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THOMAS L. JUDGE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

HELENA, MONTANA 59601

H. J. ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS

June 25, 1975

IN REPLY REFER TO:

M 5201(1)
6th St. S.W.
Great Falls
(10th Ave. So. to
B.N. Underpass)

RECEIVED
JUN 26 1975
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
COUNCIL

Environmental Quality Council
Room 366, State Capitol Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Gentlemen:

Enclosed herewith for your information and files are two copies of the Negative Declaration for the above project as concurred in by the FHWA Division Engineer.

Very truly yours,

H. J. ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS

By *Stephen C. Kologi*
Stephen C. Kologi, P.E., Chief
Preconstruction Bureau

39-SCK:GLA:JGS:dt
attachment

cc: G. L. Anders

GEORGE VUCANOVICH, CHAIRMAN
HELENA

Wm. M. KESNER, VICE CHAIRMAN
BLACK FOOT

G. R. COONEY
BUTTE

R. L. BAGHELLER
BILLINGS

JAY LA LONDE
SIDNEY

THOMAS L. JUDGE
GOVERNOR

Date Recd. Preced. 6-23-75	MAIL ROUTE	[Hand-drawn map of a highway route]									
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STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

HELENA, MONTANA 59601

H. J. ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS

May 22, 1975

IN REPLY REFER TO:

RECEIVED
JUN 26 1975

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
COUNCIL
08-30.22-A3

M 5201(1)
6th St. S.W.-Gt. Falls
(South Section & 14th
St. S.W. Bridge)

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Helena, Montana 59601

Gentlemen:

Your letter of April 28, 1975 gave approval to proceed with a negative declaration for the subject project.

This is to request your concurrence in the attached negative declaration (2 copies).

Consideration has been given to your letter of December 20, 1974 containing comments relative to your review of the draft FEIS for which this negative declaration is being substituted.

BASIS FOR NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Based on the following, it is felt that the project will not significantly affect the environment and that this negative declaration is appropriate.

Your early return of the signed original of this letter will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

H. J. ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS

By: Stephen C. Kologi
Stephen C. Kologi, P.E., Chief
Preconstruction Bureau

39-SCK:GLA:JGS:dt
cc: G. L. Anders

Date JUN 19 1975

I concur H. N. Stewart
H. N. Stewart
Division Engineer
Federal Highway Administration

GEORGE VUCANOVICH, CHAIRMAN
HELENA

W.D. M. KEESNER, VICE CHAIRMAN
BLACK EAGLE

G. R. COONEY
BUTTE

P. L. BACHELLER
BILLINGS

JAY LA LONDE
SIDNEY

5-22-75

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

PROJECT M 5201 (1)

6th STREET SOUTHWEST FROM 10th AVENUE SOUTH TO THE
BURLINGTON NORTHERN UNDERPASS

AND

BRIDGE OVER THE SUN RIVER ON 14th STREET SOUTHWEST
GREAT FALLS, MONTANA

INTRODUCTION

A draft environmental statement was circulated in July 1971 which covered a proposed project from 10th Avenue South to Central Avenue West via 6th Street Southwest. Recent changes in regulations allow a negative declaration to be substituted for an environmental impact statement if it is determined that no significant impacts will result from a project. The FHWA has concurred in this substitution. Following the December 1968 public hearing, the Department of Highways and the Federal Highway Administration approved the location of the section from 10th Avenue South to the Burlington Northern underpass. This is the section that is discussed in this negative declaration. The remainder, from the B.N. underpass to Central Avenue West is still under study. A final environmental impact statement or negative declaration covering that section will be prepared at a later date.

The southerly 0.4 mile of the section for which this negative declaration is written is currently scheduled for contract letting in July of 1976. This would include the Sun River Bridge on 6th Street Southwest and its approaches and the 14th Street Southwest bridge over the Sun River. The remainder is currently scheduled for letting in July 1979.

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

I. PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

Project M-5201(1) consists of the proposed reconstruction of about 0.9 mile of 6th Street Southwest and proposed construction of a bridge across the Sun River on 14th Street Southwest in Great Falls, Montana. The existing 14th Street Southwest bridge would be removed.

Sixth Street Southwest is currently the major north-south arterial in west Great Falls and local planning for the Great Falls area calls for the combination of Fox Farm Road and 6th Street Southwest to continue to be the major north-south arterial.

The existing 6th Street Southwest bridge over the Sun River was built in the late 1920's. It has only 11½ feet of vertical clearance, 19 feet of horizontal clearance and is generally in very poor condition. Replacement of this structure is a top priority. The existing bridge would be removed.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The proposed project would include reconstruction of a portion of 6th Street Southwest and construction of a new bridge over the Sun River on 14th Street Southwest.

