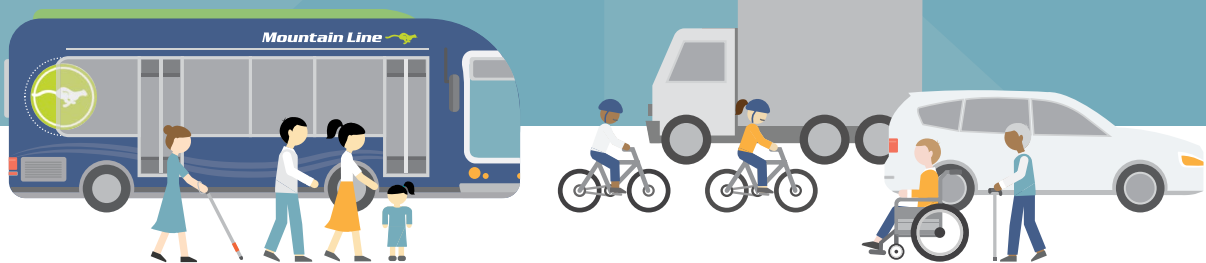


# missoula connect

2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan

## Final Plan

JUNE 2021



# Acknowledgments

**The Missoula MPO acknowledges that we are in the aboriginal territories of the Séliš (Bitterroot Salish) and Qlispé (Kalispel) people. We honor the path they have always shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come.**

To the thousands of Missoula area residents who took the time to share ideas for improving our region's transportation system, thank you! Your insights and experiences have shaped Missoula Connect and the recommendations for projects and programs you'll find in these pages. Because of your feedback, the future of transportation in our region is bright.

This plan would not have been possible without the oversight of and direction from the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee and Transportation Technical Advisory Committee. We are also grateful for the commitment of our Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Citizens Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee. The members of these groups are listed on the following pages.



## Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee

**Dave Strohmaier**, Board of County Commissioners, TPCC Chair

**Mirtha Becerra**, Missoula City Council, TPCC Vice Chair

**Don MacArthur**, Missoula Urban Transportation District

**John Engen**, Mayor, City of Missoula

**Josh Slotnick**, Board of County Commissioners

**Bob Vosen**, Montana Department of Transportation

**Peter Benson**, Missoula Consolidated Planning Board (past)

**Shane Morrissey**, Missoula Consolidated Planning Board

**Lucia Oliviera**, Federal Highway Administration

**Debbie Johnston**, Missoula City-County Health Board

## Transportation Technical Advisory Committee

**Jeremy Keene**, City Public Works & Mobility, TTAC Chair

**Corey Aldridge**, Missoula Urban Transportation District, TTAC Vice Chair

**Shane Stack**, Missoula County Public Works

**Sarah Coefield**, Missoula City-County Health Department

**Ellen Buchanan**, Missoula Redevelopment Association

**Eran Pehan**, Community Planning, Development & Innovation

**Jacquelyn Smith**, Montana Department of Transportation

**Chet Crowser**, Missoula County CAPS

**Juniper Davis**, Missoula County Parks & Trails

**Donna Gaukler**, City Parks & Recreation

**Lyn Hellegaard**, Missoula Ravalli TMA

**Ben Weiss**, City Public Works & Mobility

**Katie Potts**, Montana Department of Transportation

**Dori Brownlow**, Missoula County (past)

**Emily Brock**, Missoula County

**Ryan Hammon**, Federal Highway Administration

**Tiffany Brander**, Missoula Parking Commission

**Brian Ellestad**, Missoula Airport Authority

**Bynum Jackson**, ASUM Office of Transportation

**Eva Rocke**, University of Montana

## L RTP Citizens Advisory Committee

**Bob Giordano**, Missoula Institute for Sustainable Transportation

**Laurel Farrell**, Community Forum

**Toffer Lehnherr**, Partnership Health Center

**Dwight Easton**, Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce

**John Corwin**, Missoula Downtown Partnership

**Clint Burson**, Missoula Organization of Realtors (MOR)

**Paul Forsting**, Missoula Building Industry Association (MBIA)

**Andrea Davis**, homeWORD

**Jessica Goodburn**, Bike-Ped Advisory Board

**Travis Hoffman**, Summit Independent Living Center

**Amy Cilimburg**, Climate Smart Missoula

**Jean Belangie Nye**, Lolo Community Council

**C. Burt Caldwell**, Bonner/Milltown Community Council

**Susan Kohler**, Missoula Aging Services

**Anne Rupkalvis**, Target Range HOA

**Terry Phelan**, Missoula County Public Schools

**Greta Bates**, Soft Landing

**Eva Rocke**, University of Montana

**Andrew Meyers**, Northside/Westside Neighborhood

## L RTP Technical Advisory Committee

**Kevin Slovarp**, Missoula City Engineer for Surface Transportation

**Troy Monroe**, Missoula City Engineer for Development Reviews & Inspections

**Ellen Buchanan**, Missoula Redevelopment Agency

**Corey Aldridge**, Missoula Urban Transportation District

**Donna Gaukler**, Missoula Parks & Recreation

**Neil Miner**, Missoula Parks & Recreation

**Ben Weiss**, Missoula Bicycle/Pedestrian Program Manager

**Sarah Coefield**, Missoula City-County Air Quality Specialist

**Ben Schmidt**, Missoula City-County Air Quality Specialist

**Juniper Davis**, Missoula County Parks & Trails Manager

**Erik Dickson**, Missoula County Public Works



## L RTP Technical Advisory Committee, Continued

**Shane Stack**, Missoula County Public Works

**Jacquelyn Smith**, Montana Department of Transportation – Missoula District

**Ben Nunnallee**, Montana Department of Transportation – Missoula District

**Vicki Crnich**, Montana Department of Transportation – Helena

**Emily Gluckin**, Community Planning, Development & Innovation, Current Planning/Land Use

**Laval Means**, Community Planning, Development & Innovation, Long-Range Planning

**Karen Hughes**, Missoula County CAPS

**Andrew Hagemeyer**, Missoula County CAPS

**John Stegmaier**, Missoula County Parks & Trails

**Diana Maneta**, Missoula County CAPS Sustainability Program Manager

**Montana James**, Community Planning, Development & Innovation, Community Development

**Lisa Beczkiewicz**, Missoula City-County Health Department

**Tiffany Brander**, Missoula Parking Commission

## Missoula MPO Staff

**Aaron Wilson**, Infrastructure & Mobility Planning Manager

**David Gray**, Transportation Planner

**Jon Sand**, Assistant Transportation Planner

**Charles Menefee**, Assistant Transportation Planner

## Consultant Team

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates

Big Sky Public Relations


Smart Mobility

LSA



# Contents

<b>Chapter 1</b>	
<b>Our Charge</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2</b>	
<b>A Strong Foundation</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter 3</b>	
<b>Your Input</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Chapter 4</b>	
<b>Missoula Connect Goals</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>Chapter 5</b>	
<b>Shaping the Future</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>Chapter 6</b>	
<b>Recommended Projects</b> .....	<b>47</b>



<b>Chapter 7</b>	
<b>Recommended Programs and Policies</b> .....	<b>83</b>
<b>Chapter 8</b>	
<b>Funding the Plan</b> .....	<b>113</b>
<b>Chapter 9</b>	
<b>Measuring Success</b> .....	<b>127</b>
<b>Chapter 10</b>	
<b>Taking the First Steps</b> .....	<b>133</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	
<b>Moving Forward</b> .....	<b>139</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	

# Chapter 1

# Our Charge

The Missoula planning area is home to more than 82,000 residents spread over 263 square miles. With a thriving downtown, unique residential neighborhoods, a large public research university, and proximity to world-class outdoor recreation, it's no surprise that Missoula is growing quickly.

While growth brings benefits to the region, it also creates challenges to affordability, connectivity, accessibility, and equity. Growth also puts pressures on our current transportation system, especially as our community's demographics change. For example, the number of older adults in the Missoula area is increasing, and young people are driving less than their parents. People are asking for a wider range of mobility options, and they want safe connections that help them get to where they need to go.



As we developed Missoula Connect, we learned about your vision for the future of the Missoula area and your ideas for solutions to help respond to current challenges. We heard that Missoula area residents want safe, comfortable, and reliable ways to get around the region. For some, that means better biking connections or safer places to walk; for others, that means a reliable way to drive or an efficient trip to work and services on transit.

We know that when transportation is integrated with land use, we can support future growth and enhance the local economy without straining the transportation system or creating negative environmental impacts for future generations. As we grow, we need a transportation system that keeps pace—one that reflects our community's character and supports a region that is more livable, equitable, and sustainable.

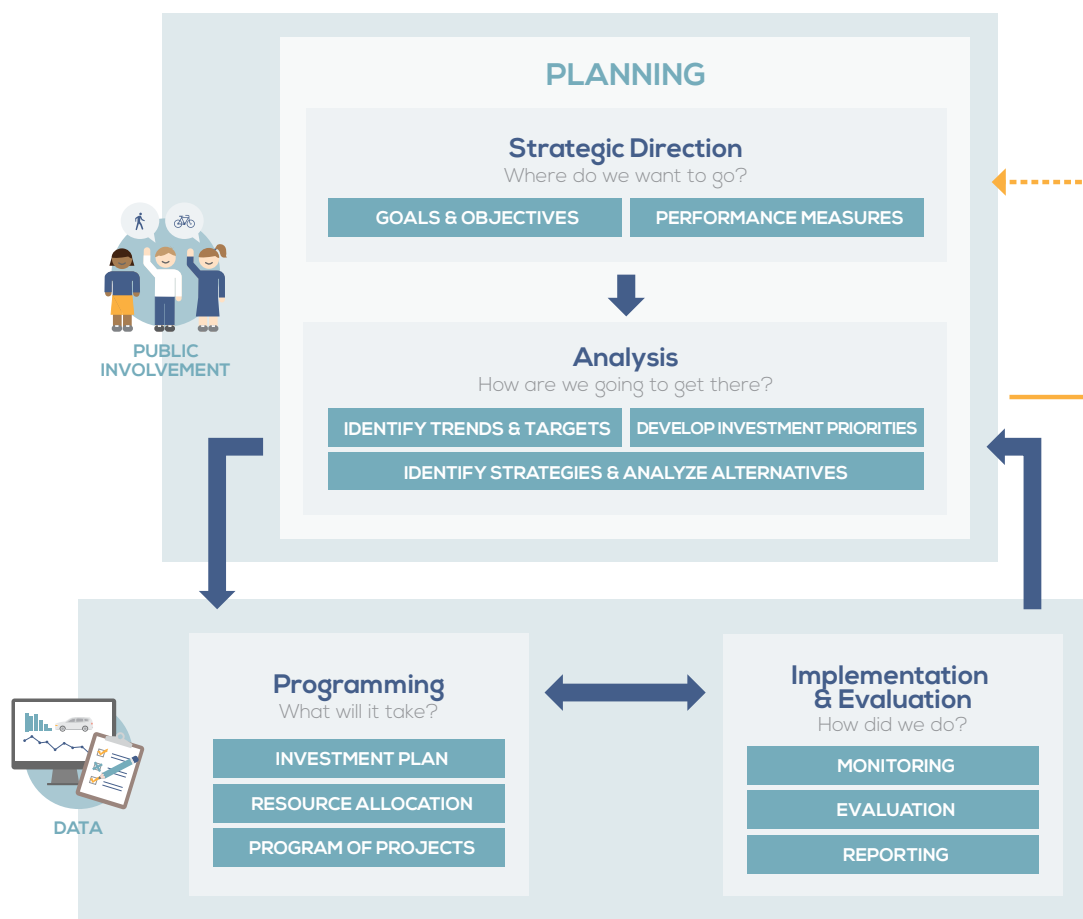


# THE PLAN

Missoula Connect is an update to our Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The 30-year plan looks at all modes of transportation and identifies priorities for projects and programs, as well as how funding should be allocated. Relying on previous planning work and extensive community outreach, Missoula Connect integrates existing plans and projects to create a sustainable transportation future that improves mobility and access for all Missoula area residents, workers, and visitors.

A strong transportation plan is critical to the success of Missoula’s City and County growth policies, and Missoula Connect knits together our land use and transportation goals. Missoula is on the move and we need to ensure we’re not only keeping pace but staying ahead.

## The Federal Planning Process



# Connecting Our Planning Efforts

The Missoula region has a rich tradition of planning, which both contributes to and helps to implement our long-range transportation plan. Our growth plans and policies, our climate action plans, and Mountain Line’s Strategic Plan are a few examples of the many documents that have guided and shaped Missoula Connect. And to help our region implement the many recommended transportation projects and programs, we develop plans like the Bicycle Facilities Master Plan, the Community Transportation Safety Plan, and corridor-specific plans.

