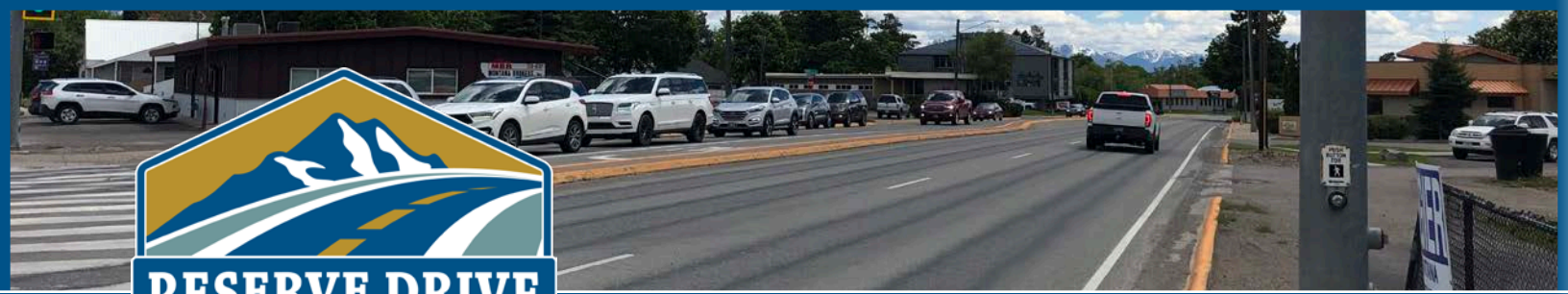


Reserve Drive: Hutton Ranch Road to Whitefish Stage Road Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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Project Overview

Q: What is the Reserve Drive: Hutton Ranch Road to Whitefish Stage Road project?

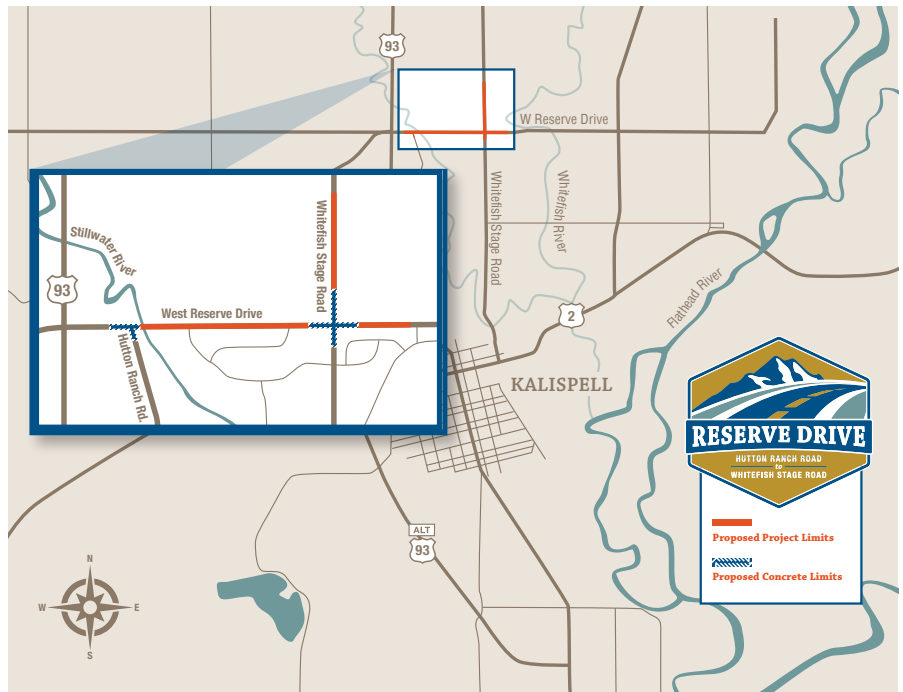
A: The project includes widening West Reserve Drive from Hutton Ranch Road to Whitefish Stage Road from three to five lanes, adding a center turn lane, replacing the Stillwater River Bridge deck, and adding a shared-use path and sidewalk. Intersection improvements to Hutton Ranch Road and Whitefish Stage Road include dedicated turn lanes, signal upgrades, and concrete surfacing. The project also includes reconstructing half a mile of Whitefish Stage Road north of West Reserve Drive to a three-lane configuration.

