



Montana Department of Transportation

2701 Prospect Avenue  
PO Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001

RECEIVED

AUG 23 2006

Jim Lynch, Director  
Jon Schwelizer, Governor

M3

ENVIRONMENTAL

RECEIVED

JUL 29 2006

RECEIVED

MT MONTANA DIVISION

AUG 30 2006

July 25, 2006

Janice W. Brown, Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)  
585 Shepard Way  
Helena, MT 59601-9785

Subject: **STPHS 15(51)**  
**Signing/Guardrail – Flathead County**  
**UPN 5008**

LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL  
POLICY OFFICE

This is to request approval of this proposed project as a Categorical Exclusion (CE) under the provisions of 23 CFR 771.117(d), and the Programmatic Agreement as signed by the MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT) and the FHWA on April 12, 2001. Copies of its draft Scope of Work Report (January 23, 2006) and Project Location Map are attached. This proposed action also qualifies as a CE under ARM 18.2.261 (Sections **75-1-103** and **75-1-201, MCA**).

The following form provides the documentation required to demonstrate that all of the conditions are satisfied to qualify for a Programmatic Categorical Exclusion Approval (PCE) as initially agreed by the (former) MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS (MDOH) and the FHWA on December 6, 1989. (Note: An "X" in the "N/A" column is "Not Applicable" to, while one in the "UNK" column is "Unknown" at the present time for this proposed project.)

**NOTE:** A response in a box will require additional documentation for a Categorical Exclusion request in accordance with 23 CFR 771.117(d).

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>UNK</u>
1. This proposed project would have (a) significant environmental impact(s) as-defined under <u>23 CFR 771.117(a)</u> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>X</u>		
2. This proposed project involves (an) unusual circumstance(s) as described under <u>23 CFR 771.117(b)</u> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>X</u>		
3. This proposed project involves one (or more) of the following situations where:				
A. Right-of-Way, easements, and/or construction permits would be required.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>X</u>		
1. The context or degree of the Right-of-Way action would have (a) substantial social, economic, or environmental effect(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>X</u>		
2. There is a high rate of residential growth in this proposed project's area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>X</u>		

Environmental Services  
Phone: (406) 444-7228  
Fax: (406) 444-7245

Web Page: [www.mdt.state.mt.us](http://www.mdt.state.mt.us)  
Road Report: (800) 226-7623  
TTY: (800) 335-7592

YES   NO   N/A   UNK

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 3. There is a high rate of commercial growth in this proposed project's area.  | _____ <u>  X  </u> _____ _____                    |
| 4. Work would be on and/or within approximately 1.6 kilometers (1± mile) of an Indian Reservation.   | _____ <u>  X  </u> _____                          |
| 5. There are parks, recreational, or other properties acquired/improved under <i>Section 6(f)</i> of the <i>1965 National Land &amp; Water Conservation Fund Act (16 U.S.C. 460L, et seq.)</i> on or adjacent to proposed the project area.  | _____ <u>  X  </u> _____                          |
| The use of such <i>Section 6(f)</i> sites would be documented and compensated with the appropriate agencies. (e.g.: MDFW&P, local entities, etc.).   | _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <u>  X  </u> |
| 6. Are there any sites either on, or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places with concurrence in determination of eligibility or effect under <i>Section 106</i> of the <i>National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470, et seq.)</i> by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which would be affected by this proposed project. | _____ <u>  X  </u> _____                          |
| 7. There are parks, recreation sites, schoolgrounds, wild-life refuges, historic sites, historic bridges, or irrigation that might be considered under <i>Section 4(f)</i> of the 1966 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Act (49 U.S.C. 303) on or adjacent to the project area.   | _____ <u>  X  </u> _____                          |
| a. "Nationwide" Programmatic <i>Section 4(f)</i> Evaluation forms for these sites are attached.  | _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <u>  X  </u> |
| b. This proposed project requires a full (i.e.: DRAFT & FINAL) <i>Section 4(f)</i> Evaluation.   | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <u>  X  </u>       |
| B. The activity would involve work in a streambed, wetland, and/or other waterbody(ies) considered as "waters of the United States" or similar (e.g.: "state waters").   | _____ <u>  X  </u> _____                          |
| 1. Conditions set forth in <i>Section 10</i> of the <i>Rivers and Harbors Act (33 U.S.C. 403)</i> and/or <i>Section 404</i> under <u>33 CFR Parts 320-330</u> of the <i>Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251-1376)</i> would be met.  | _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <u>  X  </u> |
| 2. Impacts in wetlands, including but not limited to those referenced under Executive Order (E.O.) #11990, and their proposed mitigation would be coordinated with the Montana Inter-Agency Wetland Group.   | _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <u>  X  </u> |