By serving as a connector between the region’s contributing and implementing plans, Missoula Connect helps to carry our values forward and advance our highest priorities.



# GETTING TO KNOW THE MPO

## WHO

The MPO, or Metropolitan Planning Organization, works to plan a safe transportation network for the Missoula area to ensure we have a comprehensive, cooperative, and connected transportation system.



## WHAT

Because the Missoula Urban Area has more than 50,000 residents, the federal government requires that an organization be established to carry out metropolitan transportation planning.

## WHERE

The MPO serves the Missoula Urban Area, which is a larger area than the Missoula city limits but smaller than Missoula County.

## WHY

Once the Missoula Urban Area grew to more than 50,000 residents, the MPO was created to coordinate the region's shared transportation vision.

## WHEN

The Missoula MPO was formed nearly 40 years ago, following the 1980 Census. Today the MPO is responsible for long-range planning and programming of federal transportation funds within the Missoula area.

## HOW

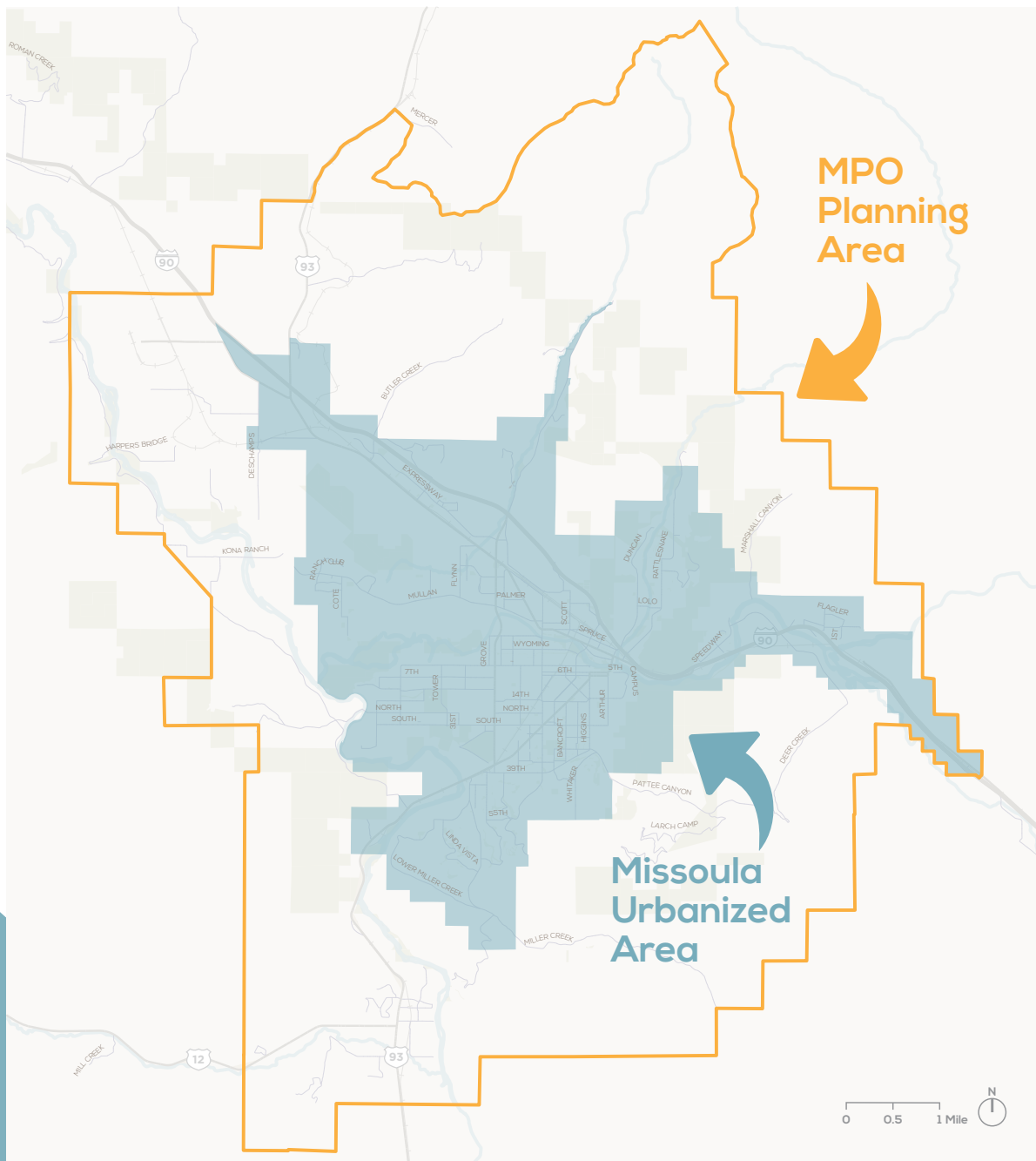
The MPO facilitates collaboration between federal, state, and local government agencies, interested parties, and community members in the planning process. The primary responsibility of the MPO is to create a Long-Range Transportation Plan that prioritizes funding and improvements throughout the Missoula area.





# Where We Plan

The map below shows the Missoula MPO's Metropolitan Planning Area as well as the Missoula Urbanized Area. The planning area includes the City of Missoula and the adjacent urban areas of Missoula County. This area has diverse land uses and transportation needs, presenting both opportunities and challenges for transportation planning and delivery of new projects.



# A YEAR LIKE NONE OTHER

We launched Missoula Connect in early 2020 and quickly found our work plan and approach turned upside down. Almost immediately on the heels of our first public in-person engagement event in early March, the spread of COVID-19 necessitated a statewide stay-at-home order.

The global pandemic significantly impacted people's daily lives and dramatically changed travel behavior, particularly for those fortunate to have jobs that could be done remotely. Commute trips plummeted, proving the long-held belief that getting more people to telework could have tremendous positive impacts on the region's mode split goals and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction targets.

However, for essential workers, people supported by lifeline services, and lower-income community members, COVID didn't lessen their need for reliable transportation connections. Rather, it highlighted existing inequities in our systems and made the importance of an efficient and robust transit network even clearer.

Over the course of 2020, growth in the Missoula region didn't skip a beat. In fact, the pace of growth increased due to an influx of remote workers from other parts of the country. All those new residents have put increased pressures on our housing supply and dramatically impacted regional affordability. The volume of home and property sales in the city and county set a new record in 2020.<sup>1</sup> And in the first 45 days of 2021, the median housing price in Missoula jumped nearly \$100,000.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <https://missoulacurrent.com/business/2021/02/housing-demand/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://nbcmontana.com/news/local/median-housing-prices-jump-across-western-montana>

Even with the increasing challenges of affordability, Missoula area residents recognized the need to invest in the region's transportation system. County voters adopted a 2-cent gas tax in June 2020; however, this local option tax was repealed by the Montana State Legislature in April 2021. In November 2020, Missoula Urban Transportation District voters approved a mill levy increase, which presents a tremendous opportunity to expand Mountain Line's service to keep pace with community needs.

Although we had to adjust our planning approach to respond to COVID, we were able to engage thousands of Missoula area residents. We shifted meetings to virtual platforms and focused on more (and shorter) opportunities for people to share their feedback. As we emerge from the pandemic, there will be a continued need for people to participate in transportation planning throughout the region. The tools we used in 2020 can complement in-person meetings and events, creating more accessible opportunities for Missoula area residents to shape our future.

The recommendations included in Missoula Connect can help us secure other types of lasting change. By focusing on active transportation, complete streets, and transit projects, we can provide more sustainable and more affordable travel options for our region's residents. Complementing those projects with programs and policies that support inward growth and encourage people to telecommute when possible means that we can move toward our mode share targets. To create a more equitable and more accessible region, we must work together to advance the goals of Missoula Connect.



# THE PROCESS



## Ongoing Community Engagement

2020

JAN - APR

MAY - JUN

JUL - SEP

### Community Values & Existing Conditions

We explored data to understand the demographics and existing transportation and land use conditions of the Missoula area. We also met with our committees, held a pop-up event, and launched an online survey to understand your priorities for getting around the region.

### Project Goals & Evaluation Framework

We used your feedback to develop goals and desired outcomes that reflect the region's priorities for transportation. Based on the values you shared, we developed an evaluation framework to prioritize projects.

### Call for Projects & Project Prioritization

We gathered project ideas from City and County staff, community groups, the MPO, and the public, asking people to share the bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and auto projects needed to make it easier and safer to move around the Missoula area. We scored the projects using our evaluation framework.



2021

OCT - DEC

JAN - MAR

APR - JUN

### **Project Prioritization & Scenario Development**

Using the highest scoring projects, we developed three scenarios to illustrate different ways for the region to prioritize investments in the LRTP. We also analyzed the scenarios against the Missoula Connect goals to understand the benefits of each and shared those findings with the community.

### **Recommended Scenario & Implementation Plan**

We developed a final preferred scenario that best supports the values identified by the community. The implementation plan identifies current and future funding sources, recognizing that new revenues will be needed to develop our future transportation system.

### **Draft & Final Long-Range Transportation Plan**

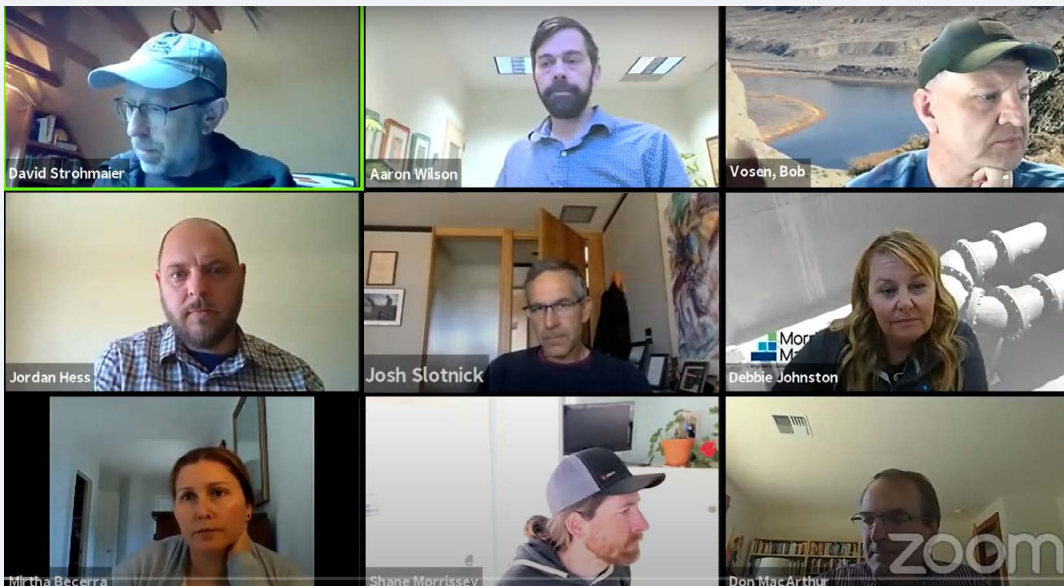
Missoula Connect includes a final list of projects, programs, and policies along with metrics to monitor performance and a financial plan for getting it all done. The plan will be adopted by the MPO to guide funding decisions moving forward.

# YOU GUIDED OUR WORK

We gathered input from you, Missoula area residents, to create Missoula Connect. Through focus groups, in-person and virtual community meetings, social media posts, and online surveys, we heard your ideas to improve getting around our region today and in the future. We also worked with four standing committees, described below, throughout the planning process. More information about our engagement activities and what we learned can be found in Chapter 3 and Appendix A.

## Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee

The Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee (TPCC) is a standing committee of the Missoula MPO. It includes elected officials, the District Administrator for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and representatives from the Planning Board, the Missoula Urban Transportation District (MUTD) Board, and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). TPCC members guide transportation planning in the Missoula area and approve the final LRTP. TPCC provided direction to the project team, responded to input from the LRTP committees and the public, and shaped the plan's recommendations.



## Transportation Technical Advisory Committee

The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) is a standing committee of the Missoula MPO. Members provide technical advice to TPCC and technical direction to the MPO and the project team. TTAC includes staff from the City, the City-County Health Department, County Parks & Trails, the Missoula Redevelopment Agency, Public Works & Mobility, MUTD, MDT, County Community and Planning Services, Community Planning, Development & Innovation, County Public Works, and Missoula Ravalli TMA (MRTMA). TTAC members provided input on the project scoring framework, transportation network scenario development, the recommended scenario and funding prioritization, and program and policy recommendations.

