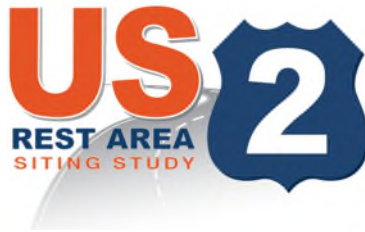


Appendix A: Participation Process

Stakeholder Interviews



Stakeholder Interview

November 7, 2017

Kelly Lynch – Deputy Director/General Counsel, Montana League of Cities and Towns (MLCT)

Stopping Opportunities

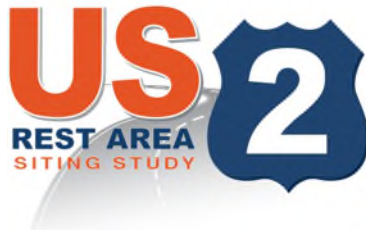
- Ms. Lynch explained MLCT had posted study information on their website for all members to review.
- While the association could not comment directly on stopping opportunities, for public health and safety reasons they did feel rest areas should be located near incorporated cities or towns along the corridor.
- Ms. Lynch will provide DOWL with a list of towns contacted by MLCT regarding the study.

Stakeholder Coordination

- Ms. Lynch explained MLCT was not in a place to provide specific information to the project team; MCLT will engage affected cities and towns (Shelby, Dodson, Saco, and Wolf Point) regarding the study and pass on any information gathered.

Agency Coordination

- Ms. Lynch mentioned connecting with other state departments regarding stopping opportunities or needs along the corridor.
- She said city rest area locations could influence siting decisions and suggested MDT explore partnership opportunities with MLCT members to help fill gaps between MDT-maintained sites.



Stakeholder Interview
November 7, 2017
Clint Simpson – Mayor of Saco

Stopping Opportunities

- Mr. Simpson discussed the rest areas near Malta and Vandalia as the nearest stopping opportunities.
- He explained there have been comments from business owners about travelers (including cyclists) stopping to use private business bathrooms without purchasing anything.
- There are no on-route public bathrooms in the town.

Specific Locations

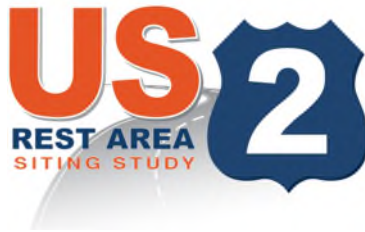
- Mr. Simpson discussed a city park rest area in the town that has sprinklers, ADA accessible tables, and ADA accessible walkways, but no restroom facility.
- He explained the town ran out of funds to complete the project.
- Mr. Simpson expressed support for an option to partner with MDT and provide a city park safety rest area in the current park location.
- Mr. Simpson confirmed a new safety rest area could tie into the town's public water system.
- He noted there are floodplains just east and west of the town that should be avoided.
- Additionally, there are restrictions that could affect any options requiring a vaulted toilet.

Specific Needs

- Mr. Simpson noted that while though traffic from the Bakken oilfields has slowed down, drivers of both trucks and other vehicles still need areas to safely pull over and rest.
- Travelers are currently pulling out on approaches and other access points to rest.
- Seasonally, traffic increases in the summer with a large number of tourists and cyclists passing through.
- Mr. Simpson explained the summer months mean cyclists are camping in city parks, near rest areas, and in other areas of the town due to lack of public space to do so.
- In the winter, he noted MDT and local efforts at snow plowing are successful at keeping roadways clear.

Other Issues or Needs

- Mr. Simpson said a recent road improvement project left a large lip on the shoulder of the highway, but it has seemingly leveled off.
- While he could not speak to exact safety statistics for the roadway, he noted fatigue is always a safety issue for drivers on long trips.
- Mr. Simpson would like to promote Saco as a stopping opportunity and partner with MDT regarding utilizing the city park and its current amenities.
- He extended an invitation to “check out the park” next time the project team was in the area.



