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July 12, 2012

Kevin L. McLaury, Division Administrator
Federal Highways Administration (FHWA)
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601-9785

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Subject: IM 90-8(161) 431
West Laurel Interchange - West
UPN 5736000

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INTRODUCTION

This is a request for the Federal Highways Administration’s (FHWA) concurrence that this proposed project meets the criteria for classification as a Categorical Exclusion (CE) under the provisions of 23 CFR 771.117(d). This proposed action also qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion under the provisions of ARM 18.2.261 (Sections 75-1-103 and 75-1-201, MCA).

This document is a re-evaluation of the original CE request that was submitted to FHWA on April 24, 2008. This re-evaluation is necessary because of project design modifications and subsequent project study area expansion resulting from acceptance of a number of Value Analysis Study recommendations, and Montana Rail Link’s request for adequate clearances under the new overpass structures for one additional holding track immediately north of the existing tracks.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose and need of the proposed West Laurel Interchange – West project is to improve travel safety in this segment of the Interstate, and replace two functionally obsolete Interstate bridges over the Montana Rail Link railroad tracks.

This will be accomplished by replacing an existing half interchange on the west side of Laurel with a full-movement compressed diamond facility, the realignment of I-90 in this vicinity, and replacement of the bridge structures over the railroad tracks.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION, SCOPE, AND PHASING

The original project area included approximately 267 acres. While the footprint of the proposed project has been decreased, the project area expanded by approximately 39 acres, resulting in a total project study area of 306 acres. The project area is located within and adjacent to Interstate 90 (I-90) and its right-of-way (ROW), west of the City of Laurel. The project area extends from I-90 Reference Post (RP) 432.1 to RP 433.2. The legal description of the project area is the southeast quarter of Section 7, the southwest quarter of Section 8, the northern half of Section 17, and the eastern half of Section 18, Township 2 South, Range 24 East, P.M.M. Yellowstone County, Montana. A project layout detail is included on the following page.

DETAIL



PROJECT LAYOUT
DETAIL
NOT TO SCALE

2 1	MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION <small>...15736/RDZZ_LRF/Laurel.dgn</small> 9/30/2011 2:52:22 PM itorrey	DESIGNED BY		ROAD PLANS - PHASE 1	PRELIMINARY	WEST LAUREL INTERCHANGE - WEST		PROJECT NO. IM 90-8(161)432
		REVIEWED BY		YELLOWSTONE COUNTY		CSF = 0.99951087	UPN NUMBER	

The eastbound (EB) and westbound (WB) interstate bridges over the Montana Rail Link railroad tracks would be replaced to address an accident trend in the EB direction. The proposed project would realign approximately 1.1-miles of I-90 located within the segment, and the existing half interchange would be replaced with a new full-movement interchange. It is currently not a full interchange because it only has one WB on-ramp and one EB off-ramp. It is not feasible to modify the existing interchange into a full interchange at its current location due to the limitations resulting from alignment, the proximity of the railroad tracks, and the community fishing pond on the east side of the bridges spanning the tracks. New vertical and horizontal alignments, as well as new right-of-way would be required for construction of the new I-90 mainline alignment, bridges and the proposed interchange. No relocations are anticipated with acquisition of the new right-of-way.

Project design modifications as a result of MDT's Value Analysis process would include relocating the proposed interchange to approximately 1,000 feet east of the current 19th Avenue West alignment. The proposed interchange geometry will be revised to a compressed diamond configuration. The new I-90 alignment will generally follow the existing interstate alignment with the exception of larger radius curves at the Montana Rail Link railroad crossing. 19th Avenue West will be realigned to the east and will be reconstructed as a rural two-lane facility.

The scope of work is proposed to be completed in two phases. Phase 1 would include construction of the modified alignment of the interstate mainline, including the replacement of the railroad overpass bridges. No effort to perpetuate or enhance the access that is currently provided by the existing half interchange would be included in Phase 1. Phase 2 would consist of construction of the bridge on 19th Avenue West over the interstate, construction of the EB and WB ramps, and realignment of 19th Avenue West north to Urban Route 6904 (U-6904, also identified as Main Street or Old Highway 10).

