comment noted requesting construction of a livestock underpass at Milepost 12.4. The highway design process will review appropriate locations for design options, including livestock underpasses.
26	A copy of the draft EIS has been provided. Other requested items are not yet available.

Comment Number	Response
27	Comment noted.
28	Alternative routes such as the "Old Freight Route" were considered, but are not part of the preferred alternative because they received substantial opposition at public meetings and would cause greater environmental impacts.
29	As indicated in Section 7.12 of the draft EIS and final EIS, with the preferred alternative, a bridge with span and rise suitable for wildlife crossing under the highway will be constructed at Post Creek. Comment noted concerning divider between opposite lanes at Post Creek.
30	Comment noted favoring four-lane highway.
31	Comment noted favoring four-lane highway.
32	Comment noted favoring four-lane highway.
33	As indicated in Section 7.1.3.2, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) plan to coordinate access management with land use planning and regulation policy established by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Lake and Missoula counties and the incorporated communities in Lake County. As design of each highway segment progresses, each landowner adjacent to the highway will be contacted to determine specific access requirements.
34	Comments noted in favor of highway improvement and questioning the value of wildlife crossings.
35	Comments noted.

Comment Number	Response
36	Traffic and other studies have been updated for the final EIS. Section 7.1.3.2 of the final EIS describes access control proposals. Comments concerning highway design noted and will be addressed during final design.
37	Comment noted favoring the existing alignment at Ronan.
38	As indicated in Section 7.10, all wetlands impacted by the proposed action will be replaced with wetlands having similar functions and values. Comments noted concerning design of irrigation crossings.
39	Comment noted favoring the FRO proposal, an improved two-lane highway.
40	Comment noted favoring serious consideration of FRO proposal, for specific left-turn bays and for Ninepipe wildlife crossing. Section 7.12 of the final EIS discusses mitigation measures for ducks, turtles and other wildlife.
41	Comment noted favoring Alignment 3 at Ronan and favoring preferred alternative at Polson. Comment noted concerning animal corridors.
42	Comment noted opposing a four-lane highway and in favor of an improved two-lane highway. As described in Section 5.3.4 of the final EIS, various design options have been developed and are proposed in Pablo near the schools. These options address pedestrian, access and safety concerns, and were developed by the Pablo Community Team. A representative of Salish Kootenai College was a member of the team and concurred with the recommendations. Many of the recommendations were made at the suggestion of Salish Kootenai College through their representative on the community team. As indicated in Section 7.8.3 of the draft EIS and final EIS, noise levels will increase by approximately three dBA in the Pablo area if Lane Configuration C is constructed, as compared with existing conditions. Noise levels with Lane Configuration C will increase by approximately two dBA in the Pablo area, as compared with an improved two-lane highway in the year 2020.
43	As indicated in Section 5.3.4, additional traffic signals are under consideration.

For comments regarding Polson, response to public comment has been organized by general topics instead of by specific comments. The following responses to comments apply to written comments received before, at and after the Polson public hearing, as well as oral testimony received at the Polson public hearing. Comment numbers 44 through 62 for Polson, which are described in the index for the Polson public hearing on Pages 3.1-5 through 3.1-6, are discussed by the following responses 1 through 42.

Polson - Response to Public Comment

1. **Concern about impacts to Bald eagle with a new bridge.**

As described in the draft EIS and final EIS, the new bridge included with the preferred alternative is expected to have no adverse effect on eagles. Eagles which currently use the area for perching, hunting, feeding and loafing will probably be displaced by placement of a bridge in this area due to a small loss of habitat and increased noise and human activity. It is expected that these eagles will move to other habitat along the river. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has not expressed concern over these impacts. The draft EIS and final EIS describe measures to mitigate these impacts.

2. **Concern about impacts to wildlife with a new bridge.**

The placement of the new bridge would potentially have some impact on foraging ospreys and other waterfowl. Currently, ospreys and other waterfowl forage along the Flathead River. The construction of a new bridge may cause raptors to avoid foraging in this area. These impacts would result in limiting foraging areas near the new bridge. In addition, the new bridge may cause displacement of waterfowl and shorebirds due to a small loss of habitat and increased noise and human activity. As with the bald eagle, these individual birds will move to another area along the river. However, no substantial impacts to wildlife are anticipated as a result of this alternative. The draft EIS and final EIS describe measures to mitigate these impacts.

3. **Concern about reflected noise impacts from the cliffs with a new bridge.**

As stated in the draft EIS and final EIS, existing noise levels in the area of the preferred alternative bridge crossing was measured at 47 dBA and would increase to 73 dBA at 100 feet from the centerline of the new roadway. As stated in the draft EIS and final EIS, this increase is considered substantial.

An analysis of reflected noise was conducted. Assuming the cliffs are perfectly reflective (although it is very unlikely the cliffs are perfectly reflective), the results show that receptors would experience one to three dBA increase with reflected noise above projected direct road noise alone . An increase of one dB is not perceptible by the human ear; an increase of three decibels would be barely perceptible. This would result in a total dBA of 74 to 76 dBA noise level at 100 feet from the centerline of the new roadway. Similar to the increase in noise projected without accounting for reflected noise, the noise increase including reflected noise over existing levels would be considered substantial.

Noise levels decrease with distance, resulting in lower noise levels further away from the centerline of the new roadway. The following page describes typical noise levels.

Typical Noise Levels

Indoor Sound	dBA Scale	Outdoor Sound	Reference Loudness
	140	Aircraft carrier	
		Military operations	32 times
		Jet aircraft	as loud
	130	Large siren at 100'	
		Jet takeoff at 200'	
Rock band	120	Oxygen torch	
		Thunderstorm	16 times
		Elevated train	as loud
Industrial plant	110	Riveting machine	
		Auto horn at 3'	8 times
Circular/chain saw			as loud
Shouting in ear	100	Back compacting trash truck	
Printing room			4 times
		Heavy truck at 25'	as loud
Power mower	90		
		10 hp outboard at 50'	
Food blender		Motorcycle at 25'	2 times
Auto car wash		Diesel train at 100'	as loud
Garbage disposal	80	Small trucks at 25'	
Alarm clock			
Symphonic music		Heavy traffic at 50'	**Reference loudness to dBA**
Vacuum cleaner	70		
Dishwasher			
Electric typewriter		Average traffic at 100'	1/2 as loud
	60		
Air conditioner at 20'			
			1/4 as loud
Typical office			
Living room	50	Light traffic at 100'	
			1/8 as loud
Bedroom			
		Birdsong	
Library	40		
Broadcasting studio	30		
		Rural area	Just audible
	20		
		Rustling of leaves	
	10		
			Threshold of hearing
	0		

4. Suggestion to include new residences near preferred alternative

As of May, 1995 six new residences have been constructed within approximately 1,000 feet of the preferred alternative. This is subsequent to information printed in the draft EIS and final EIS.

5. Concern about impacts to special aquatic site.

It should be noted that according to the US Army Corps of Engineers, all wetlands are special aquatic sites. The wetland (special aquatic site) in the area of the preferred alternative bridge crossing would be avoided, to the extent possible. If avoidance is not possible, impacts will be minimized and all unavoidable impacts will be mitigated. The same is true for impacts to all wetlands related to this proposed action.

6. Question about how large are the cut and fill slopes on the preferred alternative?

The range of cut and fill slopes along the new roadway would be between six feet and 40 feet.

7. Request to show the cut and fill slopes on a 3D GIS model.

Adequate design information has not been developed to accurately portray this visual impact. It has been described in the draft EIS and final EIS in section 7.17.

8. Question about why at the public hearing were the results of the business survey not passed out, even after it was requested?

We are not aware of a request to have the results of the business survey passed out at the public hearing. Results of the business surveys were posted on the walls of the meeting room at the Polson Public Hearing held on April 27, 1995. Individual requests for receipt of the survey results were fulfilled. The survey will be included at the end of Appendix E in the final EIS, and will be available at the Public Information Meeting in Polson on August 7, 1995.

9. Question about why did the Polson Election Day Survey have only a 50% of the responses received, totaled in the results?

This requires a lengthy explanation . The purpose of the election day survey was to provide a large number of Polson area residents with an opportunity to have input into the identification of US 93 issues and the analysis of US 93 alternatives. Of the approximately 2,750 persons who voted at the Polson area polling places in the fall of 1992, 1,288 took the time to complete the US 93 survey. This 48% participation rate in the survey is indicative of a very high level of local interest in US 93 issues.

A statistical technique called sampling is used in survey research for the sake of economy and accuracy. Rather than surveying an entire population, a representative "sample" is selected from the larger population being studied. It is not uncommon for national surveys to use sample sizes of about 400 to develop information about nationwide public opinions. Analysis of the Polson Election Day Survey employed a sample of 644; which was half of the completed questionnaires.

Results of samples should be viewed as approximations of the opinions/characteristics of the population as a whole. Even with a very large and carefully compiled sample, it is almost inevitable that there will be small differences in the results which would occur if everyone in the population was surveyed. This is called the "SAMPLING ERROR". It is the differences in the values for the sample versus values for the entire population.

For the Polson Election Day Survey, the sample results are likely to very closely approximate the distributions of opinions of all people who completed the survey. There is a 95% probability that the frequency distributions for the sample of the survey respondents are within plus or minus two percent of the distributions for all the persons completing the survey.

10. Question about where the first letter went that MDT received from the Tribes?

Only one letter dated May 24, 1995 was received by MDT from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council regarding the preferred alternative in Polson.

11. Why did the draft EIS take two years instead of six months to complete?

Several factors created this delay including the need to address tribal concerns and a longer than expected Federal review process.

12. Question about how the alignment of the preferred alternative be changed be a piece of red tape for a Public Hearing, then be removed again, prior to a Polson City Council Meeting?

The red tape indicated a possible refinement of a portion of the preferred alternative as it crossed over the Flathead River. The tape was removed, and the potential of a river crossing dropped from further consideration after it was discovered that the area is considered to be culturally significant.

13. Question about who is responsible within the MDT structure to check the quality of the draft EIS and the accountability of Carter & Burgess' end product?

The agency responsible for the draft EIS and the final EIS is the FHWA.

14. Question about if the Polson City Council votes against the bypass and requests to improve the existing route, how soon will that happen?

Reconstruction of the existing route would have the same period for construction as a bypass on MDT's priority list (10 to 15 years from now). Minor systems improvements would continue to be made until that time.

15. Question, if the Polson City Council votes in favor of the bypass, how will the final EIS proceed even though the draft EIS is incomplete and out of date?

Where necessary, additional information in the draft EIS will be updated and included in the final EIS. FHWA will make a decision about a preferred alternative based on information contained in the final EIS.

16. Suggestion to add residential right-of-way required for the preferred alternative on Pages 7.2-5 through 7.2-8 .

For the preferred alternative the residential right-of-way required for Lane Configuration B is 18.4 acres and for Lane Configuration D is 21.5 acres.

17. Comment, MDT has stated that the preferred alternative would be cost prohibitive if right-of-way acquisition were necessary to prohibit access to all existing residents and agricultural users. However, the Polson City Council agreed to a "Controlled Access Highway".

The preferred alternative would be a controlled access highway for the vast majority of the route. This does not mean that access will be prohibited. The small number of access that will be allowed, will not compromise the controlled access aspect of the new highway. Business and commercial access will not be allowed unless the access exists prior to acquisition of access rights by MDT.

18. Question about how much right-of-way is needed and what will the right-of-way costs be for the preferred alternative?

