

Description of the Area

The terrain of the area is generally level, with a gradual increase in elevation on both sides of the river from about Squaw Island toward 10th Street Bridge, and away from the river on the north. Railroad tracks follow the river on the north and south sides with those on the south being elevated on fill.

The area immediately south of the river is park land bounded on the south by the C.M.St.P & P. Railroad and the B.N. Railway tracks. Below the tracks the area is predominantly residential and park area with some industrial between 8th Avenue North and the railroad and some commercial east of 9th Street North and north of 8th Street North. The south connecting streets, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Streets North, range from residential to commercial, in the area of 1st Avenue and Central Avenue, and back to residential toward 10th Avenue South. The percentage of commercial on each street between 8th Avenue North and 10th Avenue South is as follows: 6th Street - 46%; 7th Street - 31%; 8th Street - 24%; 9th Street - 43%.

Squaw Island is leased by the Park Board from the State of Montana and is designated by them as a bird refuge.

Directly north of the river the land is used mainly for industrial purposes with some commercial and public use. Prominent installations are the Phillips Petroleum Company Refinery, the Westgate Shopping Center, and the Sewage Treatment Plant. Between the U.S. 87 bypass and Smelter Avenue is a commercial area and the Montana Highway Department Division Headquarters. Still further north, above Smelter Avenue is the large Riverview Residential area.

Figure 2 shows the land use in more detail. It also shows the location of schools and churches as well as various public buildings. The 1990 Comprehensive Plan of the Great Falls City-County Planning Board projects no major change in this land use.

Gibson Park is a recreational park of 60 acres with ball fields, playground equipment, a bandshell, flower and rock gardens and a lake with various waterfowl. At the northeastern most end of the park is located the headquarters of the park system with greenhouses, storage sheds and the park bird winter quarters. Across 6th Street North from the headquarters site is a small area of park land with two metal storage buildings. No additional new facilities are planned at this time.

Park officials estimate that some 7500 persons per week visit the park with many tourists using the facilities

during the summer months. Park Drive runs the full length of the park and provides ready access.

The park is owned by the City of Great Falls and is considered by the officials of that city as a significant element in their community's culture. Planned by Paris Gibson and the City Founders, it is the oldest park in the city system.

River Drive Park is also a recreational park. Some 40 acres in size it has two tennis courts, horse-shoe pits, playground equipment, small shelters and facilities for picnicing. There is also a facility for use by the Girl Scouts and the Campfire Girls. The tennis courts are located some 200 yards southwest of the 6th Street Underpass with all the remaining facilities located between there and the Broadwater Bay area, south of the Central Avenue Bridge. There are no facilities existing or planned for the area between the 6th Street underpass and the 10th Street Bridge.

An estimated 8500 persons per week use this facility, again, with many tourists using these facilities during the summer months. River Drive runs the length of the park and provides easy access. The park is owned by the City and its location is consistent with the communities land use development.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

PREPARED BY
MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION

STATE DOCUMENTS

D R A F T

ENVIRONMENTAL/SECTION 4(F) STATEMENT STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
FOR

MAY 2 1981

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
390 E. Lyndale Ave.
Helena, Montana 59601

MISSOURI RIVER BRIDGE & APPROACH ROADS
CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA

PLEASE RETURN

THIS HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT IS PROPOSED FOR FUNDING UNDER TITLE 23, U.S.C.
THIS STATEMENT FOR THE IMPROVEMENT WAS DEVELOPED IN CONSULTATION WITH
THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION AND IS SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO:

SECTION 102(2)(C)

PUBLIC LAW 91-190

AND

SECTION 4(F)

PUBLIC LAW 89-670

MONTANA - A
930 East Lyndale Avenue
Helena, Montana 59601

DATE

10/22/71

SIGNATURE

L. P. B. [Signature]

CLEARED BY FHWA FOR CIRCULATION AND COMMENTS

DATE

10/23/71

SIGNATURE

[Signature]

As mentioned earlier the Park Board has designated Squaw Island as a bird refuge. There is no development on the island and the only access is by boat. A portion of the island is flooded annually and totally submerged during years with high runoff.