The 6th Street Southwest portion would begin at the intersection of 10th Avenue South and Fox Farm Road and proceed northerly for approximately 0.9 mile to a point near the Burlington Northern underpass. The above intersection would be a new intersection located about 500 feet west of the existing 6th Street Southwest - 10th Avenue South intersection. This is necessary in order to properly line up 6th Street Southwest with Fox Farm Road. In turn, this would require about 0.3 mile of realignment of 6th Street Southwest

and a new location for the Sun River bridge crossing. The existing bridge would be removed and the existing street obliterated. The existing R/W width is 60' and for most of the length of the project an additional 60' will be required on the west side.

The proposed facility would consist of four 12 foot driving lanes, a 20 foot wide median with turning bays and a 10 foot shoulder on each side. Integral curb and gutter and a concrete sidewalk would be provided on each side of the roadway. The sidewalk will also serve as a bike path.

Traffic data for the project is as follows: (ADT=Average Daily Traffic; DHV=Design Hourly Volume; D=Direction Distribution; T=% Trucks; V=Design Speed)

ADT (1972)	5,850
ADT (1994)	22,700
DHV -----	3,250
D -----	55% - 45%
T -----	5%
V -----	40 m.p.h.

The Fox Farm Road would be widened on the east side to provide a right turn lane onto 10th Avenue South. An acceleration lane would be constructed on 10th Avenue South to accommodate a free right turn movement off Fox Farm Road. In addition, the 10th Avenue South - Fox Farm Road - 6th Street Southwest intersection would be channelized and signalized to provide for smooth traffic flow. The whole project would also be lighted.

The Sun River Road would be dead-ended at 6th Street Southwest. A new bridge would be constructed over the Sun River on 14th Street Southwest allowing Sun River Road traffic to feed into existing streets from 14th Street Southwest.

III. DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

- A. HUMAN RESOURCES - Great Falls is one of Montana's two largest cities and has a population of over 60,000. It has been estimated that by 1990 the population of the urban area will be about 120,000. The economy of the area is varied. Contributors to the economy include heavy industry, light industry, and large military installations. Also, Great Falls is the trade and marketing center for a farming and ranching area larger than many states.
- B. PHYSIOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY - Great Falls derives its name from water falls on the Missouri River. In the ten miles adjacent to and immediately downstream from Great Falls, the Missouri River falls about 500 feet and includes several spectacular water falls. Five hydroelectric dams have been constructed in the area to harness the available water power. Located on the bank of the Missouri River just below the city is Giant Springs, which is reputed to be the world's largest fresh water spring.

The Great Falls area is surrounded by rolling treeless plains. A thin layer of topsoil and a variable layer of clay overlay the bedrock. The bedrock, which is of cretaceous age, is a part of the Kootenai formation and consists of shales and sandstones. Typical deposits of gravel, sand, and clay are along the river valleys.

Great Falls is also the point where the Sun River flows into the Missouri River. The Sun River has a history of some terrible flooding. The most recent and one of the worst floods occurred in 1964 and caused millions of dollars worth of damage. A flood control project consisting of dikes and related

facilities was proposed to prevent or lessen future damage, but it appears now that the proposal has been indefinitely deferred.

- C. LAND USE - The land use within the city of Great Falls consists of typical urban development. The area surrounding the city is utilized for farming and grazing. As is the case around most cities, suburban development is creeping out in all directions.

Adjacent to the proposed project, the land use consists of residential, commercial, industrial, and vacant. There are no parks or recreation areas, wildlife or waterfowl refuges nor historic or natural landmarks within the project area.

- D. FISH AND WILDLIFE - The rural area surrounding Great Falls has abundant wildlife, but because of the urban development around the proposed project there is little wildlife to be concerned with.

The Missouri River is an important fishery with trout being the most desirable species available. Further upstream the Sun River is an important trout fishery, but by the time it reaches Great Falls it has little value as a fishery because of its silt load.

- E. VEGETATION RESOURCES - The predominant natural flora surrounding Great Falls is grass. The rolling hills are treeless. However, an abundance of cottonwoods, willows, chokecherries, and many other berries and shrubs are found along the rivers and creeks.

In the urban area along the proposed project some native grass and a few cottonwoods remain, but for the most part, the native flora has been replaced with domestic varieties of grass, flowers, shrubs, and trees.

- F. CLIMATE - The average temperature in the Great Falls area is 44° F. The temperature normally varies from an average of 20° F. in January to 67° F. in July.

The area is quite windy and the skies are unusually clear and blue.

An unusual and welcome phenomenon is the "chinook". Warm winds can raise the winter temperature from below zero to thawing in a matter of minutes.

The average annual precipitation in the area is about 14 inches. Usually, the most precipitation occurs in June, which has an average of about 3 inches.

- G. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS - Great Falls is served by numerous highways. They include I 15, US 89, US 91, Montana 200, and Montana 789.

Great Falls does not have railroad passenger service, but freight service is provided by both the BN and the Milwaukee.