## LRTP Citizens Advisory Committee

The LRTP Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) included representatives from a diverse group of community organizations, such as the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Board, the Chamber of Commerce, Missoula Organization of Realtors, the Community Forum, Community Councils, Neighborhood Councils, Aging Services, and Climate Smart Missoula. The CAC identified key issues and opportunities, provided input on priority projects and programs, and engaged their communities throughout the process.

## LRTP Technical Advisory Committee

The LRTP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) included staff representatives from City and County Planning, Public Works & Mobility, Community Development & Housing, the Missoula Redevelopment Agency, MUTD, the City-County Health Department, and MDT. TAC members provided technical guidance about project development and evaluation, cost estimates and revenue sources, project prioritization, and program and policy recommendations.

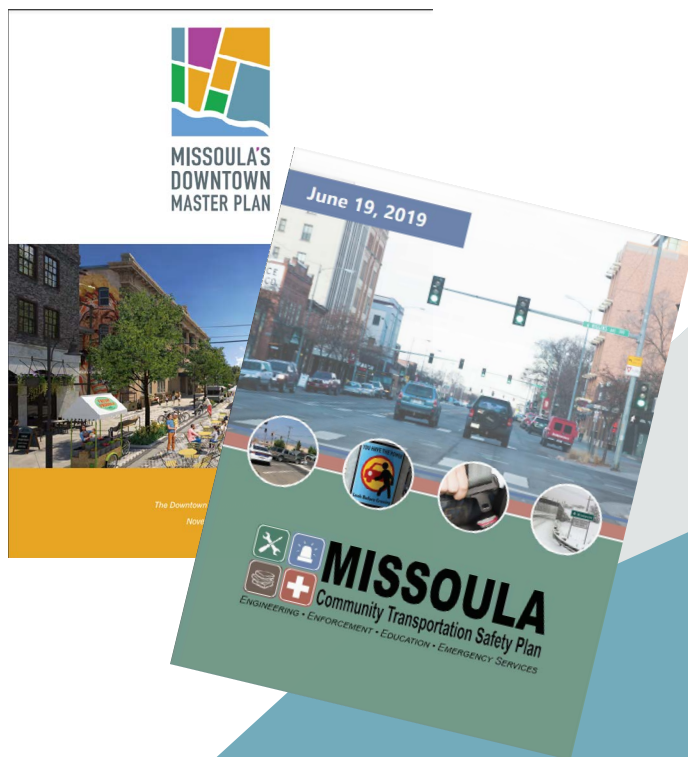
## Chapter 2

# A Strong Foundation

Relying on previous planning work and extensive community outreach, Missoula Connect integrates existing plans and projects to create a sustainable transportation future that improves mobility and access across all travel modes for all Missoula area residents, workers, and visitors. See Appendix B for the full Missoula Connect Existing Conditions Report.

## GUIDING PLANS

There's been a lot of good planning work done in the region since the 2016 Long-Range Transportation Plan. We've adopted a Community Transportation Safety Plan and bicycle and pedestrian master plans. We've also completed the Downtown Master Plan, the Missoula Area Mapping Project, the Housing Policy, Climate Ready Missoula, and the Missoula Area Pavement Assessment Report. And we have the Sx<sup>w</sup>tpqyen (pronounced S-wh-tip-KAYN) Neighborhoods Master Plan in place to guide growth in the area west of Reserve Street.





Together, these efforts have identified important transportation projects and programs and set new goals for our region. The recommendations from these plans have been integrated into Missoula Connect so that we have a single list of projects that can advance with our region's limited transportation funding. These recent plans—and many more—share common values that informed our work on Missoula Connect.

## Common Values from Guiding Plans



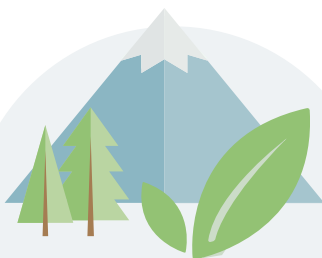
**Integrated  
land use and  
transportation  
planning**



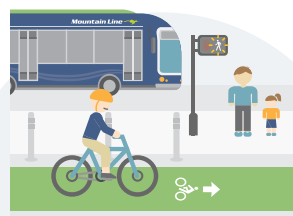
**Community  
health, economic  
development, and  
social equity**



**Accessibility,  
efficiency, and  
connectivity**



**Sustainability  
and resilience**



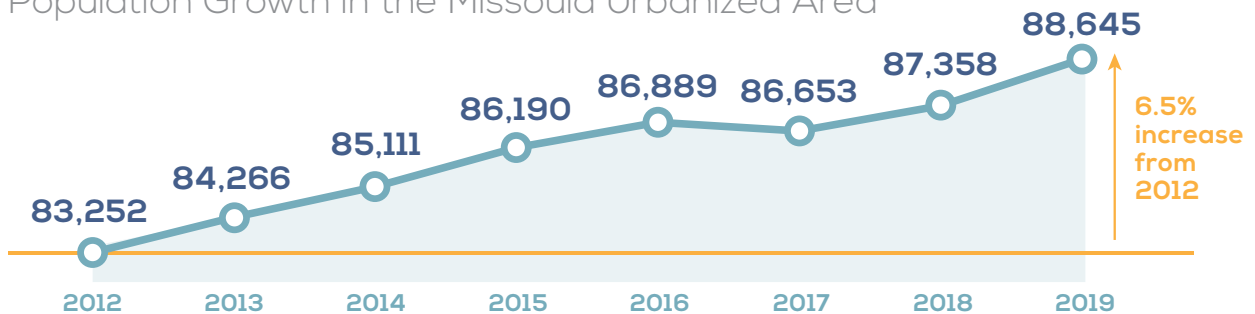
**Safe and secure  
transportation  
options**

# MISSOULA TODAY

## A Growing Region

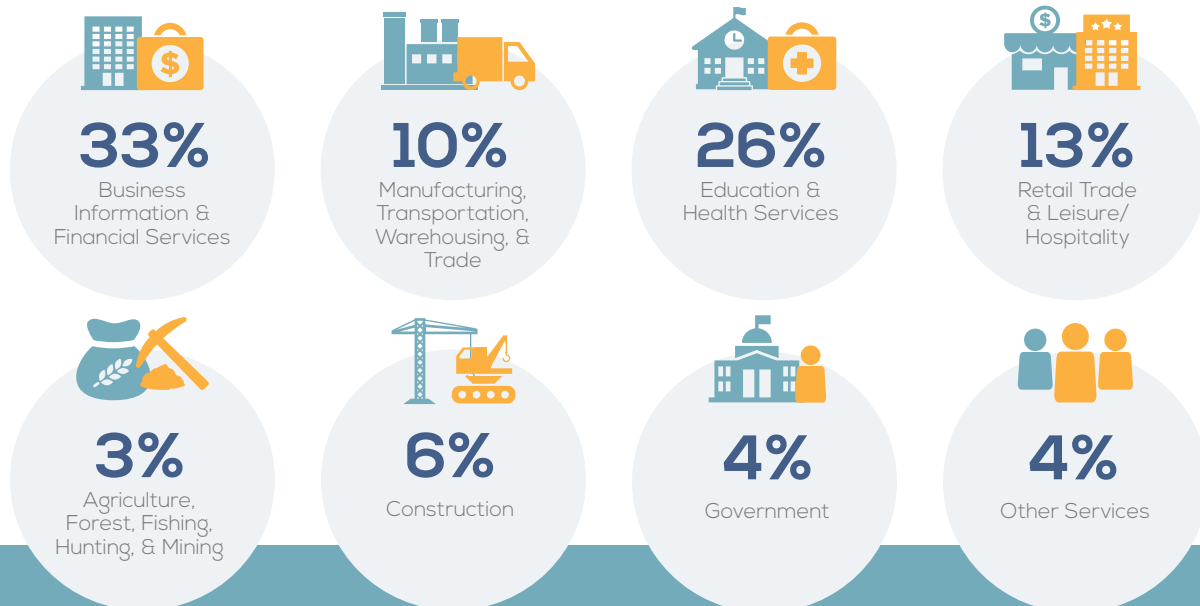
With more people come new opportunities and new challenges. Since 2012, the population of the Missoula area grew by 6.5%. As our population grows, demand for transit service and active transportation investments, like trails and sidewalks, is increasing. This means we need to find creative ways to use our existing infrastructure to move more people and goods.

Population Growth in the Missoula Urbanized Area



Source: 2015-2019 U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates

In recent years, the Missoula area economy has grown increasingly diversified. Education, healthcare, tourism, and professional services have replaced agriculture and resource extraction as the major economic drivers of the region.



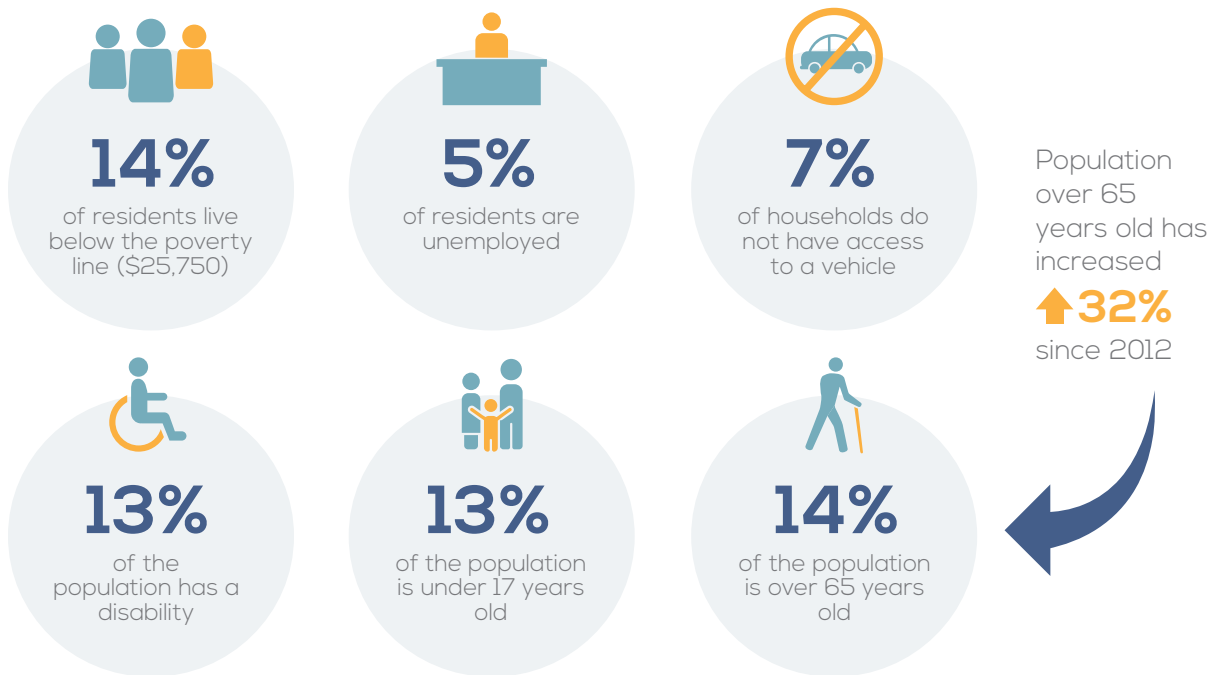
**41% of full-time workers in Missoula County earn less than \$35,000**

Source: 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates

# Changes in Affordability

Like many desirable metropolitan areas throughout the United States, housing costs in the Missoula region are climbing faster than wages, making it difficult for many residents to find housing that they can afford. This reinforces the need for accessible, affordable, and reliable transportation options that connect Missoula area residents with jobs, schools, services, and recreation.

As we grow, we must ensure that everyone in the Missoula area has access to high-quality transportation options that connect us to the places we go. More than 40% of our residents make less than \$35,000 per year, and 14% live below the poverty line, which is above the national average of about 9%. Providing affordable options—like Mountain Line, which is fare-free—can increase access to jobs, schools, and services for everyone.