ALTERNATES UNDER CONSIDERATION

Alternate A1:

This alternate connects with the 6th Street North - 7th Street North one way couplet, passes under the C. M. St. P. & P. Railroad and the B. N. Railway tracks at the present location of the 6th Street Underpass, and intersects with River Drive. The bridge extends 2380 feet across the river in a north easterly direction over Squaw Island and across the B. N. tracks on the north bank. The northern terminus consists of a modified trumpet interchange with U.S. 87 bypass and Division Road.

Its projected traffic volume for the design year 1990 is 19,600 vehicles per day. This is the highest volume of all the alternates. The projected 1975 volume is 18,032. Traffic on Central Avenue Bridge and 15th Street Bridge is most closely balanced by this alternate, and there is a good utilization of the existing street system. Being the longest bridge it also has the highest initial cost, \$6,150,000.

Studies show an annual saving to the road use of \$252,945 for this alternate over the existing facility. Due to the existing 6th Street underpass extensive reworking of the area would not be necessary with this alternate. As a result it has a lower, flatter profile than the other alternates.

On the north side of the river, approximately 10.73 acres of right of way (R/W) would have to be acquired from public and private ownership with 4.82 acres of this in public land and not subject to taxation. The southern R/W would require approximately 0.91 acres of park land and 0.31 acres of private land. However, vacation of existing roadway would add approximately 0.47 acres to the park land, thus reducing the net loss to the park to approximately 0.44 acres, 0.07 of which would come from Gibson Park. Some 0.98 acres of R/W would be needed across Squaw Island.

Two metal storage buildings belonging to the park would have to be relocated. Presumably they could be moved across 6th Street onto a portion of the vacated roadway, thus consolidating the park headquarter facilities. There would be no acquisition or relocation of residential or commercial buildings. The total estimated cost of R/W for this alternate is \$422,236.

Alternate C1:

Connecting with the 8th Street North - 9th Street North one way couplet on the south, this alternate crosses under the C. M. St. P. & P. Railroad and the B. N. Railway tracks midway between the 6th Street underpass and the 10th Street Bridge, then intersects with River Drive. The bridge extends 1800 feet across the river in a north easterly direction, over the sewage treatment plant, and across the B. N. track on the north bank. The northern terminus consists of a split roadway with two lanes running north to intersect with Smelter Avenue at 6th Street N.E. and four lanes running west to intersect with U.S. 87 bypass at Division Road.

The projected traffic volume for this alternate is 19,400 vehicles per day, the second highest of the alternates. Its projected 1975 volume is 17,848. Traffic is balanced on the Central Avenue Bridge and the 15th Street Bridge and there is good utilization of the existing street system on the south. On the north however, while the end connectors are good, there is the undesirable feature of 2 four lane roadways running parallel.

The estimated initial cost of this facility is \$5,518,000. An annual savings of \$249,945, would accrue to the road user with this alternate over the existing

facility. Due to the decreased elevation of the B. N. Railway and the C. M. St. P. & P. Railroad tracks at Alternate C1 there is a rather deep cut necessary, with a 5 percent grade in and out, for the roadway to pass beneath the railroad tracks. A somewhat higher structure than at Alternate A1 would be required but it would also be about 580 feet shorter.

Approximately 8.02 acres of R/W would be required from private ownership on the north of the river and additional 0.80 acres from public ownership. This represents a considerable conflict in that it is an area where the proposed multi-million dollar sewage treatment plant expansion will be.

On the south side of the river approximately 4.04 acres of R/W would be required of which some 0.52 acres would be park land.

Four commercial and industrial buildings and two mobile homes would have to be acquired or moved on the north bank. On the south bank a major gas line facility would be crossed and nine commercial and industrial buildings would have to be acquired. The total estimated R/W costs for this alternate is \$851,243.