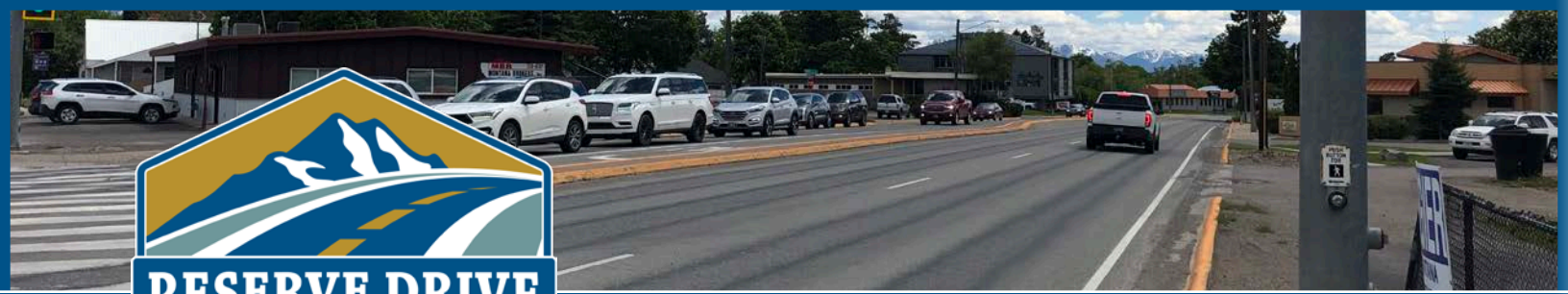
Q: Where is the project location?

A: The Reserve Drive: Hutton Ranch Road to Whitefish Stage Road project is located in Kalispell. This section of road is one of two east-west connectors between US Highway 93 (US 93) and US Highway 2 (US 2), connecting Evergreen to Kalispell. Kalispell is the regional trade center, the county seat of Flathead County, and is characterized as a fast-growing micropolitan area.

Q: What is a micropolitan area?

A micropolitan area is generally an urbanized area (city) that has a population of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000, with a high degree of social and economic integration as measured through commuting ties within at least one county. The 2020-2021 US Census named Kalispell the fastest growing micropolitan area in the country.





Q: What is a design-build project?

A: A design-build project allows the construction company and design engineers to work together throughout the project to provide a unified plan to fit the project timeline and budget. This method is being used due to this project's unique scope of work, time requirements, deadlines, and to minimize disruption to traffic.

Q: Who is the design team for this project?

A: DJ&A Engineering is the design team selected to aid in planning and designing the project.

Q: Who is the contractor for this project?

A: Schellinger Construction is the general contractor for the Reserve Drive: Hutton Ranch Road to Whitefish Stage Road project. Schellinger Construction will also have many subcontractors.

Q: How many right-of-way acquisition parcels are needed to complete this project?

A: Because West Reserve Drive is being widened from three to five lanes, eight right-of-way acquisition parcels have been necessary during the planning process. Currently, the right-of-way acquisitions are close to completion.

Q: What is the West Reserve Drive Corridor Planning Study?

A: The West Reserve Drive Corridor Planning Study was conducted to highlight existing and projected conditions suggesting needed improvements. This extensive planning study provided the foundation for final project development and construction to enhance roadway safety for all users, maintain Montana's transportation infrastructure, implement economic improvements relating to freight movement, reduce environmental impacts, expand multimodal options, and improve the quality of life for users. To read the study, visit <https://bit.ly/3SNOUQ1>.





Q: What were the West Reserve Drive Corridor Study findings?

- There was a historic annual growth rate of 2.4% in annual average daily traffic (AADT) from 2000 to 2019, and a projected 2.4% annual growth rate to 2040, yielding traffic volumes roughly 3-fold higher than 2000 levels.
- Deterioration of the bridge over Stillwater River to structurally deficient/functionally obsolete.
- A lack of bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the north side of West Reserve Drive, only a partial and narrow sidewalk adjacent to the roadway to the south.
- Near doubling of crashes between 2010 and 2019, likely attributed to increased congestion with 31% of all crashes resulting in injury.
- Extensive queues and vehicle idling due to long traffic delays.

Q: Why is this project necessary?

A: This project will improve West Reserve Drive's traffic operations and safety. The following are all factors considered in the decision-making process:

- West Reserve Drive is one of two east-west connectors in the area linking US 93 and US 2, making it a key part of the Kalispell roadway system.
- In 2020, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) re-designated West Reserve Drive from a small county "urban" road to part of the state's "primary" route system reflecting dramatic increases in traffic volume.
- The 2020 – 2021 US Census named Kalispell the fastest-growing micropolitan area in the country.
- The historic annual growth rate in AADT was 2.4% from 2000 to 2019 and is projected to continue at 2.4% into 2040, yielding traffic volumes roughly three-fold higher than 2000 levels.
- Deterioration of the bridge over Stillwater River.
- The lack of bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the north side of West Reserve Drive.
- Near doubling of crashes between 2010 and 2019, likely attributed to increased congestion with 31% of all crashes resulting in injury.
- Extensive queues and vehicle idling due to long traffic delays.





