



# Next Public Open House

**Date:** June 7, 2007 Time: 6-8 p.m.

**Location:** Central School Gymnasium

**Address:** 600 East Second Street, Whitefish, MT

The purpose of the meeting is to present the results of the Environmental Re-Evaluation and to get your feedback on the preliminary design.

For additional information, please go to [www.wmggroup.com/projects/whitefish.html](http://www.wmggroup.com/projects/whitefish.html) or contact:

Jeremy Keene, P.E.  
WGM Group, Inc.  
(406)728-4611  
[jkeene@wmggroup.com](mailto:jkeene@wmggroup.com)

Dwane Kailey, P.E.  
MDT, Missoula  
(406) 523-5802  
[dkailey@mt.gov](mailto:dkailey@mt.gov)

Blair Nordhagen, P.E.  
MDT, Helena  
(406) 444-9128  
[bnordhagen@mt.gov](mailto:bnordhagen@mt.gov)

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program or activity of the Dept. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information call (406) 444-6331 or TTY (800)335-7592, or by calling Montana Relay at 711. Accommodation requests must be made within 48 hours of the meeting.



3021 Palmer  
P.O. Box 16027  
Missoula, MT 59808-6027



## PROJECT STATUS

An Environmental Re-Evaluation for the US 93 Whitefish Urban and Whitefish West projects has been prepared. The purpose of the Re-evaluation is to assess whether the 1994 US Highway 93 Somers to Whitefish West Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is still valid, up-to-date, and complete.

The Re-Evaluation considers two primary questions:

- ⌘ Are there changes to the proposed action that would result in new significant impacts that were not evaluated in the FEIS?
- ⌘ Are there changes to the affected environment, such as new information, circumstances, laws, regulations, or local ordinances that would result in new significant impacts that were not evaluated in the FEIS?

A Citizen's Working Group (CWG), representing Whitefish businesses and residents, was formed to assist in the Re-Evaluation. The CWG provided valuable input on the design and comparison of current conditions with those described in the FEIS.

The US Highway 93 project is split into the Whitefish Urban and Whitefish West project areas (project limits are described on the following page).

### Whitefish Urban

The Re-Evaluation found that there are substantial changes to the proposed action and the affected environment within the Whitefish Urban project area, which would result in potential new significant impacts not evaluated in the FEIS. These include:

- ⌘ Due to changes in traffic volumes, the FEIS preferred alternative in the Whitefish Urban project area no longer functions at an acceptable level of service. Additional turn lanes and widening would be required to provide improved level of service and traffic operations. These changes would result in greater impacts to buildings, pedestrians, bicyclists, parks, historic properties, and visual resources in the downtown area.

- ⌘ The *Whitefish Downtown Business District Master Plan* was adopted. The plan identifies goals for land use, social, economic, and pedestrian facilities which are not compatible with the proposed action.

**The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) determined that additional study of feasible alternatives for US 93 is needed in the Whitefish Urban area. A Whitefish Transportation Plan and Urban Corridor Study of US 93 is underway. Contact Jeff Key at Robert Peccia & Associates for more information (406-447-5000), or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/whitefish](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/whitefish).**

### Whitefish West

There were changes to the proposed action and affected environment within the Whitefish West project area as well. However, the Re-Evaluation concluded that these changes would not result in new significant impacts that were not previously evaluated in the FEIS. Changes include:

- ⌘ Changes to the proposed action to provide improved safety and meet current design standards, which would result in greater impacts to businesses, residences, historic properties, water resources, and hazardous materials sites west of the Whitefish River. These impacts are consistent with the type and nature of impacts described in the FEIS for the overall Somers to Whitefish West corridor and the FEIS adequately addresses mitigation for these impacts.
- ⌘ Wetlands and threatened and endangered species that were not identified in the FEIS. The impacts to these resources are similar in type and nature to the impacts described in the FEIS for the overall Somers to Whitefish West corridor and the FEIS adequately addresses mitigation requirements.