The following documents provide information for this CE and are incorporated by reference:

- Final Biological Resources Report (BRR) with associated Addendum Material and Addendum BRR: The West Laurel Interchange-West Project dated March 2008 documents the detailed analysis of potential impacts and appropriate avoidance and mitigation for wildlife, vegetation, wetlands, fisheries, threatened and endangered (T/E) species, and species of special concern. The BRR documents the results of the field review completed for this project on October 19 and 23, 2006. A Technical Memo regarding an addendum to the BRR dated March 2008 (Addendum Memo) documents additional and/or updated information relating to impact quantifications due to design changes and additional MDT comment that have occurred subsequent to the submittal of the BRR. On April 11, 2011 a Final Biological Resources Report Addendum Memo was submitted to MDT which updates the original BRR with respect to project design modifications and project area expansion.

- Final Traffic Noise Study (TNS): The West Laurel Interchange-West Final Traffic Noise Study dated July 2007 documents the noise analysis performed based on ambient noise level measurements taken on May 7, 2007. This report provides the analysis of noise impacts and feasibility of mitigation for such impacts. A revised West Laurel Interchange-West Traffic Noise Study dated January 28, 2011 is also included.
- Class III Cultural Resources Inventory: The West Laurel Interchange: A Class III Cultural Resource Inventory near Interstate 90, Yellowstone County Montana report dated March 2007 documents the results of cultural resource investigations identifying the presence or absence of significant cultural properties within the project area and documents the results of the Class III cultural resource inventory completed November 27 to December 5, 2006 and February 5, 2007. The West Laurel Interchange: An Addendum to the 2007 Class III Cultural Resource Inventory near Interstate 90, Yellowstone County, Montana documents the results of the cultural resource investigations identifying the presence or absence of significant cultural properties within the expanded project area which was completed on February 18, 2011.
- Initial Site Assessment (ISA): The Montana Department of Transportation Initial Site Assessment for Hazardous Materials/ Substances, Traffic Noise, and Air Quality dated September 2006 and December 2010 provides information on hazardous materials, utilities, air quality, and traffic noise associated with the project and provides the results from field investigations completed on September 9, 2006 and December 12, 2010.
- Irrigation Report: The Activity 110 Irrigation report for the West Laurel Interchange-West project dated February 2007 documents the evaluation of potential project-related impacts to irrigation infrastructure and practices. The irrigation report specifically details the impacts to the Italian Ditch irrigation system associated with the West Laurel Interchange-West project. An amendment to the Irrigation report, dated February 25, 2009, documents impacts to the Big Ditch Company's irrigation facilities in the vicinity of the intersection of 19th Avenue West and Main Street.
- Preliminary Hydraulics Report: A Preliminary Hydraulics Report dated November 2007 documents the tributary drainage areas, hydrology, and existing conditions in the project area. Flood plain and project-related storm drainage detention requirements are documented. An update to the Report dated March 15, 2011, documents the changes to the storm drainage scheme and irrigation system considerations resulting from the Value Analysis modifications.

- An Italian Ditch Realignment Alternatives memo dated February 2012 documents project-related impacts to the Italian Ditch that would result from implementation of the selected alternative to install a new culvert through the area of the structures over the MRL railroad tracks.

CONSIDERATION OF TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS IN AREA

The evaluation of this project has concluded that project development would not result in significant environmental effects. However, temporary, short-term, and minor environmental effects may occur as a result of some project activities. Resources potentially affected by project development include vegetative communities, wildlife species, wildlife habitat, and public resources that have been determined to lack uniqueness and are considered to be relatively abundant within the region.

An evaluation of the likely cumulative impacts to the identified resources potentially affected by project development has been completed for this project. The cumulative effects analysis included identification of other transportation projects within the vicinity of the West Laurel Interchange-West project. MDT currently has the following projects planned or under construction within a 10-mile radius of the proposed West Laurel Interchange-West project.