YES    NO    N/A    UNK

D. There would be substantial changes in access control involved with this proposed project.

\_\_\_    X    \_\_\_

If yes, would they result-in extensive economic and/or social impacts on the affected locations?

   \_\_\_    X

E. The use of a temporary road, detour, or ramp closure having the following conditions when the action(s) associated with such facilities:

1. Provisions would be made for access by local traffic, and be posted for-same.

X        \_\_\_

2. Adverse effects to through-traffic dependant businesses would be avoided or minimized.

X        \_\_\_

3. Interference to local events( e.g.: festivals) would be minimized to all possible extent.

X        \_\_\_

4. Substantial controversy associated with this pending action would be avoided.

X        \_\_\_

F. Hazardous wastes /substances, as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and/or the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), and/or (a) listed "Superfund" (under CERCLA or CECRA) site(s) are currently on and/or adjacent to this proposed project.

\_\_\_    X    \_\_\_

All reasonable measures would be taken to avoid and/or minimize substantial impacts from same.

\_\_\_        X

G. The Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System's conditions (ARM 16.20.1314), including temporary erosion control features for construction would be met.

X        \_\_\_

H. Permanent desirable vegetation with an approved seeding mixture would be established on exposed areas.

X    \_\_\_    \_\_\_

I. Documentation of an "invasive species" review to comply with both E.O.#13112 and the *County Noxious Weed Control Act (7-22-21, M.C.A.)*, including directions as specified by the county(ies) wherein its intended work would be done.

X        \_\_\_

YES    NO    N/A    UNK

- J. There are "Prime" or "Prime if Irrigated" Farmlands designated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service on or adjacent to the proposed project area.

\_\_\_ X \_\_\_

If the proposed work would affect Important Farmlands, then an AD-1006 Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form would be completed in accordance with the *Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 U.S.C. 4201, et seq.)*.

\_\_\_  X \_\_\_

- K. Features for the *Americans with Disabilities Act (P.L. 101-336)* compliance would be included.

\_\_\_  X \_\_\_

- L. A written Public Involvement Plan, would be completed in accordance with MDT's Public Involvement Handbook.

X  \_\_\_

4. This proposed project complies with the *Clean Air Act's Section 176(c) (42 U.S.C. 7521(a))*, as amended) under the provisions of 40 CFR 81.327 as it's either in a Montana air quality:

- A. "Unclassifiable"/attainment area. This proposed project is not covered under the EPA's September 15, 1997 Final Rule on air quality conformity.

\_\_\_ X \_\_\_

and/or

- B. "Nonattainment" area. However, this type of proposed project is either exempted from the conformity determination requirements (under EPA's September 15, 1997 Final Rule), or a conformity determination would be documented in coordination with the responsible agencies: (Metropolitan Planning Organizations, MDEQ's Air Quality Division, etc.).

X  \_\_\_

- C. Is this proposed project in a "Class I Air Shed" (Indian Reservations) under 40 CFR 52.1382(c)(3)?