Total right-of-way needed for the preferred alternative is approximately 139.6 acres, for Alternative 2 approximately 107.5 acres and for Alternative 1 approximately 23.3 acres. Right-of-way costs for the preferred alternative are approximately $2,081,000, for Alternative 2 they are $2,435,000 and for Alternative 1 they are $2,659,000.

19. Question about the specific location of the preferred alternative as it crosses the Flathead River.

The precise alignment of the preferred alternative will be determined during final design. The preferred alternative as described in the draft EIS and final EIS is a corridor wide enough to make adjustments at the time of final design for changed conditions or unforeseen circumstances.

The preferred alternative corridor as it crosses the Flathead River has been adjusted to respond to concerns regarding access expressed by residents in the area. The corridor as shown in the draft EIS and final EIS followed Highland Drive, a private north-south road in the Riverside Terrace subdivision. The adjusted corridor approaches Highland Drive from the south , then proceeds west of and

generally parallel to it, then crosses Highland Drive with an overpass just south of the sewage lagoon road. It crosses the river slightly north of the original route. This corridor would maintain access for existing residences in the area. An aerial photo of this corridor was available at the Public Information Meeting and City Council meeting on August 7.

20. Question about if the preferred alternative is opposed by the Tribes, why isn't this alternative dropped, and route selection revisited or widening of the existing alignment become the preferred alternative since MDT already owns all of the right-of-way along US 93.

MDT does not own all of the right-of-way along US 93 and would still need to acquire approximately 23.3 acres of additional right-of-way. Acquisition of this right-of-way would displace at least three businesses which need to be purchased or moved. It is not know whether the Tribes oppose or support widening through Polson or widening of the existing bridge across the Flathead River. The FHWA will review all of the alternatives and the positions stated by each governing entity . The fact that Tribal land cannot be condemned will be taken into account. The FHWA will make the final decision on the selection of the preferred alternative based upon all of this information.

21. Suggestion to reevaluate the economic impacts of the preferred alternative based on no commercial development allowed along the new roadway.

Economic impacts of the preferred alternative assuming no commercial development along the new roadway and for comparative purposes, economic impacts of Alternative 1 and Alternative 3 with commercial development are summarized below:

Estimated Business Sales to Drive-Through Travelers
For Retail and Selected Service Businesses

	Alternative 1	Alternative 3 (Pref. Alt.) (with commercial development)	Alternative 3 (Pref. Alt.) (no commercial development)	
**Year	Sales (in millions of $)	Sales (in millions of $)	Sales (in millions of $)	* Mitigation Options
1995	$5.8	$5.8	$5.8	(base year)
2000	$6.7	$4.1	$3.4	(no mitigation
			$4.4	(low mitigation)
			$5.0	(medium mitigation)
			$5.7	(high mitigation)
2005	$7.8	$6.7	$3.9	(no mitigation
			$5.1	(low mitigation)
			$5.8	(medium mitigation)
			$6.6	(high mitigation)
2010	$9.0	$9.0	$4.5	(no mitigation)
			$5.9	(low mitigation)
			$6.8	(medium mitigation)
			$7.7	(high mitigation)
2015	$10.5	$10.5	$5.2	(no mitigation)
			$6.8	(low mitigation)
			$7.8	(medium mitigation)
			$8.9	(high mitigation)

No mitigation: Bypass encouraged intersection design & no promotion.
Low mitigation: Minor intersection improvements & low promotion.
Medium mitigation: Equal weight intersection design & medium promotion.
High mitigation: Existing route encouraged intersection design & high promotion.

**All mitigation options include restrictive zoning (city and county) and access controls by MDT to restrict commercial development along new route.*

*** Note: It is assumed that the bypass will not be constructed prior to the year 2005.*

Two types of mitigation are available, promotional and interchange design. It is assumed that mitigation will include a combination of these two types.

Promotional mitigation is based on the level of local promotional effort. The level of promotion would be higher based on the number of promotional tools used. These tools could consist of advertisement in publications, special events, scenic overlooks, community attractions, beach/recreation improvements and promotions and signage. In coordination with MDT, signage could be located at or near the two bypass intersections with US 93.

Potential signage for US 93 could include: "Full Services available in Polson" "Flathead Scenic Highway ". For the bypass, potential signage could include: "No Services Available on the Bypass Route", "Truck Route".

The second type of mitigation is the design of the two bypass intersections with US 93.

- No mitigation is defined as a design encouraging tourism traffic onto the bypass.
- A low level of mitigation is defined as design of minor intersection modifications to make it easier for travelers to stay on the existing highway.
- Medium level mitigation is defined as design giving travelers equal opportunity to travel on the bypass or existing highway.
- High level of mitigation is defined as a design encouraging tourism traffic onto the existing highway

Costs of locally initiated promotional mitigation are anticipated to be low relative to the estimated sales increases. A portion of the overall mitigation includes signage as well as intersection design and construction costs that will be part of MDT's project costs. Possible methods of financing the various local promotional measures include Chamber of Commerce dues and the formation of an Economic Development District.

Baseline projections of sales losses attributable to a bypass route are founded on results of the survey of Polson businesses conducted in the spring of 1993. Survey responses indicated that if a bypass /truck route was built around Polson, local businesses would lose about half of their sales to drive-through travelers. The "No Mitigation" assumption is based on the business survey results.

The low to high mitigation levels assume that as mitigation increases, Polson will capture an increasing share of the drive-through traveler market.

22. Suggest placing signage on MT 35 as a truck bypass of Polson route. MT 35 is already used as a bypass should be the Polson bypass.

Opposition exists along MT 35 against using this route as a truck route. If MT 35 were signed as a bypass route, the other cities north of Polson would by default be bypassed also including Somers, Lakeside, etc. These cities would need to be involved in any decision to bypass them. MT 35 would not relieve congestion within Polson that originates in Polson - for those users who may use a bypass to get from the east to west end of town for example. The MT 35 route is not a bypass of Polson, it is too long and is an alternate route. There would be no opportunity to return to Polson once the MT 35 route is taken. A bypass within Polson would provide a means for the traveler to have some access to Polson. Many people already know about MT 35 are using this route for other reasons, scenery, access to Big Fork among others.

23. Statement that the cliffs at the Flathead River crossing are unstable and subject to erosion. A bridge will contribute to the instability of this area.

The bridge would be designed and built so that it would not contribute to further instability of the cliffs.

24. Concern with impacts to wetlands at the preferred alternative crossing of the Flathead River.

As stated in the draft EIS and final EIS, estimated impacts to wetlands for the entire length of the preferred alternative is one-half of one acre. This is not considered a substantial impact to wetlands.

25. Recommend checking the business survey results as stated on Page 6.5-5 of the draft EIS that state 64% of US 93 businesses and 44% of downtown merchants feel that summertime traffic congestion frequently or occasionally restricts customer access to their business.

The referenced statement is accurate, however, additional text will be added to the final EIS as follows: In the summer months, for businesses on US 93, 20% experience frequent restrictions of customer access, 44% experience occasional restrictions and 36% do not experience a problem. In the winter months, for businesses on US 93, 12% experience frequent restrictions of

customer access, 16% experience occasional restrictions and 68% do not experience a problem. In the summer months for downtown businesses, 11% experience frequent restrictions, 33% experience occasional restrictions and 47% do not experience a problem. In the winter months for downtown businesses 0% experience frequent restrictions, 14% experience occasional restrictions and 81% do not experience a problem.

26. Suggest research on effect alternative routes have had on other similar cities.

Appendix D of the draft EIS entitled Influence on Retail Trade provides a summary of studies which have been conducted on the impacts caused by highway alignment alternatives.

27. Concern with destruction of the view and appearance of the Flathead River and the sand cliffs.

The new bridge will create a permanent visual impact for residents in the area of the bridge crossing. The new bridge will also provide users a new scenic view of the Flathead River and Flathead Lake.

28. Concern with decline in property values in the area of the preferred alternative crossing of the Flathead River.

Studies on the effect of new, limited-access highways on residential (essentially single-family) property values, although not in total agreement, generally conclude that properties abutting the new highway or within 1,000 feet of it would be affected most, properties between 1,000 feet and 4,000 feet would have some "secondary impact," and properties beyond the eight blocks would not be affected. For residences in the abutting zone, appreciation of properties lagged slightly behind those in other areas. However, several studies have determined that such potential loss in property values is frequently offset or surpassed by appreciation resulting from increased accessibility to the area. Within the secondary impact zone (1,000 to 4,000 feet away), most studies reported no loss in property values from adverse environmental effects and a gain from improved accessibility for the area (Caltrans 1994). Researchers agree that these studies are not conclusive and that various project design factors influence the property values. This is the best information on which to evaluate impacts of the preferred alternative on residential property values in the area.

29. Suggestion of two alternatives one provide overpasses or expand the highway into the lake and improve US 93 in the present alignment.

The majority of the impacts associated with widening of US 93 would still exist with these alternatives including adverse operating conditions as traffic volume increases, impacts to parks. In addition the alternative would create additional visual impacts, environmental impacts involving construction in the lake, and a greater potential for spillage of hazardous materials into the lake.

30. Concern that the preferred alternative bridge structure would create a navigational hazard for future aquatic events on the Flathead River.

Proper placement of bridge pier structures can minimize navigational hazards for boat traffic.

31. Concern that preferred alternative departs US 93 before the view of Flathead Lake at the top of the hill at Ready Mix Concrete.

This is an accurate statement, northbound users of the preferred alternative will not have a view of the Lake before turning west. A view of the Flathead River and the Lake will be available at the new bridge crossing.

32. Suggest a route that would bypass every city on the route.

This suggestion was raised early in the EIS process and was discarded because it received public opposition and only minor public support, it would cause substantial environmental impacts relating to noise, farmland impacts visual and cultural resources. In addition, Ronan has indicated opposition to any highway relocation that will divert highway traffic. In accordance with Montana law, these alignments cannot be constructed by MDT without approval of the municipality.

33. Suggest that the numbers show that a bypass will not help traffic congestion in the city of Polson.

When combined with historic growth on US 93, traffic demand on US 93 through Polson is projected to be nearly double the existing average annual traffic volume of 10,000 vehicles per day (VPD) However, the capacity of the existing road is only estimated to be about 15,000 VPD. The proposed bypass would help accommodate the over capacity demand by providing; a route for trucks bypassing Polson; an alternative for through traffic ; an optional southern access into town via Kerr Dam Road and Skyline Drive. The bypass is estimated to carry more than 5,000 to 7,000 VPD by the year 2020. While it is recognized that traffic volume on the existing US 93 will decrease initially following completion of the two-lane bypass, average daily traffic will continue to grow due to continued development in town to an estimated 13,000 to 15,000 VPD by the year 2020. The bypass will serve as a relief valve for the increasing traffic congestion on US 93 through Polson.

34. Suggest looking at other alternatives for a bypass alignment.

A revisit of the logic used to develop the present two alternative routes proposed for Polson would be useful in responding to this question. A description of the potential routes and the reason they were not considered acceptable follows:

- A one way couplet was investigated using Third and Fourth Streets. This alternative contained impacts to schools, churches and the Lake County Courthouse, potential for increased pedestrian conflicts including accidents, noise impacts to a large number of residences. It would not improve the safety of the transportation system, minimize negative impacts to existing residential neighborhoods, nor was it responsive to future land use plans and transportation needs.

- An alignment on the top of Polson Hill was investigated. This alternative required almost a mile of six-percent grade, which would result in icing problems. It would not maintain and enhance traffic flow, improve the safety of the transportation system and was not responsive to long-term maintenance requirements.