**If the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) concurs with the Re-Evaluation, final design and construction of the Whitefish West project can proceed under the original FEIS.**



## PROJECT LOCATIONS

### Whitefish Urban

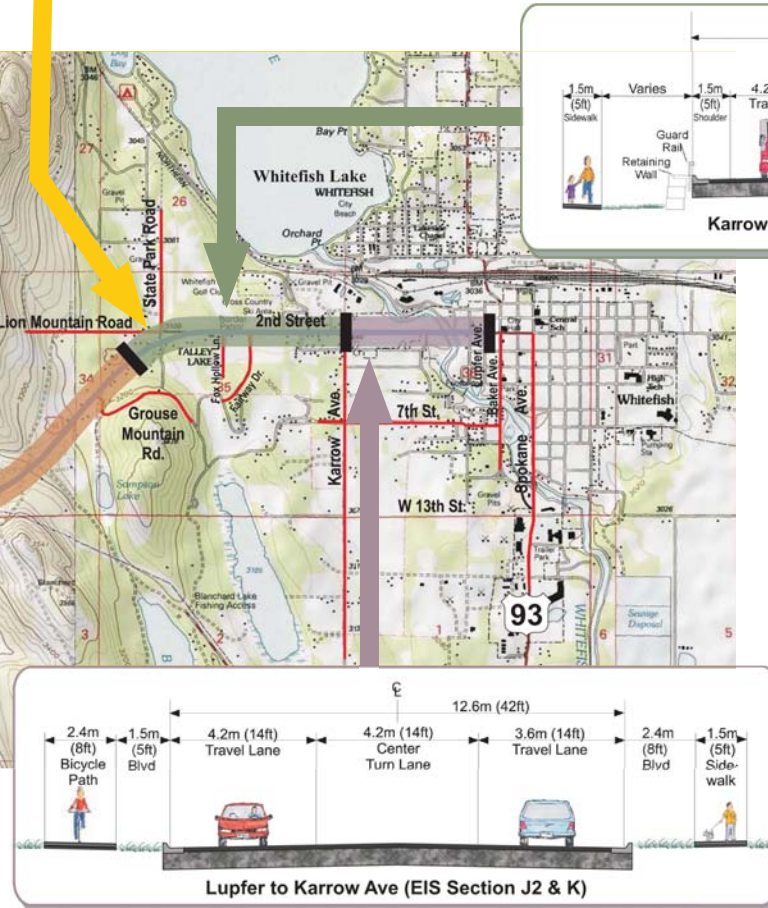
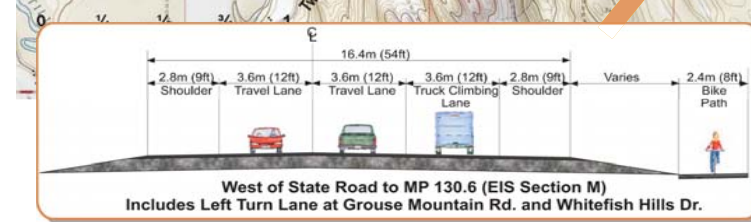
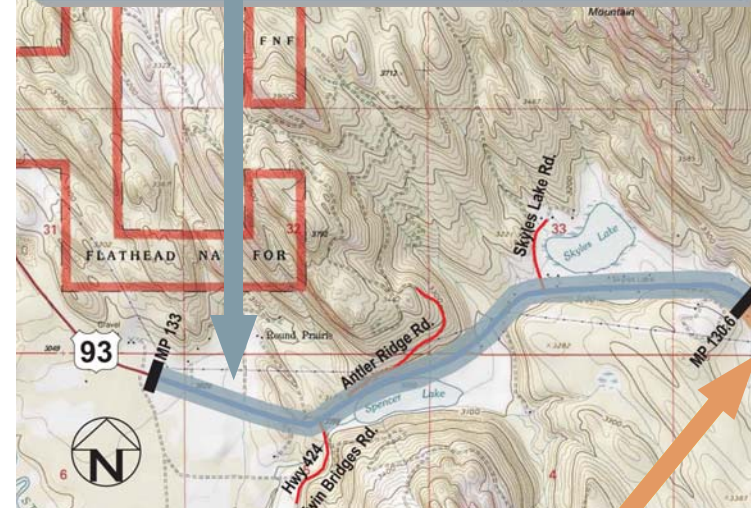
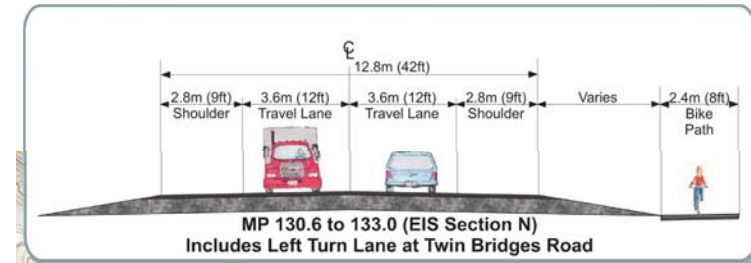
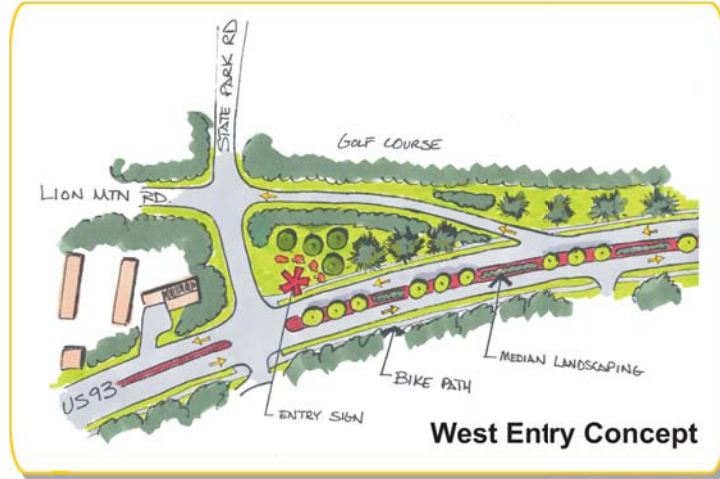
The Whitefish Urban project begins on US 93 at 13<sup>th</sup> Street, continues north on Spokane Avenue and west on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, ending just west of Baker Avenue. The proposed action includes a one-way couplet on Spokane and Baker avenues between 7<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> streets, and a new bridge crossing the Whitefish River at 7<sup>th</sup> Street.