Great Falls has a large airport and is served by both national and local air lines.

Intercity bus service is available, but intracity buses no longer run.

- H. UTILITY SYSTEMS - As discussed earlier, the Great Falls area has abundant electric power. Because of this, it is sometimes called the "Electric City".

The electricity is provided by the Montana Power Company, natural gas is provided by the Great Falls Gas Company, phone

service by Mountain Bell, and sewer and water systems are provided by the City.

IV. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

A. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

1. Human Resources - The proposed project will result in some relocations. Housing is scarce in Great Falls and problems are anticipated in relocating those displaced. However, given ample time it is expected that all relocation problems can be resolved through the Department of Highway's Relocation Assistance Program.
2. Geologic Resources - It is not expected that the proposed project will affect any geologic resources.
3. Land Use - Naturally, there will be some change in land use because of the additional right-of-way required for the proposed facility. Also, some of the residential and vacant land adjacent to the facility can be expected to become commercial in the years following the proposed facilities completion.

The following is a summary of a land use study made by the Department of Highways.

Changing traffic patterns from the termination of the Sun River Road and the loss of direct access to 10th Avenue South would probably have some impact on adjacent land use. The degree of impact would be directly related to changed traffic patterns resulting from traffic generated from existing land use adjacent to the Sun River Road between 14th Street S.W. and the proposed Sun River Road cul de sac.

With a new 14th Street S.W. Bridge to be constructed across the Sun River, non-residential truck and mobile home towing traffic may be divided between trips oriented to the downtown area and I-15 - Central Avenue West Interchange to the north and 10th Avenue South to the south. This division of traffic would tend to lessen residential impacts in comparison to consideration of all traffic presently using the Sun River Road to be diverted using the 14th Street S.W. - Montana Avenue - Fox Farm Road System.

A considerable shifting of truck traffic, mobile home towing traffic and mobile home resident traffic from the closing of the Sun River Road and rerouting of access to 10th Avenue South would affect the older residential areas to the east and west of 14th Street S.W. with some increase in noise, air pollution, congestion, activity and disturbance levels. These conditions may be heightened due to the existence of the narrow pavement width on 14th Street S.W. and the narrow 10th Avenue Southwest underpass. Mobile home units with a vertical clearance of more than 12' 8" would not be able to negotiate the B.N. underpass on the Sun River Road. Although units are now being manufactured over 13' high and up to 92' long and 18' wide, it is unlikely these types would be moved into a trailer court; however it cannot be discounted.

The two older residential areas particularly that residential area to the east of 14th Street S.W. may become further unstable, conceivably accelerating land use changes to light industrial uses. The older single family residential area to the west of 14th Street S.W. due to the increase in

activity and disturbance levels may begin to receive pressure particularly along 14th Street S.W. for zone changes to commercial and service type activities depending on the permanence of existing zoning within the area and the nature and extent of light industrial development across the street.

These same impacts resulting in increased activity and levels from changing traffic volumes and composition mentioned previously would also have an effect on the neighborhood environment of the two new developing residential areas located north and south of Montana Avenue. This effect is not anticipated to be of any great consequence. The residential structures located immediately adjacent to Montana Avenue are likely to receive the brunt of the impact received from the additional traffic and changed traffic composition. It is doubtful that the existing adjacent residential structures will change in land use, although their value could be reduced. However, density changes may result to the remaining platted undeveloped portions of the subdivision located north of Montana Avenue.

Impact to the developed residential single family area immediately east of the Montana Avenue - Fox Farm Road intersection would be less severe in terms of traffic volumes since Fox Farm Road functions as a collector to traffic generated from subdivisions located south of the intersection. The inclusion of truck and mobile home traffic to existing traffic volumes would not benefit residents of the area located adjacent to Fox Farm Road. However, the impact would not be as severe since a substantial number of the residential structures are not oriented to Fox Farm Road. It is doubtful that a change

in land use would result in the immediate future since the residences are quite new.

The approach to the proposed 6th Street S.W. Bridge located immediately north of 10th Avenue South would require conversion of residential land use included in the eastern portion of the mobile home park to the proposed project right-of-way. The loss of direct access to 10th Avenue South would also affect the trucking, other light industrial uses and drinking establishment located west of the mobile home park.

The proposed north 6th Street S.W. Bridge approach to the intersection of the existing 6th Street S.W. alignment would require the conversion from existing residential land use (three residential structures) to right-of-way. The remaining triangle between the proposed and existing 6th Street S.W. alignment would possibly be converted to some other form of low activity land use other than residential.

The remaining portion of the North Tracts and Garden Homes Subdivision west of existing 6th Street S.W. and north of 10th Avenue would be affected in terms of direct and secondary impacts. Direct construction impacts would require the relocation or removal of 11 residential structures west of the existing 6th Street S.W. for required right-of-way. The integrity of the remaining portion of the residential area which at the present time is marginal would become less attractive for residential activities with the close proximity of the railroad tracks and industrial area to the west and the high activity of the proposed arterial project. Four trailer units at Dick's Trailer Court would require relocation.