Alternate D:

Alternate D also connects to the 8th Street North - 9th Street North one way couplet. It passes under the B. N. Railway and the C. M. St. P. & P Railroad tracks at about 9th Street and connects with River Drive. The bridge extends 1465 feet across the river and over the B. N. Railway tracks on the north bank. The northern terminus is the existing Smelter Avenue-10th Street intersection.

The 1990 traffic volumes for Alternate D are projected to be 15,100 and for 1975, 13,890. Traffic on the 15th Street and Central Avenue Bridges is unbalanced to the point where the capacity of the Central Avenue Bridge facility is expected to be exceeded well before the design year. The connections on both the north and south sides make good use of the existing street system. However, due to the grade separation North River Road would be closed to through traffic, thus rerouting some 6000 vehicles per day, 1990 traffic. Initial cost for Alternate D is estimated at \$5,230,000. Against the existing facility, road user savings would be \$130,670 annually.

A deeper cut is necessary on the south side to allow the roadway to pass beneath the B. N. Railway tracks. Also, it requires a higher, although shorter structure.

This alternate would require approximately 0.96 acres of R/W north of the river from the oil refinery and a gas transmission facility belonging to Montana Power. South of the river some 5.62 acres would be needed of which about 0.70 acres would be park land.

Extensive relocation of buildings and piping would be necessary at the oil refinery. Ten structures, industrial and commercial, would have to be acquired south of the river. Estimated R/W costs for Alternate D is \$1,143,000.

Alternate D1:

This alternate is basically the same as Alternate D but with an at grade railroad crossing on the north bank rather than a grade separation. This allows through traffic to use the North River Road. As a result some of the vehicles using 10th Street Bridge shift over to the 15th Street Bridge dropping the total vehicles per day to 12,600 for D1 in 1990 and 11,700 in 1975. These are the lowest volumes of all the alternates.

Traffic is still unbalanced on the Central Avenue and 15th Street Bridges with an overload situation on Central. Everything about the south bank in the description of Alternate D applies to Alternate D1.

On the north bank the conflict with the petroleum refinery is eliminated and R/W requirements drop to some 0.38 acres. Thus R/W costs are reduced to an estimated \$571,559. This, plus a lower, shorter span, 1210 feet, provides the lowest initial cost of \$4,088,000. Annual road user savings would be \$62,415 against the existing facility.

In addition to the preceding alternates several other alternates were considered and, after study, rejected.

Alternate A connected with the 4th Street North-5th Street North one way couplet on the south, passed under the railroads at the park headquarters, crossed Squaw Island and intersected with U.S. 87 bypass at Division Road. This alternate had two serious objections.

First was the fact that it required relocation of park headquarters. In addition the north connection required a sharp turn and steep grade in order to allow for a grade separation with the B. N. tracks. It was therefore eliminated from consideration.

Alternate B connected with the 6th Street North - 7th Street North one way couplet on the south, passed under the B. N. tracks in the area of 6th Street North extended, crossed the river at the eastern most tip of

Squaw Island and intersected with U.S. 87 bypass at Smelter Avenue. It was dropped from consideration due to this undesirable intersection.

Alternate C was essentially the same as Alternate C1 previously discussed. However, rather than a split roadway at the north this alternate ran directly into the U.S. 87 bypass - Smelter Avenue intersection. As with Alternate B, Alternate C was removed from consideration due to this undesirable intersection.

Probable Impact

It is not anticipated that this project will have any major adverse environmental consequences on the area. Quite the contrary is true. Considerable benefit should be accrued by the community with the construction of a new bridge within the corridor. The existing 10th Street Bridge has had a weight limit imposed upon it, and as a result there has been a substantial reduction in its volume. With the eventual elimination of this bridge the city would in fact become more divided by the river. An improved means of crossing this barrier would encourage more uniform development of the area in agreement with the projections of the City-County Planning Board. Further, the simplification of dealings between the people from each side of the river would create a more cohesive community.