\_\_\_ X \_\_\_

5. Federally listed Threatened or Endangered (T/E) Species:

- A. There are recorded occurrences, and/or critical habitat in this proposed project's vicinity.

\_\_\_ X \_\_\_

YES   NO   N/A   UNK

B. Would this proposed project result in a "jeopardy" opinion (under 50 CFR 402) from the Fish & Wildlife Service on any Federally listed T/E Species?

             X  

The proposed project would not induce significant land-use changes, nor promote unplanned growth. There would be no significant effects on access to adjacent property, nor to present traffic patterns.

This proposed project would not create disproportionately high and/or adverse impacts on the health or environment of minority and/or low-income populations (E.O.#12898). It also complies with the provisions of *Title VI* of the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964 (**42 U.S.C. 2000d**) under the FHWA's regulations (23 CFR 200).

In accordance with the provisions of 23 CFR 771.117(a), this pending action would not cause any significant individual, secondary, or cumulative environmental impacts. Therefore, the FHWA's concurrence is requested that this proposed project is properly classified as a Categorical Exclusion.

Prepared By: Susan Kilcrease, Date: 7/25/06  
Susan Kilcrease  
MDT Environmental Services Project Development Engineer

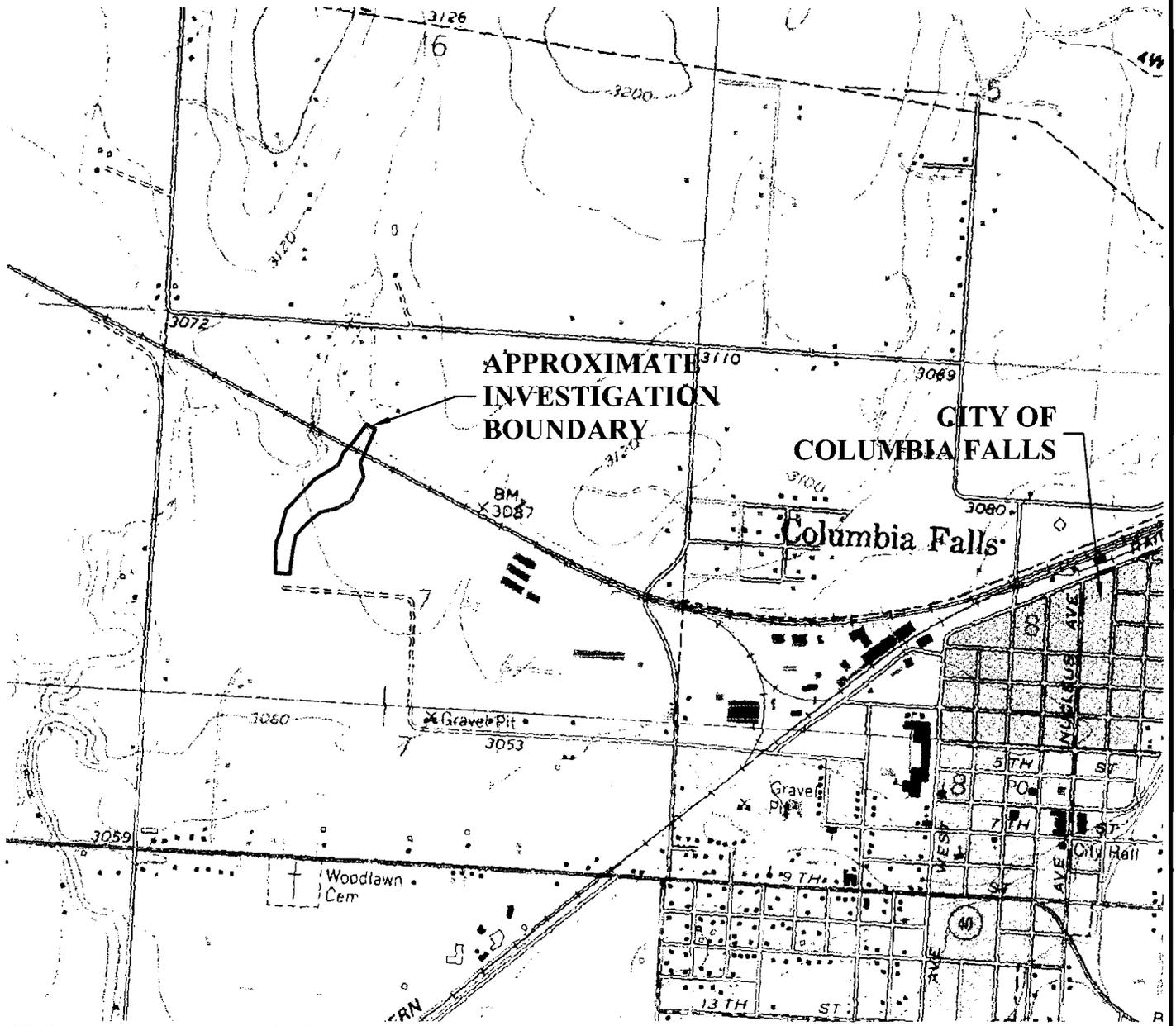
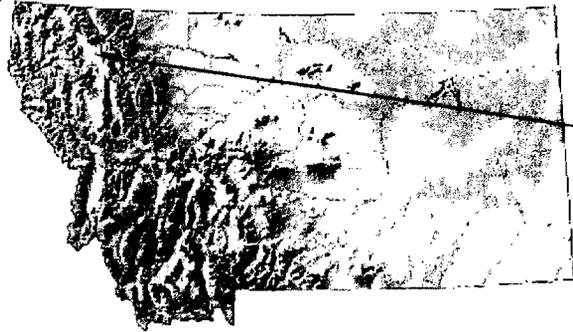
Concur Thomas L. Hansen, Date: 7/25/06  
Thomas L. Hansen, P.E.  
MDT Environmental Services Engineering Section Supervisor