Source: 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates

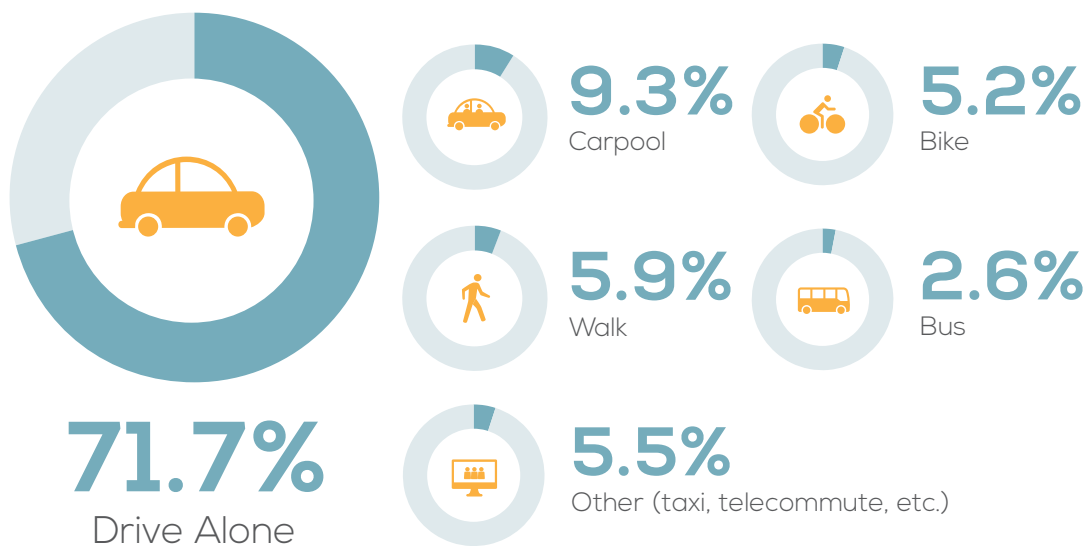
The MPO's 2019 regional travel survey showed vehicle ownership declining slightly, from an average of just over 2 vehicles per household to **just under 2 vehicles per household.**



# How We Travel

How are Missoulians getting around the region today? Well, mostly by driving. Given our relatively low density and large area—and our role as a regional economic, educational, and tourism hub—driving is often the fastest and most convenient way to travel. This is especially true for longer trips.

However, drive-alone rates among Missoula area residents are less than the state average, while active transportation modes such as biking and walking are well above what we see in the rest of the state and among the highest rates in the country. Missoulians who live in the city drive even less and ride transit, bike, and walk more than people who live outside the city limits.



Source: 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## What are our mode split goals?

In our 2016 Long-Range Transportation Plan, we set some important mode-share goals:



Reduce drive-alone commute share to **34% by 2045**



**Triple** bike and walk shares and **quadruple** transit share by 2045



Reduce drive-alone commute trips by **20,000 by 2045**



Achieve a **small increase** in carpool and work from home

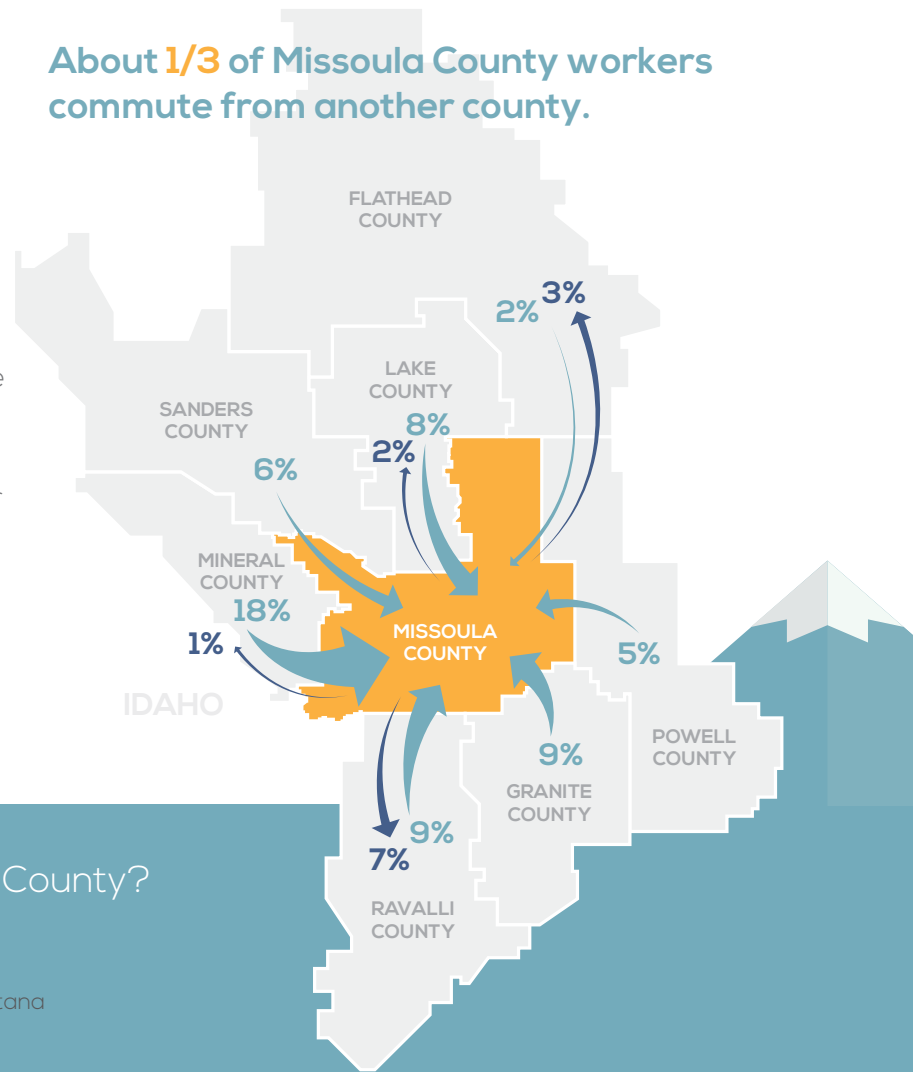
Since then, our drive-alone rate has remained relatively flat. Trips by transit and bicycle have both increased by approximately 1%. Carpool, walk, and telecommute shares have stayed mostly the same, although telecommuting increased dramatically in 2020 due to COVID-19 stay-at-home orders.

# Regional Commute Patterns

Missoula is the economic heart of Western Montana. Each day, Missoula County welcomes many commuters from neighboring communities in Mineral County, Granite County, Ravalli County, and Lake County. Nearly a third of Missoula County workers commute from another county, and these are typically longer trips than Missoula County residents make to work. In most cases, commuters from adjacent counties have limited options beyond driving.

The 65% of Missoula County workers who live within the county's boundaries enjoy shorter travel times to work than people in many cities and towns across the nation. Our residents spend an average of 17 minutes traveling to work each day, compared to the national average of 25 minutes. But for some Missoula County residents, trips to work can still cover many miles—workers from rural areas have fewer travel modes to choose from than people in urban parts of the county. In the MPO's 2019 travel survey, nearly 99% of County residents reported driving to work as their typical mode of travel.

**About 1/3 of Missoula County workers commute from another county.**



## Who fills the jobs in Missoula County?

**64.5%**  
By Missoula County Residents

**15.1%**  
By Neighboring Montana County Residents

**14.9%**  
By Non-Adjacent Counties

**5.5%**  
Of Missoula County Residents Commute Outside the County for Work



**LEGEND**

- Light blue arrow: Jobs Filled by Neighboring Montana County Residents
- Dark blue arrow: Jobs in Neighboring Counties That are Filled by Missoula County residents

Source: U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer–Household Dynamics, Origin–Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), Main (JT00) Montana (2017)

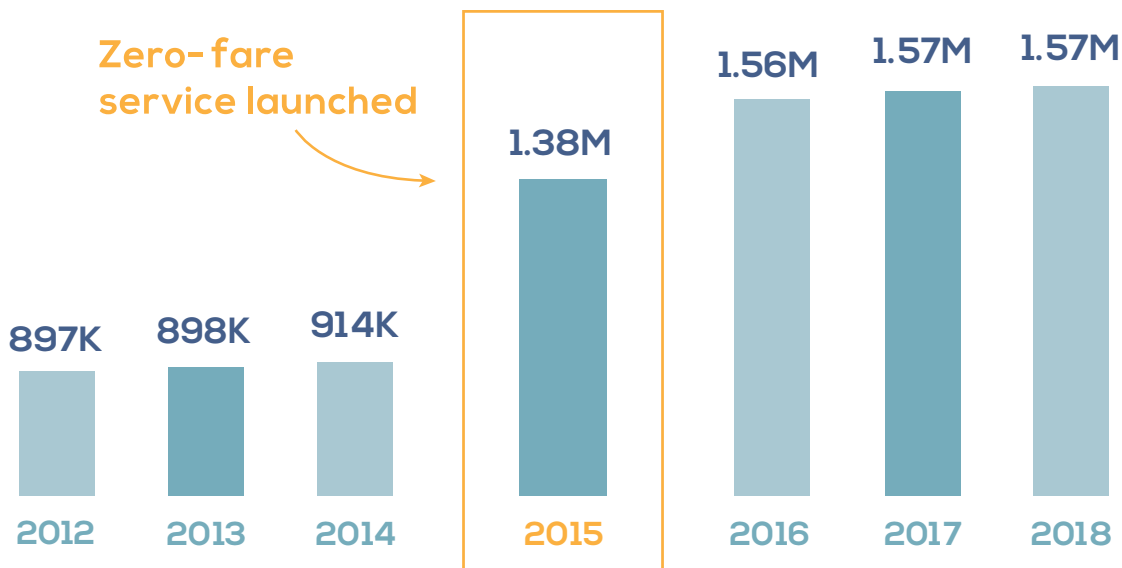
# Transit as a Regional Backbone

Transit ridership in the Missoula area has nearly doubled since 2012, as Mountain Line launched and then expanded 15-minute frequency BOLT! service and added later evening service. In 2015, Mountain Line implemented zero-fare service, which boosted ridership almost 50% in one year. Since that time, ridership has continued to grow, although less than 3% of Missoula area commuters use the bus to get to work.

Mountain Line has 12 routes and offers Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service and a Senior Van. Nearly 90% of Missoula residents live within a half-mile of a bus stop. Historically, service hours and the frequency of service have made it challenging for people to ride Mountain Line.

The mill levy increase passed in November 2020 is an important step in overcoming those challenges and making Mountain Line an option for more people for more trips. The estimated \$3 million that will be raised annually will help Mountain Line add Sunday service, expand current weekday and Saturday service, increase frequency, enhance the Zero-Fare Program, and support purchases of electric buses.

## Mountain Line Ridership



Source: 2018 MUTD

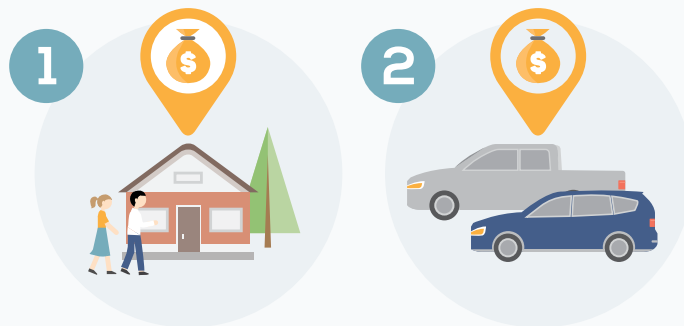


# Focusing on Equity

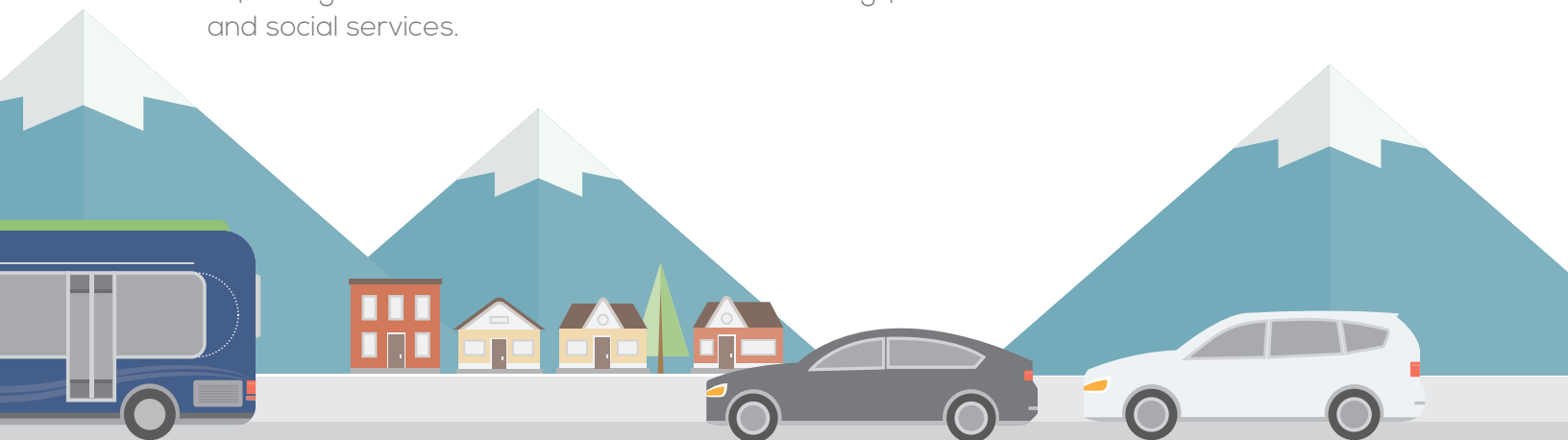
Equity is an important tool for analyzing people’s access to transportation and planning future transportation investments. Planning within an equity framework charges decision-makers with the responsibility to invest in places where transportation projects and programs can support historically underrepresented communities that may have fewer transportation options.