- Mossmain Interchange - East, IM 90-8(153)437, CN 5174
- Rockvale - Laurel, NH 4-1(21)43, CN 4070
- EIS, 4 lane reconstruction and new alignment, US 212 (N-4), RP 42.765 to 52.915.
 - South of Laurel RR Overpass, letting in 2013;
 - Rockvale – North (US 212/310) letting in 2014;
 - Rockvale – Laurel (2 Lanes) letting in 2015; and
 - Rockvale – Laurel (NB Lanes) letting in 2016.
- Laurel - Northeast, STPP 4-2(23)54, CN5186
- 2002 - Turn Lane - Laurel, STPHS 4-2(22)55, CN 5304
- 8th Ave. - Main to 9th - Laurel, STPU 6905(1), CN 3927
- Park City - Laurel, SFCX 81015(2), CN 4389
- Seal and Cover, and guardrail improvements, X-route 81015 (HWY 10), RP 0.00 to 6.70, 2012 completion.
- Main Street - 3rd to 8th - Laurel, UPP 6904(2), CN 6280
- Maryland Lane - Washington to 8th Ave. North - Laurel, UPP 6906(), CN 6277
- West 12th Street - 5th Ave North to 8th - Laurel, UPP 6907(2), CN 6278
- 8th Avenue - West 12th to West 9th - Laurel, UPP 6905(3), CN 6279
- West Laurel Interchange, IM-STPHS 90-8(154)433, under construction.

It is unknown if any of the identified projects will result in significant impacts to environmental resources. However, it is likely that impacts to environmental resources similar to those identified for the West Laurel Interchange-West project may occur for some of the identified transportation projects potentially resulting in cumulative effects to some regional resources. The nature of the identified impacts (minor and short-term) to environmental resources and the nature of the resources impacted (significantly abundant in the region) does not indicate that the

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West Laurel Interchange-West project in conjunction with the other reasonably foreseeable transportation projects in the region would cumulatively result in significant environmental impacts.

PROJECT IMPACTS AND PROPOSED MITIGATION

The table below summarizes the direct, indirect (secondary), and cumulative impacts anticipated for the proposed project. It also includes proposed mitigation and/or monitoring that may be necessary, and a determination of the significance of identified impacts. Significance determinations were made based on the criteria specified in 40 CFR 1508.27 and ARM 18.2.238.

Resource	Description	Potential Direct and Indirect Impacts	Proposed Mitigation and Monitoring	Potential Cumulative Impacts	Significance Determination and Reasoning
Vegetation	<p>Project area generally consists of flat bottomland with wheatgrass, brome and quackgrass.</p> <p>No Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) listed plant Species of Concern have been identified within the expanded project area, and the vegetative community is not unique or sensitive.</p>	<p>Temporary: Construction activities may result in the invasion or spread of noxious weeds.</p> <p>Permanent: Approximately 12 acres of vegetated areas would be covered with impervious materials, e.g. asphalt, compacted gravel surfacing, etc.</p>	<p>All land disturbed by construction activities, including cut and fill slopes within the right-of-way, would be revegetated using a desirable seed mixture.</p> <p>Unused portions of the presently traveled way would be obliterated, topsoiled and seeded.</p>	<p>Impacts to vegetation anticipated from this project and other MDT projects in the area considered to be minor.</p>	<p>Not Significant. Minor impacts anticipated.</p>
Prime Farmland	<p>The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database identifies six soil map units that contain prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance within the project area.</p>	<p>Permanent: Approximately 17.7 acres of the prime and important farmland located in the project area would be converted, either directly or indirectly, by project activities.</p>	<p>Under section 7 CFR 658.4(C) of the Farmland Protection Policy Act, in May 2012, a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form was completed by MDT and the NRCS.</p>	<p>Impacts to prime farmland anticipated from this project and other MDT projects in the area considered to be minor.</p>	<p>Not Significant.</p>