Stakeholder Interview
November 14, 2017
Larry Bonderud – Mayor of Shelby

Stopping Opportunities

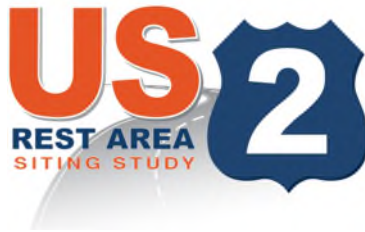
- Mayor Bonderud explained a Chamber of Commerce signage program encouraging travelers to stop within city limits.
- In regards to stopping opportunities outside of city limits, he noted the community feels they are lacking.

Specific Locations

- Mr. Bonderud explained there are areas in and outside of city limits which could be suitable for siting a new safety rest area.
- He requested a new safety rest area be as close to the municipal area as possible.
- MDT has land holdings one mile west of Shelby along US 2 which could be available.
- Toole County has land east of the city limits near the base of a hill that could also be usable.
- Both sites would have access to the public water supply from the Shelby municipal water system. There is a current effort to increase sewage handling and the public water system has enough capacity.
- The Shelby Carousel and Rest Area has a project that is roughly 90% developed and near US 2.
- The Baker Massacre historic pullout has land and could be a possibility.

Specific Needs

- Mr. Bonderud acknowledged the need for more stopping opportunities to decrease potential for accidents due to unsafe conditions such as weather and drowsy driving.
- On weekends and in the evenings, there are large numbers of trucks parked in and around the municipal area awaiting opening of the border.
- He estimated that 20% of the traffic moving through the area is truck and freight traffic.



Stakeholder Interview

December 1, 2017

Bob Siversten – President, Highway 2 Association

Stopping Opportunities

- Mr. Siversten said he did not believe there was a need for new construction of safety rest areas along US 2.
- He believes an increased focus on public/private partnership with local businesses is a better solution to concerns about safety and stopping opportunities.
- He repeatedly stressed the economic benefits of these arrangements and warned against placing safety rest areas outside of communities as it would draw travelers away from businesses.
- Mr. Siversten mentioned the Shelby Carousel and Rest Area as a model for community “rest areas”.

Rest Area Maintenance

- Mr. Siversten expressed concern about future costs of maintaining a new safety rest area facility, especially those in rural locations.
- He also discussed concerns related to safety and vandalism at safety rest areas when they are not located near communities. He did not provide specific instances but rather expressed a general concern.

Federal Funding

- Mr. Siversten requested additional information on safety rest area funding related to construction and maintenance. DOWL confirmed they would investigate and direct him to the best source for that information at a later date.

Resource Agency Comments



April 10, 2019

To: Resource Agency Distribution
Subject: US 2 Rest Area Siting Study

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has completed initial efforts to assess needs and opportunities for new safety rest area sites along the US Highway 2 corridor. The study corridor includes the length of US 2 extending from a western endpoint at the Troy Safety Rest Area to an eastern endpoint at the Culbertson Safety Rest Area. Per guidance outlined in the Montana Rest Area Plan, MDT strives to provide stopping opportunities at approximately one-hour intervals. For this study, MDT defined six study segments spanning the corridor where a new safety rest area would provide approximately one-hour spacing relative to urban areas with a minimum population of 5,000.

With this letter, MDT invites you to review and provide comments on the draft Environmental Scan report. MDT requests specific attention to the accuracy and completeness of the resource information considered. The draft report may be accessed online at <https://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/us2restarea/documents.shtml>.

Please send comments to Sarah Nicolai, Consultant Project Manager, by **May 7, 2019**.

Sarah Nicolai
DOWL
1300 Cedar Street
Helena, MT 59601
snicolai@dowl.com

MDT will consider all comments before finalizing the study. Thank you in advance for your input.

Sincerely,

Tom Martin, P.E.
Environmental Services Bureau Chief

Resource Agency Distribution:

Mike McGrath, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Todd Tillinger, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Brenda Christensen, U.S. Forest Service

Lonna Sandau, U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Glen Smith, U.S. Department of the Interior – National Park Service
Jason Garber, MT Department of Environmental Quality
Jonathan Ferree, MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Carolyn Sime, MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

Copies:

Division Administrator, Missoula District
Division Administrator, Great Falls District
Division Administrator, Glendive District
File

From: Sime, Carolyn <CSime2@mt.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 30, 2019 10:22 AM
To: Crnich, Vicki <vcrnich@mt.gov>
Subject: RE: US 2 Rest Area Siting Study Draft Environmental Scan report

Vicki,

Since receiving your email, I have honestly been thinking about it in light of Tom Martin's letter and the meeting between the Program and MDT a few weeks ago. That being said, I am at a loss as to an appropriate way to respond to the request for comment and will likely decline.