- An alignment at the north base of Polson Hill was investigated. This alternative would result in circuitous, forced alignment and six-percent grades, potential icing problems, socioeconomic impacts to residential areas, and conflict with the airport. It would not maintain and enhance traffic flow, improve the safety of the transportation system, minimize negative impacts to existing residential neighborhoods, and was not responsive to long-term maintenance requirements or future land use plans and transportation needs.

- An alignment from the old mill to Eighth Avenue was investigated. This alternative would result in a circuitous, forced alignment , socioeconomic impacts to residential areas on the hillside, effects on the elementary and junior high schools and noise impacts to a large number of residences. It would not maintain and enhance traffic flow, minimize negative impacts to existing residential neighborhoods, or be responsive to future land use plans and transportation needs.

- Locations to cross the Flathead River were investigated. The banks of the river become steeper and taller as one travels south on the river from Flathead Lake. Steepness of the banks has a direct correlation to the cost of a bridge, therefore steep banks are avoided. The area considered too steep begins about 9,000 feet south of the mouth of Flathead Lake. The Polson Airport, Lake County Fairgrounds and the Polson sewer lagoons were avoided for potential routes. Existing residences were avoided. With this process of elimination, the remaining crossing locations became an extension of Kerr Dam Road (Alternative 2) and the crossing of preferred alternative 3.

Upon revisiting the alternative for a bypass around Polson, topographical, existing residential and community development constraints eliminated most alternatives, resulting in the three that were analyzed in the draft EIS and final EIS.

35. Concerned with safety at intersection of preferred alternative with Kerr Dam Road and wants an interchange considered

The preferred alternative alignment at Kerr Dam Road is proposed with an intersection to provide for access onto Kerr Dam Road into Polson. As traffic increases along the new alignment, an interchange is an option for the future.

36. Suggest a one-way system on Main and First Streets as an alternative solution, would result in fewer right-hand turns.

This suggestion may provide some relief at the two intersections, but would not relieve enough congestion on US 93 to satisfy overall purpose and need for the proposed action.

37. Suggest that input from children be sought to identify their concerns.

Anyone is welcome to share their views. Perhaps some of these children could attend the Polson City Council meeting on August 7 to let the Council know their feelings regarding the preferred alternative.

38. Suggest a route further south of preferred alternative's river crossing at "rock in river" site.

This crossing location has been investigated. It was discarded upon learning that the area is a culturally significant area.

39. Suggest a pedestrian overpass over a five-lane US 93 to mitigate concerns about pedestrians crossing safely.

A pedestrian overpass is typically used in combination with fencing and limited access, thus creating a mandatory crossing location. Experience gained from research into similar existing facilities and situations shows that pedestrian crosswalks are seldom used, unless the use is mandatory. Pedestrian overpasses also present visual impact, safety and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) concerns.

40. Suggest expanding US 93 northwest to 4th Avenue then existing three lanes west through Polson.

Without expansion of the existing three lanes from 4th Avenue west, there would not be enough capacity for the forecast traffic growth to meet the purpose and need of the proposed action.

41. Concern that if US 93 is not widened by MDT, that the city will be responsible for cleaning up the hazardous materials that occur within the existing right-of-way.

MDT's responsibility for cleanup will not change whether the existing alignment is widened or not.

42. Concern with impact to farming access.

Access to existing farm operations will be maintained.

Comment Number	Response
63	Comment noted opposing Alignment 3 as the preferred alternative at Polson.
64	Comment noted opposing Polson Alignment 3 as the preferred alternative at Polson.
65	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative at Polson. Based on the traffic analysis, without an alternative alignment for through traffic at Polson, a two-lane highway through Polson will not provide adequate capacity for the high traffic volume. A two-lane highway will not improve access or reduce conflicts between turning vehicles and through traffic. Refer to Polson Response 21 for information about effects on business. Design options for facilities serving pedestrians and bicyclists were developed in response to support at public meetings and in consultation with community teams and the ID Team. The highway design process will review appropriate locations for facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Public meetings and public hearings were open to young people, both as individuals and members of civic groups. Comment noted any future public involvement consider special meetings with young people in the community.
66	Comment noted favoring a four-lane highway. The schedule for construction will depend on availability of appropriated funds.
67	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
68	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
69	Comment noted opposing existing alignment as the preferred alternative at Arlee.
70	Comment noted opposing existing alignment as the preferred alternative at Arlee.
71	As indicated in Section 7.1 of the final EIS, the preferred alternative will provide adequate highway capacity and improved safety and traffic operation through the design year 2020. Highway speed will be controlled with signs and enforcement practices that are used for all rural primary highways in Montana.
72	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring the FRO proposal. The analysis of cultural resources was coordinated with the Flathead and Kootenai culture committees and with the legal department of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The wildlife analysis has identified areas in which wildlife crossing the highway is a special concern. Wildlife passage structures will be included in the design for such locations. The wildlife analysis has been coordinated with biological specialists of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and other governmental agencies and citizen groups with interests in wildlife. The preferred alternative will include the costs of construction and maintenance for Lane Configurations B, C and D (four-lane highways) for various highway segments. The expenditure will be for a highway that provides adequate highway capacity through the design year 2020. Based on the traffic analysis, a two-lane highway with auxiliary passing lanes, and using reasonable and feasible measures of TDM, will not provide adequate highway capacity through the design year 2020. Expenditure for a highway with inadequate capacity will not be a reasonable or prudent use of public monies.
73	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro to Polson and opposing Polson Alignment 3 as the preferred alternative at Polson.
74	Comments noted favoring the FRO proposal and expressing concern about the public hearing process. The draft EIS does not state the culture of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes is "no longer alive or of much consequence." The analysis of cultural resources was coordinated with the Flathead and Kootenai culture committees and with the legal department of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.
75	Comment noted favoring TDM instead of large highway improvements.
76	Alternative routes such as the "Old Freight Route" were considered, but are not part of the preferred alternative because they received substantial opposition at public meetings and would cause greater environmental impacts. The lane configurations of the preferred alternative were developed in response to support at public meetings and through consultation with the Arlee, Ronan, Pablo and Polson community teams and the ID Team.

Comment Number	Response
77	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
78	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative at Polson.
79	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative at Polson. Left-turn bays at major intersections and continuous two-way left-turn center medians on the highway in and near communities will reduce conflicts between vehicles turning and through traffic. The highway design process will review appropriate locations for auxiliary lanes and left-turn bays.
80	The distance in the Pablo area for Lane Configuration C (four-lane highway with a continuous two-way, left-turn center median) was developed in consultation with the Pablo Community Team and the ID Team. The highway design process will review appropriate distances for lane configurations of the preferred alternative.
81	Comment noted opposing existing alignment as the preferred alternative at Arlee.
82	Comment noted opposing existing alignment as the preferred alternative at Arlee.
83	Comment noted opposing preferred alternative and favoring the FRO proposal.
84	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
85	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
86	Comment noted opposing existing alignment as the preferred alternative at Arlee.
87	Comment noted on proposal for a new utility complex in Pablo. The highway design process will review appropriate locations for design options and traffic control, including traffic signals.
88	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro to Polson and opposing Polson Alignment 3 as the preferred alternative at Polson.
89	Comment noted the Fort Connah Restoration Society will request an approach to the highway. MDT currently manages access by application of road approach standards and permit requirements. MDT plans to implement partial or full access control with the preferred alternative to eliminate and consolidate approaches.
90	Comment noted opposing existing alignment as the preferred alternative at Arlee.
91	Comment noted favoring a four-lane highway.
92	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
93	Comment noted indicating concern about effects of Polson Alignment 3.
94	Comment noted requesting an overpass or underpass be constructed at Kerr Dam Road with Polson Alignment 3.
95	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
96	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative at Ronan.
97	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative at Ronan.
98	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
99	Comment noted regarding the right-of-way appraisal process.
100	Comment noted favoring bypasses at Arlee, Ronan and Polson.
101	Frontage roads have been considered but are not proposed in this area because of the substantial cost, right-of-way requirements and environmental impacts. With highway construction, approaches will be improved and left-turn bays added to help access the highway.
102	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative at Polson.
103	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.

Comment Number	Response
104	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative at Polson.
105	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Chapter 10 in the final EIS discusses the coordination of public involvement and development and comparison of alternatives. Alternatives for lane configurations from Evaro through Polson and highway alignments at Arlee, Ronan and Polson were developed in response to support at public meetings and through consultation with the Arlee, Ronan, Pablo and Polson community teams and the ID Team.
106	Comment noted favoring preferred alternative at Polson.
107	Comment noted favoring preferred alternative at Polson.
108	Comment noted favoring preferred alternative at Polson.
109	Comment noted opposing Polson Alignment 3 as the preferred alternative at Polson.
110	Comment noted favoring preferred alternative at Polson.
111	Comment noted opposing Polson Alignment 3 as the preferred alternative at Polson.
112	Comment noted opposing Polson Alignment 3 as the preferred alternative at Polson.
113	Comment noted favoring Arlee alternative alignment. The highway design process will review appropriate locations for design options and traffic control, including highway approaches, access and turning movement.
114	Comment noted favoring preferred alternative.
115	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring the FRO proposal. The preferred alternative uses the four-lane configurations to provide adequate highway capacity, while converting to new highway right-of-way the least amount of necessary land, including farmland and wetlands. MDT is coordinating development of a wetlands mitigation plan with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to replace wetlands converted to highway right-of-way with other wetlands having similar function and value.
116	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Lane Configurations B, C and D (four-lane highways) were selected for various highway segments as the preferred alternative. Based on the traffic analysis, a two-lane highway with auxiliary passing lanes will not provide adequate highway capacity through the design year 2020, even if extensive TDM measures are employed. The preferred alternative uses the four-lane configurations to best provide for safety and to provide adequate highway capacity, while converting to new highway right-of-way the least amount of necessary land, including wetlands.
117	Comment noted opposing the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson.
118	Response to the comment from the Flathead Resource Organization (FRO) is presented on the following pages.

Details of Topics in FRO Comment and Response:

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-1 Bias in the draft environmental impact statement (EIS).

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-1.1 The draft environmental impact statement (EIS) shows bias in favor of the preferred alternative.

FRO-1.2 The presentations of the preferred alternative at the public hearings were conducted in a biased, argumentative manner.

FRO-1.3 Bias against the recommendations of the Arlee and Ronan community teams.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page		Paragraph(s)
FRO-1.1	Letter	
	2	1-2
	25	1
FRO-1.2	Letter - 1	3
FRO-1.3	Letter - 1	4
	13	1
	13	5

Response:

FRO-1.1 The purpose of the proposed action is to improve the highway transportation system in response to transportation demand.

Section 6.1 in the final EIS presents information that was not available for the draft EIS. It indicates traffic volume continued to increase for US 93 from Evaro through Polson during 1992-94. Continuing growth of local and regional travel contribute to transportation demand that requires the preferred alternative to provide adequate highway capacity and improve safety and traffic operation.

The results of the analysis of traffic operation shows that with the expected growth of traffic volume a four-lane highway is necessary for adequate capacity and desired LOS.

The analysis of a two-lane highway considers the design options and the TDM measures that are presented in the FRO alternative.

Alternative transportation is considered in the analysis of the alternatives. The analysis applies TDM with levels of ridership higher than is typical for rural areas similar to the Flathead Indian Reservation and Lake County. The enhanced TDM does not allow a two-lane highway to obtain adequate capacity and desirable LOS for the high volume of traffic.

Alternatives were developed through a series of public meetings. The public provided comments about the purpose and need for the transportation system, which is predominantly automobile and truck traffic on US 93. The alternatives represent the response of the public at the public meetings.