Resource	Description	Potential Direct and Indirect Impacts	Proposed Mitigation and Monitoring	Potential Cumulative Impacts	Significance Determination and Reasoning
<p>Cultural and Historic Sites, including Section 4(f) Properties</p>	<p>Six historic sites were identified within or adjacent to the project area. These sites include the Burlington Northern Railroad, the Italian Ditch, and four historic residential sites.</p> <p>The Burlington Northern Railroad (site 24YL277) has been evaluated as eligible for the NRHP. The railroad exhibits good integrity as a late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century active railroad. The original alignment is intact, and modifications have not diminished the site's significance to the State of Montana. Therefore, the Burlington Northern Railroad is eligible under Criterion A found in 36 CFR 6034. The Italian Ditch (Site</p>	<p>Permanent: Approximately 200 additional feet of the Italian Ditch (total length of approximately 800 feet) would be enclosed in a new culvert by the project. An additional 260 feet of existing ditch immediately west of the new culvert would be relocated with the project.</p> <p>Although a number of lateral segments of the Italian Ditch are located within the project area which may be impacted by project activities, the contributing features providing eligibility of this site are located outside of the project area. Ditch segments found within the project area have been greatly altered since original construction. The cultural inventory report found that anticipated project activities would not have adverse effects</p>	<p>The four residential sites have been evaluated as ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The residential sites are ineligible because they do not meet any of the four eligibility criteria found in 36 CFR 6034.</p>	<p>Possible cultural impacts associated with MRL's intended addition of a holding track immediately north of the existing tracks cannot be determined at this time. This work is being pursued by MRL independent of this interchange project by MDT.</p>	<p>Not Significant. A Determination of Effect for project activities was completed for the NRHP-eligible sites within the project area. It was determined that the West Laurel Interchange-West Project would have No Effect on the NRHP-eligible Northern Pacific Railway (24YL227) and Italian Ditch (24YL663). This Determination of Effect was accepted by the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and stamped with SHPO concurrence on December 28, 2007.</p> <p>A second Determination of No Effect, based on revised impacts to the Italian Ditch, was stamped with SHPO concurrence on April 8, 2011.</p> <p>A third Determination of No Effect, based on</p>

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	<p>24YL663) has been evaluated as eligible for the NRHP.</p> <p>The Italian Ditch is eligible under Criterion A found in 36 CFR 6034.</p> <p>The Laurel Community Fishing Pond is located directly east of the West Laurel Interchange-West project and is likely considered a 4(f) property under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act (49 USC 303).</p>	<p>to the Burlington Northern Railroad and Italian Ditch sites.</p> <p>Due to its proximity to the project area the Community Fishing Pond was evaluated to determine if a “constructive use” could occur as a result of potential identified noise impacts. The TNS identifies a traffic noise impact criterion of 66 dBA for this project. Predicted traffic noise levels for the west corner of the Laurel Community Fishing Pond is 66 dBA for the build alternative and 65 dBA for the no-build alternative for the design year of 2030, thus the build alternative predicted traffic noise levels reach the criterion for a noise impact.</p>			<p>additional revised impacts to the Italian Ditch, was stamped with SHPO concurrence on May 2, 2012.</p> <p>Sec. 771.135 Section 4(f) (49 USC 303)] also states that “A constructive use does not occur if the increase in the projected noise levels if the proposed project is constructed, when compared with the projected noise levels if the project is not built, is barely perceptible (3 dBA or less).” The TNS indicates that the predicted traffic noise level for the build alternative is only 1 dBA greater than the no-build alternative for the year 2030. Therefore, no constructive use occurs to the Laurel Community Fishing Pond from noise impacts due to the proposed project.</p>

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Air Quality	The proposed project is located in a SO ₂ non-attainment area of Montana for air quality under 40 CFR 81.327, as amended.	<p>Temporary: A localized, temporary decrease in air quality is anticipated during project construction due to particulate emissions generated by heavy equipment and support vehicles.</p> <p>Permanent: Once constructed, no increase in particulate emissions is expected.</p>	Particulate emissions would be minimized by the contractor through watering the graveled surfaces and by minimizing the area of disturbance at any given time. The contractor would obtain the necessary air quality permits specific to the equipment location that will stipulate procedures for minimizing emissions.	Temporary impacts from this project and adjacent projects are considered minimal and not anticipated to result in long term or permanent air quality impacts.	Not Significant. Correspondence with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) states that this project is exempt from the requirement of a conformity determination as per 40 CFR 93.126 Table 2 and 40 CFR 93.127 Table 3. Therefore, this proposed project complies with Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act as amended (42 U.S.C. 7521(a)).
Water Quality	There are no perennial streams within the project area.	<p>Temporary: Construction-related impacts to water quality include increased potential for erosion and increased turbidity resulting from fill activities in Figgins Pond.</p> <p>Permanent: Storm water ponds constructed with the project are expected to detain design storm flows.</p>	A Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan would be developed and submitted to the Montana DEQ's Permitting and Compliance Division in compliance with their Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Regulations (ARM 16.20.1314) for	This project or adjacent projects are not anticipated to generate sediment in nearby waterways, therefore no cumulative impacts to ambient water quality were identified.	<p>Not Significant. Project detention ponds are expected to decrease the amount of storm water discharged to the Italian Ditch, and are expected to maintain or improve the amount of suspended solids in the discharged water.</p> <p>There would be no project-related impacts to streams associated</p>