On the other hand the "do nothing" alternate would have the opposite affect. As the river crossing became more difficult due to congestion on the remaining bridges, alternatives to crossing would become more desirable. Thus the river would have a divisive effect on the area creating separate communities on either side of the barrier.

Unavoidable Adverse Effects

There are some unavoidable adverse environmental effects which will occur regardless of the alternate selected. These would be the increasing traffic on the street systems to which they connect and the crossing of River Drive Park land which runs along the south bank of the river through the study area.

Since the north connections of the various alternates are with major traffic arteries no problem is foreseen with an increase of traffic there. On the south, however, connecting streets are predominantly residential in nature with varying amounts of commercial.

As discussed earlier in the descriptions of the park, activities in River Drive Park are confined to an area west of the 6th Street underpass to and beyond Central Avenue Bridge. There is no development existing or proposed, with the exception of some beautification projects, in the area between the 6th Street underpass

and the 10th Street Bridge. There is a sewage lift station in the area which would be unaffected by the alternates.

In addition to these general effects there are some adverse effects attendant with the specific alternates.

Alternate A1, in addition to the traffic increase previously mentioned, will increase traffic on Park Drive as traffic from the bridge flows toward the central business district. Park Drive is the main thoroughfare paralleling Gibson Park. This Park would be further affected by Alternate A1 with the necessity of relocating two storage buildings and the taking of approximately 0.07 acres of land.

Open space is a commodity rapidly vanishing in our big cities. The area along the river between Central Avenue Bridge and 10th Street Bridge represents a large open area which is readily accessible to most residents of the community. The effect Alternate A1 has in limiting this area is adverse and would be unavoidable.

And lastly this alternate crosses Squaw Island. As was discussed earlier this island is designated as a bird refuge by the Park Board.

Alternate C1 also has a limiting effect on the open space within the study area. However, as can be seen in figure 1 the effect would be less than that of Alternate A1.

Whitter Elementary School is located on 8th Street North between 3rd and 4th Avenues North. Traffic would be increased past this school with Alternates C1, D, and D1.

Alternate A1 would require some 0.07 acres from Gibson Park and 0.37 acres of River Drive Park, or 0.44 acres total park land. Two structures would also have to be relocated. Alternate C1 would take approximately 0.52 acres of park land while Alternates D and D1 would require about 0.70 acres of park land.

Each of the alternates are sufficiently removed from the park use areas that there should be a minimum of increase in physical effects upon park users. The park areas would be more accessible to traffic from north of the river, both vehicular and pedestrian. Access to the River Drive Park area from the south would be improved while Gibson Park would be unaffected. Steps taken to minimize the effect of crossing park land would include but not be limited to:

1. The design of approaches with as flat a slope as is practicable.

2. Esthetic considerations during the architectural design of the bridge
3. The use of a landscape architect during the planning.

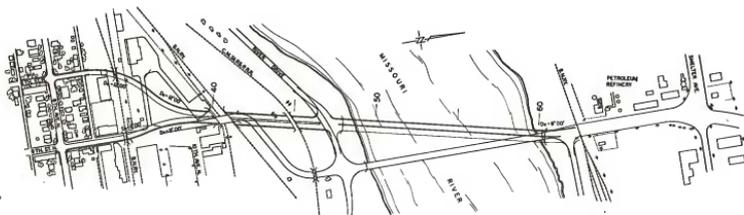
Long Term Vs Short Term Considerations

As has been discussed previously the long term value of this project would be the effect of drawing the community closer together and the more orderly development of the area. By comparison the resultant change in traffic patterns, and the removal of the necessary trees and buildings would be of little consequence.