The residential area to the east of the proposed 6th Street

S.W. project should not be substantially adversely affected in terms of traffic activity since the existing 6th Street S.W. is presently serving as an arterial system and access to available community facilities is to the north. It is conceivable that as traffic volumes increase greater development pressures for commercial zone changes will appear.

Little land use change should result to the Great Northern Yards as a result of the 6th Street S.W. Project other than possible further development of industrial and commercial service activities.

Planning agencies responsible for local land use planning and coordination within the Great Falls area include two organizations each organized under provisions of Chapter 38, Sections 11-3801 through 11-3858 of the Montana Revised Codes, 1947. The Great Falls City-County Planning Board and more recently the Cascade County Planning Board have been charged with the following objectives:

To encourage local units of government to improve the present health, safety, convenience, and welfare of their citizens and to plan for the future development of their communities to the end that highway systems be carefully planned, that new community centers grow only with adequate highway, utility, health, educational, and recreational facilities; that the needs of agriculture, industry, and business be recognized in future growth; that residential areas provide healthy surroundings for family life; and that the growth of the community be commensurate with and promotive of the efficient and economical use of public funds. Both planning organizations are advisory to their respective local governments - The Great

Falls City Council and the Cascade Board of Commissioners.

The Great Falls City-County Planning Board is responsible for Land Use Planning within the City of Great Falls and extends four and one-half miles beyond the city limits. The Cascade County Planning Board is accountable for planning in the remaining portions of the county.

The scope of the Great Falls Land Use Planning process has resulted in the coordination and development of several plans and studies. Planning elements included population, economic studies, water, sewer, solid waste disposal, flood plains, land use, community facilities, recreation, and transportation plans. A comprehensive plan for the Great Falls area evolved from the cumulative analysis of these previous studies and plans leading to development of a capital improvements program and zoning regulations.

The Great Falls Area Comprehensive Plan 1970-1990 includes both existing and proposed Land Use for the project area. Superimposed on the 1990 Comprehensive Plan illustration is both the proposed Land Use and Roadway Plan. The following general conclusions can be reached concerning review of the Great Falls Area Comprehensive Plan and Montana Highway Functional Classification and Needs Study:

1. The site of Dick's Mobile Home Court encompassed by Tenth Avenue South, B.N.R.R. and the existing Sun River Road is proposed in the 1990 Land Use Plan for commercial land use. The rerouting of access of the Sun River Road to Tenth Avenue South would limit the mobile home park parcel for commercial use since the site would not have direct access and exposure from an arterial system.

2. Traffic rerouted through existing residential areas would have a detrimental effect due to its changed composition.

3. The changed traffic composition and required street improvements may trigger land use changes not consistent with the 1990 Land Use Plan particularly in the areas east of 14th St. S.W. and west of 6th St. S.W.

4. The Montana Highway Functional Classification and Needs Study 1970-1990 does not propose Montana Avenue as a collector system. The 1990 Great Falls Area Comprehensive Plan proposes Montana Avenue primarily as a residential collector as compared to a commercial - industrial collector.

5. The Sun River Road is a proposed cross-town collector for residential, commercial and industrial traffic to 10th Avenue South. This proposal is made in the 1990 Roadway Plan and the Montana Highway Functional Classification and Needs Study 1970-1990.

The following 1990 Land Use pattern and proposals are described for the project area:

1. All existing residential areas are proposed to retain their integrity while protecting them from exposure to major traffic carriers through neighborhoods and non-compatible uses.
2. The site of the mobile home court encompassed by Tenth Avenue South, B.N.R.R., and the existing Sun River Road is proposed for commercial, a high activity land use.
3. The residential area north of Montana Avenue between the B.N.R.R. and commercial area west of Fox Farm Road is proposed to change to multi-family development. This proposal does not appear to be taking place with three

new single family structures recently constructed adjacent to Montana Avenue.

4. The commercial area west of Fox Farm Road is anticipated to extend west to proposed 10th Street S.W.
5. The industrial area located in the northern portion of the project area is anticipated to remain the same in terms of land area.

The 1990 Great Falls Area Comprehensive Plan includes a roadway plan which specifies the type of highway or street system required to serve local and regional circulation functions.