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			<p>this proposed project. Impacts to water quality would be minimized by following the procedures and methods identified in the MDT Erosion and Sediment Control Best Management Practices Reference Manual.</p>		<p>with the West Laurel Interchange-West project. Further consultation with Montana FWP for SPA notification is not required.</p>
Wild and Scenic Rivers	<p>No Wild and Scenic Rivers are present in the project area.</p>	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	<p>Not Significant. No impacts anticipated.</p>
Wetlands	<p>All wetlands, waterways, and open water areas within the project area are associated with the Italian Ditch, its correlating laterals, adjacent wetlands, the gravel pit pond, and its associated fringe. The investigation resulted in the delineation of eleven wetlands, eight waterways, and one open water area totaling approximately 33.55 acres of aquatic resources within the identified project area.</p>	<p>Project activities are expected to impact 1.89 acres of wetlands, 6,506.9 linear feet of waterways, and 1.0 acre of the open water area. Approximately 1.85 acres of jurisdictional wetlands, 6,506.9 linear feet of jurisdictional waterways, and 1.0 acre of jurisdictional open water area are expected to be impacted by project activities.</p>	<p>Consultation with the U.S Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) has concluded that impacts to the open water area and waterways associated with this project do not require mitigation. All wetlands impacted by project activities would be mitigated in compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Executive Order 11990.</p>	<p>No cumulative impacts to wetlands anticipated.</p>	<p>Not Significant.</p>

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Fish and Wildlife	<p>Potential fisheries resources within the proposed project area are limited to the main portions of the Italian Ditch and the gravel pit pond. The fish species present within the project are primarily generalist species that are well adapted to high levels of disturbance and human activity. Although suitable habitat for amphibians exists within the project area none were observed during the field investigation.</p> <p>No MNHP listed wildlife Species of Concern have been identified within the expanded project area, and the wildlife community is not unique or sensitive.</p>	<p>Temporary: Construction activity would likely disrupt animal use including foraging, denning, and nesting.</p> <p>Permanent: Due to the limited fishery resources within the project area (Italian Ditch), minimal impacts to fisheries are anticipated from project activities.</p> <p>Small mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles that may inhabit the expanded ROW would be displaced when construction activities begin. Most would be expected to relocate outside of the disturbed area; some will move back into the ROW once construction is complete.</p>	No mitigation or monitoring proposed.	No cumulative impacts to fish and wildlife anticipated.	<p>Not Significant. Degradation of fish habitat will not likely reduce numbers for those species to a level that would impact species propagation.</p> <p>Because the affected area is comparatively small relative to comparable habitat in the surrounding area and does not include unique habitat, and because the wildlife in the area are accustomed to significant human disturbance, any impacts to wildlife would be short-term and would be restricted to individuals living in close proximity to or within the area to be disturbed.</p>

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Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species	<p>The February 2012 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Montana County List of Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, and Candidate Species lists four species for Yellowstone County which include the black-footed ferret (<i>Mustela nigripes</i>), the whooping crane (<i>Grus americana</i>), greater sage-grouse (<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>, and Sprague's pipit (<i>Anthus spragueii</i>).</p> <p>The USFWS Montana County List of Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, and Candidate Species does not identify any listed plant species for Yellowstone County.</p>	<p>Temporary: Short-term, construction-related impacts to fish and wildlife activity and habitat are expected as described above.</p> <p>Permanent: Loss of fish and wildlife habitat may occur as described above.</p>	<p>No mitigation or monitoring proposed.</p> <p>N/A.</p>	<p>Since occurrence of T& E species unlikely within the project area and project area does not contain critical habitat, no cumulative impacts anticipated.</p> <p>N/A.</p>	<p>Not Significant. After off- and on-site analysis of habitat specifications for the four endangered, proposed, and candidate species listed for Yellowstone County, and correspondence from USFWS, it was determined that the occurrence of these species within the modified project area is unlikely, and project-related impacts to these species are not anticipated.</p> <p>Not Significant.</p>