The Program does not routinely provide scoping comments in response to solicitations from consultants (i.e. send your comments by a certain date or we will assume ...). Similarly, we do not routinely comment on state agency MEPA/NEPA work and especially when framed in the same way as consultants frame the solicitation. Rather, the burden is on consultants to reach out to the Program to initiate consultation if the project requires a state permit in designated habitat. For state agencies, the Governor's directive and expectation as a part of the Executive Branch is that Executive Order 12-2015 applies to the work they do and MSGOT as the statutorily-created body with the duties and powers to oversee implementation of both the Executive Order and the Greater Sage Grouse Stewardship Act. The Program's consultation work is included in state agency MEPA/NEPA documents as a part of developing alternatives, assessing impacts, etc.

I am also aware of the April STIP for 2019-2023. It appears that many potential projects are located in designated habitat, running the gamut from safety to reconstruction. I look forward to working with MDT, the Governor's Office, and MSGOT to resolve the current impasse created by Tom's letter and find a path forward that is equitable with what other state agencies and regulated industries have already or will soon work out with MSGOT.

I am aware that there is now at least one MDT project that requires a 124 permit. Tom and I have discussed it, including my experience that permitting agencies usually reject permit applications if consultation is required but not completed. Not sure what he will do or how that project will move forward. Happy to work with MDT on that...

Best,
Carolyn

From: Crnich, Vicki
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 1:52 PM
To: Crnich, Vicki <vcrnich@mt.gov>
Subject: US 2 Rest Area Siting Study Draft Environmental Scan report

Attached is a letter requesting your review and comment on the draft Environmental Scan report for this study. A link to the study web page is included below.

<https://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/us2restarea/documents.shtml>

Thank you for your help with this study.



Vicki Crnich

Planner | Statewide and Urban Planning Division
Montana Department of Transportation
2960 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-1001
406-444-7653 | vcrnich@mt.gov

Follow Us: mdt.mt.gov



-----Original Message-----

From: Tillinger, Todd N CIV USARMY CENWO (US)
<Todd.N.Tillinger@usace.army.mil>
Sent: Wednesday, April 24, 2019 1:23 PM
To: Tom Martin (tomartin@mt.gov) <tomartin@mt.gov>
Cc: Sarah Nicolai <snicolai@dowl.com>; Tillinger, Todd N CIV USARMY CENWO (US) <Todd.N.Tillinger@usace.army.mil>; heidy.bruner@dot.gov
Subject: FW: US 2 Rest Area Siting Study Draft Environmental Scan report (UNCLASSIFIED)

CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

Tom,

Present resource and time limitations preclude specific Corps comment on the referenced Environmental report. I understand you requested our specific attention to the accuracy and completeness, but all that the Corps can offer at this time are the following general statements regarding our Regulatory Program and associated permit processes.

- 1) Under the authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), DA permits are required for the discharge of fill material into waters of the U.S. Waters of the U.S. include the area below the ordinary high water mark of stream channels and lakes or ponds connected to the tributary system, and wetlands adjacent to these waters. Isolated waters and wetlands, as well as man-made channels, may be waters of the U.S. in certain circumstances, which must be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- 2) The permit evaluation process we employ involves two parts. The first part is the 404(b)(1) evaluation, which is the substantive criteria by which permit decisions are made, and is used to determine the least environmentally damaging alternative. The second part is the public interest review, which determines if the project is contrary to the public interest. Public interest factors include conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. The factors relevant to your project include wetlands, fish and wildlife values, water quality, considerations of property ownership, and recreation. The 404(b)(1) guidelines contain the four substantive criteria used in evaluating discharges of dredged or fill material in waters of the U.S. Fundamental to these Guidelines is the precept that dredged or fill material should not be discharged into an aquatic ecosystem unless it can be demonstrated that such discharges would not have unacceptable adverse impacts, either individually or in combination with known and/or probable impacts of other activities affecting the ecosystem of concern.
- 3) Activities in waters of the U.S. that have no more than minimal effect may be authorized by using Nationwide or Regional General Permits. Those permits typically take 30 to 45 days to review once a complete application is received by the Corps. Activities with more than minimal impact require review under the Corps standard (individual) permit process, which takes at least 120 days.