FRO-1.2 The presentation at the beginning of each public hearing summarized the preferred alternative. It discussed reasons for selecting a four-lane highway, as well as reasons a two-lane highway will not provide adequate capacity and desirable LOS.

FRO-1.3 Community teams at Arlee, Ronan, Pablo and Polson were organized to provide recommendations for lane configurations and alignments to be considered by the ID Team for the proposed action. Recommendations of the community teams are reported in Section 5.3.4 of the final EIS, along with reasons some recommendations are not included in the preferred alternative.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-2 The analysis in the draft EIS does not present comparisons of all alternatives.

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-2.1 The analysis of a two-lane highway does not include all of the elements of the FRO proposal.

FRO-2.2 Acceptable LOS is a subjective measure that varies widely among communities and regions.

FRO-2.3 The LOS analysis considers only road characteristics, not performance characteristics. FRO LOS analysis for Highway Segment I.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page		Paragraph(s)
FRO-2.1	Letter - 2	2
	1	3
FRO-2.2	1	4
FRO-2.3	2	5-10
	3	1-3

Response:

FRO-2.1 Lane Configuration A in the draft and final EIS includes all of the elements of the FRO proposal except for slow-moving vehicle turnouts.

According to AASHTO[18], where slow-moving vehicle turnouts exist,

"The driver of the slow-moving vehicle, if there are following vehicles, is expected to pull out of the through lane and remain in the turnout only long enough for the following vehicles to pass before returning to the through lane. When there are only one or two following vehicles this maneuver can be accomplished without it being necessary for the driver of the vehicle in the turnout to stop. However, when this number is exceeded it will require the driver to stop in order for all the following vehicles to pass. Turnouts are most frequently used on lower volume roads where long platoons are rare and in difficult terrain with steep grades where construction of an additional lane may not be cost effective."

With the high traffic volumes on this road, platoons of more than two vehicles are frequent. When slower moving vehicles pull into the turnout, they will frequently be required to come to a complete stop. Most of these slower-moving vehicles will be RVs and trucks that accelerate slowly -- with the high traffic volume on the through lane, it will be difficult for them to re-enter the traffic stream. Because of these difficulties, few drivers will use them and, when they do, additional safety problems will be created as slower-moving vehicles try to re-enter the main traffic stream.

FRO-2.2

MDT's policy for rural primary highways is to implement highway improvement that will provide LOS B through the design year. A survey of other state transportation agencies in the region indicates similar policies are in effect for LOS.

The preferred alternative will include the cost of construction, operation and maintenance for Lane Configurations B, C and D (four-lane highways) for various highway segments. The expenditure will be for a highway that provides adequate highway capacity through the design year 2020. Based on the traffic analysis, a two-lane highway with auxiliary passing lanes, and using reasonable and feasible measures of TDM, will not provide adequate highway capacity through the design year 2020. Expenditure for a highway with inadequate capacity will not be a reasonable or prudent use of public monies.

[18]American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 1990, page 270.

Section 7.20 provides information about costs of construction for lane configuration alternatives and the preferred alternative.

FRO-2.3

The LOS computations in the draft EIS were completed using the 1985 Highway Capacity Manual. Those in the final EIS were completed using the 1994 Highway Capacity Manual. The Highway Capacity Manual is a standard used by state and local highway agencies throughout Montana and the United States. Using this method, it is possible to compare operation on this highway with highways throughout the state and region. It is correct that this method is not a measure of safety or environmental impacts. Safety and environmental impacts are evaluated in other sections of the document using various methods.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-3 Safety versus traffic operation

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-3.1 Safety is not the primary reason for the proposed highway improvement, but safety is presented as a reason for improving the highway. Accident frequency is an irregular statistic.

FRO-3.2 FRO comparison of safety between FRO Plan and draft EIS.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page	Paragraph(s)
FRO-3.1 Letter - 2	3
3	2
FRO-3.2 3	3

Response:

FRO-3.1 The accident frequency (the number of accidents per mile of highway) is presented in the document to illustrate the high number of accidents that occur on each mile of this highway as a result of the high traffic volumes. This statistic is explained well in the draft EIS and final EIS. The accident rate (the number of accidents per million miles driven) also is presented in the draft EIS and final EIS. It is acknowledged in the draft EIS and the final EIS that the accident rate on this highway is better than statewide averages.

FRO-3.2 Comment noted.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-4 Comparison of impacts of growth and development for alternatives.

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-4.1 The analysis in the draft EIS avoids the issue of growth and development.

FRO-4.2 The projections of traffic growth are made to justify the project.

FRO-4.3 Detailed plan for implementing access management.

FRO-4.4 Highway right-of-way in environmentally sensitive areas.

FRO-4.5 Comparison of barrier effects for alternatives.

FRO-4.6 Left turns onto the highway and safety for school buses.

FRO-4.7 Settlement patterns for the Polson preferred alternative.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page		Paragraph(s)
FRO-4.1	Letter - 2	4
	3	6
	4	2
	4	5
	5	1
	6	3
	7	1-5
	8	1
	8	3
	9	1-6
	10	2-3
	10	5
	11	1-6
	12	6
	13	2
	13	5-6
	13	8
	14	1
FRO-4.2	Letter - 2	4
	3	4
	8	2
FRO-4.3	4	1
FRO-4.4	4	3
FRO-4.5	5	2
	6	1-2
	9	1
	10	1
	11	4-6
	11	8
	12	1-2
	19	6

FRO-4.6	11	7-8
	12	3
	13	3
FRO-4.7	13	7

Response:

FRO-4.1 The Flathead Indian Reservation and Lake and Missoula counties have experienced high rates of population growth. An improved highway will be one of many factors that make the area attractive to new residents. Traffic operation will improve with reduced travel time and improved convenience and driver comfort. Continuing local and regional population growth contribute to transportation demand that requires the preferred alternative to provide adequate highway capacity and improve safety and traffic operation. Land use planning and regulation will provide appropriate management of population growth.

Important information about land use planning and regulation is not available for the Flathead Indian Reservation and Lake and Missoula counties.

A separate analysis of farmlands converted to developed areas is beyond the scope of the analysis in the final EIS.

Additional information was added to Sections 6.4 and 7.4, Social, and 6.14 and 7.14, Cultural Resources, to address the issue of impacts associated with commuter-related population growth. The new information supports the analysis in the draft EIS that the highway is one of many factors that contribute to growth.

Using the legal authority of tribal and local governments to implement land use planning and regulation for overall growth will also provide management for growth related to the highway. Also, restricting the highway to a facility with inadequate capacity will neither prohibit nor manage overall levels and patterns of growth and development.

Overall development, including the improvement of the highway, causes pressure for development of farmlands.

The preferred alternative does not exclude use of any highway design option, TDM measure or tribal and local land use policy for management of growth and development.

FRO-4.2 Table 6.1-14 in the draft EIS and final EIS identifies the geographic origin of traffic during the summer season. Additional origin and destination studies would have required stopping traffic and would have caused a safety hazard. There have not been major construction projects that periodically stop traffic.

Table 6.1-14 provides information obtained from a count of license plates of moving vehicles to determine the origin of traffic. In the summer months, when traffic is at its peak, approximately 50% of traffic is from outside Lake County.

The volume of traffic has increased at an annual average rate of three percent since 1970. During 1970-1991, the populations of Lake County and the Flathead Indian Reservation have increased at a higher rate than the overall rate for Montana. There have been fluctuations in the rate of population growth, ranging from one percent to more than three percent per year. Use of a three percent annual rate of growth for traffic provides a reasonable basis with which to analyze future transportation demand and need for highway capacity.

FRO-4.3 Section 7.2.1.3 discusses the intention of MDT to coordinate access management with land use planning and regulation. Information has been added to the final EIS in Section 7.1 to describe plans for access management.

FRO-4.4 The designs and new right-of-way for sensitive areas will be coordinated with project representatives of cooperating agencies having legal jurisdiction for land along the highway.

FRO-4.5 Section 7.4.1.1 compares the barrier effects of two-lane and four-lane highways. A two-lane highway will have traffic congestion because of inadequate capacity for the high volume of traffic. The traffic congestion restricts access to the highway and developed areas. A four-lane highway will have a greater physical presence, but traffic operation will have reduced congestion.

The analysis of lane configurations on the existing alignment explains the highway will be a facility that maintains the current routes of travel for vehicles and pedestrians. The preferred alternative provides adequate capacity for increasing traffic volume, and it will provide the best opportunity to not alter vehicular and pedestrian patterns by moving traffic off the highway onto residential streets.

Page 6.4-7, Paragraph 2 identifies the populations that live east and west of the highway in Arlee and Ronan. Minorities will benefit from improved access with the preferred alternative.

Section 7.4.1.4 discusses conditions that result in the highway being one of many factors that will contribute to population growth and development of land. Section 7.2.1.3 discusses the differences among lane configurations for turning movement from the highway to land with highway frontage.

FRO-4.6 Sections 6.1 and 7.1, Traffic Operation and Safety, address turning movement. Safety for school buses, school children, farm vehicles and other service vehicles such as mail carriers will be included in the design of the highway.

FRO-4.7 Refer to response to FRO-4.3.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-5 Purpose and need.

FRO-Comment Topic:

Purpose and need and interpretation of traffic operation and LOS.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page	Paragraph(s)
1	1-2

Response:

Refer to response to FRO-1.1 for information about the preferred alternative and analysis of traffic operation for LOS.

Refer to response to FRO-4.5 for information about comparison of barrier effects between two-lane and four-lane highways.

Refer to response to FRO-4.3 for information on access management.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-6 Preliminary draft EIS.

FRO-Comment Topic

Comparison of information in the preliminary draft EIS and the draft EIS.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page	Paragraph(s)
Letter-1	3

Various pages of cover letter and comments.

Response:

The preliminary draft EIS was a working document that was distributed to members of the ID Team for review. The draft EIS contains numerous changes from the preliminary draft EIS. Comments about changes between the working document and the draft EIS are noted and addressed in the responses to FRO comments about the draft EIS.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-7 Economics.

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-7.1 Influence of highway transportation system on economic and community development.

FRO-7.2 Effects of multi-lane highways on the area with an economy dependent on tourism (and tourist perceptions) and a relatively unspoiled natural character.

FRO-7.3 The analysis should determine how declining animal populations affect the tourism economy.

FRO-7.4 The analysis on Page 7.5-5 does not provide clear comparisons among alternatives on the economy. The analysis does not provide information about which lane configuration would have a more positive or negative effect on the economy.

FRO-7.5 Comparison of alternatives encouraging commercial strip development.

FRO-7.6 Indirect effects on farmlands and agricultural production value.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page		Paragraph(s)
FRO-7.1	14	2-3
FRO-7.2	14	4
FRO-7.3	14	4
FRO-7.4	14	5
FRO-7.5	14	6
FRO-7.6	15	1

Response:

FRO-7.1 The preferred alternative will provide a highway with adequate capacity to support transportation and economic activity. The tourist economy depends on a highway transportation system that provides for traffic operation and safety of travelers. Section 7.5 discusses the relationship among the highway transportation system and other factors that determine performance of the economy.

FRO-7.2 Refer to response to FRO-7.1.

FRO-7.3 A separate analysis of the economic effects of changes in animal populations is beyond the scope of the analysis in the final EIS.

FRO-7.4 Refer to responses to FRO-7.1 and 7.2.

FRO-7.5 Section 7.2.1.3 of the draft EIS and final EIS discusses commercial strip development for all alternatives.

FRO-7.6 Refer to response to FRO-4.1.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-8 Pedestrians and bicyclists.

