

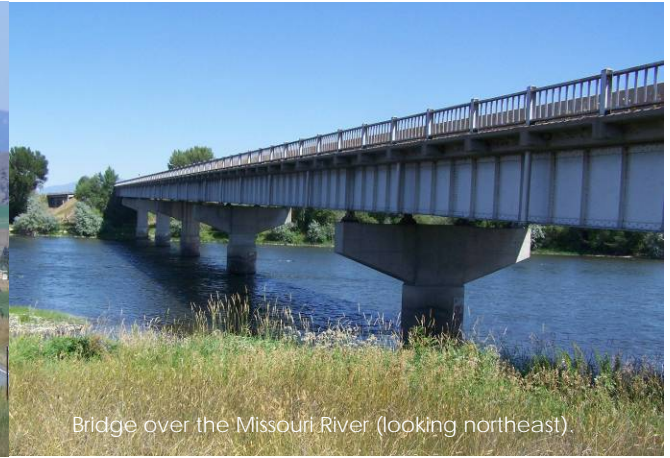
Toston Missouri River Crossing Corridor Study Newsletter 3

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South of Toston, Montana (looking north).



Bridge over the Missouri River (looking northeast).



Toston Missouri River
Corridor Planning Study

Needs and Objectives for the Corridor Study:

- ✓ Improve safety by reducing traffic conflicts and crashes
- ✓ Improve operation and functionality of the roadway
- ✓ Minimize environmental resource impacts

Final Public Meeting

Thursday, February 10,
2011

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Townsend High School –
Community Room
201 North Spruce Street

We hope to see you there!

Draft Corridor Study Highlights

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) initiated a corridor study along US 287 near Toston, Montana, to assess and identify improvement options for the 2.8-mile segment, from RP 86.3 to RP 89.1. This segment is the remaining section of roadway between Toston and Three Forks without planned improvements. This corridor study was developed strictly as a planning study and not a design project.

This pre-NEPA/MEPA corridor planning process included:

- Research and analysis of existing roadway conditions;
- Preparation of an Environmental Scan;
- Documentation of projected future conditions;
- Identification of stakeholder and resource agency concerns;
- Assessment/identification of potential improvement options; and
- Identification of potential funding sources.

The draft Corridor Study will be available January 31, 2011 for public review and comment.

Roadway issues identified based on the assessment of existing conditions include:

- Roadway geometry (horizontal and vertical),
- Roadway fill slopes,
- Narrow roadway width,
- Higher crash trend compared to statewide average, and
- Skewed access points.

Improvement options, including realigning US 287, were evaluated based on engineering and environmental data as well as public, stakeholder, and resource agencies input. Ten potential alignments were initially developed to address the needs and objectives for the study area and were presented at the public meeting held on October 13, 2010. Through further analysis and screening, the ten alignments were narrowed down to two corridor "paths" as potential locations for development of a new US 287 alignment. Exact roadway configurations will be determined once funding is identified and a project moves forward with design activities

STUDY CONTACTS:

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Looking east at MRL Railway and private land.

Check out the study website:
www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/toston

Long-Term Improvement Options

Through detailed screening analysis, costs and impacts to resources and individual parcels were evaluated. The screening analysis included the following factors:

1. Corridor needs and objectives
2. Environmental/Resource impacts
3. Construction/ROW costs
4. ROW impacts
5. Constructability
6. Length of alignment
7. Public preference

The results of the analysis identified no fatal flaws with developing a relocated US 287 alignment within either the central corridor path or the eastern corridor path as shown on page 3.

The pre-NEPA/MEPA corridor study process is a high level planning study and exact future roadway configurations are not developed at this time. A project can move forward once funding is identified.

Central Corridor Path

Pros:

- o Public preference
- o Close to existing travel way, resulting in lowest overall impacts
- o Least impact to irrigated farmland
- o Improvement to existing conditions

Cons:

- o Impacts 4(f) fishing access site

Approximate cost range (2010 dollars):

\$18-41 Million
(depending on lane configuration)

Eastern Corridor Path

Pros:

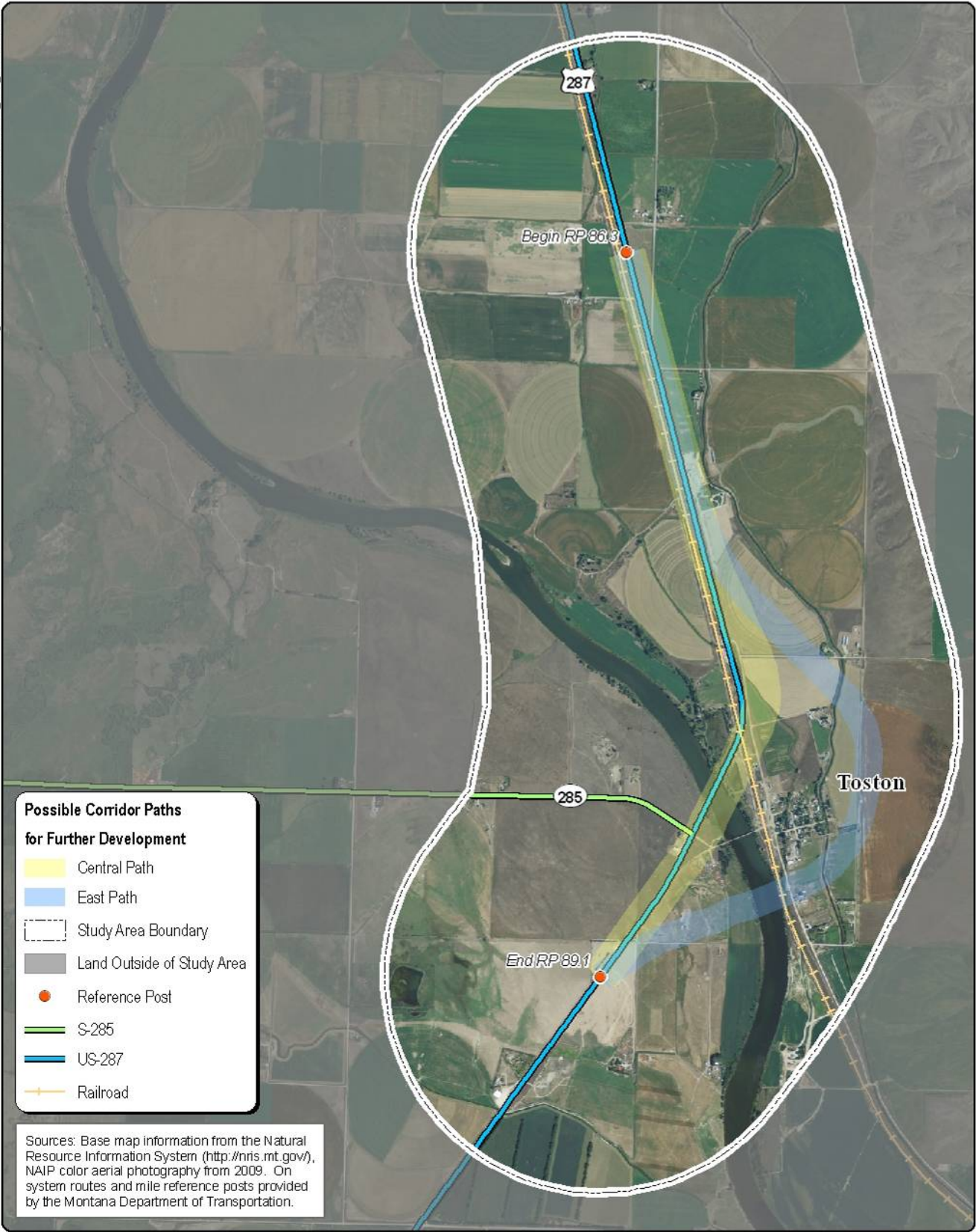
- o Improvement to existing conditions
- o Lowest cost
- o Lowest environmental resource impacts
- o Shortest bridge length

Cons:

- o Affects irrigation pivots and cropland
- o Public opposition
- o Increased route length by 0.59 miles (compared to existing)

Approximate cost range (2010 dollars):

\$17-25 Million
(depending on lane configuration)

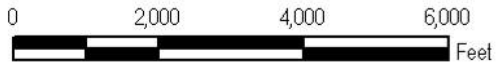


Possible Corridor Paths for Further Development

- Central Path
- East Path
- Study Area Boundary
- Land Outside of Study Area
- Reference Post
- S-285
- US-287
- Railroad

Sources: Base map information from the Natural Resource Information System (<http://nris.mt.gov/>), NAIP color aerial photography from 2009. On system routes and mile reference posts provided by the Montana Department of Transportation.

**Possible Corridor Paths for Further Development
Toston Missouri River Crossing Corridor**



**Toston Missouri River
Corridor Planning Study**

Short-Term Improvement Options

Several short-term improvement options have been identified to improve conditions in the study area. The following projects would improve conditions in the interim as funding for long-term improvements is identified:

1. Add Southbound Left Turn Bay to US 287 at Toston Frontage Road
 - Short timeframe (0 to 3 years)
2. Address Sight Distance Obstructions - Intersection of US 287 & S 285
 - Relocate private advertisement signs to improve sight distance.
 - Short timeframe (0 to 3 years)
3. US 287 Shoulder Widening
 - Widen shoulders on both sides of US 287 to a 4-foot minimum width.
 - Medium timeframe (3 to 5 years)
4. S 285 Realignment
 - Shift the alignment of S 285 south of the existing travelled way and introduce larger horizontal curvature (farther south of the Missouri River Bridge end).
 - Long timeframe (greater than 5 years)
5. US 287 and S 285 Intersection Reconfiguration
 - Reconfigure intersection by enlarging radii and aligning minor approach legs.
 - Medium timeframe (3 to 5 years)



What's Next?

After the Final Corridor Study is complete, funding will need to be identified to enter into the next phase of project development, which would consist of the appropriate environmental document and preliminary engineering activities.

PUBLIC INPUT WANTED:

Your feedback on the Draft Study is greatly appreciated!

*The **Public Draft will be made available on January 31, 2011** for review and comment. Copies of the Draft can be accessed via the study website at:*

www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/toston

Hard copies will also be made available at MDT offices, Townsend Public Library, and Broadwater County Commission.

The deadline for receiving comments is February 18, 2011.