Q: What improvements will be made under the Reserve Drive: Hutton Ranch Road to Whitefish Stage Road project?

A: West Reserve Drive project improvements include:

- Widening West Reserve Drive from Hutton Ranch Road to Whitefish Stage Road from three to five lanes.
- Adding a center turn lane.
- Reconstructing the Stillwater River Bridge, widening it to be consistent with the roadway width including sidewalks on each side.
- Adding an 8-foot shared-use path on the north side of the roadway.
- Adding a 5-foot sidewalk on the south side of the roadway for separated pedestrian and bicycle mobility and accessibility.
- Dedicated turn lanes.
- Concrete surfacing at the Hutton Ranch Road and Whitefish Stage Road intersections.
- Curbing and drainage for half a mile on Whitefish Stage Road, north of the intersection with West Reserve Drive.

Q: What is the purpose of this project?

A: The purpose of this project is to enhance roadway safety for all users, increase nonmotorized accessibility, and improve traffic operations on West Reserve Drive.

Q: What are the project goals?

A: This project will benefit the Kalispell community with the overall improvements to the roadway and added sidewalk and shared-use path.

- Enhance safety for all users.
- Reduce travel delays.
- Increase fuel savings.
- Improve traffic capacity and operations.
- Reduce crash risk.
- Enhance economic impacts.
- Increase accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists.





Timelines and Construction

Q: What is the project history and timeline?

- MDT and the city of Kalispell identify West Reserve Drive as an area needing improvements to address safety and operational concerns.
- 2020: The Montana Transportation Commission re-designated West Reserve Drive from an Urban Route designation to be part of the state's Primary Route system reflecting dramatic increases in traffic volume.
- October 2020: West Reserve Drive Corridor Planning Study conducted by MDT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
- March 21, 2021: MDT hosts West Reserve Drive Corridor Planning Study Virtual Public Meeting.
- September 9, 2021: MDT hosts Public Information Meeting #2.
- September 11 – October 11, 2021: 30-day public comment period.
- October 2021: West Reserve Drive Corridor Planning Study completed.
- April 13, 2022: The West Reserve Drive project was submitted to the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program.
- May 18, 2022: USDOT Multimodal Project Discretionary (MPDG) Rural Application for the West Reserve Drive project submitted.
- December 16, 2022: city of Kalispell was awarded USDOT 2022 MPDG Rural Surface Transportation grant.
- 2023 – 2024: Design-build team was selected and project design takes place.
- Mid-summer 2024: Construction begins.
- 2025: Second phase of construction will resume.
- 2025: Construction estimated to be completed.



Q: How long will construction take?

A: MDT has been working hard to get this project designed and funded and we anticipate the start of construction later this year. **All timelines are subject to unforeseen factors, such as the availability of contractors, materials, and weather.**

- The project will take two construction seasons to complete.
- Construction will begin in summer 2024.
- MDT anticipates project completion in the fall of 2025.

Q: What will travel along the West Reserve Drive project site look like during construction?

A: Traffic control will be in place. Motorists can expect reduced speeds and single-lane traffic. Stay alert and proceed with caution. It is highly recommended to sign up for weekly project updates to stay in the know about upcoming planned work and what to expect for traffic control each week. To receive project updates, please contact Dawn May at dawn@bigskypublicrelations.com.

Q: How will you manage traffic delays during construction?

A: MDT understands that West Reserve Drive is a major thoroughfare between Evergreen and Kalispell. Traffic delays can be expected. However, our team will work to minimize delays as much as possible. In general, we recommend adding 15 minutes to regular one-way commute times.

Q: Will businesses and residents have access throughout construction?

A: Yes, access to both businesses and residences will be maintained throughout the project.

Q: What will be the new permanent traffic pattern for the Country Way subdivision?

A: The Country Way subdivision accesses to West Reserve Drive will be changed to a right-in and right-out traffic pattern, which will enhance the safety and traffic flow of West Reserve Drive.

Q: Will there be a noise wall included in this project?

A: A noise wall study is currently being conducted. These study's findings are anticipated to be available the end of June 2024.