4) Wetland losses exceeding 0.1 acre at a site require compensatory mitigation within the same watershed. Stream impacts exceeding 300 linear feet will also require compensatory mitigation within the same watershed. The Corps needs to review and approve all compensatory mitigation plans prior to authorizing any activity in waters of the U.S.

5) US Highway 2 runs through three Indian reservations in Montana. Applications/Pre-construction notifications are required for all regulated activities in waters of the U.S. within those reservations.

6) Separate individual Section 401 Water Quality Certification may be needed for some activities.

7) Wetland delineations and delineations of other waters and special aquatic sites must be provided with Applications and Pre-construction notifications. Those can be prepared and submitted in advance, and jurisdictional determinations requested from the Corps, to help expedite the permit review process.

8) Additional, project-specific information and comments can be provided by the Corps once additional detail is received, or when Applications/Pre-construction notifications are submitted.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

Todd N. Tillinger, P.E.
Montana Program Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District
10 West 15th Street, Suite 2200
Helena, Montana 59626-9705

Office Phone (406)441-1376
Mobile Phone (406)422-7527
Fax (406)441-1380
todd.n.tillinger@usace.army.mil

<http://www.nwo.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory-Program/Montana/>



United States Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service

Montana Ecological Services Office

585 Shepard Way, Suite 1

Helena, Montana 59601-6287

Phone: (406) 449-5225; Fax: (406) 449-5339



In Reply Refer To:
File: M.44 MDT (I)
06E11000-2019-TA-0409

May 9, 2019

Sarah Nicolai
DOWL
1300 Cedar St.
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Ms. Nicolai:

This responds to an April 10, 2019 letter from Tom Martin, at the Montana Department of Transportation, requesting comments on the Draft US 2 Rest Area Siting Study report. The study provides a planning-level overview of physical, biological, social, and cultural resources, and identifies potential constraints and opportunities along the US 2 corridor for new safety rest area sites. The study corridor extends across northern Montana, from the towns for Troy to Culbertson, from route post (RP) 50.8 to RP 593.7, a span of almost 543 miles. The Service received your letter on April 10, 2019. We offer the following comments under the authority of and in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA; U.S.C. 703 et seq.), Executive Order 13186 *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA; 16 U.S.C. 668–668d), and the Endangered Species Act, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

Migratory Birds

The MBTA prohibits the taking, killing, possession, and transportation, (among other actions) of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests, except when specifically permitted. The Service therefore recommends that the project proponent take all practicable measures to avoid and minimize take of migratory birds, their eggs, or active nests, and impacts to migratory bird habitat. Because migratory birds build nests on a variety of substrates (e.g., ground, shrubs, trees, structures), the Service recommends implementation of the following measures should work be proposed during the peak breeding season: (1) tree and shrub cutting/removal should be avoided between April 15 and August 15 as possible, to remove potential nesting substrate prior to project commencement; and (2) swallow nests on the existing bridge or other overhead structures to be removed or impacted should be removed prior to occupancy or as they are built, but prior to egg laying. A list of the Service's recommended Nationwide Standard Conservation Measures for

migratory birds can be found here:

<https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/management/nationwidestandardconservationmeasures.pdf>

We recommend that these be considered and applied as appropriate in conjunction with any construction project that may result from this study.

Purposeful take of birds, eggs, or active nests requires a permit from the Service's Region 6 Migratory Bird Permits Office. Please contact the Service's Region 6 Migratory Bird Permits Office if you are uncertain if activities may result in prohibited take of migratory birds, eggs, or nests. Additional information about permits can be found at:

<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/mbpermits.html>.