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Utilities and Railroads	<p>Buried natural gas lines, buried crude oil lines, buried telephone lines, buried fiber optic lines, and overhead electrical power poles occur along the project corridor.</p> <p>Montana Rail Link (MRL) involvement is anticipated. Additionally, the proposed bridges are likely to be modified in design to accommodate MRL's request that sufficient horizontal and vertical clearances be provided to install one holding track immediately north of the existing tracks in the project area.</p>	<p>Temporary: Some of these utilities would require relocation or adjustment to avoid conflicts with the planned road reconstruction. Temporary effects may occur due to utility relocations and adjustments which could produce short term interruptions of service.</p> <p>Temporary: Minor changes to train speeds and frequency may result from coordination with MRL and its flaggers.</p>	<p>Utility relocations and minor interruptions of service would be coordinated with the utility owners. Notification of service interruption due to the relocation would be the responsibility of the utility owner.</p> <p>Railroad flaggers would be used to secure the safety of the traveling public, the contractor and public agency staff and agents.</p>	No cumulative impacts anticipated.	Not Significant.
Hazardous Materials	<p>ISAs were completed for the project in October of 2006 and December of 2010. The ISAs identified industrial sites, spill sites, and other sites with potential for</p>	<p>No direct or indirect impacts. Project would not impact known hazardous material sites identified in the ISA.</p>	N/A.	No adverse potential cumulative impacts would be anticipated.	<p>Not Significant. Although there are several Leaking USTs within 1 mile of the project area, and a number of remediation response sites within 1 mile of the project area,</p>

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	hazardous materials or substances within 1 mile of the project area. The identified sites include the Cenex Refinery located approximately 0.5 mile from the project area, the Burlington Northern Railroad located parallel to I-90, one Stormwater Discharge area located within 1 mile east of the project area, active and inactive Underground Storage Tanks (USTs), and numerous Remediation Response Sites located to the east of the project area.				all of these sites are at least 0.5 mile from the project boundary and impacts to the MDT ROW from hazardous waste are not apparent.
Visual Resources	The project area is visually consistent with an urban / rural interface. No particular features are noted.	<p>Temporary: Some short-term, localized visual impacts are anticipated as a result of construction activities.</p> <p>Permanent: None</p>	None.	No adverse cumulative impacts anticipated.	Not Significant. The proposed project would only slightly modify the alignment of the interstate. Modifications to 19 th Avenue West would be consistent with the urban / rural interface.

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Noise	<p>A TNS was completed by Big Sky Acoustics, LLC dated July 2007. This study was completed in accordance with U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 (23 CRF 772) <i>Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise</i>, and MDT's <i>Traffic Noise Analysis and Abatement: Policy and Procedure Manual</i>.</p>	<p>Temporary: Short-term, localized noise impacts are anticipated from the construction equipment.</p> <p>Permanent: This study predicts minor traffic noise impacts during the Design Year (2030) to six receptors found adjacent and within the project area, under the build alternative. The impacted receptors represent three single-family residences, and a mobile home located along U-6904 (Main Street or old Highway 10) located north of the project area, one single family residence along 19th Avenue West within the project area, and the Laurel Community Fishing Pond located south east of the project area adjacent to I-90.</p>	<p>Possible mitigation measures have been evaluated for feasibility in the TNS for the impacts. It has been determined that none of the evaluated mitigation measures for the proposed project are reasonable and feasible in accordance with MDT's <i>Traffic Noise Analysis and Abatement: Policy and Procedure Manual</i>.</p>	<p>No adverse cumulative noise impacts anticipated.</p>	<p>Not Significant.</p>
Locally-Adopted Plans, Policies, and Controls	<p>The City of Laurel has adopted the <i>Laurel Growth Management Plan, 2004</i>. The City of Laurel has also</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Not Significant. The proposed project would not induce growth, nor promote changes in land use. No conflicts</p>