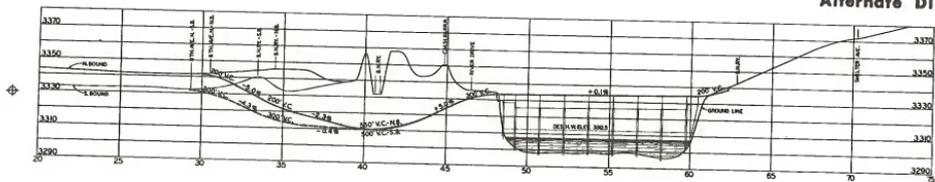
Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

The growth of the city represents an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources but this is an inevitable commitment which this project only encourages. In this instance, the bridge acts not as a catalyst but as a means of direction.

This is a draft environmental statement. Four alternates, A1, C1, D and D1 are under consideration. A specific alternate will be selected by the Montana Highway Commission following a public hearing.



Alternate D1



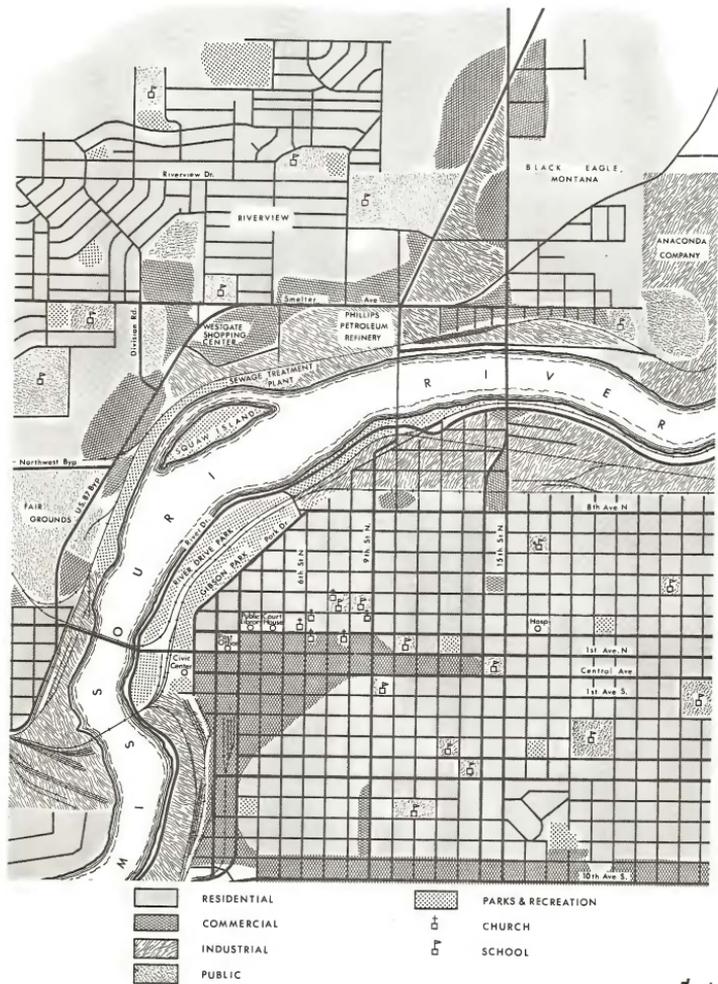


FIGURE 2



Lloyd Page

FORREST H. ANDERSON
GOVERNOR



MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION

HELENA, MONTANA 59601

October 22, 1971

LEWIS M. CHITTIM
STAT. HIGHWAY ENGINEER

39-JGS

IN REPLY REFER TO:

U 149(26)
Tenth Street Bridge
Study
Great Falls

Montana Department of Planning & Economic
Development
Attention: Perry F. Roys; Executive Director
Capitol P.O.
Helena, Montana 59601

Gentlemen:

In compliance with Section 102(2)(C) and Section 4(f) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Montana Highway Department has prepared a Draft Environmental and 4(f) Statement for the subject project

Under provisions of the law, it is requested that your agency review the enclosed statement and furnish this office with your comments within 45 days from the date of this letter.

Specific comments are requested from certain agencies shown on the attached distribution list. Comments from other agencies are requested as their expertise warrants.