Increasing access to safe, convenient, and connected transportation options is an important way to promote community health and social equity.

**Transportation is typically a household’s second largest expense**, and a 2015 study found access to reliable transportation to be the single biggest factor in the odds of escaping poverty and avoiding homelessness.



Providing people with affordable, reliable, and safe transportation options can enhance their economic stability and create a safety net for the most vulnerable in our community. Some steps the region is taking to better serve historically underrepresented communities include providing fare-free public transportation and improving multimodal access to affordable housing, parks, schools, health care facilities, and social services.



# Transportation Safety in Missoula

One of our biggest priorities as we plan for the future is keeping people safe on our streets. Between 2013 and 2017 there were nearly 12,000 transportation-related collisions in the Missoula area that impacted people using all modes of travel. These five corridors have the highest rate of collisions:

- ☀ Reserve Street from Broadway Street to Mullan Road
- ☀ Reserve Street from 3rd Street to 39th Street
- ☀ Broadway Street through downtown
- ☀ Brooks Street from Reserve Street to Higgins Avenue
- ☀ Russell Street from Broadway Street to South Avenue

In that same period of time, there were 462 collisions that involved people walking or biking. While a relatively small percentage of the total number of collisions, pedestrians and cyclists are our most vulnerable travelers. They face a high risk of injury or death, particularly when hit by a vehicle traveling at speeds greater than 25 miles per hour.

**There were 85 crashes involving people biking and walking in 2018**



## Vehicle Travel Speeds and Pedestrian Injury



**25%**

chance of pedestrian fatality or severe injury



**50%**

chance of pedestrian fatality or severe injury



**90%**

chance of pedestrian fatality or severe injury

Source: Tefft, Brian, 'Impact speed and a pedestrian's risk of severe injury or death' (Accident Prevention Analysis, 2013)



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR MISSOULA CONNECT

In the early months of Missoula Connect, the project team used information about existing conditions to begin identifying opportunities for the long-range transportation plan. The recommended projects, programs, and policies in Missoula Connect tie to these opportunities and reflect current plans and input from Missoula area residents and stakeholders.



## Connecting urban and rural

The Missoula region covers 263 square miles. This presents challenges for delivering transportation choices for all residents across a large geography. Many of the people who most need affordable and efficient transportation live far from the downtown core. And the urban parts of our region are fairly disconnected from the rural areas, especially when it comes to biking and walking connections. Missoula Connect helps to knit these areas together, recognizing that tailored solutions will always be needed.



## Moving the dial on mode share

Driving is the way that most people get around the Missoula area today. But the region is growing, and preferences are changing. Missoulians have asked for safe, sustainable, efficient, and cost-effective transportation choices to support getting them to the places they need to go. This means creating a more robust transit system. And it means doing more to manage transportation demand, including creating new policies and programs to make it easier for people to shift to non-drive-alone modes. Missoula Connect proposes clear actions to change behavior, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and meet our ambitious mode share and climate goals.



## Integrating land use and transportation

Our transportation system is shaped by our land uses, and “Our Missoula Growth Policy” sets a vision for growth that focuses inward. The region must continue to direct growth toward Missoula’s core neighborhoods to create complete communities and to ensure that people can make sustainable choices for most trips. Missoula Connect focuses on tying transportation investments to strategic land use planning, helping to manage the existing right-of-way and make the best use of the space we have.



“Our Missoula Growth Policy”

anticipates **6,500**



**new housing units** in the area in the next 10 years.



## Advancing safe and local networks

Each year, there are more than 2,000 transportation-related collisions in the Missoula area. To keep people safe on our roads, Missoula Connect focuses on completing and maintaining our networks. The plan identifies opportunities to create local systems—like neighborhood greenways—that focus on low-speed and low-volume streets to enhance safety for people walking and biking. But safety is about more than infrastructure. To create streets that work for people of all ages and abilities, Missoula Connect prioritizes saving lives over free-flowing traffic.



There are **29 miles** of designated greenways in the Missoula area.



## Preparing for an uncertain future

We are at a pivotal moment in time—we’re emerging from a global pandemic that has reshaped the ways people travel and the places they can go. And we continue to face the challenges of a rapidly warming climate, new and expanding technologies, and the pressures of development. This is a period of unprecedented change in transportation, presenting incredible opportunities and potential challenges for the Missoula area and our residents, workers, and visitors. Missoula Connect recognizes that the ways we move and the ways transportation services are provided will be different tomorrow than they are today. These changes have the potential to increase accessibility, but also to increase inequity.

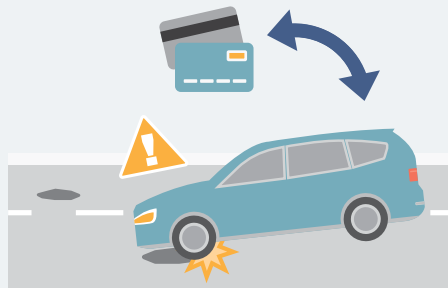


Shared and connected mobility services can help to provide more travel options for Missoula area residents.



## Expanding the pie

There is never enough money to design or build all the projects that are needed in our region. Nor is there enough funding available each year to take care of our transportation system’s basic maintenance needs. Missoula Connect makes the dollars we have stretch further by focusing on lower cost and higher impact investments and seeking opportunities to expand the funding sources available for transportation projects.



Failing to maintain our infrastructure is similar to making only the minimum payment on a credit card bill each month—deferring maintenance compounds the problem, just like monthly interest payments!

# Chapter 3

# Your Input

The MPO and the Missoula Connect project team worked closely with the community over the last 15 months to create a long-range transportation plan that reflects the region's priorities. As we shaped our outreach plans, we focused on opportunities to broaden residents' understanding of the role the MPO plays in the region and on creative ways to hear feedback.

We gathered input from Missoula area residents, employees, students, and visitors through community events and meetings, virtual workshops, online surveys and maps, and one-on-one conversations. You shared your visions for the future of transportation in the region along with specific ideas to make it easier and safer to travel in the Missoula area.

## HOW WE ENGAGED

In response to COVID-19, all Missoula Connect engagement activities shifted to online and virtual formats in mid-March 2020 to ensure the safety of residents and staff. Despite the limitations of virtual engagement, people from all parts of the region provided input to help create this plan.

## Outreach Online

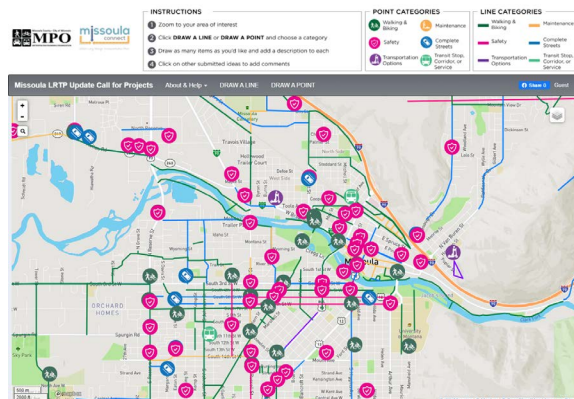
With stay-at-home and social distancing requirements in place throughout the project, online and virtual tools became critically important. We developed an interactive project website, hosted online surveys and interactive mapping exercises, created educational videos, and used a variety of social media tools to reach people.



The project website was an important tool for reaching people throughout the development of Missoula Connect. During our final outreach phase in March 2021, we reached more than 6,000 people on Facebook and had nearly 1,000 visitors to our website!

# Surveys & Mapping Activities

We heard from thousands of people through surveys, starting with the 2019 Missoula Area Transportation Survey. Shared on the project website, via social media, and by community members, the Missoula Connect surveys invited people to share their values; weigh in on draft goals; describe improvements needed to make traveling throughout the region better; map ideas for specific walking, biking, bus, and driving projects in our community; provide feedback on draft scenarios; and help shape the Missoula Connect recommendations.



The project team created tools for people to share input on project ideas, including an interactive map to identify new transportation projects throughout the region. People also had the option to submit project ideas using an online form or by joining a virtual workshop. The community generated more than 150 new project ideas between June and July 2020 using these online tools.

## 2019 Missoula Area Transportation Survey

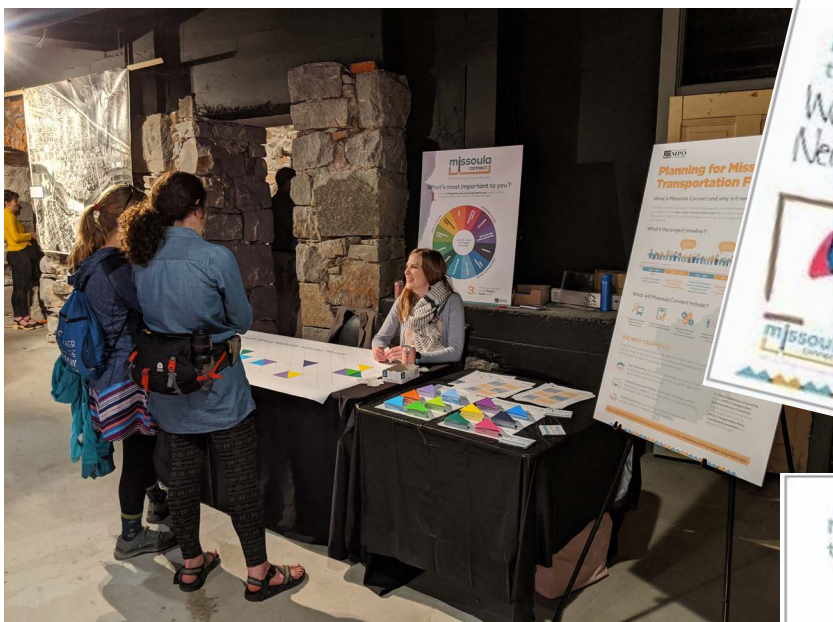
The [2019 Missoula Area Transportation Survey](#) provides information about Missoula area residents' opinions and use of the transportation system. This statistically valid survey gives the MPO reliable data about travel behavior, transportation priorities, needs and opportunities, and community opinions. The results of this survey helped to shape the priority recommendations in Missoula Connect.





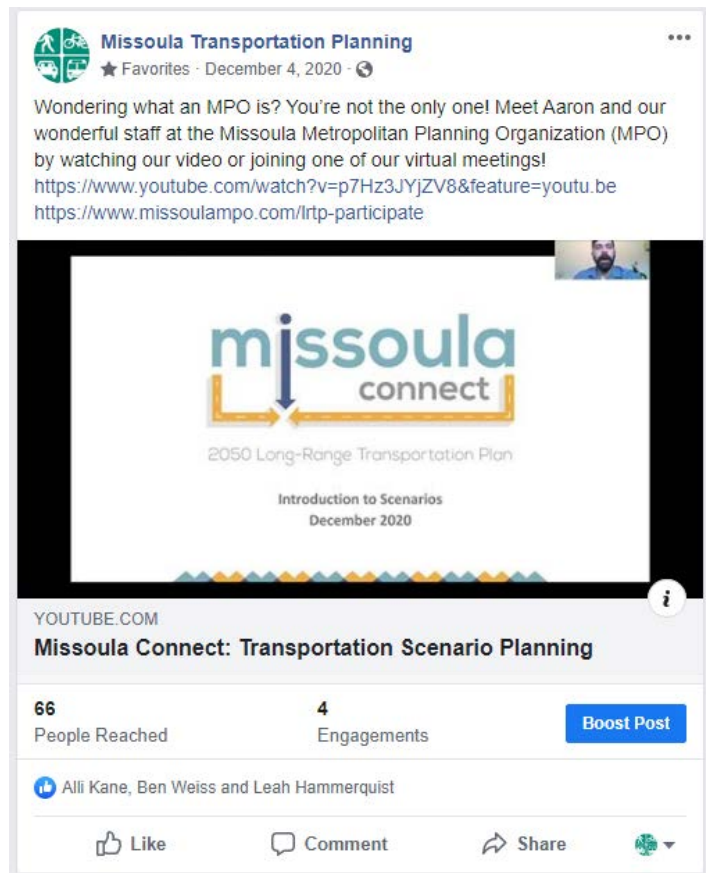
# Workshops & Events

Meeting people where they are is one of the best ways to reach a broad audience. At the beginning of the project, the MPO hosted a “History of Transportation in Missoula” event, held in the Hammond Arcade on First Friday, to introduce Missoula Connect and gather input about the community’s mobility values. Due to COVID, this was the only in-person event allowed during development of the long-range plan.