Bald and Golden Eagles

Within several of the study's segments it is noted that bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and/or golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) nests have been recorded within the segment, and that "...siting options will need to consider proximity to known eagle nests as construction timing restrictions are required for work near active nests." While the Service agrees with this statement, we also encourage the Department to consider the potential long term effects that the installation of a rest area will have on eagle reproduction, as the definition of "take" under BGEPA includes "disturb," which can lead to a decrease in productivity. As such, the Service recommends that potential rest area sites be evaluated for their proximity to eagle nests and the potential to decrease eagle reproductive success.

The bald eagle and golden eagle are protected from a variety of harmful actions via take prohibitions in both the Migratory Bird Treaty Act¹ and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The BGEPA, enacted in 1940 and amended several times, prohibits take of bald eagles and golden eagles, including their parts, nests, young or eggs, except where otherwise permitted pursuant to federal regulations. Incidental take of eagles from actions such as electrocutions from power lines or wind turbine strikes are prohibited unless specifically authorized via an eagle incidental take permit from US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). BGEPA provides penalties for persons who "take, possess, sell, purchase, barter, offer to sell, purchase or barter, transport, export or import, at any time or any manner, any bald eagle ... [or any golden eagle], alive or dead, or any part, nest, or egg thereof." BGEPA defines take to include the following actions: "pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb." The Service expanded this definition by regulation to include the term "destroy" to ensure that "take" also encompasses destruction of eagle nests. Also the Service defined the term disturb which means to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, (1) injury to an eagle, (2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with

¹ On December 22, 2017, the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Office of the Solicitor Memorandum M-37050 titled The Migratory Bird Treaty Act Does Not Prohibit Incidental Take <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/m-37050.pdf> concludes that the MBTA's prohibitions on pursuing, hunting, taking, capturing, killing, or attempting to do the same apply only to affirmative actions that have as their purpose the taking or killing of migratory birds, their nests, or their eggs. The MBTA list of protected species includes bald and golden eagles, and the law has been an effective tool to pursue incidental take cases involving eagles. However, the primary law protecting eagles is the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) (16 U.S. Code § 668), since the bald eagle was delisted under the Endangered Species Act in 2007. Memorandum-37050 does not affect the ability of the Service to refer entities for prosecution that have violated the take prohibitions for eagles established by the BGEPA.

normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or (3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior.

The Service has developed guidance for the public regarding means to avoid take of bald and golden eagles:

- The 2007 *National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines* serve to advise landowners, land managers, and others who share public and private lands with bald eagles when and under what circumstances the protective provisions of BGEPA may apply. They provide conservation recommendations to help people avoid and/or minimize such impacts to bald eagles, particularly where they may constitute “disturbance,” which is prohibited by the BGEPA.
<https://www.fws.gov/northeast/ecologicalservices/pdf/NationalBaldEagleManagementGuidelines.pdf>
- The 2013 Eagle Conservation Plan Guidance, Module 1- Land-based Wind Energy, Version 2 is specific to wind energy development and provides in-depth guidance for conserving bald and golden eagles in the course of siting, constructing, and operating wind energy facilities. Development of an Eagle Conservation Plan per these guidelines may serve as the basis for applying for an eagle incidental take permit for wind energy facilities. Applications for such eagle incidental take permits must include an Eagle Conservation Plan. <https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/management/eagleconservationplanguidance.pdf>

The Service also has promulgated new permit regulations under BGEPA:

- New eagle permit regulations, as allowed under BGEPA, were promulgated by the Service in 2009 (74 FR 46836; Sept. 11, 2009) and revised in 2016 (81 FR 91494; Dec. 16, 2016). The regulations authorize the limited take of bald and golden eagles where the take to be authorized is associated with otherwise lawful activities. These regulations also establish permit provisions for intentional take of eagle nests where necessary to ensure public health and safety, in addition to other limited circumstances. The revisions in 2016 included changes to permit issuance criteria and duration, definitions, compensatory mitigation standards, criteria for eagle nest removal permits, permit application requirements, and fees in order to clarify, improve implementation and increase compliance while still protecting eagles.
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-12-16/pdf/2016-29908.pdf>

The Service’s Office of Law Enforcement carries out its mission to protect eagles through investigations and enforcement, as well as by fostering relationships with individuals, companies, industries and agencies that have taken effective steps to avoid take, including incidental take of these species, and encouraging others to implement measures to avoid take. The Office of Law Enforcement focuses its resources on investigating individuals and entities that take eagles without identifying and implementing all reasonable, prudent and effective measures to avoid that take. Those individuals and entities are encouraged to work closely with Service biologists to identify available protective measures, and to implement those measures during all activities or situations where their action or inaction may result in the take of an eagle(s).