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	<p>adopted the <i>1978 Transportation Plan for Laurel, Montana</i>.</p> <p>The project would accomplish, in whole or in part, two goals from the Transportation Plan: 1) improved access to I-90; and 2) provision of alternative travel routes.</p>				<p>with the referenced plans have been identified.</p>
Recreational Opportunities	<p>The Laurel Community Fishing Pond is located directly east of the West Laurel Interchange-West project and is used for recreational purposes such as fishing, hiking, and picnicking.</p>	<p>Temporary: Short-term, localized noise and visual impacts are anticipated from the construction equipment.</p> <p>Permanent: No long-term impacts are anticipated.</p>	N/A	None anticipated.	Not Significant.
Right-of-way Acquisition and Relocations	<p>This project would require the acquisition of new rights-of-way. The new interstate mainline would be relocated to the north of the existing road alignment. Exact location of the new alignment would be</p>	<p>New right-of-way must be acquired to reconstruct the road along the preferred alignment. Approximately 21.5 acres of new right-of-way must be obtained to reconstruct the road along the preferred</p>	<p>Construction permits would be obtained as necessary for the construction of drive approaches, inlet/outlet ditches for drainage pipes, and any other minor features that require construction outside of the project</p>	<p>No adverse cumulative impacts anticipated from right-of-way acquisition.</p>	<p>Not Significant.</p>

Resource	Description	Potential Direct and Indirect Impacts	Proposed Mitigation and Monitoring	Potential Cumulative Impacts	Significance Determination and Reasoning
	provided as the design of the project progresses.	alignment. The new right-of-way would involve 7 individual parcels. No commercial or residential relocations would be required.	right-of-way.		
Environmental Justice	The proposed project is in close proximity to presently traveled ways. Right-of-way acquisition would be uniform throughout.	Approximately 21.5 acres total of new right-of-way must be obtained to construct the proposed alignments.	The project was reviewed through MDT's Value Analysis process. As a result of the changes accepted by MDT, the proposed footprint of the project was reduced approximately 20%. No further mitigation or monitoring would be proposed.	The nature of the identified impacts (minor and short term) to environmental resources and the nature of the resources impacted (significantly abundant in the region) does not indicate that the West Laurel Interchange-West project, in conjunction with the other reasonably foreseeable transportation projects in the region, would cumulatively result in significant environmental impacts.	Not Significant. No disproportionate impacts to minority and/or low-income persons are anticipated.

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Social	The West Laurel interchange provides access to farms and residences located in the area west of Laurel.	<p>Realignment and development of a full interchange for this segment of I-90 would make travel safer, more pleasant, and more efficient.</p> <p>Improvements to I-90 to address the accident cluster on the eastbound bridge over the MRL tracks would improve safety for the traveling public.</p>	No mitigation or monitoring is proposed.	No adverse cumulative social impacts anticipated.	Not Significant.
Changes in Grade and Traffic Patterns	<p>The proposed project would provide a full-movement interchange to replace the existing half-interchange.</p> <p>19th Avenue West would be realigned to cross over the interstate approximately 1,000' east of its existing location. A public street connection to the existing presently traveled way would be provided to maintain</p>	<p>Temporary: Construction sequencing could result in the closure of the existing eastbound off-ramp and existing westbound on-ramp prior to completion of the new ramps.</p> <p>Short-term interruptions to traffic on Main Street and Golf Course Road would be anticipated to improve the intersection of the two roadways.</p>	<p>A traffic control plan would be developed in accordance with the Manual on Traffic Control Devices.</p> <p>A limited public information plan would be anticipated to address construction-related changes.</p>	There would be no significant effects on access to adjacent properties or present traffic patterns.	Not Significant.

Resource	Description	Potential Direct and Indirect Impacts	Proposed Mitigation and Monitoring	Potential Cumulative Impacts	Significance Determination and Reasoning
	<p>access to the residences and business located on the west side of 19th Avenue West, south of Main Street.</p> <p>A cul-de-sac would be constructed at the southern terminus of the existing interchange ramps to perpetuate access to properties on both sides of the combined ramps.</p>	<p>Permanent: The project would provide another point of access to the interstate system for travelers going to / from points east. Some decrease in east-oriented traffic would be expected at the existing Central Laurel Interchange.</p>			
<p>Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities</p>	<p>The West Laurel Interchange-West project is not expected to have impacts on pedestrians or bicyclists. There has not been any identified pedestrian trail or bicycle use on or connected to 19th Avenue West.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Not Significant.</p>