Concur Mark A. Zille, Date: 8-22-06  
Federal Highway Administration

TLH\smk\S:\PROJECTS\MISSOULA\5008\5008enPCE001.DOC  
Attachments

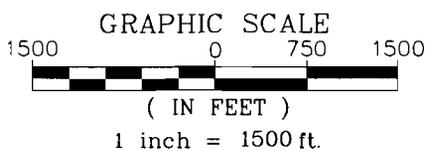
- cc: Dwane Kailey, P.E. - Missoula District Engineer
- Paul R. Ferry, P.E. - Highway Engineer
- Kent M. Barnes, P.E. - Bridge Engineer
- John H. Horton - Right-of-Way Bureau Chief
- Suzy Price - Contract Plans Bureau Chief
- David W. Jensen - Fiscal Programming Section
- Mark Studt, P.E. - Consultant Design Engineer
- Jean Riley, P.E. - Environmental Services Bureau Chief
- Susan Kilcrease - Missoula
- Environmental Quality Council
- File

MEADOW LAKE BOULEVARD  
SECTION 7, TOWNSHIP 30 NORTH,  
RANGE 20 WEST, P.M.M.,  
FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA



USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS (1991 AND 1992)

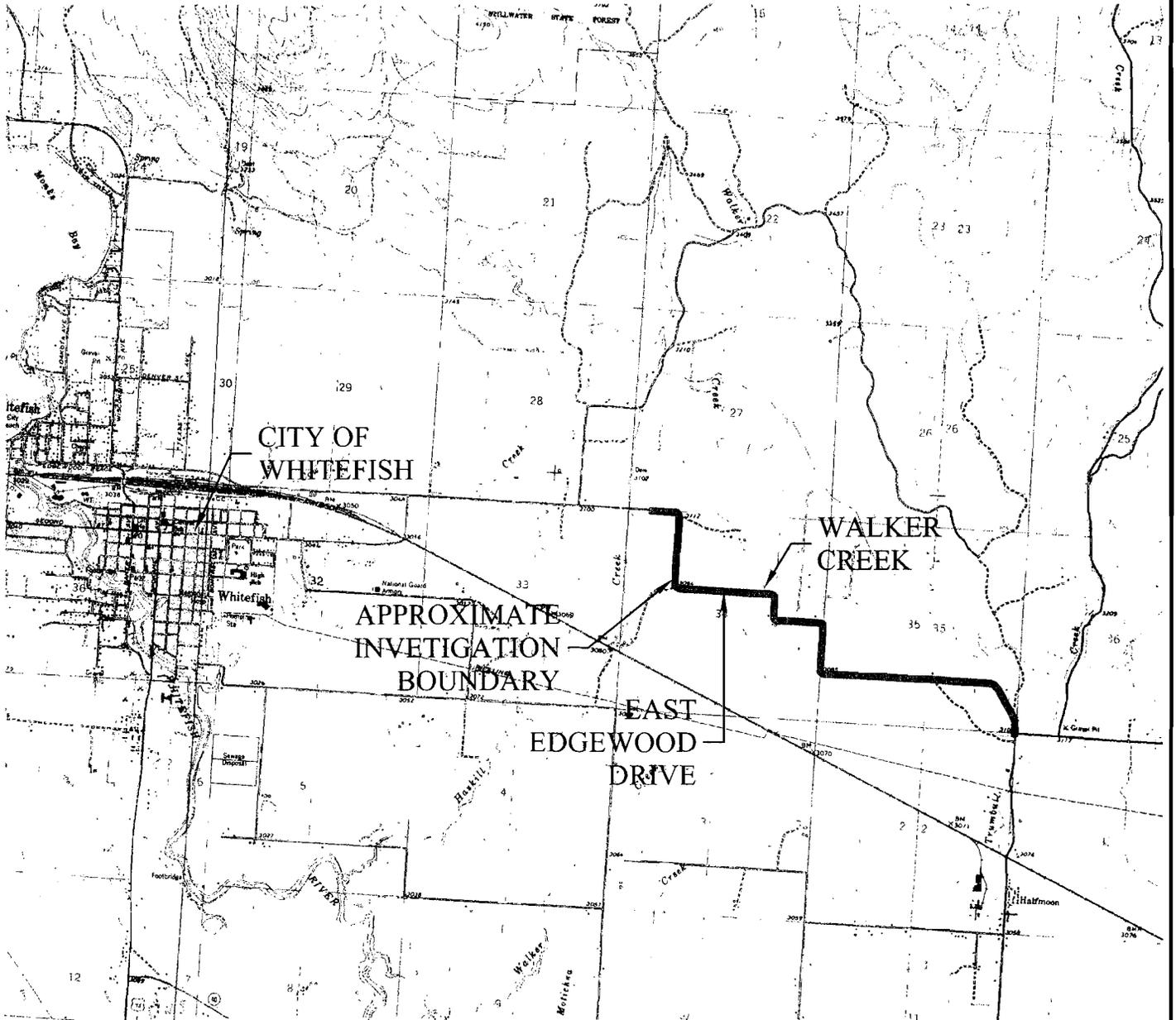
FIGURE 1b



<p><b>MORRISON MAIERLE, Inc.</b> An Employee-Owned Company</p>		<p>ENGINEERS SCIENTISTS SURVEYORS PLANNERS SINCE 1945</p>
<p>PO Box 1113, 301 Technology Blvd, Bozeman, MT 59711 - Phone: (406) 587-0721 Fax: (406) 587-1176</p>		
<p>CLIENT: MDI</p>		
<p>FIELD WORK: _____</p> <p>DRAWN BY: SER</p> <p>CHECKED BY: PWM</p>	<p>DATE: 10/13/05</p> <p>SCALE: 1" = 1500'</p> <p>PROJ # 0275.102.03</p>	<p>PLOTTED DATE: Feb/02/2006 - 11:55:32 am</p> <p>DRAWING NAME: H:\0275\102\03\acod\ENV\FLATHEAD-FIGS.dwg</p> <p>SHEET _____ OF _____ PLOTTED BY: sprotschiller</p>