1. Fox Farm Road - 6th Street S.W. is a proposed north - south arterial system.
2. 10th Avenue South is proposed as an expressway system east to Fox Farm Road.
3. 14th Street S.W. is a proposed north - south collector serving residential areas located along the western fringe of Great Falls.
4. 10th Avenue S.W. provides a collector link on the north side of the Sun River to allow residential traffic to gain access through a residential area from 14th Street S.W. to 6th Street S.W.
5. The Sun River Road is a proposed east - west collector from west of the urban area through to the Fox Farm Road-Sixth Street S.W. arterial system. The Sun River Road Collector system provides for residential, commercial and industrial traffic to gain access to both intracity and interstate systems as well as provide access to proposed commercial and industrial areas.
6. Montana Avenue is anticipated to provide collector service

from surrounding residential areas and 14th Street S.W. to the Fox Farm Road - 6th Street S.W. arterial system.

4. Fish and Wildlife Resources = It is not expected that the proposed project will affect any fish or wildlife resources.
5. Vegetation Resources - It is probable that a few trees and shrubs along the Sun River will be removed as a result of bridge construction on the project.
6. Water, Air and Noise - An adequate storm drain system will be provided throughout the project. The storm drain water will be discharged into the Sun River and/or the Missouri River. Where open ditches are used they will be lined or permanently seeded wherever necessary to prevent erosion. Before being discharged into the Sun River or Missouri River, storm drainage will be treated as required to meet Montana water quality standards or as required to comply with current discharge policies set forth by the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences.

The waterway opening for the Sun River crossing at 6th Street will be designed so that backwater caused by the structure and its approaches during a 100 year flood (39,000 cfs) will be less than 0.5 feet higher than the backwater during the same flood under existing conditions. This is in compliance with the Montana Floodway Management and Regulation Act. In general, the same is true of the 14th Street bridge.

Some increase in air pollution may be expected because of the increase in traffic volumes. The same can be said of an increase in noise levels.

7. Aesthetics - Areas disturbed by construction would be topsoiled and seeded to provide a pleasing appearance throughout the project and prevent erosion.
8. Energy - Construction of the project would involve use of oil based products such as diesel fuel, gasoline and asphalt.
9. Transportation Systems - The proposed project will cross a minor B.N. track at-grade, but the crossing is not considered a significant conflict.

Other transportation facilities will not be affected, except that some disruption and inconvenience to highway traffic can be anticipated during the construction period.

The completion of the project will bring about a tremendous improvement for vehicular traffic.

10. Utility Systems - There will be some conflict with public utility systems, however, satisfactory arrangements will be made for the relocation or replacement of all utilities and service will be maintained during the construction period.
11. Schools, Fire Protection & Industrial Resources - Mr. Rodney Johnson, director of transportation, Great Falls School System, stated that their school busses make 12 daily pickups at Dick's Trailer Court, using the Sun River Road. The reason for that many pickups at Dick's Trailer Court is based on time elements of school schedules, including grades, classes and schools the pupils are bussed to. Schools being bussed to are Charles M. Russell Elementary School, West Side Jr. High, and C.M. R. High School, all located approximately three miles northwest of Dick's Trailer Court. No school pickups of pupils are made by these busses south of Tenth

Avenue South, although the busses must traverse the Fox Farm Road, Montana Avenue, Fourteenth Street Southwest-Sun River Road, to make the necessary pickups.

For the children living near the easterly end of the Sun River Road which will be dead-ended, the accessibility will have no affect on them. They were bussed before the situation and will be bussed in the after situation.

According to the captain, Fire Station No. 4, Fox Farm Road and Montana Avenue, the dead-ending of the Sun River Road will have little affect on their fire runs. It would perhaps take approximately 3 minutes more to arrive to the dead-end area if a run became necessary.

The proposed 6th Street Southwest Bridge approach to the intersection of the existing 6th Street Southwest alignment assuming a 60' to 100' R/W left of centerline would require the conversion from existing residential land use to right of way. Assuming this, approximately 11 residential structures will be affected. This would leave the balance of land with better roads open for commercial businesses to the remaining land.

Buttrey's Warehouse, Burlington Northern Railroad, G.T.A. Elevators, and an Implement Company now occupy the industrial site between the railroad tracks and the 6th Street Southwest underpass. This area could very well develop into an industrial park in the upgrading of the proposed road.

The Burlington Northern at the present time is advertising their lands for lease along this route. The land is zoned First Industrial. The road will enhance the general public as well as the development of industrial and commercial service activities.

B. Adverse Environmental Effects Which Cannot Be Avoided

1. Human Resources - To provide an adequate facility, some relocations will be involved. Although there will no doubt be problems with the relocation, it is expected that they can be resolved.

It appears four mobile homes will be displaced from Dick's Trailer Court.

From the north bank of the Sun River to a point north near the Burlington Northern underpass, an estimated 11 residential units will be displaced. No businesses would be involved.

Some replacements units can be made available in the immediate area. Some may have to be constructed if comparable listings are not found on the market. Some may choose to relocate to other parts of the city. If this is the case, comparable housing should be no problem to relocate the displacees. If we must construct homes for anyone of them, it may take up to one year to relocate them, depending mostly on the time of year, the availability of financing, their financial means, construction materials and a number of other things that could involve a delay.