The required summary sheet to accompany this statement follows:

Very truly yours,

LEWIS M. CHITTIM, P.E.,
State Highway Engineer

By *Grover O. Powers*
Grover O. Powers, P.E.,
Preconstruction Engineer

39-GOP/JGS/lk

CH. CHAIRMAN

JON. VICK CHAIRMAN HELENA	G. R. COONEY BUTTE	WILLIAM M. KLESNER HELEN LAUREL	R. C. COFFEY WOLF POINT	JOHN D. WHFFLER, SECRETARY HELENA
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SUMMARY SHEET

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

COMBINED DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL/SECTION 4(f) STATEMENT

MISSOURI RIVER BRIDGE & APPROACH ROADS
CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA

Environmental impacts for all alternates would be a more uniform development of the area, the creating of a more cohesive community, increasing traffic on predominantly residential streets, and the crossing of park land. In addition two alternates limit open space to a lesser or greater degree and one alternate crosses a bird refuge. And lastly three of the alternates would increase traffic past an elementary school.

There are four alternates under consideration, referred to as A1, C1, D and D1 in this report.

A1 is 2300 feet long, carries 19,600 vehicles per day, 1990 traffic, and costs an estimated \$6,150,000. Annual road user savings, A1 versus the existing facility, \$252,945.

C1 is 1800 feet long, carries 19,400 vehicles per day and costs \$5,518,000. Annual road user savings, \$249,945.

D is 1465 feet long, carries 15,100 vehicles per day and costs \$5,230,000. Annual road user savings, \$130,670.

D1 is 1210 feet long, carries 12,600 vehicles per day and costs \$4,088,000. Annual road user savings, \$62,415.

This statement was made available to the CEQ and the public on October 22, 1971.

DISTRIBUTION LIST FOR THIS STATEMENT

STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES SPECIFIC
COMMENTS REQUESTED:

Montana Fish and Game Department
Attention: Frank Dunkle, Director
Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Re: Squaw Island Bird
Refuge

Montana State Conservation Commission
Attention: O.M. Uland, Executive Secretary
Room 224
Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Montana Department of Planning & Economic Development
Attention: Perry F. Roys, Executive Director
Capitol P.O.
1716 9th Avenue
Helena, Montana 59601

Montana Council of Natural Resources & Development
Attention: Richard E. Mayer, Landscape Architect
Room 420 Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Montana Water Resources Board
Attention: Douglas G. Smith, Director
Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

State Council of Natural Resources
Attention: George T. McGaffick, Coordinator
Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

State Department of Health
Cogswell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Environmental Quality Council
Attention: Fletcher Newby, Executive Director
Capitol Building, Room 366
Helena, Montana

City Council
Civic Center
Great Falls, Montana 59401

STATE & LOCAL AGENCIES, Cont'd

STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES SPECIFIC
COMMENTS REQUESTED

Board of Park Commissioners
City Park Department
Great Falls, Montana 59401

Re: Parks Involved

City County Planning Board
Civic Center
Great Falls, Montana 59401

Re: Your planning

Sewer and Water Department
Civic Center
Great Falls, Montana 59401

Re: Alternate CI crossing
of treatment plant

Mr. Lou Fontana
City Engineer
Civic Center
Great Falls, Montana 59401

The Honorable John McLaughlin
Mayor
City of Great Falls
Great Falls, Montana 59401

Board of County Commissioners
Cascade County
Great Falls, Montana 59401

Mr. Robert Myklebust
Traffic Engineer
Civic Center
Great Falls, Montana 59401

Re: Traffic patterns, etc.

FEDERAL AGENCIES

Department of Housing and Urban Development
Oscar P. Pederson, Regional Administration X
Attention: Environmental Clearance Officer
Room 226
Arcade Plaza Building
Seattle, Washington 98101

Department of Interior
Deputy Assistant for Programs
Washington, D.C. 20240

Environmental Protection Agency
1200 6th Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98101