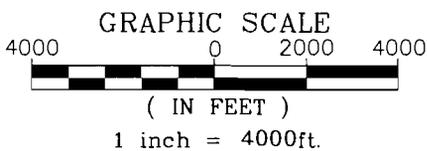
TLG  
location  
Map  
Project

EAST EDGEWOOD DRIVE  
SECTIONS 34 AND 35, TOWNSHIP 31 NORTH,  
RANGE 21 WEST, P.M.M.,  
FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA



USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS (1991 AND 1994)

FIGURE 1a



 <b>MORRISON MAIERLE, INC.</b> An Employee-Owned Company <small>PO Box 1113, 801 Technology Blvd, Bozeman, MT, 59711 • Phone (406) 587-0721 • Fax (406) 587-1178</small>	<small>ENGINEERS SCIENTISTS SURVEYORS PLANNERS SINCE 1915</small>
	<small>CLIENT: MDT</small>
<small>FIELD WORK: _____</small> <small>DRAWN BY: SER</small> <small>CHECKED BY: PWM</small>	<small>DATE: 10/10/05</small> <small>SCALE: 1"=4000'</small> <small>PROJ #: 0275.102.03</small>

EAST EDGEWOOD DRIVE  
VICINITY AND  
TOOGRAPHIC MAP

PLOTTED DATE: Feb/02/2006 - 11:52:47 am  
DRAWING NAME:  
H:\0275\102\03\ocad\ENV\FLATHEAD-FIGS.dwg  
SHEET \_\_\_\_\_ OF \_\_\_\_\_ PLOTTED BY: srothschiller

Draft  
1/23/2006

Scope of Work Report  
STPHS 15(51), Signing/Guardrail – Flathead County, CN 5008

1. Proposed Scope of Work

The project was nominated as a safety project through a benefit-cost analysis of accident trends or clusters presented to MDT by Flathead County through a Traffic Safety Improvement Study that was prepared in 2000. The nomination included two different sites within Flathead County related to this project.

The first, Meadow Lake Boulevard (X-15231) is a two-lane paved local road located northwest of Columbia Falls, Montana. Meadow Lake Boulevard improvements include guardrail and signing installations to reduce the severity of single vehicle run-off-the-road crashes. Because of the limited scope of this safety project, Activity 118 – Roadway Alignment Plan, was combined with Activity 122 – Alignment and Grade Traffic Plans.

The second site, East Edgewood Drive (X-15200), was a 2-lane gravel road located east of Whitefish, Montana. East Edgewood Drive improvements included uniform and consistent signage to reduce nighttime single vehicle run-off-the-road crashes.

Since the PFR and subsequent preliminary field work, Flathead County has paved East Edgewood Drive and installed their nominated improvements, thus completing this component of the project. Since noting the improvements, no further work has been completed on this component and through discussions with the project sponsor, no additional work is required. Please see attached letter from Flathead County, dated January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

2. Project Location and Limits

The two project sites lie entirely within Flathead County. The Meadow Lake Boulevard component, located on Department route L 15-231, is located northwest of Columbia Falls, Montana within RP. 0.7 to 1.0.

3. Physical Characteristics

Meadow Lake Boulevard is a two-lane road used primarily for residential and recreational travel. Truck traffic accounts for approximately 18% due mainly to Plum Creek Lumber, whose main and alternate access approaches are located within the project vicinity. The site has a 35-mph posted speed limit and includes a bridge over the Burlington Northern Railroad. The roadway within the project limits is an "S" curve that rises and falls approximately 35' over the existing ground for the bridge and includes a short horizontal tangent section on the bridge. The roadway is paved 24' wide with minimal shoulders. At the bridge, the typical section includes paved shoulders with a minimum width of 2.6'.

