

FAQs

What is a Corridor Planning Study?

The corridor planning process was developed in an effort to better coordinate and link the planning process with the NEPA/MEPA process. It is important to note that the Corridor Planning Study is developed strictly as a planning study and **not** a design project. The results of the study will be used to determine the level of environmental documentation to be used prior to continuation of the NEPA/MEPA process and project implementation.

The Winifred to Big Sandy Corridor Study allows for **earlier** planning-level coordination with the public, resource and other agencies, and will develop specific factors that can be used in the subsequent environmental review process as projects are moved forward from the study.

What is the outcome of the study?

The results of the study will be used to determine the level of environmental documentation to be used prior to any projects moving forward. The corridor planning study will identify improvement options and the potential for environmental impacts, and identify potential mitigation efforts to minimize such environmental impacts.

The study serves as a planning process, not a design or environmental process. Recommendations will consider the least environmental impact and feasibility.

Check out the study website at:

www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/winifred

What steps will be taken during the Corridor Study?

In order to maintain a smooth and efficient transition from transportation planning to project development/environmental review, the MDT has established several steps that will be followed to produce an effective corridor study plan. These include:

1. Identify study area.
2. Develop work plan.
3. Establish existing conditions.
4. Identify issues and needs.
5. Determine improvement options.
6. Recommend improvement options.
7. Prepare draft report.
8. Issue final report.

What does a "pre-NEPA Corridor Study" mean?

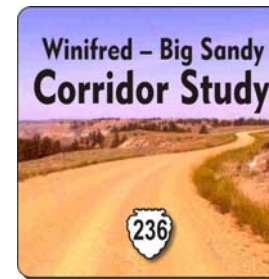
NEPA is the National Environmental Policy Act. Modeled after NEPA, MEPA is the Montana Environmental Policy Act, and it only applies to state agencies and state actions. NEPA/MEPA is a federal law that outlines policies and goals to be complied with to protect our environment. The NEPA/MEPA process also makes sure that environmental information is available to the public before decisions are made and carried out. The Winifred to Big Sandy Corridor Study is a pre-NEPA/MEPA study that will include a high level environmental scan of potential issues that may arise as a project is moved forward from this study and identifies potential mitigation opportunities.

The MDT and DKS attempt to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity associated with this study.

Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided up on request.

For further information, call (503) 243-3500 or TTY (800) 335-7592 or by calling Montana Relay at 711.

Accommodations requests must be made at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled activity and/or meeting.



WINIFRED TO BIG SANDY CORRIDOR STUDY NEWSLETTER 1



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Study Description

Fergus and Chouteau Counties, in association with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), have initiated a process to develop the Winifred to Big Sandy Corridor Study. The study area is established along Secondary 236 from Reference Post (RP) 24 (Winifred) to RP 90 (Big Sandy). The corridor planning study will look at transportation issues within the Secondary 236 corridor.

Secondary 236 is a major collector on the Montana Secondary Highway System and serves as the north-south corridor between Hilger and Big Sandy. The corridor consists of both gravel and paved surfacing. The width of the roadway varies from 21 to 38 feet. The corridor passes through the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument.

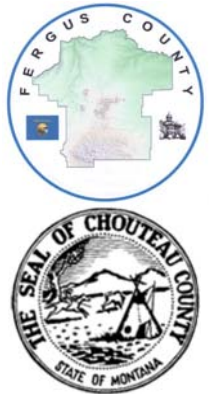
For a number of years, residents along corridor have sought to have the roadway improved. The existing roadway is unpaved for 50 miles between R.P. 24 in Winifred and R.P. 74 south of Big Sandy. The remaining 16 miles of the roadway from R.P. 74 to R.P. 90 in Big Sandy is paved. The roadway geometry is poor in many locations, with horizontal and vertical

alignment deficiencies. Maintenance of the gravel portion of the roadway, which is the responsibility of Fergus and Chouteau Counties, is difficult and costly.

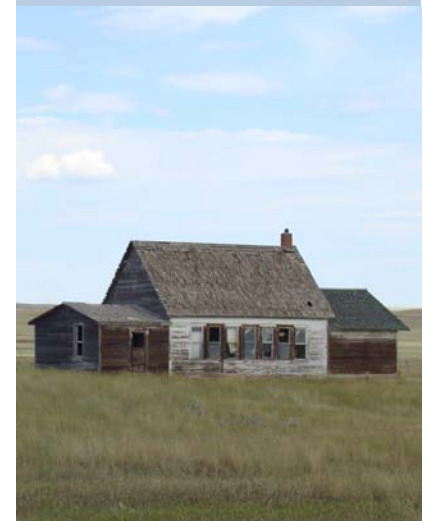
Local officials believe that the lack of accessibility due to the poor roadway conditions has dampened economic development in the area. These conditions also result in a number of potential safety issues. The safety issues are compounded by the growing number of recreational visitors to the scenic southern rim of the Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River, who share the road with local farmers and ranchers. Also, roadway locations with narrower widths or geometric needs are resulting in traffic operations concerns due to the increased number and size of trucks and farm equipment.

STUDY SCHEDULE

The study schedule is a twelve-month effort that began in March 2010. The study team strives for a final document and study completion by March 2011.



A Corridor Study is NOT....
~ A NEPA Study or Environmental Study
~ A Preliminary or Final Design Project
~ A Construction or Maintenance Project
~ A Right of Way Acquisition Project



STUDY CONTACTS:



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Fast Facts

- There are 1,577 miles of gravel secondary routes in Montana out of a total of 4,674 miles of secondary routes.
- The statewide average roadway width of secondary routes is 25.6' and Secondary 236 has an average width of 26.0'.
- The statewide annual average daily traffic on secondary routes is 450 vehicles. Annual average daily traffic on Secondary 236 is 240 vehicles.
- The statewide average crash rate for secondary routes is 1.53 crashes per million vehicle miles traveled (MVMT). The crash rate for Secondary 236 is 0.90 crashes per MVMT.
- The corridor study document will NOT determine which improvement options will be forwarded for further action. This decision will be determined by the counties and the availability of resources.

Public Involvement Opportunities

Public involvement is an important component in any successful corridor planning study process. The purpose of public involvement is to ensure a proactive process that provides an opportunity for the public to be involved in all phases of the corridor study process. The general public is invited to participate in the process through public meetings and ongoing study information review and input.

A study web site has been developed to provide on-line opportunities to comment on the needs of the Winfred to Big Sandy corridor and later on the draft plan recommendations. Dates, times, and locations for all public outreach will be announced prior to the events through the local media and the study mailing list.

The study team will collect and consider all public comments received to better understand the public view of potential issues. Those with a specific interest in the study are encouraged to join the **study mailing list**. They can do so by submitting their name and contact information to Bob Schulte at rjs@dkspdx.com.

Two sets of public meetings will be held over the course of the study. The first set of public meetings is scheduled for **Tuesday, July 6, 2010** from 6-8 pm at the Winfred Community Center and **Wednesday, July 7, 2010** at the Big Sandy High School auditorium.

Check the *Lewistown News Argus*, *Mountaineer*, *Great Falls Tribune*, *Havre Daily News*, and the study website periodically for information relating to the time and location of future public meetings.

Public Meeting #1

Tuesday, July 6, 2010
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Winfred Community Center
210 Main Street, Winfred

Wednesday, July 7, 2010
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Big Sandy High School Auditorium
398 1st Avenue, Big Sandy

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