FRO-Comment Topic:

Comments and recommendations of the community teams regarding pedestrians and bicyclists were disregarded.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page	Paragraph(s)
15	2-5

Response:

A description of the recommendations of the community teams for Arlee, Ronan, Pablo and Polson is included in Section 5.3.4 of the final EIS.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-9 Air quality

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-9.1 Air quality regulations, EPA, December 1993. (Air quality conformity analysis)

FRO-9.2 Sand and PM-10 emissions.

FRO-9.3 Alternative alignments and air quality.

FRO-9.4 Commuter traffic and traffic on secondary roads.

FRO-9.5 Home heating air pollution.

FRO-9.6 Emissions from agricultural operations.

FRO-9.7 Two-lane highway and conditions of gridlock.

FRO-9.8 Chemical deicers and effects on water quality.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page		Paragraph(s)
FRO-9.1	15	6
FRO-9.2	15	7
FRO-9.3	16	1
FRO-9.4	16	2
FRO-9.5	16	4
FRO-9.6	16	5
FRO-9.7	16	6
FRO-9.8	16	7

Response:

FRO-9.1 Refer to Response A-165.

FRO-9.2 Refer to Response A-164.

FRO-9.3 Section 7.7 in the draft EIS and final EIS and Appendix F in the final EIS discuss impacts to air quality that will occur on the existing alignment and on alternative alignments.

FRO-9.4 Section 7.7 in the draft EIS and final EIS and Appendix F in the final EIS discuss the effects of increasing traffic volume and traffic on unpaved secondary roadways in the analysis of impacts to air quality.

FRO-9.5 Section 7.7 in the draft EIS and final EIS and Appendix F in the final EIS acknowledge an increase in commuter-related population will result in cumulative impacts of ambient concentrations of PM_{10} associated with combustion of home heating fuels. Refer to Response A-6 for information about estimates of increase in commuter-related population.

FRO-9.6 Refer to response to FRO-9.4.

FRO-9.7 Refer to responses to FRO-2.1 through 2.4.

FRO-9.8 Section 7.9 in the final EIS discusses the effects of sand and chemical deicer on water quality.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-10 Noise.

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-10.1 Use of 55 mph speed for noise analysis

FRO-10.2 Use of identical traffic volumes for all lane configurations.

FRO-10.3 Noise from indirect traffic and development.

FRO-10.4 Alternative alignments at Arlee and Ronan will leave one percent of truck traffic on the existing alignment.

FRO-10.5 Table 7.8-1.

FRO-10.6 Noise levels will be above federal standards.

FRO-10.7 Dismissal of lower speed limits as a mitigation measure.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page		Paragraph(s)
FRO-10.1	17	1
FRO-10.2	17	2
FRO-10.3	17	3
FRO-10.4	17	4
FRO-10.5	17	5
FRO-10.6	17	6
	18	1
FRO-10.7	18	2

Response:

FRO-10.1 The noise analysis in the final EIS has been updated to use 1994 and 2020 traffic volumes and a speed of 60 mph.

FRO-10.2 Refer to response to FRO-4.2. Sections 6.1 and 7.1 of the draft EIS and final EIS discuss evaluation of traffic volumes for lane configurations.

FRO-10.3 Refer to response to FRO-4.1.

FRO-10.4 It is assumed that most trucks will not leave the bypass route to drive through a community. For that reason, a very low percentage of trucks is assumed to travel through communities. Those trucks would be either local trucks or trucks making local deliveries.

FRO-10.5 No Action and Lane Configuration A are two-lane highways and will have nearly identical noise impacts. As explained in Section 7.8.1, noise levels for Lane Configurations B and C will be slightly less than for Lane Configuration D. They are not shown separately for that reason. It is not reasonable to predict noise levels over 50 years into the future.

FRO-10.6 The increase in noise levels is acknowledged in the draft EIS and final EIS.

FRO-10.7 It is not practical or effective to impose a speed limit lower than the majority of drivers are comfortable driving.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-11 Wetlands.

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-11.1 Wetlands impacts are underestimated or understated.

FRO-11.2 Documentation of wetlands impacts.

FRO-11.3 Mitigation plans are vague.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page		Paragraph(s)
FRO-11.1	18	4
FRO-11.2	18	4
FRO-11.3	18	5

Response:

FRO-11.1 Comment noted.

FRO-11.2 A detailed, site specific mitigation plan is discussed in Section 7.10 of the final EIS.

FRO-11.3 MDT and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are developing a mitigation plan that satisfies the requirements of the Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-12 Floodplains and stream crossings.

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-12.1 The analysis ignores or minimizes potentially catastrophic indirect and cumulative impacts for floodplains and stream crossings.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page	Paragraph(s)
FRO-12.1 19	1-3

Response: FRO-12.1 As explained in the draft EIS and final EIS, any new highway construction will include adequate drainage systems that likely will be better than existing drainage systems. There is no reason to believe ground water will be trapped.

Lane Configuration B, which is recommended for about three-fourths of the highway, will have a pavement width of 64 feet. An improved two-lane highway will have a pavement width of 40 feet, and segments of a two-lane highway with a passing lane will have a pavement width of 52 feet. As shown on Figure 5.1-4, the general right-of-way width for Lane Configuration A (an improved two-lane highway) is 160 feet, compared with 180 feet for Lane Configuration B (a four-lane highway).

Section 6.11.4 has been revised to clarify that fish passage is important for various streams along the proposed action. Specific streams and proposed crossings are described in Sections 6.12.1 and 7.12.2.1.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-13 Fish and wildlife.

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-13.1 Fish and wildlife impacts are understated for four-lane highways.

FRO-13.2 The analysis does not address indirect and cumulative noise effects.

FRO-13.3 FRO questions whether Lane Configuration A would result in reduced spacing between vehicles.

FRO-13.4 Lack of consideration of hazardous waste contamination.

FRO-13.5 Analysis for reptiles and amphibians.

FRO-13.6 Mitigation is inadequate for birds.

FRO-13.7 Mitigation is inadequate for wildlife passage structures.

FRO-13.8 Analysis and survey of vegetation in sensitive areas.

FRO-13.9 Polson alternative alignments and wildlife impacts.

FRO-13.10 Analysis is inadequate for indirect effects of increased population and development.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page		Paragraph(s)
FRO-13.1	19	4
FRO-13.2	19	5
FRO-13.3	19	6
FRO-13.4	20	1
FRO-13.5	20	2
FRO-13.6	20	3
FRO-13.7	20	4
FRO-13.8	21	1
FRO-13.9	21	2
FRO-13.10	21	3

Response:

FRO-13.1 Comment noted.

FRO-13.2 Refer to response to FRO-4.1.

FRO-13.3 Comment noted.

FRO-13.4 Transport of hazardous materials on the highway will not be dependent on there being a multi-lane highway. It is beyond the scope of the analysis to project differences of transport of hazardous materials among lane configuration alternatives.

Safety will be improved with the preferred alternative for all traffic, including transport of hazardous materials.

FRO-13.5 The MDT is coordinating the development of a wetlands mitigation plan with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, based on the terms and conditions contained in the wetlands memorandum of agreement (MOA).

As indicated in Section 7.10.2 of the draft EIS and final EIS, wetland replacement will be diverse and will replace filled wetlands with wetlands of equal or better functions and values.

Many of the replacement wetlands will be away from the highway where it is more efficient to restore and enhance wetlands in large, off-site tracts and where wildlife will be farther away from the highway. Biologists for tribal, federal and state governments that have been involved with the preparation and review of the draft EIS and final EIS are in agreement that this concept will provide wetlands that are equal to and, in some cases, better than existing conditions.

Placing the highway on pylons through the Ninepipe area will be cost-prohibitive and is not practical or feasible.

FRO-13.6 Refer to response to FRO-13.5.

FRO-13.7 As indicated in the final EIS, a wildlife overpass is proposed in the Evaro area. The wildlife passage proposed at Post Creek is considered adequate by wildlife biologists who have reviewed work for the proposed action. The wildlife biologists indicate that developed wildlife crossings are not needed at the Jocko River, Mission Creek, Ninepipe and other areas.

FRO-13.8 The appropriate research and field review have been conducted for sensitive plants.

FRO-13.9 The sentences about the referenced topic have been deleted from Section 7.12 of the final EIS.

FRO-13.10 Refer to response to FRO-4.1.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-14 Threatened and endangered species.

FRO-Comment Topic:

Impacts on threatened and endangered species are not adequately evaluated.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page	Paragraph(s)
22	1-4
24	1-3

Response:

Impacts on threatened and endangered species have been extensively evaluated and reviewed by wildlife biologists from various agencies, including the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It has been determined that the proposed action will have no adverse effect on grizzly bears or bald eagles.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-15 Cultural resources.

FRO-Comment Topic:

Cultural Resources analysis does not analyze direct or indirect impacts for lane configurations.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page	Paragraph(s)
24	4

Response:

Additional information was added to Sections 6.4 and 7.4, Social, and 6.14 and 7.14, Cultural Resources, to address the issue of impacts associated with growth and development.

Analysis of impacts for cultural resources in Sections 6.14 and 7.14 has been coordinated with the Flathead and Kootenai culture committees.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-16 Hazardous materials.

FRO-Comment Topic:

Hazardous materials analysis is not adequate.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page	Paragraph(s)
24	5-7

Response:

As indicated in Section 7.16 of the draft EIS and final EIS, the proposed action will improve safety for all vehicles, including tanker trucks. This will result in a reduction of the likelihood that accidents will occur that result in hazardous materials spills and contamination.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-17 Visual.

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-17.1 The visual analysis has little awareness of the real power the of the visual landscape.

FRO-17.2 There is no discussion of designating the highway as a scenic highway.

FRO-17.3 Unavoidable disturbance of landforms.

FRO-17.4 Noise should be mentioned in discussion of highway structures and appurtenances.

FRO-17.5 The discussion of access management recommends frontage roads, which will be eyesores.

FRO-17.6 Community interface should compare various lane configurations.

FRO-17.7 A wider road will result in drivers spending more time viewing scenery should be mentioned in Section 7.1 as a safety hazard.

FRO-17.8 The analysis of the Evaro Landscape Unit does not coordinate with the wildlife mitigation measures.

FRO-17.9 Section 7.17.3.3 does not consider lower speed limits or a lower LOS for the Ravalli Canyon Landscape Unit.

FRO-17.10 The computer generated images distort a normal point of view of a motorist.

FRO-17.11 More information is needed to evaluate the suggested mitigation measure for roadside parks.

FRO-17.12 A wider highway on Ronan's existing alignment will fragment an already discontinuous streetscape.

FRO-17.13 Discussion of visual impacts of highway design options is vague.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page	Paragraph(s)
FRO-17.1 25	2
FRO-17.2 25	3
FRO-17.3 25	4
26	1-3
26	5
27	5
FRO-17.4 25	5
FRO-17.5 25	6
FRO-17.6 25	7
FRO-17.7 26	4
FRO-17.8 26	6
FRO-17.9 26	7
FRO-17.10 26	8
27	1-4
FRO-17.11 27	6

FRO-17.12 27 7

FRO-17.13 27 8-9

Response:

FRO-17.1 through FRO-17.13

These comments, expressing FRO's opinion that an improved two-lane highway will have less visual impact on the visual environment, are noted. The draft EIS and final EIS also acknowledge this.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-18 Section 4(f).

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-18.1 The US 93 corridor through the Flathead Indian Reservation should be considered Section 4(f) property.

FRO-18.2 The Section 4(f) evaluation does not prove Lane Configuration A is inadequate.