The main access into Plum Creek Lumber is located on the east side, just south of the project limits, while the alternate access is located within the project limits approximately 200' north of the bridge on the east side.

#### 4. Traffic Data

Traffic data from MDT's Traffic Data Collection Section is not available at this time for these project locations, located on local County roads. Flathead County provided the following AADT for the site in their Traffic Safety Improvement Study for the year 2000. This volume provides adequate information for the design of guardrail and signage.

<u>Location</u>	<u>AADT</u>
• Meadow Lake Boulevard	2,850 ADT

#### 5. Crash History

Safety projects are intended to correct an identified deficiency and only projects with the highest benefit-cost ratio are funded. This includes a structured system of information gathering, traffic crash analyses, site analysis and development of alternatives that could correct the identified safety concern. Alternatives are judged by the estimated savings attributed to correctable accidents compared to the safety improvements actual cost.

There are no accident cluster locations identified within the project limits. The safety study estimated that the benefit-cost ratio of installing guardrail and signage is equal to 23.55. With a high percentage of injury accidents, it is estimated that guardrail and signage will decrease the severity of potential accidents when compared to the consequences of leaving the roadway.

The collision data summary for Meadow Lake Boulevard for 1990 to 1999 provides the following data within the project site:

Total Accidents	= 28
Single vehicle collisions	= 54%
In last 4 years	= 57%
Nighttime Accidents	= 46%
Injury Accidents	= 46%
Snow or icy conditions	= 46%

#### 6. Major Design Features

The project generally comprises the design of guardrail and signage components only. This includes new W-beam guardrail, guardrail end treatments, shoulder gravel widening, sign removal and new signage. The new guardrail will tie into the bridge rail that will not be replaced.

Guardrail will be installed on the west side from the farm field approach at the south end (Sta. 12+73.78) up to the bridge rail (Sta. 23+11.28) and from the bridge rail (Sta. 23+92.83) to the first approach on the west side (Sta. 28+02.78), located north of the bridge

Guardrail will be installed on the east side from Sta. 14+61.25 at the south end up to the bridge rail (Sta. 23+11.25) and from the bridge rail (Sta. 23+92.47) to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street W.N. intersection at Sta. 25+54.98. Beyond the intersection to the north for the east side, guardrail will be installed up to the same north limit as the west side (from Sta. 26+40.12 to 28+02.62).

This includes the installation of three (3) intersecting roadway transitions, four (4) bridge approach sections, and three (3) optional terminal sections. It is estimated that the installation of guardrail and signage will decrease the severity of potential future accidents.

#### 7. Design Exceptions

No design exceptions have been identified at this time.

#### 8. Right-of-Way/Railroads

No new right-of-way will be required for this project. An agreement with Burlington Northern Railroad to complete the work may be required.

#### 9. Utilities

Utilities were not surveyed as part of this project. However, there are no utility conflicts anticipated for the guardrail and signage construction.

#### 10. Environmental Considerations

An ISA and draft biological resource report (BRR) has been completed for this project. Any further comments from Environmental Services will be incorporated into the final documents. A categorical exclusion will be developed for this project and submitted once the ISA and BRR are completed and approved. The scope of work approval will follow the approval of the categorical exclusion.

#### 11. Traffic Control

Traffic will generally be maintained by short-term lane closures to construct the guardrail and signing.

#### 12. Public Involvement

Public involvement for this project will involve a press release only. No negative feedback is anticipated

### 13. Cost Estimate

The preliminary cost estimate is \$58,600. This includes an estimated 10% for mobilization, 10% for construction engineering, 10% for traffic control and 5% for a contingency.

### 14. Ready Date

The ready date for this project is April 28, 2006