Resource	Description	Potential Direct and Indirect Impacts	Proposed Mitigation and Monitoring	Potential Cumulative Impacts	Significance Determination and Reasoning
Economic	Interstate-90 is a primary transportation route for the state of Montana.	<p>Temporary: Short-term, beneficial impacts to the economy are anticipated during construction of the project. Local contractors and suppliers would have an opportunity to bid and/or offer services. Additionally, the local economy may benefit by providing temporary services and housing to construction personnel.</p> <p>Permanent: Realignment and development of a full-movement interchange for this segment of I-90 would make travel safer, more pleasant, and more efficient.</p>	No mitigation or monitoring is proposed.	No adverse cumulative economic impacts anticipated.	No significant.
Public Controversy	A public information meeting was held on December 12, 2006, in Laurel to outline the general scope of the project and facilitate input from the public. Approximately 55 people attended	<p>Concerns were raised regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fate of the existing pond located on City property on the north side of the interstate; • Speed limits; • Project funding, likelihood and 		N/A.	Not Significant. All public comments concerning this project have been addressed by MDT.

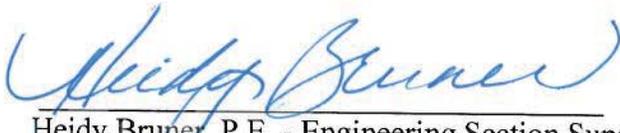
Resource	Description	Potential Direct and Indirect Impacts	Proposed Mitigation and Monitoring	Potential Cumulative Impacts	Significance Determination and Reasoning
	<p>including local property owners, representatives from the local press, and the general public.</p> <p>A second public information meeting was held on December 17, 2007, in Laurel that outlined proposed project design and the chosen configuration, Phases 1 and 2 of the project, and</p>	<p>schedule of construction;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access control/ fencing; • Expected efficacy of the recently installed bridge deck de-icing system; • The condition and future improvements to old Highway 10 (also known as Urban Route 6904 or Main Street); • Access to areas south of the railroad tracks; • Consideration of alternative locations for the proposed full-movement interchange; and • Need for environmental study. <p>Concerns were raised regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start and completion dates; • Reasoning behind two construction phases; • Possibility of extension of 19th Avenue West to 			

Resource	Description	Potential Direct and Indirect Impacts	Proposed Mitigation and Monitoring	Potential Cumulative Impacts	Significance Determination and Reasoning
	scheduling. Approximately 38 people attended including local property owners, representatives from the local jurisdiction, the press, and the general public.	the south over the railroad tracks; • Source of material for project construction outside of the existing interstate; an • Accident trend numbers and scheduling issues.			

Growth: Induced and Cumulative/Secondary

The proposed West Laurel Interchange-West project would not induce significant land use changes or promote unplanned growth. There would be no significant effects on access to adjacent properties or present traffic pattern. This project would not create disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations (E.O. 12898) and complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d).

In accordance with 23 CFR 771.117(a), this action would neither, individually or cumulatively, have any significant environmental impacts. Therefore, the FHWA's concurrence is requested that this proposed project is properly classified as a Categorical Exclusion.



Heidi Bruner, P.E. - Engineering Section Supervisor
MDT Environmental Services Bureau

Date:

7/13/12

Concur:



Federal Highway Administration

Date:

20 July 2012

e-copy: Stefan Streeter, P.E. - Administrator – Billings District No. 5
Tim Conway, P.E. – Consultant Design Bureau Chief
Paul Ferry, P.E. – Highways Engineer
Kent Barnes, P.E. – Bridge Engineer
Robert Stapley – Right-of-Way Bureau Chief
Nicole Pallister – Fiscal Programming Section Supervisor
Tom Erving - Fiscal Programming
Suzy Price, Supervisor – Contract Plans Section
Tom Martin, P.E. – Environmental Services Bureau Chief
Heidi Bruner – Engineering Sect. Sup. – Environmental Services Bureau
Phillip J. Forbes, P.E. – Morrison-Maierle, Inc.
Montana Legislative Branch Environmental Quality Council (EQC)
File

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