FRO-18.3 The Section 4(f) evaluation does not consider Glacier National Park.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page	Paragraph(s)
28	1-3

Response:

FRO-18.1 US 93 does not meet the definition of a Section 4(f) property because its primary use is not for recreation or as a wildlife refuge. Also, it is not considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

FRO-18.2 Lane Configuration A, a two-lane improved highway similar to the Flathead Resource Organization's (FRO) concept, has been evaluated in the Section 4(f) Evaluation and elsewhere in the draft EIS and final EIS.

As indicated in Section 5.3.2 of the draft EIS and final EIS, an improved two-lane highway will not meet the purpose and need of the proposed action and is therefore not considered a reasonable and prudent alternative.

FRO-18.3 Comment noted.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-19 Appendix B, Transportation Demand Management.

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-19.1 Implementation of TDM versus a multi-lane highway design and the underlying traffic problem in a rural area.

FRO-19.2 The Transit section of Appendix B, Transportation Demand Management, notes a high number of low-income and the large number of people with no reliable transport.

FRO-19.3 There needs to be documentation of research on the difficulty of removing trucks from US 93.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page		Paragraph(s)
FRO-19.1	28	4
FRO-19.2	28	5
FRO-19.3	28	6
	29	1-2

Response:

FRO-19.1 In Section 5.3 of the draft EIS and final EIS, it is noted that TDM is a desirable long-term goal. Any highway improvement should be designed to incorporate TDM as much as is practical.

FRO-19.2 Comment noted.

FRO-19.3 Comment noted.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-20 Flathead Resource Organization: Safety and US 93.

FRO-Comment Topic:

FRO-20.1 MDT creates a misleading impression that safety is the primary reason to improve the road.

FRO-20.2 MDT employs highly irregular statistical methods on safety, while ignoring normal statistics.

FRO-20.3 MDT has falsely given the impression that a four- or five-lane highway will be much safer than an improved two-lane highway.

FRO-20.4 MDT has downplayed or hidden well-known safety drawbacks and dangers of undivided, high-speed multiple-lane rural highways.

FRO-20.5 MDT has generated misleading propaganda relating to safety improvements resulting from the construction of a four-lane from I-90 to Evaro.

FRO-20.6 MDT characterizes passing lanes as dangerous, but has not made clear existing passing lanes are very badly designed.

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page	Paragraph(s)
FRO-20.1 30	1
FRO-20.2 30	2
FRO-20.3 30	3
FRO-20.4 30	4
FRO-20.5 31	1-2
FRO-20.6 31	4

Response:

FRO-20.1 The draft EIS and final EIS present an analysis that shows safety has been improved where two-lane highways with high volumes of traffic have been widened to four lanes. Other rural primary highways with volumes of traffic similar to US 93 already are four-lane highways; two-lane highways were not adequate for their volumes of traffic.

FRO-20.2 Refer to response to FRO-3.1.

FRO-20.3 Using a computer data base consisting of all reported accidents investigated by the Montana Highway Patrol, MDT identifies accident cluster areas on all state and federal highways in Montana. When a cluster area is identified, an evaluation is conducted of accidents at the site to identify trends in what may be causing the accidents.

An evaluation also is conducted to identify highway and other site conditions that may contribute to the accidents. Any highway revisions or improvements that will help reduce accidents are then identified and a cost/benefit analysis is performed. The proposed improvements are compared to and prioritized with other accident cluster sites, based on the cost/benefit ratio, and decisions are made concerning which sites can be improved with available funding.

This type of audit was conducted for US 93 from I-90 to Polson and is presented in the report "Highway Traffic Collision Countermeasures on U.S. Highway 93 Corridor, P-5 Milepost 0 to Milepost 59.3", completed in January 1992 by the Montana Multi-disciplinary Traffic Safety Task Force. This report identifies several different cluster sites and other concerns, particularly related to elderly drivers, and proposes countermeasures. Recommendations of the report are summarized in Section 6.1.3 of the draft EIS and the final EIS.

As indicated in the draft EIS and the final EIS, implementation of some of these recommendations occurred in 1994. Others are more extensive and expensive and will be implemented as sections of the highway are reconstructed. As final design for each section of US 93 is completed, these countermeasures and others identified by future traffic and accident data will be incorporated in the plans.

FRO-20.4 The following information is from a literature search provided to the ID Team for the proposed action by the Federal Highway Administration[19]:

"Considerable evidence shows that a continuous two-way left-turn lane (C2WLTL) is a cost-effective method of increasing the operational efficiency and safety of a highway where there is a demand for left-turns off of and onto the major roadway."

"Speed limits from 25 to 55 mph will accommodate C2WLTLs.[20]"

"Accident reductions averaging about 35% have been attributed to C2WLTLs."

"C2WLTLs also increase capacity and are well accepted by the driving public."

FRO-20.5 It is acknowledged that not all characteristics of US 93 from I-90 to Evaro are exactly the same as from Evaro to Polson. However, US 93 from I-90 to Evaro generally has conditions that are typical of conditions found on segments of US 93 between Evaro and Polson.

Evaluation of this section of highway was completed, at the request of the ID Team, because of concern expressed that four-lane highways may be less safe than two-lane highways. The ID Team consensus, at the inception of the study, was that US 93 from I-90 to Evaro would be a very good highway section to evaluate because of its proximity to the proposed action and because driver characteristics, traffic volumes and characteristics, weather conditions, terrain and junction densities are similar (not necessarily identical) to US 93 from Evaro to Polson.

There are approximately 10 intersections per mile on this section of highway compared with approximately 10 intersections per mile on the section from Evaro to Polson. There also is an intersection with a major county road, and two campgrounds that are commercial developments that generate traffic turning on and off the highway. There also is a long level segment of highway that is typical of segments north of Evaro. Evaro Hill has a steep grade typical of the grades on Ravalli, Post Creek and Polson hills.

The ID Team, and in particular visiting members from the Tribes, asked for the comparison of I-90 to Evaro.

Refer to response to FRO-3.1 and 20.1.

FRO-20.6 It is correct and was acknowledged in the draft EIS that shoulder widths are not adequate on existing passing lanes. It is acknowledged that transition lengths and other factors may not be in accordance with current design standards on existing passing lanes.

It is likely that accident rates would be reduced if these areas were improved to meet current standards, but actual numbers are not known and cannot be calculated with reasonable accuracy.

Refer to response to FRO-19.2.

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[19]Federal Highway Administration, Montana Division, Studies on Safety Concerns of 5-lane C2WLTL vs. 4-Lane Divided Highway, letter. with attachments, dated 22 July 1991.

[20]After Congress repealed the national speed limit of 65 mph on interstates and 55 mph on other highways in 1995, Montana automatically reverted to its former law that has the "basic rule." A driver may not drive at speeds exceeding what is "reasonable and prudent" for traffic, road and weather conditions.

FRO-Comment Number:

FRO-21 Flathead Resource Organization: Comparison of the FRO Plan and the MDT plan on the safety issue.

FRO-Comment Topic

Refer below to FRO Table .

FRO-Comment Page/Paragraph Number(s):

Topic/Page	Paragraph(s)
32	Table

FRO Table:

Issue	MDT	FRO
Speeding	Four or five lanes encourage faster speeds	Improved two-lane road would not encourage faster speeds, a major factor in accidents
Shoulders	Eight-foot shoulders along length of highway, except in towns where five lanes would make (wide) shoulders impossible	Eight-foot shoulders along the length of the highway
Passing	Nearly unlimited passing in the short run, until congestion and development catches up with the highway	Improved passing (improving existing passing lanes, plus a new passing lane on Post Creek Hill
Turning left from the highway	In developed areas, a center "suicide" lane; in most rural areas, left-turning cars must come to a dead halt in the fast lane	Left-turn bays at all major intersections
Turning left onto the highway	Cars must cross three or four lanes of traffic, with few gaps in the traffic due to more even flow	Vehicles must cross one lane of traffic, with more frequent gaps due to less even traffic flow
Crossing the highway	Cars, pedestrians, bicyclists and horseback riders must cross four or five lanes of pavement, plus shoulders (84 to 94 feet)	Cross two lanes of pavement, plus shoulders (44 feet)
Slow-moving vehicle turnouts	None called for	Recommended every five miles or so, with strict enforcement
Law enforcement	Not addressed	Calls for full dual jurisdiction on all traffic infractions and higher local penalties, prominently announced on road signs
Truck traffic	Not addressed	Explore ways to remove or restrict multi-trailer semis and shift more truck traffic in general onto rails
Pedestrians and bicyclists	Only calls for eight-foot shoulders, with considerably less in towns (e.g., Arlee)	Eight-foot shoulders with rumble strip in rural areas and separate bike paths within one to two miles of towns

Response:

These comments, expressing FRO's opinion about comparing an improved two-lane highway with a four-lane highway, are noted.

4. Oral Testimony Received at Public hearing

Public hearing transcripts of oral testimony received at the public hearing are available from the Montana Department of Transportation. Please contact:

Joel Marshik, Manager Environmental Services
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

4.1 Index For Summary Of Oral Testimony Received At Arlee Public Hearing

COMMENT NUMBER	SPEAKER	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
119	Richard Eggart	Flathead Resource Organization	Oppose preferred alternative[4,5] EIS process and public involvement Wetlands
120	Pat Hurley	Flathead Resource Organization	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Wetlands Wildlife Land use Social Economics and tourism
121	Thompson Smith	Flathead Resource Organization	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Land use Social Economics and tourism Cultural resources Safety/traffic operation Highway design
122	Larry Klinkenbeard	Arlee business	Favor Arlee existing alignment Right-of-way Land use Social Economics and tourism
123	Tony Hoyt	Flathead Resource Organization	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement
124	Jerry McGahan	Arlee resident	Oppose preferred alternative Favor Arlee existing alignment Wetlands Wildlife
125	Laverne Cole	Arlee resident	Safety/traffic operation Construction and maintenance cost

COMMENT NUMBER	SPEAKER	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
126	Wayne Brown	St. Ignatius resident	Economics and tourism Pedestrians and bicyclists
127	Christine Roesch	St. Ignatius resident	Favor preferred alternative Wildlife Highway design Construction schedule
128	Rob Sand	Charlo resident	Oppose preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation Wildlife
129	Mary Herak	Charlo resident	Oppose preferred alternative Land use Social Economics and tourism
130	Thompson Smith	Flathead Resource Organization	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Land use Social Economics and tourism
131	Emily Baty	Dixon resident	Safety/traffic operation Right-of-way
132	Thelma Olsen	St. Ignatius resident	Favor preferred alternative Land use Social Economics and tourism Construction schedule Visual
133	Archie Olsen	St. Ignatius resident	Favor preferred alternative Social Economics and tourism Highway design High traffic volume Construction schedule
134	Gordon Malley	St. Ignatius resident	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation Land use Social Economics and tourism
135	Yvonne Olmsted	St. Ignatius resident	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation
136	Richard Eggart	Flathead Resource Organization	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Highway design Land use Social Economics and tourism
137	Sam Rouiller Mayor	Town of St. Ignatius	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation Land use Social Economics and tourism

COMMENT NUMBER	SPEAKER	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
138	Janet Camel	St. Ignatius resident	Safety/traffic operation Highway design Land use Social Economics and tourism
139	John Yatchak	St. Ignatius resident	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation Access and left turns
140	Pat Hurley	Flathead Resource Organization	Oppose preferred alternative Land use Social Economics and tourism
141	Bob Cook	St. Ignatius resident	Safety/traffic operation