Q: Why are bicycle/pedestrian facilities being proposed for both sides of the road?

A: Adding a shared-use path on the north side and a sidewalk on the south side of West Reserve Drive is a significant advancement toward providing equal access for all users to educational facilities, employment opportunities, retail, commercial, recreational, restaurant and entertainment, which are concentrated at the north end of Kalispell along US 93. West Reserve Drive is one of the only two east-west road connections in the area. It links the community of Evergreen to the many necessities and amenities available in the city of Kalispell.

The shared-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists connects to existing facilities on both ends of the corridor. On the west end, the trail will connect to the existing path along the Kalispell Bypass. On the east end, the trail will connect to the existing path that runs on the west side of Whitefish Stage Road.

Q: What is Portland cement concrete pavement (PCCP)?

A: PCCP is a mix of cement, sand, aggregate (rocks) and water. There are also admixture materials added into the concrete blending process to make it substantially stronger than cement. This is intentionally used for the roadway surfacing at the two main intersections to increase the longevity of the intersections as there is more wear in those road areas due to the increase in stopping, slowing, and turning. As proposed in the USDOT MPDG Rural Surface Transportation grant program, the West Reserve Drive project has been expanded to include the use of PCCP at both the Hutton Ranch Road and Whitefish Stage Road intersections to generate greater state of good repair, traveler reliability, and freight movement benefits.

Project Budget

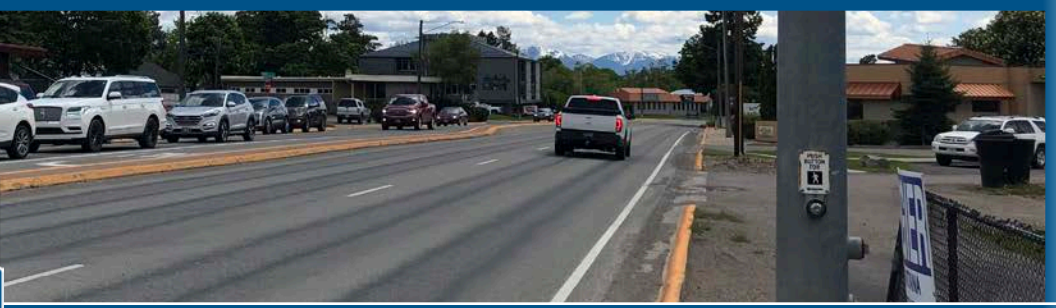
Q: How much will this project cost?

A: The estimated cost of the Reserve Drive: Hutton Ranch Road to Whitefish Stage Road project is \$42.2 million.

Q: Where are the project funds coming from?

A: In 2023, this project was awarded \$25 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) to address transportation and traffic challenges. The MPDG Rural grant funds were matched with Montana's Surface Transportation Program – Primary (STPP) funds for \$13.4 million. Additionally, this project will receive \$1.44 million from the SAFER Montana Roads and Bridges Fund.





Public Outreach

Q: How have you been communicating to the public about this project?

A: MDT's public involvement team, Big Sky Public Relations, has consistently and clearly communicated to the public regarding the Reserve Drive: Hutton Ranch Road to Whitefish Stage Road project. The following are some of the ways we have reached out to stakeholders:

- Canvassing to local businesses and residences regarding an upcoming open house occurred in early May 2024.
- Public open house on May 16, 2024.
- Held tabling events to inform the public about the project, as well as the following:
 - Logan Health Spring into Safety event – May 2024.
 - Whitefish Farmer's Market – May 2024.
 - Flathead Food Truck Festival – June 2024.
- All printed materials have contact information, including a hotline phone number, project webpage, and subscription options to stay informed on the project.
- Media outreach.
- Project updates via email, project website, hotline and text.

Q: I still have questions or comments. Who should I contact?

A: Public participation is highly encouraged in all MDT projects. Dawn May with Big Sky Public Relations is the main point of contact for this project. Please feel free to reach out with any questions, comments, or to get updates on the Reserve Drive: Hutton Ranch Road to Whitefish Stage Road project.

- Email Updates: Contact Dawn at dawn@bigskypublicrelations.com to subscribe.
- Project Hotline: 406-207-4484, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- SMS Text Updates: Text RESERVEDRWHITEF to 41411. Message and data rates may apply. Message frequency may vary. Text STOP to cancel. Texting alerts are not managed by MDT and may have different privacy and security policies. For more information, see <https://smstc.us/t41411/>.
- Project Website: <https://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/reservedrive/>.

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