Second Street Bridge, US Hwy 93, Whitefish

### Whitefish West

The Whitefish West project begins on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street just west of Baker Avenue and ends approximately 1/2 mile west of Twin Bridges Road (Hwy 424) at milepost 133.



Whitefish West Preliminary Design

## PRELIMINARY DESIGN

### Whitefish Urban

A Whitefish Transportation Plan and Urban Corridor Study of US 93 is underway. Contact Jeff Key at Robert Peccia & Associates for more information (406-447-5000), or visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/whitefish](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/whitefish).

### Whitefish West

Preliminary design of the Whitefish West project is progressing, and includes several important changes from the FEIS.

Due to the rolling terrain, it was not possible to meet current design standards for clear zones and stopping sight distance without acquiring additional right-of-way from adjacent properties. In addition, there was not adequate accommodation for utilities, signs, and light poles. Traffic analysis identified the need for turn lanes at several locations to safely remove turning vehicles from through traffic.

The current design includes the following new or revised features:

- ⌘ Retaining walls and guardrail to reduce impacts to adjacent properties, parks, and the golf course
- ⌘ Boulevard sidewalks, where feasible
- ⌘ A new underpass at the golf course
- ⌘ A narrower shoulder width along the golf course and Grouse Mountain park to reduce impacts
- ⌘ An eastbound right-turn lane at Karrow Avenue
- ⌘ A new intersection at State Park Road, located approximately 90 m (300 ft) west of the existing intersection, including accommodation for a future signal and a new approach from the south
- ⌘ A separated bike path on the north side of the highway, where feasible. The bike path will be on the shoulder where right-of-way is constrained
- ⌘ A westbound left-turn lane at Grouse Mountain Road
- ⌘ A westbound left-turn lane at Whitefish Hills Drive
- ⌘ A westbound left-turn lane at Twin Bridges Road
- ⌘ An at-grade bike path crossing at Twin Bridges Road. Based on input from the Citizens Working Group, the bike path would end at Twin Bridges Road

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The next step is to complete the Environmental Re-Evaluation. If the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) agrees that there are no new significant impacts, final design can begin.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Project Initiation	★					
Public Open House	● April		●	●		
Citizen Working Group	→	→				
Preliminary Design	→	→	→			
Environmental Re-evaluation		→	→	→		
Final Design				→	→	
Right-of-way Acquisition					→	→
Construction*						★

\*This project is not currently funded.