COMMENT NUMBER	SPEAKER	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
142	Richard Eggart	Flathead Resource Organization	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Highway design
143	Jaymee Bick	Roan resident	Oppose preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation Wetlands Wildlife Air quality Pedestrians and bicyclists Social High traffic volume
144	Joe McDonald President	Salish Kootenai College	Safety/traffic operation EIS process and public involvement Highway design Access and left turns Noise
145	Sherri McDonald	Ronan resident	Favor Ronan existing alignment Safety/traffic operation Cultural resources
146	Thompson Smith	Flathead Resource Organization	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Safety/traffic operation Highway design Land use Social Economics and tourism
147	Pat Hurley	Flathead Resource Organization	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Safety/traffic operation Highway design Land use Social Economics and tourism
148	Tom R. McDonald	Ronan resident	Construction and maintenance cost
149	Bearhead Swaney	St. Ignatius resident	Oppose preferred alternative Land use Social Cultural resources
150	Rob Sand	Charlo resident	Favor alternative alignment improvement in Swan Valley Safety/traffic operation Land use Social Economics and tourism Cultural resources
151	Jay Preston Sr.	Ronan resident	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Land use Social Economics and tourism

COMMENT NUMBER	SPEAKER	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
152	Kim Skyelande	Missoula resident	Oppose preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation Land use Social Economics and tourism Wetlands Wildlife Air quality Noise
153	Art Mangels	Pablo resident	EIS process and public involvement Highway design Safety/traffic operation Access and left turns Land use Social Economics and tourism
154	Troy R. Wunderlich	Ronan Auto Body	Favor Ronan existing alignment Safety/traffic operation Wetlands Wildlife Social Economics and tourism

COMMENT NUMBER	SPEAKER	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
155	Allen Hibbert	Polson resident	Oppose preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Land use Social
156	James French	Polson resident	Oppose preferred alternative Favor alternative alignment outside Flathead Indian Reservation Cultural resources Wildlife Land use Social
157	Thompson Smith	Flathead Resource Organization	Oppose preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation Highway design Cultural resources Land use Social
158	Dave Lake	Polson business	Favor preferred alternative, except favor Ronan alternative alignment General environmental Access and left turns Right-of-way Farmlands Land use Social Economics and tourism
159	Ralph Zahn	Polson resident	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation Construction schedule
160	Gary Wicks	Polson resident	Favor preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Safety/traffic operation
161	Ron Grogan	Polson business	Oppose No Action Highway design Farmlands
162	Dave Stipe	Lake County Board of Commissioners	Favor preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Land use Social Economics and tourism
163	Karen Welch	Polson resident	Favor preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation
164	Bill Gallagher	Polson business	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Safety/traffic operation Right-of-way Social
165	George Mahoney	Polson business	Oppose Polson alignment 3 EIS process and public involvement Safety/traffic operation Construction schedule Land use

COMMENT NUMBER	SPEAKER	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
166	Patty Brock	Polson resident	Favor Polson preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Economics and tourism
167	Pat Lake	Polson business	Realign Polson Alignment 3 Farmlands Land use
168	Wes Delaney	Polson business	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 Safety/traffic operation Highway design Economics and tourism Construction and maintenance cost
169	Jim Mercer	Polson business	Favor Polson preferred alternative EIS process and public involvement Social
170	James Haynal	Polson property owner	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 EIS process and public involvement Wildlife Stream crossings Noise
171	Terry Haynal	Polson property owner	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 EIS process and public involvement Social Economics and tourism
172	Charles Budge	Polson resident	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 EIS process and public involvement Safety/traffic operation General environmental Construction and maintenance cost Economics and tourism Wildlife Noise Stream crossings
173	Dan Howlett	Polson business	Oppose Polson Alignment 3 EIS process and public involvement Social Wildlife Noise Stream crossings Right-of-way Land use Economics and tourism
174	Lon Jacobs	Polson resident	Safety/traffic operation Highway design
175	Joan Bennett	Polson resident	Favor Polson alternative alignment Realign Polson Alignment 3 Social Economics and tourism
176	Tom Sands	Polson resident	EIS process and public involvement Land use Social Economics and tourism

4.1 Index For Summary Of Oral Testimony Received At Polson Public Hearing

COMMENT NUMBER	SPEAKER	AFFILIATION	TOPIC(S)
177	(Name not known)	Polson resident	Favor Polson preferred alternative Safety/traffic operation Pedestrians and bicyclists Social Economics and tourism
178	Pat Fromm	Polson resident	Safety/traffic operation

The draft EIS and Section 4(f) evaluation was approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for release to the public on 21 February 1995.

The public hearing was held on the dates and at the locations listed below:

24 April 1995, Arlee Elementary School Cafeteria, Arlee, MT

25 April 1995, St. Ignatius Senior Citizens Center, St. Ignatius, MT

26 April 1995, BIA Conference Rooms at the Tribal Complex of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Pablo, MT

27 April 1995, KwaTaqNuk Resort, Polson, MT

To provide notice of the hearing, initially scheduled to be held in St. Ignatius, Pablo and Polson, a notice was sent to the project mailing list consisting of members of the public and public agencies that are thought to have or have expressed an interest in the proposed action. This notice indicated public comment would be received through 08 May 1995. The notice was placed in the following newspapers:

The Missoulian, Missoula, MT on 24 March and 11 April 1995.

Char-Koosta News, Pablo, MT on 24 March and 07 April 1995.

Lake County Leader, Polson, MT on 30 March and 13 April 1995.

During a meeting of the ID Team, it was decided that a portion of the public hearing should also be held in Arlee. Also, as requested by the Tribal Council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, it was decided that the public comment period should be extended to 23 June 1995. A second notice was therefore sent to the project mailing list and advertised in the following newspapers:

The Missoulian, Missoula, MT on 14 April and 21 April 1995.

Char-Koosta News, Pablo, MT on 14 April and 21 April 1995.

Lake County Leader, Polson, MT on 13 April and 20 April 1995.

Each of the four meetings was held from 4:00 p.m. to approximately 9:00 p.m. From 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., an opportunity was provided for interested individuals to meet with project representatives, view project displays and information, ask questions and provide written or oral comment. The following stations were available at each meeting to provide information on specific aspects of the proposed action:

- Greeting Station, to welcome public hearing participants, ask them to sign the attendance list, ask them to indicate if they planned to provide public comment, provide copies of project summaries, provide copies of information provided by the Flathead Resource Organization. This station was staffed by Ginger Thomas, Tribal Consultant Liaison and by John Hodnik, Morrison-Maierle, Inc.

- EIS Process Station, to provide information on the process followed to prepare the draft and final EIS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. This station was staffed by Gordon Stockstad of MDT and Dale Paulson of FHWA.

- Highway Design and Construction Station, to provide information on the design and construction of alternatives considered for the highway improvements. This station was staffed by Jim Weaver and John Marron of the Missoula Division of the Montana Department of Transportation.

- Traffic and Safety Station, to provide information on existing and projected traffic volumes and the operation of the highway now and in the future. This station was staffed by Brad Peterson of Morrison-Maierle, Inc.

- Social, Economic, Cultural Station, to provide information on social, economic and cultural resource impacts of the proposed action including impacts on businesses, population and archaeological, historical and cultural sites in the area. This station was staffed by John Hodnik of Morrison-Maierle, Inc. and Jon Axline of the Montana Department of Transportation.

- Environmental Station, to provide information on potential impacts to natural resources including wetlands, wildlife, air quality, streams and rivers, threatened and endangered species and others. This station was staffed by Joel Marshik of the Montana Department of Transportation and Joe Elliott of Morrison-Maierle, Inc. Also at this station, Bob Nebel and Bob McInerney of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were available to discuss potential impacts to streams, rivers and wetlands. Copies of the preliminary application for a Section 404 permit were available at this location.

- Polson Alternatives Station, to provide information on the alternative alignments in the Polson Area. This station was staffed by various individuals during the Arlee and St. Ignatius meetings. In Pablo, the station was staffed by Jeanette Lostrocco of Carter Burgess, Inc. At Polson where the bulk of the interest in the Polson alignment alternatives occurred, the station was staffed by Jeanette Lostrocco, Joe Hart, Jim Boyer and Nick Kaufman of Carter Burgess, Inc.

- Right-of-Way Station, to discuss right-of-way and relocation requirements for each of the alternatives under consideration and procedures that will be followed.

This station was staffed by Dick Chrest of the Montana Department of Transportation.

- Comment Station, to allow individuals to provide written comment at the meeting, provide oral, tape-recorded comment or to take a comment form and send it later. This station was staffed by Jeri Sherrill of Morrison-Maierle, Inc.

- Computer Graphics Presentation was available from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at each meeting. This presentation lasted approximately 10 minutes, was set to continually repeat itself and provided a brief summary of the draft EIS and the public hearing process.

At 7:00 p.m. at each meeting, a formal presentation was made consisting of:

- Dave Dreher of the Montana Department of Transportation moderated the presentation.

- A presentation by Brad Peterson of Morrison-Maierle, Inc. at all four meetings, consisting of a 25 to 30 minute summary of the draft EIS including the purpose and need for the proposed action, the alternatives considered, the preferred alternative and potential impacts.

- A presentation by Dick Chrest of the Montana Department of Transportation, at all of the meetings except in Polson, concerning right-of-way acquisition procedures and relocation assistance programs.

- At the Polson meeting only, a presentation was made by Jeanette Lostrocco, Jim Boyer, Nick Kaufman and Joe Hart of Carter and Burgess, Inc. concerning the alternative highway routes through the Polson area.

Following these presentations at each meeting, an opportunity was provided for all who desired to provide formal oral comments. Comments were limited to five minutes per person. An opportunity to formally ask questions of project representatives was provided at each meeting except in Polson.

The formal presentations, public comments and questions/answers were electronically recorded and a transcript has been prepared. The transcript of the oral testimony is available to the public at offices of the Montana Department of Transportation in Missoula and Helena, Montana.

After the formal portion of the meeting, members of the public were again invited to visit the various stations, ask questions and provide comments.

Refer to Section 1 for information about public notices.

The following two tables summarize the numbers of public comments received before, at and after the public hearing.

Summary of Registered Attendance

Summary of Registered Attendance (those who signed the attendance list)					
Affiliation	Arlee	St. Ignatius	Pablo	Polson	Total
Resident or not indicated	39	42	27	63	171
Property owner	3	--	--	11	14
Business owner or operator	3	2	11	24	40
Flathead Resource Organization (FRO)	4	3	2	2	11
Other	1	4	9	7	21
Total	50	51	49	107	257
Information from sign-up sheets at sessions of the public hearing in Arlee, St. Ignatius, Pablo and Polson, 24-27 April 1995.					

Summary of Public Comments

Source	Arlee	St. Ignatius	Pablo	Polson	Total
Written Comments Before Hearing					20
Written Comments At Hearing	6	9	8	19	42
Written Comments After Hearing					56
Oral Comments At Hearing	7	16	13	24	60
Total	13	25	21	43	178
Information from written comments and notes on oral comments at sessions of the public hearing in Arlee, St. Ignatius, Pablo and Polson, 24-27 April 1995.					

Refer to Section 4.1, the index for oral testimony, and Section 4.3, the response to comment received from oral testimony at the public hearing.