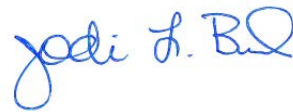
In addition to the above guidance, the 2010 Montana Bald Eagle Management Guidelines: An Addendum to Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan (1994) developed by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) also provides guidance for avoiding and minimizing the risk for bald eagle take. <http://fwp.mt.gov/fwpDoc.html?id=44181>

Threatened and Endangered Species

Throughout the study document, threatened or endangered species that may occur in the respective study segments' counties are listed. However, the Service-provided list that is referenced is dated September 2017. Prior to consultation on any projects that may result from this study, the Department must obtain the most recent species list for the project's action area. Should a project move forward to develop a rest area in an area where grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) may occur, the Service recommends that any such rest area be designed to control and minimize the availability of attractants (e.g., food, trash, waste, petroleum products) to grizzly bears long term, through the use of bear resistant dumpsters and receptacles, as appropriate.

We appreciate the Department's efforts to conserve fish and wildlife resources. If you have questions about this letter, please contact Mike McGrath at (406) 449-5225, extension 201, or at mike_mcgrath@fws.gov.

Sincerely,



Jodi L. Bush
Office Supervisor

Public Review Period Comments

Table A.1 Public Review Period Comments (May 22 to June 22, 2019)

Comment # and Date	Name / Source	Comment	MDT Response
<p>Comment 1 05-23-19</p>	<p>Lorette Carter City of Shelby</p> <p>Email Comment</p>	<p>In looking at the plan for rest areas, I hope you reconsider the strategic location of Shelby in traveling the HiLine. Several years ago, Mr. Harry Benjamin approached the State to consider the Carousel Rest Area of Shelby as an MDT rest area. He built the permanent carousel building to accommodate travelers if the State were to partner with him in sustaining the rest area. Mr. Benjamin has received financial support from the Office of Tourism in the build and most recently received the Public Private Collaboration Award from the Office of Tourism. I hope your study will keep this in mind.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. In Segment 3, the study recommends Site 3a, which is located approximately two miles east of Shelby. Locations within the community of Shelby were not identified as potentially favorable for a new MDT safety rest area in part due to the need for undeveloped right-of-way adequate to accommodate truck and passenger vehicle parking and access from US 2. If a project in Segment 3 advances from this study, MDT will coordinate with community representatives during the project development process.</p>
<p>Comment 2 05-23-19</p>	<p>Matt Baldwin Daily Inter Lake Newspaper</p> <p>Phone Call</p>	<p>Where is the Happy's Inn Rest Area site located along US 2?</p> <p>Why was this location selected within the Segment 1?</p> <p>What would the rest area look like, and would there be sufficient truck parking and amenities?</p> <p>What are the next steps in the US 2 Rest Area Siting Study process?</p>	<p>The recommended site for Segment 1 is near Mile Post 66.5 near an existing MDT Maintenance shop.</p> <p>Site locations were determined based on several criteria as outlined in the study. The siting selection process included a fatal flaw screening, desirable site characteristics screening, cost analysis, spacing analysis, and site prioritization. Site 1d (Happy's Inn) was selected from Segment 1 due to its current MDT R/W ownership, existing utilities, and favorable geology above other sites located within Segment 1.</p> <p>MDT has recently gravitated to individual rest room stalls as opposed to the communal men's and women's rest rooms from a previous era. MDT uses guidelines established in the MDT Rest Area Plan to adequately size new rest areas. Truck parking is always a concern at rest areas and MDT uses growth models to predict current and future needs. New rest areas have typically included covered picnic areas, pet areas, and other amenities.</p> <p>The public review period will extend through June 22, 2019. All comments and questions will be compiled for MDT consideration.</p>