# Virtual Engagement

To provide diverse opportunities for the public to shape Missoula Connect, the project team shifted all workshops and events to virtual spaces. We gave presentations to standing committees and at community meetings, we hosted small workshops to collect project ideas, and we held online open houses to gather feedback on scenarios and draft recommendations.



# Printed Materials

To ensure access to information for people who do not have internet access or do not feel comfortable engaging online, the project team developed printed materials that were distributed at key locations, including the Missoula Food Bank and through mailers in the Invest Health neighborhoods (Northside/Westside, River Road, and Franklin to the Fort).



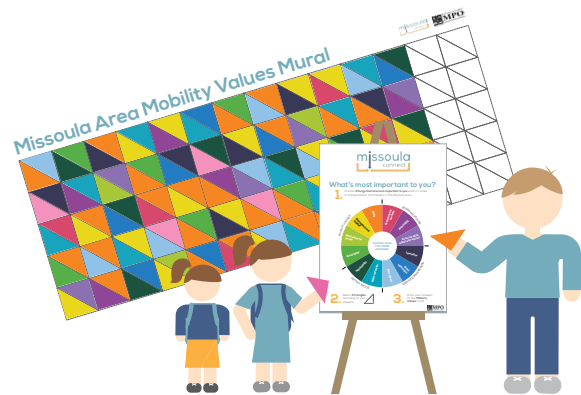


# WHAT WE HEARD

Through traditional and social media, surveys, meetings, and workshops, we reached thousands of people across the region. You helped the project team understand the Missoula area's transportation opportunities and challenges—and you helped to develop solutions. Highlights of the input you provided are described below, and more information is available in Appendix A.

## Missoula's Mobility Values

We asked you to tell us three things that are most important to you when it comes to moving around the region. People from all parts of the Missoula area identified sustainability, safety, and accessibility as the top three mobility values. We used these values to develop the Missoula Connect goals and to evaluate and prioritize the projects and programs that are recommended in this plan.



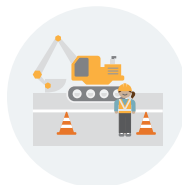


# Our Transportation Opportunities

You had many ideas to improve the Missoula area's transportation system and better connect the region:



Make it safer to walk and bike with trails, well-maintained sidewalks, and neighborhood greenways



Take better care of the infrastructure we have by maintaining roads and trails



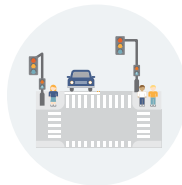
Improve connections both to and from Downtown Missoula and between different modes of transportation



Provide dedicated space for different modes of travel, including on bridges and by creating complete streets



Make it more convenient to take the bus by providing earlier and later service



Reduce congestion by improving intersections and managing demand for roads



Encourage people to travel in ways other than driving alone by creating new programs and incentives

## Shaping the Future with Missoula Connect

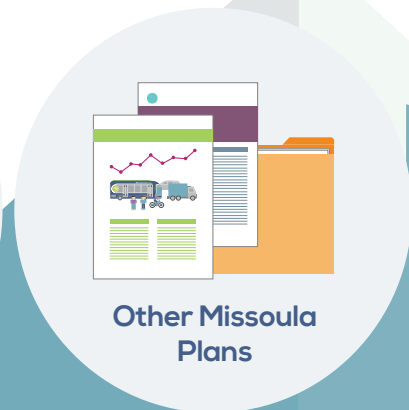
Throughout the planning process, Missoula area residents identified specific projects to help meet Missoula Connect's goals and improve mobility in the region. You also provided ideas for programs and policies that can encourage people to travel in different ways. And you provided important feedback on the priorities that need to be funded first to meet the region's needs today and in the future. The following chapters provide more information about how your feedback helped to shape the future of our region's transportation system.

# Chapter 4

# Missoula Connect Goals

The values Missoula area residents shared with the project team are the foundation of Missoula Connect. Each recommendation in this long-range plan—whether a major project or a new program—has a hand in moving the region toward a safer, healthier, more sustainable, more equitable, and more connected future. Together, these individual projects and programs will help the Missoula region achieve its mobility vision, rooted in shared community values.

To guide Missoula Connect, the project team created goals and desired outcomes that build on federal requirements, previous planning work, and the public’s feedback about Missoula’s mobility values. The goals were reviewed by the MPO and LRTP committees and the public and have been used in every step of the planning process.



# Developing Goals

The Missoula MPO is required to develop a “performance-based” long-range plan, which means using data and input from the community to focus on outcomes. To ensure compliance with federal requirements, the project team used the seven National Performance Goals and 10 Planning Factors as a basis for developing the Missoula Connect goals.



We then reviewed the eight goals in Activate Missoula 2045, the region’s 2016 long-range transportation plan. After engaging with the community and the MPO and LRTP committees, we simplified and focused the 2016 goals to reflect an updated direction for the next 30 years.

# Our Goals

Missoula Connect includes five goals to reflect today's needs and priorities and the outcomes our region must achieve in the next 30 years. The goals are consistent with federal requirements and form the basis for the project and scenario evaluation process that helped refine our priorities and shape Missoula Connect's recommendations.

## Improve safety and promote health to enhance quality of life

- Eliminate traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries
- Improve safety for people walking and biking
- Enhance active transportation and transit linkages to lower-income neighborhoods
- Increase physical activity and human connections by making walking and biking convenient modes of travel
- Improve access to recreational facilities and trails to support healthy lifestyles



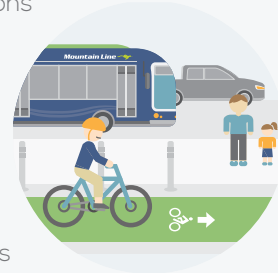
## Advance sustainability and community resilience to protect natural resources and address climate change

- Improve climate resilience and advance toward carbon neutrality
- Reduce transportation-related air emissions
- Minimize sediment, nutrients, and litter entering surface water
- Expand the urban canopy and green stormwater infrastructure
- Protect and enhance natural, cultural, and historic resources, including agricultural lands
- Create adaptable and resilient infrastructure to respond to changing needs



## Expand mobility choices to improve efficiency and accessibility for people and goods

- Build complete streets and increase access to multimodal options
- Increase street, trail/greenway, and sidewalk network connectivity for all ages and abilities
- Optimize the efficiency and accessibility of the transportation system
- Reduce person hours of delay for people driving and improve freight movement
- Improve access to high-quality and high-frequency transit stops and routes



## Connect and strengthen communities to create a more equitable region

- Increase affordability and reduce overall household transportation costs
- Develop an integrated mobility system that connects destinations with sustainable travel options
- Integrate land use and transportation planning to support infill development and create complete neighborhoods
- Improve access to schools, jobs, parks, essential services, affordable and senior housing, and basic life needs
- Engage with and invest in historically disadvantaged areas and in neighborhoods that have been adversely impacted by transportation decisions



## Maintain assets and invest strategically to boost economic vitality

- Bring existing infrastructure and transit assets into a state of good repair to support the regional economy, local industry, and goods movement
- Balance cost-effective, implementable projects with high-impact projects
- Plan for a transportation system that makes the best use of public financial resources
- Provide a network that targets growth inward to support existing centers and mixed-use development
- Support access to businesses and commercial and industrial centers to enhance economic recovery and growth
- Explore more equitable and sustainable funding sources for transportation projects and programs





## Chapter 5

# Shaping the Future

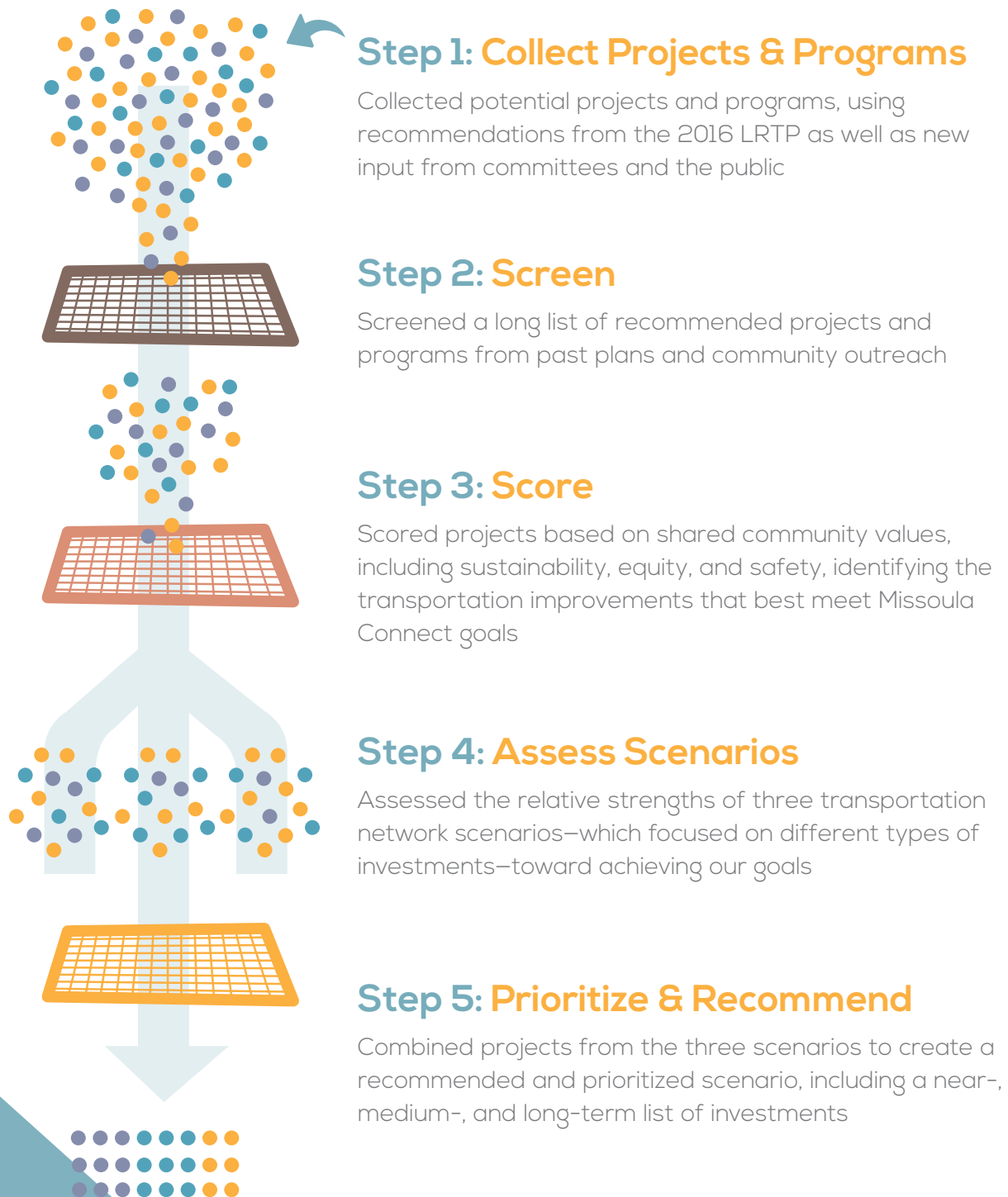
## CONNECTING TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE

The goals described in the previous chapter informed a five-step evaluation process that shaped the Missoula Connect recommendations. This process used your input and region-wide data to screen, score, and prioritize a long list of projects that came from previous plans, conversations with the community, and local and national expertise in multimodal transportation systems. You can read more about the evaluation framework in Appendix C.