The public presented oral testimony about the following issues at the four sessions of the public hearing:

Lane Configurations

Favor or oppose preferred alternative or a four-lane configuration outside Arlee, Ronan and Polson

Favor or oppose improved two-lane configuration (including proposal of the Flathead Resource Organization) outside Arlee, Ronan and Polson

Favor or oppose continuous two-way left-turn center median either in vicinity of or outside communities

Highway Alignments

Favor or oppose the existing alignment or an alternative alignment away from existing alignment

Safety, traffic conditions and traffic control

Need to improve safety and traffic operation and use transportation demand management and design options

Highway improvement schedule and cost

Need to consider schedule and cost as factors for decision about highway improvement

Physical Environment (beneficial and adverse effects)

Need to consider environmental values (e.g., fish and wildlife, wetlands, stream crossings, air and water quality, noise, visual, recreation/4(f) and other values) as important factors for decision about highway improvement

Concern about excessive consideration of environmental values as important factors for decision about highway improvement

Human Environment

Need to consider effect of highway improvement on Native American cultural values

Need to consider effect of highway improvement on population growth, economic development and land use (e.g., conversion of farmlands, access management, land use planning and regulation for sprawl and strip development, relocation, pedestrians, right-of-way and other values) as important factors for decision about highway improvement

Need to consider effect of highway improvement on rural lifestyle and barrier effect for access to neighborhoods and facilities/services

Comment Number	Response
119	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Chapter 10 in the final environmental impact statement (EIS) discusses the coordination of public involvement and development and comparison of alternatives. Alternatives for lane configurations from Evaro through Polson and highway alignments at Arlee, Ronan and Polson were developed in response to support at public meetings and through consultation with the Arlee, Ronan, Pablo and Polson community teams and the ID Team. Chapters 5, 7 and 12 in the final EIS identify impacts specifically for the preferred alternative. This information in the final EIS will provide more detailed comparison among alternatives than the draft EIS. The preferred alternative is a combination of lane configurations and highway alignments. The draft EIS discussed impacts for the preferred alternative in Section 5.3, and it presented information about impacts for the lane configurations and highway alignments that form the preferred alternative. The final EIS presents information about impacts for individual lane configurations and highway alignments and the preferred alternative. Lane Configurations B, C and D (four-lane highways) were selected for various highway segments as the preferred alternative. Based on the traffic analysis, a two-lane highway with auxiliary passing lanes will not provide adequate highway capacity through the design year 2020. The preferred alternative uses the four-lane configurations to provide adequate highway capacity, while converting to new highway right-of-way the least amount of necessary land, including wetlands. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is coordinating development of a wetlands mitigation plan with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to replace wetlands converted to highway right-of-way with other wetlands having as good or better function and value.
120	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 119 for information about coordination of public involvement and development and comparison of alternatives. Sections 5.3.4 and 7.12.4 discuss the design characteristics of wildlife passage structures. The height of the structures will be designed to provide adequate passage and lighting for wildlife. The wildlife analysis has identified areas in which wildlife crossing the highway is a special concern. The design of the wildlife passage structures will be coordinated with biological specialists of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and other governmental agencies and citizen groups with interests in wildlife. The Flathead Indian Reservation and Lake and Missoula counties have experienced high rates of population growth. Section 6.4 in the final EIS presents information that was not available for the draft EIS. It indicates the high rate of population growth continued for Lake County, the Flathead Indian Reservation and the western Montana region during 1990-1994. Continuing local and regional population growth contribute to transportation demand that requires the preferred alternative to provide adequate highway capacity and improve safety and traffic operation. An improved highway will be one of many factors that make the area attractive to new residents. Traffic operation will improve with reduced travel time and improved convenience and driver comfort. Land use planning and regulation will provide appropriate management of population growth. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) plan to coordinate access management with land use planning and regulation policy established by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Lake and Missoula counties and the incorporated communities in Lake County. MDT and FHWA do not have authority to implement land use planning and regulation with the proposed action.

Comment Number	Response
121	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics. Refer to Response 119 for information about coordination of public involvement and development and comparison of alternatives. The analysis of cultural resources and social conditions was coordinated with the Flathead and Kootenai culture committees and with the legal department of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Lane Configurations B, C and D (four-lane highways) were selected for various highway segments as the preferred alternative. Based on the traffic analysis, a two-lane highway with auxiliary passing lanes, and using reasonable and feasible measures of TDM, will not provide adequate highway capacity through the design year 2020. Section 6.1 in the final EIS presents information that was not available for the draft EIS. It indicates traffic volume continued to increase for US 93 from Evaro through Polson during 1992-1994. Continuing growth of local and regional travel contribute to transportation demand that requires the preferred alternative to provide adequate highway capacity and improve safety and traffic operation. The safety analysis used both accident rate (accidents per million vehicle miles) and accident frequency (accidents per mile) to describe conditions that will be improved with the preferred alternative. These two measures establish the unsafe driving conditions that currently exist and will continue with any two-lane highway because of high traffic volume. Section 6.1 in the final EIS also presents information about safety that was not available for the draft EIS. It indicates the number of accidents increased and fatal accidents and fatalities increased substantially for US 93 from Evaro through Polson during 1992-1994. Continuing increases in accidents and fatalities are another indication of the need for the preferred alternative to provide adequate highway capacity.
122	Comment noted favoring a four-lane highway without a continuous two-way left-turn center median on the existing alignment as the preferred alternative. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics. Refer to Response 119 for information about highway right-of-way.
123	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 119 for information about coordination of public involvement and development and comparison of alternatives.
124	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 119 for information about wetlands, which will apply to areas such as Avocet Pond north of Arlee. Design options that will be considered for improvement of US 93 were developed in response to support at public meetings and in consultation with community teams and the ID Team. The highway design process will review appropriate locations for design options. *Speed bumps* are not reasonable or feasible options for traffic control because they are obstacles and safety hazards in the roadway.
125	The preferred alternative will provide improved safety for school crossings. The highway design process will review appropriate locations and traffic controls for school crossings and school bus stopping areas.

Testimony Number	Response
126	Design options for facilities serving pedestrians and bicyclists were developed in response to support at public meetings and in consultation with community teams and the ID Team. The highway design process will review appropriate locations, including the Post Creek area, for facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Comment noted about tourism being an important sector of the local economy. While visitors to scenic attractions such as Glacier National Park will benefit from an improved highway, it is not the purpose of the proposed action to increase tourism.
127	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 120 for information about the wildlife analysis and wildlife passage structures. The schedule for construction will depend on timing of completion of the final EIS, the record of decision (ROD), highway design and availability of appropriated funds.
128	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 120 for information about the wildlife analysis and wildlife passage structures. Based on the traffic analysis, Lane Configurations B, C and D will provide adequate highway capacity and improved safety and traffic operation through the design year 2020. Highway speed will be controlled with signs and enforcement practices that are used for all rural primary highways in Montana.
129	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics.
130	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 119 for information about coordination of public involvement and development and comparison of alternatives. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation.
131	Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Refer to Response 119 for information about highway right-of-way. Refer to Response 121 for information about accident rate and accident frequency in the safety analysis.
132	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics. Refer to Response 127 for information about the schedule of construction. Sections 6.17 and 7.17 discuss visual characteristics of the proposed action. The highway design process will review appropriate measures for enhancement of visual features.
133	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics. Refer to Response 127 for information about the schedule of construction.
134	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics.
135	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation.

Testimony Number	Response
136	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 119 for information about coordination of public involvement and development and comparison of alternatives. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics.
137	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics.
138	Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics. Refer to Response 121 for information about the analysis of cultural resources.
139	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Left-turn bays at major intersections and continuous two-way left-turn center medians on the highway in and near communities will reduce conflicts between vehicles turning and through traffic. The highway design process will review appropriate locations for auxiliary lanes and left-turn bays.
140	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics.
141	Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation.

Testimony Number	Response
142	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Refer to Response 119 for information about coordination of public involvement and development and comparison of alternatives.
143	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics. Refer to Response 119 for information about wetlands. Refer to Response 120 for information about the wildlife analysis. Refer to Response 126 for information about design options for pedestrians and bicyclists. MDT will utilize the most effective measures available to preserve air quality and comply with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Various deicer compounds will be expected to be used to maintain road conditions during inclement weather.
144	Refer to Response 119 for information about coordination of public involvement and development and comparison of alternatives. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about traffic control, including traffic signals and enforcement of speed limits. Refer to Responses 125 and 139 for information about the preferred alternative providing improvement for access and turning movement. MDT will conduct warrant studies in communities to determine need for additional traffic signals in Arlee, Ronan, Pablo and Polson. Where warranted, traffic signals will be considered with highway improvement. The distance in the Pablo area for Lane Configuration C (four-lane highway with a continuous two-way, left-turn center median) was developed in consultation with the Pablo Community Team and the ID Team. The highway design process will review appropriate distances for lane configurations of the preferred alternative. Refer to Response 126 for information about design options for pedestrians and bicyclists. Sections 6.8 and 7.8 discuss noise characteristics of the proposed action. The highway design process will review appropriate measures for mitigation of noise associated with construction, operation and maintenance of the preferred alternative.
145	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative at Ronan. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about traffic control, including traffic signals and enforcement of speed limits. Refer to Response 121 for information about the analysis of cultural resources.
146	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 119 for information about coordination of public involvement and development and comparison of alternatives. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about traffic control, including traffic signals and enforcement of speed limits. Refer to Responses 125 and 139 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics.
147	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 119 for information about coordination of public involvement and development and comparison of alternatives. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about traffic control, including traffic signals and enforcement of speed limits. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics.

Testimony Number	Response
148	Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. The preferred alternative will include the costs of construction and maintenance for Lane Configurations B, C and D (four-lane highways) for various highway segments. The expenditure will be for a highway that provides adequate highway capacity through the design year 2020. Based on the traffic analysis, a two-lane highway with auxiliary passing lanes, and using reasonable and feasible measures of TDM, will not provide adequate highway capacity through the design year 2020. Expenditure for a highway with inadequate capacity will not be a reasonable or prudent use of public monies. Section 7.20 provides information about costs of construction for lane configuration alternatives and the preferred alternative.
149	Alternative routes such as the "Old Freight Route" and Montana Highway 83 through the Swan Valley were not considered as alternatives because they received substantial opposition at public meetings. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics. Refer to Response 121 for information about the analysis of cultural resources.
150	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Response 119 for information about coordination of public involvement and development and comparison of alternatives. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Chapter 12 discusses Section 4(f) properties in the vicinity of the proposed action. The final EIS makes a determination that there is not any reasonable and prudent alternative to the preferred alternative in the areas for which there are either direct or constructive uses of the properties. The highway design process will review appropriate measures for mitigation of effects on Section 4(f) properties.
151	Comment noted favoring the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation.
152	Comment noted opposing four-lane highway and favoring existing alignment as the preferred alternative from Evaro through Polson. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about analysis of safety and traffic operation. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics. Refer to Response 144 for information about noise characteristics of the preferred alternative. Refer to Response 119 for information about wetlands. Refer to Response 120 for information about the wildlife analysis.
153	Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics. Refer to Response 120 for information about the preferred alternative providing improvement for access and turning movement. Refer to Response 148 for information about using reasonable and feasible measures of TDM to support the preferred alternative in providing adequate highway capacity through the design year 2020.
154	Comment noted favoring preferred alternative at Ronan. Refer to Responses 121 and 128 for information about traffic control, including traffic signals and enforcement of speed limits. Refer to Response 120 for information about growth and development issues associated with land use, social and economics. Refer to Response 119 for information about wetlands. Refer to Response 120 for information about the wildlife analysis.

For comments regarding Polson, response to public comment has been organized by general topics instead of by specific comments. Refer to response to comment for Polson in Section 3.3, Pages 3.3-5 through 3.3-13.

ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE FORMATS OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE PROVIDED UPON REQUEST