No minority groups are found to be involved on the proposed project.

2. Land Use - The taking of right-of-way needed for construction of the project will cause some changes in the land use and although unavoidable the change should be of minor significance.
3. Vegetation Resources - Removal of a few trees and shrubs along

the banks of the Sun River will be necessary.

4. Air Quality - The increase in traffic on 6th Street Southwest from about 9,000 vehicles per day at present to about 23,000 vehicles per day in 1994 will, of course, result in increased vehicular exhaust emissions. However, this would not be a direct result of construction of this project since traffic would increase with or without the project. In fact, much more congestion, engine idling, "stop and go" driving, etc., would result if the project were not built, due to the inadequacy of the existing facility.

The traffic will not increase by 10,000 vehicles per day in the 10 year period following construction of the project. Environmental Protection Agency regulations state this to be the criterion to be met in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas for a modified section of highway before concern is expressed.

The project would not be in conflict with the State Implementation Plan for complying with federal ambient air quality standards. This plan is administered by the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences. Their comments concerning air quality effects were requested and their answer is attached.

5. Noise - There would be an increase in the noise levels because of the increased traffic but this would occur to an even greater degree if the project were not constructed. This is true because the traffic would increase in any event but the flow would not be as smooth on the existing facility.

A nomograph analysis shows that the maximum projected noise level would be about 80 dBA as compared with a present level of from 61 to 72 dBA as measured at four critical locations along

the project. Both exceed the acceptable minimum federal standard of 70 dBA for land use category B. One of the locations is a church with a recorded L_{10} of 70 dBA (exterior). This projects to about 78 dBA (exterior) in the year 1994. Tests throughout the United States show that a light frame building will give a noise reduction of 20 to 25 dBA. PPM 90~~2~~ states that the maximum acceptable interior design level is L_{10} = 55 dBA. Assuming a reduction of 23 dBA the interior noise level would be acceptable. Since a barrier or buffer zone would be impractical because of right-of-way restrictions and limited space, we will request a noise exception from the Federal Highway Administration for the project.

6. Water - The project is not expected to have any adverse effect on water quality nor will the area's watertable be affected. Storm drainage will be provided as needed and planning for this will be coordinated with the Great Falls City Engineer's Office.
7. Transportation - The project is not expected to have any adverse effect on any transportation systems.
8. Utilities - Some utility relocation and/or replacement will be necessary but this will not have a significant effect, as it will be of relatively short duration and service will be maintained to the maximum degree possible.

C. ALTERNATIVES

A location public hearing was held in Great Falls in December, 1968 at which time the project from 10th Avenue South to Central Avenue West was discussed. Following the hearing, the Montana Highway Commission and the Federal Highway Administration approved the location of the section from 10th Avenue South to the Burlington Northern underpass.

A combination location and design public hearing was held in Great Falls in February, 1974 relating to the project from the intersection of Fox Farm Road and 10th Avenue South to a point on existing 6th Street Southwest near its intersection with 9th Avenue Southwest. Also discussed were alternate locations and designs for access to the Sun River Road.

The alternates are as follows:

1. Not Build the Project - This alternate would, of course, not disturb the existing environment. However, with the increasing traffic volumes we are rapidly approaching an intolerable situation because the existing facility is most inadequate. Therefore, this alternate should not be considered further.
2. Locate the 6th Street Southwest crossing of the Sun River either at its existing site or at a site slightly downstream from the existing bridge.

Either of these would require a jog in the north-south arterial or relocation of Fox Farm Road to line up with the alternate.

The jog is not acceptable from an operational standpoint and as any relocation of Fox Farm Road would involve considerable right-of-way damage, that alternate is also judged unacceptable.

3. Construct the project as proposed under "PROJECT DESCRIPTION." This is the recommended alternate and is compatible with the Policy Coordinating Committee action and local interest groups' wishes.

The following alternates apply to the Sun River Road access.

Alternate "A"

Underpass the Sun River Road under 6th Street Southwest and intersect 10th Avenue South somewhere east of the 6th Street Southwest intersection.

This alternate would be too costly for the benefits derived. A storm water lift station would be necessary because the elevation of the underpass would be near or below the normal water surface elevation of the Sun River. This would mean a continual maintenance problem with attendant costs.

It would create an additional intersection on 10th Avenue South and would interrupt traffic flow on 10th Avenue South if future Sun River Road traffic warrants a signalized intersection. South bound Sun River Road traffic would have to weave to a left turn lane on 10th Avenue South.

The total cost is estimated at about \$171,000.00.

Alternate "B"

Overpass the Sun River Road over 6th Street Southwest and intersect 10th Avenue South somewhere east of the 6th Street Southwest intersection.

This alternate would be extremely costly for the number of users benefitted.