A key opportunity in developing Missoula Connect was evaluating and communicating the benefits of a future multimodal transportation system. We used a scenario planning approach to illustrate how the Missoula region can make choices that create maximum value through transportation investments.

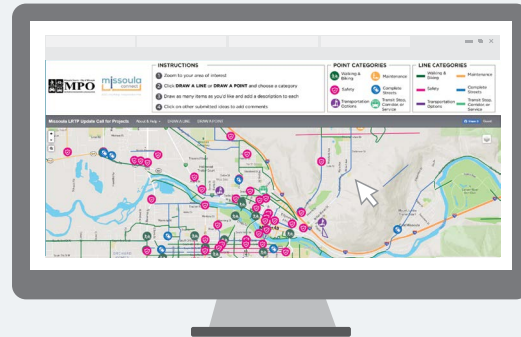
The scenario development and evaluation process was responsive to stakeholder input and fostered conversation about potential futures and tradeoffs. It was one part our data-driven evaluation framework to identify and prioritize investments.

From summer 2020 through early 2021, the MPO and the project team:



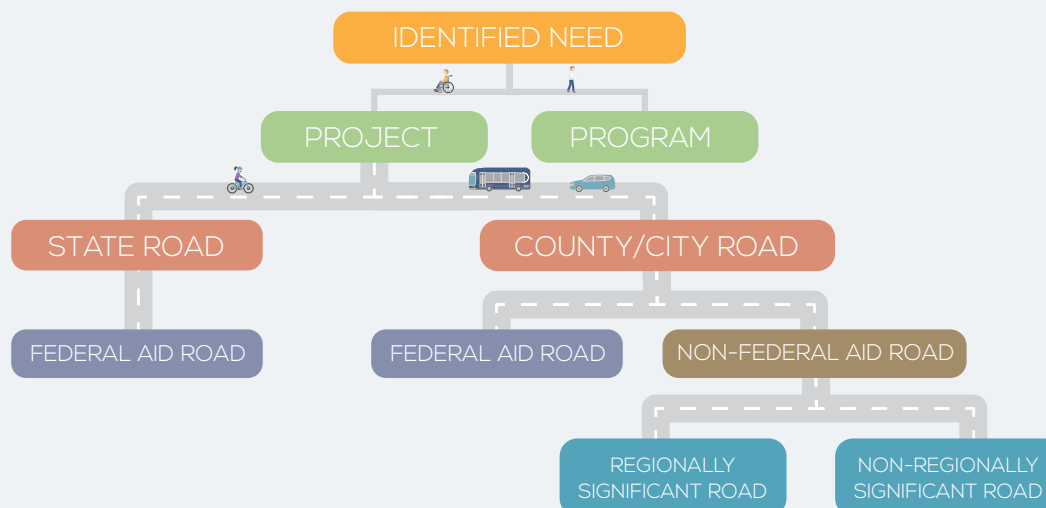
# Step 1: Collect Projects & Programs

We gathered nearly 300 project and program ideas to develop a comprehensive list of potential transportation improvements for the Missoula area. The list included recommended and illustrative projects from the 2016 LRTP as well as ideas shared by the public through a map, survey, and virtual workshops.



# Step 2: Screen

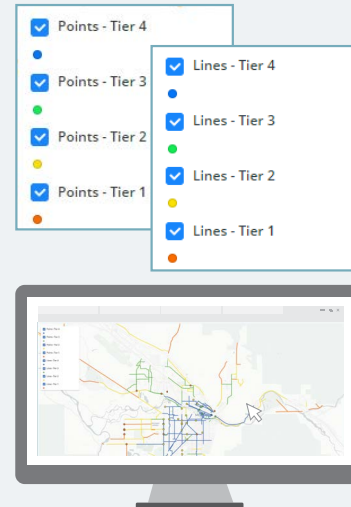
We used the screening process to identify projects and programs that are appropriate for a regional long-range transportation plan. We combined some projects and passed others along to the City and County for further study and implementation through complementary efforts.





## Step 3: Score

With a screened list of projects in hand, we used geographic criteria based on the Missoula Connect goals to score the remaining projects and group them into four tiers. We adjusted the weighting of the scores to reflect the community's values, needs, and priorities. When the initial scoring was completed, the project team identified the highest scoring projects in different areas to ensure that potential projects would address needs across the region.



## Step 4: Assess Scenarios

To evaluate and communicate the benefits of a future multimodal transportation system, we developed three transportation network scenarios and two land use scenarios and assessed them against Missoula Connect goals and outcomes. The scenarios illustrated different choices the Missoula area could make to maximize the value of transportation investments.

## Step 5: Prioritize & Recommend

We gathered community feedback on the scenarios and worked with the LRTP committees to create a Recommended Scenario. The Recommended Scenario combines high scoring projects from all three scenarios to create a transportation future for the region that is both equitable and sustainable.

# GROWTH SCENARIOS

We developed two growth scenarios to test against three transportation scenarios: “Business as Usual Growth” and “Strategic Growth.” While the same rate of population increase was used in both scenarios, the location of new households differed. We used these scenarios to understand whether a more inward-focused growth pattern, like the Strategic Growth scenario, would do more to advance our transportation goals than the region’s current approach in the Business as Usual scenario.

The City of Missoula and Missoula County identified a growth rate of 1.5% to 2050 for population and employment. While it is possible that households and jobs will increase faster than anticipated, that simply means the region will hit the forecast earlier, not that growth will happen in different places. You can learn more about the growth scenarios in Appendix D.



## Business as Usual Growth

The Business as Usual scenario assumed that future households will locate in areas where our City and County growth policies have identified capacity. It supported growth in the core of Missoula and maintained development capacity in lower-density areas. This scenario would let growth happen as it will without necessarily focusing growth in a particular part of the region.

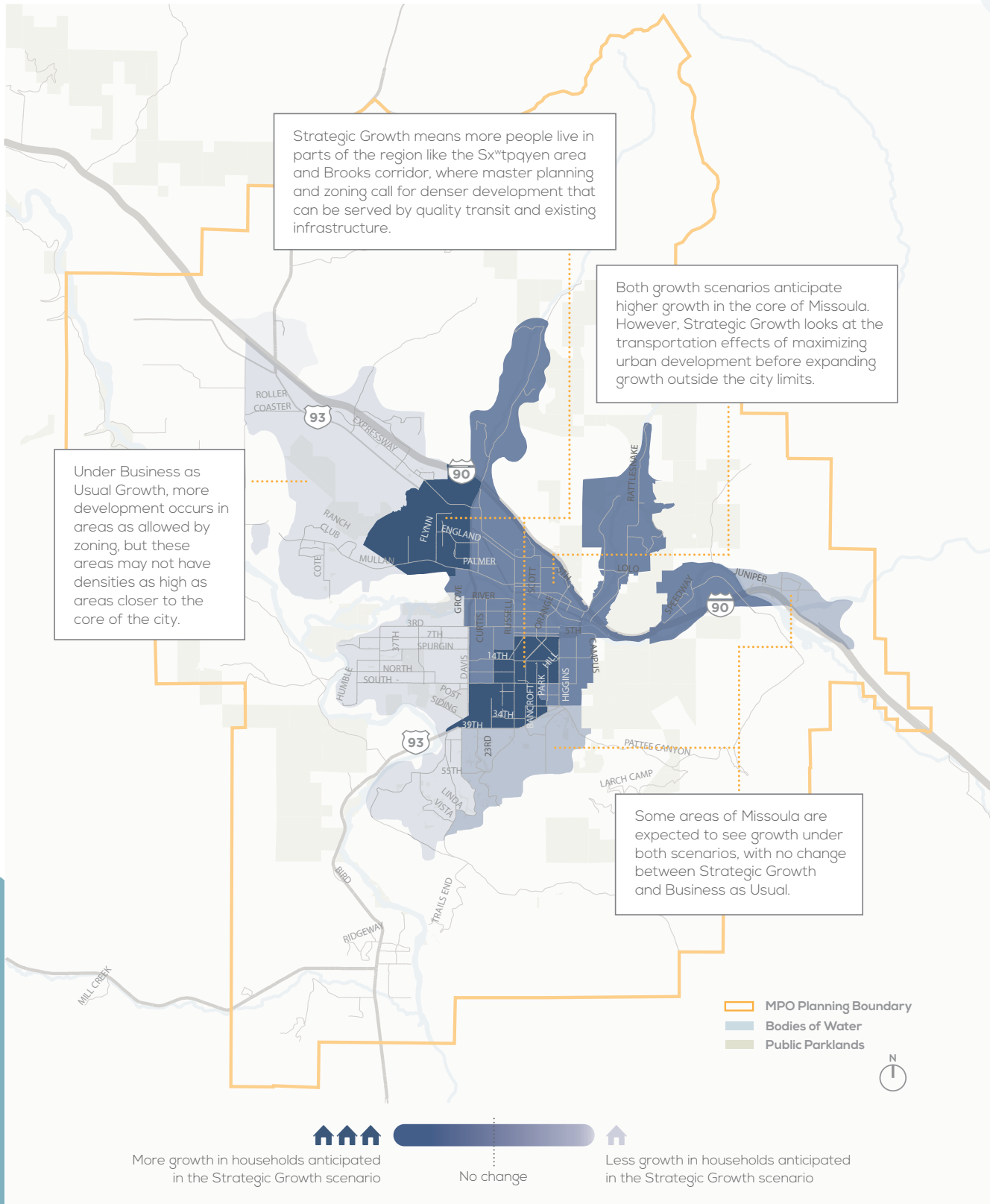


## Strategic Growth

Aligned with recent planning efforts, the Strategic Growth scenario maximized inward-focused development. It targeted growth in specific areas, including places that have services and are close to high-quality bus service, mixed-use development, and existing transportation networks. This scenario assigned growth to areas where more households benefit from transportation infrastructure investments.

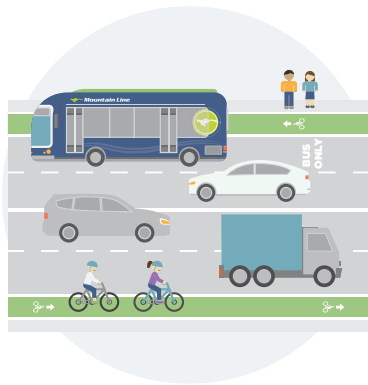
# Business as Usual Growth vs Strategic Growth

Difference in Households (2018-2050)



# TRANSPORTATION NETWORK SCENARIOS

The Missoula Connect project team created three transportation network scenarios (see Appendix D) and assessed them against the project goals. The scenarios included projects in the following categories:



## Complete Streets and Roadway Projects

provide travel options and make important connections to the regional and state transportation networks



## Safety Projects

include intersection improvements that keep people moving and make it safer to cross the street



## Active Transportation Projects

provide dedicated places for people to bike or walk and promote health



## Bridges

address critical infrastructure gaps

# Our Scenarios



## New Connections

The New Connections scenario included projects that expand the roadway network through complete street reconstruction and new trails and bridges. It included larger projects, such as the extension of Russell Street to I-90 and a new non-motorized bridge from McCormick Park to the proposed Riverfront Triangle development. Although it had fewer projects and more limited “quick-wins” compared to other scenarios, the New Connections scenario was anticipated to improve safety, connect people to jobs and opportunities, and create important links in the freight network.



## Enhanced Connections

The Enhanced Connections scenario included projects to maintain and improve the region’s current networks to support inward growth. It focused on closing gaps and completing investments. This scenario included many lower-cost projects, such as neighborhood greenways and targeted intersection improvements. It also focused on critical connections, like Reserve Street protected bike lanes and the River Road complete street. The Enhanced Connections scenario was intended to provide new travel options, encouraging people to make trips in ways other than driving alone. It increased access to jobs, schools, parks, and services and provided greater sustainability benefits than the other scenarios.



## Regional Equity

The Regional Equity scenario focused on projects that scored high on Missoula Connect’s equity criteria and those in Invest Health neighborhoods, connecting areas of the community that experience persistent poverty or poor health outcomes based on social determinants of health. Projects in this scenario represented a more equitable use of transportation funding, like the Howard Raser Drive connection between the Northside neighborhood and North Reserve and the Highway 200 complete street. The Regional Equity scenario did the most to improve affordability and provide more choices in how people travel.

# SCENARIO PERFORMANCE

We used more than a dozen metrics to evaluate the scenarios and compare them against each other. The metrics tied to Missoula Connect goals and reflected what we hope our transportation investments will help us achieve. All three transportation network scenarios moved us toward the Missoula Connect goals, often in slightly different ways. For example, the New Connections scenario improved access for freight and goods movement in key corridors, and the Enhanced Connections scenario made it easier for people walking and biking to connect to schools.