Comment # and Date	Name / Source	Comment	MDT Response
<p>Comment 3 05-28-19</p>	<p>Michele M Dieterich Email Comment</p>	<p>Before you consider the rest area near Happy's Inn, please also consider a wildlife bridge and fencing that directs them to the bridge. 811 animal fatalities in 5 years is substantial. Each one of these deaths also results in property damage and often injury. As traffic increases on this stretch of Hwy 2, we need to start thinking about how it affects the myriad wildlife that tourists flock to Montana to see. I would suggest a wildlife bridge as well a rest area that keeps wildlife in mind. Known wildlife corridors should be studied and mapped before deciding upon a location for the rest area. Thanks for considering my comments.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Wildlife crossings are outside the scope of this study, but MDT will consider your comment as it considers future safety improvements in the corridor.</p> <p>Appendices B and C summarize planning-level information about wildlife occurrences and wildlife-vehicle crashes relevant to safety rest area siting. If a project advances from this study, MDT will conduct additional wildlife and safety reviews.</p>
<p>Comment 4 06-05-19</p>	<p>Paul Leimbach Phone Call</p>	<p>Segment 1 should be moved up in the priority list. Several people who live in the Libby to Troy area often commute to Kalispell for medical procedures and regular check-ups. Segment 1 would provide a much-needed stopping opportunity, in particular for the aging community who may require more frequent stopping opportunities.</p> <p>Site 1d seems like a logical location given the existing MDT Section House; however, a location between Happy's Inn and Logan State Park may provide for a better rest area location.</p>	<p>Thank you for sharing your concerns. They will be documented and included in the study for MDT consideration. MDT will use this study to assist in determining the most needed location along US 2 for a new safety rest area. Construction would most likely take a few years once MDT has programed a project.</p> <p>Site locations were determined based on several criteria as outlined in the study. The siting selection process included a fatal flaw screening, desirable site characteristics screening, cost analysis, spacing analysis, and site prioritization. Site 1d was selected from Segment 1 due to its current MDT R/W ownership, existing utilities, and favorable geology above other sites located within Segment 1. Site 1e located closer to Happy's Inn scored lower primarily due to R/W ownership, while locations closer to Logan State Park were eliminated early in the fatal flaw evaluation due to proximity to surface water bodies, wetlands, and residential developments.</p>

Comment # and Date	Name / Source	Comment	MDT Response
Comment 5 06-11-19	Donna Hight Facebook Comment	What happened to the one and only rest area from Laurel to Vista Point on 212. The one north of Roberts... closed.	Thank you for your comment. This study considers potential safety rest area sites on US 2. The Roberts Rest Area is currently under construction and is anticipated to reopen by 2020.
Comment 6 06-11-19	Kain Hirsch-hall Facebook Comment	The rest area 15 miles west of Glasgow should be 24/7... even when it's closed... people just [redacted] on the lawn...it's the only rest area for AT LEAST 140 miles...	The Vandalia Safety Rest Area offers services seasonally from May 15 th through November 15 th . Due to network spacing and location, safety concerns associated with sight distance, and the cost to reconstruct the existing Vandalia site, this study recommends construction of a new year-round, full-service safety rest area in Segments 5 and 6.
Comment 7 06-14-19	Alan N Johns Email Comment	This comment is towards the US2 rest area siting survey: I would like to see a rest area at the top of Marias Pass. There is currently a parking area. I have not traveled the route in the last 10 years but when I did it was weekly, and I could have used the break at the top. As a Plow Driver in the Helena District I realize that snow removal would be a concern at that site. But that also is why a driver needs a break at that point.	Marias Pass is located approximately 12 miles west of Segment 2, which extends from RP 208.1 to RP 242.0. MDT defined study segments to best meet the spacing guidelines outlined in the Montana Rest Area Plan. The study recommends advancing Site 2a just south of East Glacier Park due to superior site characteristics, lower costs, and ideal spacing between reset points compared to other potentially favorable sites.