The high fills would detract from the existing park-like nature of the land between 10th Avenue South and the Sun River.

An increase in noise level would result from vehicles climbing a 5% grade in the area, particularly affecting residents of Dick's Trailer Court.

This alternate would displace approximately 10 families from Dick's Trailer Court and would require relocation of the sanitary sewer lift

station in Dick's Trailer Court. It would also require regrading of the sanitary sewer lines feeding to the lift station.

It would create an additional approach to 10th Avenue South.

Estimated cost of this alternate is about \$500,00.00.

Alternate "C"

Dead-end the Sun River Road at 6th Street Southwest and reroute Sun River Road traffic via 14th Street Southwest, Montana Avenue and Fox Farm Road entering 10th Avenue South from the south.

This alternate would require improvement of about 0.9 mile of existing roadway.

Tenants of Dick's Trailer Court would have to travel 1.5 miles further than at present to get to 10th Avenue South.

The route would pass through the higher class residential area in the Montana Addition. The increased traffic would increase the noise level of the neighborhood.

The 35 foot street width of Montana Avenue would be inadequate for parking on both sides because of the higher volume of heavy commercial vehicles which would have to use this route.

The traffic load would be increased at the intersection of 6th Street Southwest and 10th Avenue South.

This alternate would include an at-grade crossing of the BN tracks.

Total estimated costs are about \$122,000.00.

Alternate "D"

Dead-end the Sun River Road at 6th Street Southwest and re-route Sun River Road traffic via a new bridge across the Sun River on 14th Street Southwest, feeding traffic into existing city streets.

This alternate would be costly and would require occupants of Dick's Trailer Court to travel 1.4 to 1.7 miles further than they do presently. However, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

It would be of greater benefit to more people than any of the other alternates. Most users, including large trucks, would have the option of selecting the most direct route to their destination.

The traffic load at the intersection of 6th Street Southwest and 10th Avenue South would be reduced.

There would be less effect on the residents in the Montana Addition because traffic, particularly commercial, would be decreased.

It would not delay construction of the 6th Street Southwest portion of the project because users on both sides of the Sun River would have a means of access.

Little or no right-of-way would be required, nor would any people or businesses be displaced.

Total estimated costs are about \$550,000.00. This is the recommended alternate to provide access for Sun River Road traffic, and is compatible with the Policy Coordinating Committee action and local interest groups' wishes.

Alternate "E"

Provide a new intersection of Sun River Road with 10th Avenue South about 550 feet west of the 6th Street Southwest intersection.

Although this alternate would more nearly maintain existing traffic patterns than some of the other alternates, it has several disadvantages.

This point of entry would be onto a controlled access section of Interstate Spur I-315(10th Avenue South) at the bottom of a 5% grade in a 45 m.p.h. speed zone. In addition to having a high accident potential, it could cause wintertime stop-start problems should this intersection ever require signalization. It would also increase the traffic load on the 6th Street Southwest intersection.

Eleven trailer units would be displaced and high severance damages at Dick's Trailer Court could be expected.

Total estimated cost of this alternate is about \$325,000.00.

Alternate "F"

Provide a diamond interchange at 10th Avenue South and 6th Street Southwest.

This would provide for 10th Avenue South to overpass 6th Street Southwest with Sun River Road traffic entering onto the westbound "on" ramp.

It would allow uninterrupted traffic flow on the Interstate Spur (10th Avenue South) with attendant safety advantages. It would provide more uniform distribution of traffic and increase the capacity of the affected streets.

This alternate has the following disadvantages:

- (1) High initial cost of construction and right-of-way acquisition;
- (2) close proximity of the Sun River Road intersection with the north ramp terminal;
- (3) Could delay the 6th Street Southwest and 14th Street Southwest project;
- (4) would displace all or portions of the following businesses: 3 service stations, 1 motel, a mortuary and 35 trailer parking units;
- (5) the climbing grade for westbound vehicles would be moved approximately 1,000 feet to the east. This would result in a higher noise level for residences and apartment complexes immediately south of 10th Avenue South in the Country Club Addition;
- (6) the high embankment would detract from the aesthetics of the neighborhood.

The total cost of this alternate using standard fill slope would be about \$2,268,000.00. By using retaining walls, right-of-way costs could be cut by about \$555,000.00 for a total cost of about \$1,710,000.00.

Alternate "G"

Add ramps at the existing overpass on Bridge Street (14th Street Southwest) to provide an interchange as a means of access for lower

Sun River traffic via Bridge Street.

This alternate would expedite the movement of lower Sun River Traffic on and off 10th Avenue South and would relieve heavy traffic through the residential area in the Montana Addition.

Disadvantages of this proposal are (1) A complete interchange could not be constructed because the westbound "on" ramp would overlap the existing Interstate Spur Interchange "off" ramp; (2) There would not be sufficient space to accommodate adequate deceleration and acceleration lanes; (3) Some ramp grades would be excessively steep; (4) It would require a stop condition for westbound traffic entering 10th Avenue South and it would be necessary to weave through traffic preparing to enter the Spur Interchange "off" ramp; (5) The cost would outweigh the benefits; (6) The intersection of Montana Avenue and Bridge Street would be hazardous; (7) Six trailer spaces and a motel office would be displaced. The total estimated cost for this alternate is about \$253,000.00.

D. Relationship Between Short Term Use and Long Term Productivity

From both the short term and long term standpoints, the area surrounding the proposed project is considered an urban area. To serve such an area an arterial highway such as that proposed is necessary.

E. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

The land needed for new right-of-way will no doubt be used for highway purposes for some time. However, it can hardly be considered an irreversible or irretrievable commitment since it could be used for other purposes if the highway were to be abandoned.

There would be no resources other than normal construction materials, energy and monetary expenditure irreversibly or irretrievably committed by the project.

V. MINIMIZING ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Scarring resulting from construction would be minimized by topsoiling, seeding and landscaping of disturbed areas. Erosion control measures will be taken to reduce any adverse effects.

Standard specifications, special provisions and state and federal statutes relating to noise, air and water pollution will be strictly adhered to during the course of construction to keep these adverse impacts to a minimum.

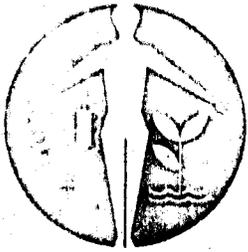
The Department of Highways has a Relocation Assistance Program - Relocation comes in many forms including supplemental rental and housing payments, increased interest payments, moving costs for personal property, financing information, house and rental listings and aid to find replacement housing. It is the Department's responsibility that those needing it are fully relocated in decent, safe and sanitary housing prior to construction of the project. Relocation will not be effected, unless and until suitable replacement housing is made available.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS

The owner and manager of the George Company Funeral Home and an adjacent landowner objected to the fact that a median break would not be included on 10th Avenue South for easy access to their property. Since these properties are in close proximity to the 6th Street Southwest, 10th Avenue South, Fox Farm Road intersection, it would be very hazardous to put a break in the median as it would conflict with the intersection turning movements.

Another gentlemen asked if pedestrian traffic could cross 10th Avenue South in the vicinity of the intersection. It was explained that the intersection would be signalized and that pedestrians could cross with the traffic light.

In general, there were no major objections to the project as proposed.



Department of Health and Environmental Sciences
 STATE OF MONTANA HELENA, MONTANA 59601

Mail File

John S. Anderson M.D.
 DIRECTOR

November 27, 1974

Stephen C. Kologi, P.E., Chief
 Preconstruction Bureau
 Department of Highways
 Helena, MT 59601

RE: M 5201(1)
 6th St. Southwest
 Great Falls

Dear Mr. Kologi:

We have reviewed the plans of the referenced project and find there should be no adverse effects on air quality from the construction of this project. We know of nothing existing or planned that would adversely affect the project from air quality considerations. The project does not conflict with Indirect Sources regulations as traffic volumes expected do not exceed the limits proposed. The project should facilitate the movement of traffic due to normal city growth.

Sincerely,

R. Clark Neilson

Clark Neilson
 Air Pollution Control Specialist

CN/sss

cc Sam Kalafat
 Great Falls APCA

Date Recd. Preconst. <i>11-21-74</i>				
Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	30		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	30 Eng. Schedules		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	31 Preliminary Plans		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	32 Final Preliminary Plans		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	33 Final Plans		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	34 Hydraulic		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	35 Structural Design		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	36 Preliminary		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>S. T. Sullivan</i>		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	35 Hydraulic		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	37 Pub. Hearing		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	38 Spec. - Urban		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	39 Consultant Design		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	File		

AMERICAN
BREWERY
ADDITION
(10)



SCALE 1"=625'

PORTIONS NOT DESIGNATED
BY BLOCK NUMBERS
ARE NOT PART OF
COMMUNITY HALL
ADDITION

NORTH
AMERICAN AVE.

END 6th ST. SW.
THIS PROPOSAL

FARMERS
UNION
GRAIN
TERM.
ASSN

SIXTH ST. SW. R

7TH AVE.

8TH AVE.

BLOCK

BLOCK

10TH AVE.

UNIVERSITY

SECTIONS

GARDEN

SUN

THIS PROPOSAL - NEW
14th ST. SW BRIDGE

SUN RIVER ROAD

TRACT 1

TENTH AVE. SO.

DICK'S ADDN.

TRACT 2

THIS PROPOSAL
BEG 6th ST. SW

STATE

17TH AVE SW

MONTANA AVE

MONTANA

19TH AVE SW

LOCAL BUSINESS
ROAD

ADDITION

UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY

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UNIVERSITY