We also found that the Strategic Growth scenario amplified the benefits of each transportation network scenario. Across most metrics—and especially accessibility, equity, and the sustainability measures—we saw more positive outcomes with Strategic Growth. There were more jobs within a 15- to 30-minute walk or bike ride; there were more people with access to affordable transportation options; and there were fewer vehicle miles traveled and more trips made by walking and biking with more people living closer to the places they need to go.

The table to the right describes the metrics and shows how the scenarios performed. Detailed information about the metrics and the data we analyzed can be found in Appendix E.

## MISSOULA CONNECT GOALS



**Improve safety and promote health to enhance quality of life**



**Advance sustainability and climate resilience to protect natural resources and address climate change**



**Expand mobility choices to improve efficiency and accessibility for people and goods**

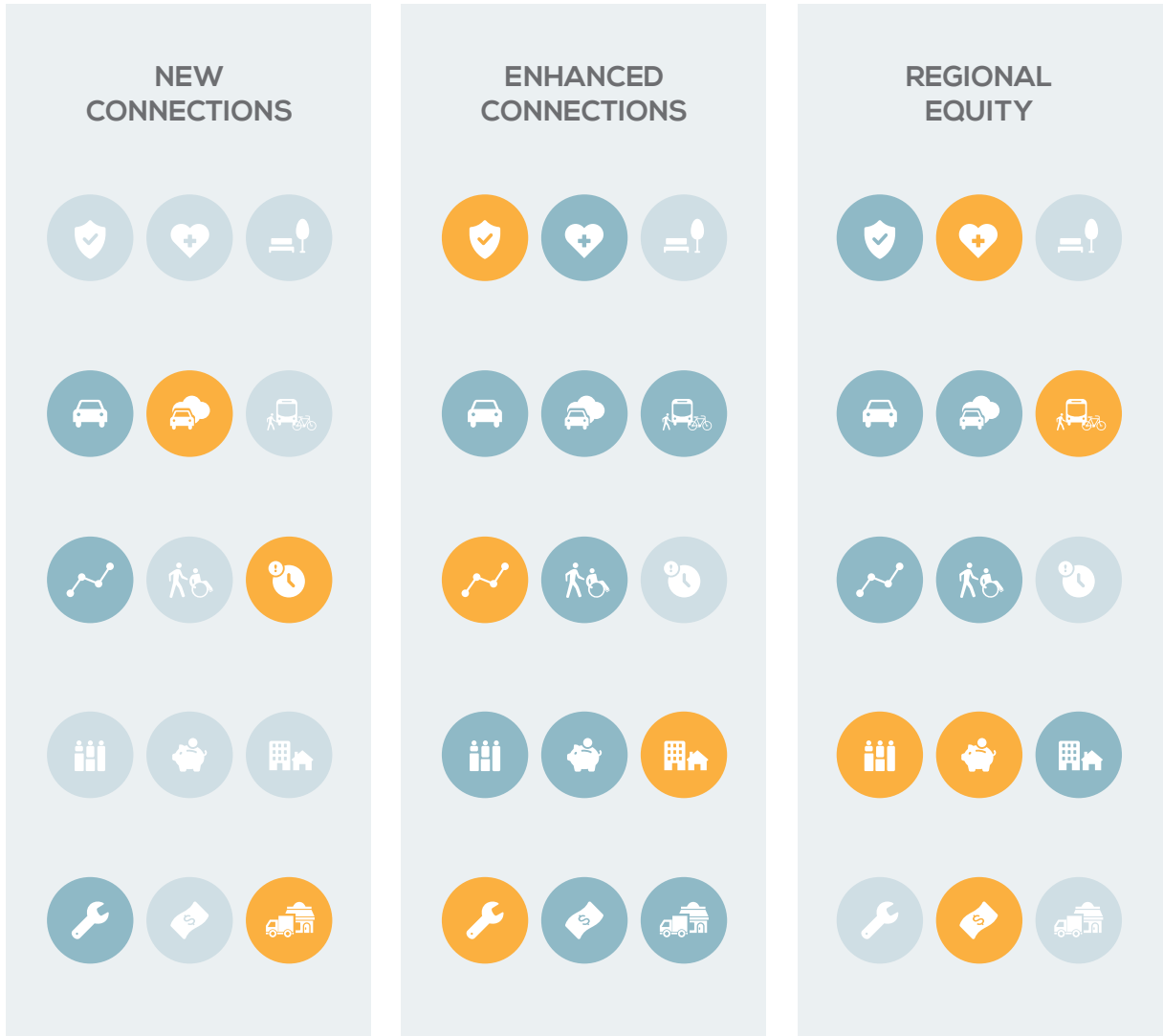


**Connect and strengthen communities to create a more equitable region**

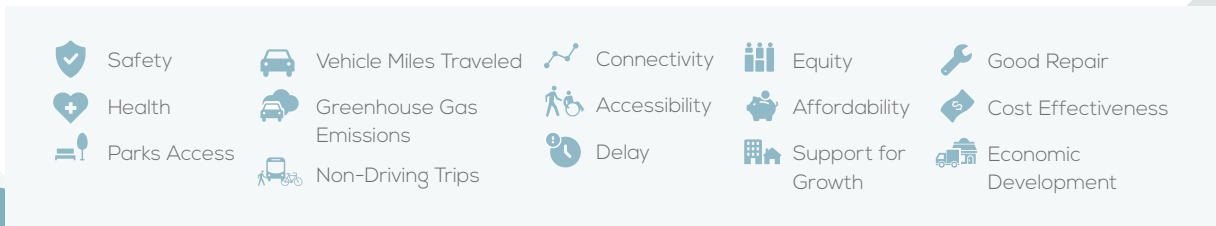


**Maintain assets and invest strategically to boost economic vitality**

## TRANSPORTATION NETWORK SCENARIOS



LESS SUPPORTIVE ◀ ◉ ◉ ◉ ▶ MORE SUPPORTIVE





# YOUR FEEDBACK

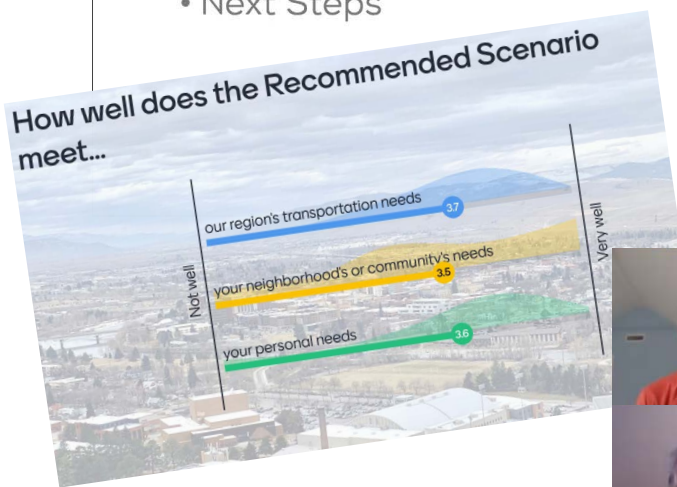
To complement our modeling and data analysis, we also gathered community feedback on the transportation and growth scenarios. In December 2020, we asked you to weigh in on the three scenarios by sharing preferences between them and identifying the types of projects that are most needed in the region.

To collect input, we hosted five community meetings and attended meetings with the Planning Board, Missoula City Council, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, the Downtown Partnership, the Downtown Business Improvement District, and the Lolo and East Missoula Community Councils. Many of these meetings incorporated live polling to gauge audience reactions to the scenarios and to specific types of projects. We complemented the community meetings with an educational video, an updated project website, and an online survey. We also provided printed materials for distribution at the Missoula Food Bank and Aging Services.

## Today's Agenda

Thanks for joining us!

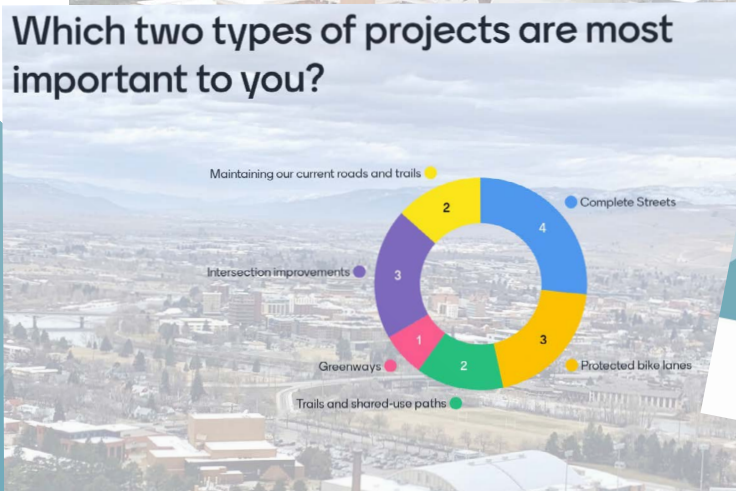
- Welcome & Introductions
- Missoula Connect Overview
- Recommended Scenario
- Long-Range Plan Funding
- Programs & Policies
- Next Steps





Feedback from the public across all platforms showed a preference for the Enhanced Connections scenario, followed closely by the Regional Equity scenario and an interest in combining projects from all three scenarios. People identified complete streets projects as the most important project type to prioritize in the recommended scenario, followed by trails and shared-use paths.

Support for the Enhanced Connections and Regional Equity scenarios aligns with the preferences expressed in the 2019 Missoula Area Transportation Survey. These scenarios both include investments for walking and biking as well as projects that improve transit, which were the top priorities in the 2019 survey.



### Tired of 2020? Let's think about 2050!

Missoula Connect is our region's long-range transportation plan. It will include projects and programs to help us meet our equity, climate, and safety goals over the next 30 years. The MPO has been working on the plan throughout 2020, and we've heard from many of you along the way. Now we're ready to share three transportation scenarios, which are combinations of projects that help us consider different ways to advance our goals.

We need your input as we decide which scenario is the best fit for our region. Join us for a neighborhood-focused discussion of the projects included in each scenario and the ways they meet your current and future transportation needs.

**WHY:** Learn about transportation scenarios and share your feedback

**WHO:** Central Neighborhoods (Rose Park, Lewis and Clark, University District, Riverfront)

**WHEN:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 | 6:00-7:15 PM

**WHERE:** Zoom Virtual Meeting (Please register in advance: <https://us.zoom.us/j/92191707070>)

**WHAT:**

- Welcome & Introductions (10 min)
- Project & Scenarios Presentation (20 min)
- Community Feedback & Discussion (40 min)
- Looking Ahead & Next Steps (5 min)

To learn more about Missoula Connect, visit: [www.missoulampo.com/long-range-transportation-update](http://www.missoulampo.com/long-range-transportation-update)

## Chapter 6

# Recommended Projects

## OUR TRANSPORTATION FUTURE

The scenario evaluation process helped to illustrate that different combinations of projects provide different benefits for people traveling in the Missoula region.

Based on feedback from the community, input from our committees, and additional data analysis, the MPO and the Missoula Connect project team developed a Recommended Scenario. We began by including all projects that were in both the Enhanced Connections and Regional Equity scenarios. Then we added projects—including projects from the New Connections scenario, as well as projects that were in either the Enhanced Connections or Regional Equity scenarios—through the following steps:



We reviewed feedback about types of projects and specific project notes from community meetings, online surveys, and our committees to identify projects that people flagged as critically important.

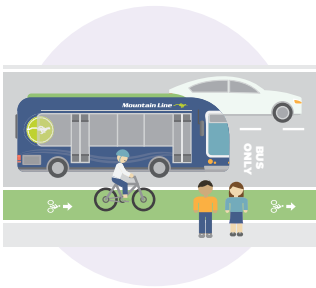


We revisited the evaluation process scores to identify projects that ranked highest in our equity weighting.



We identified projects with special importance or with catalytic potential for a specific neighborhood or area.

The Missoula Connect Recommended Scenario includes a diverse mix of projects across the region that connect neighborhoods and key destinations, support inward growth, and advance regional equity. The Recommended Scenario includes major investments in the following types of projects:



### Complete Streets

improve transit operations and access and safety for all travelers and modes of transportation



### Urban Active Transportation Improvements

enhance neighborhood connections and accessibility with sidewalks, on-street bike lanes, and greenways



### Shared-Use Paths and Trail Extensions

expand regional connectivity for active travel modes



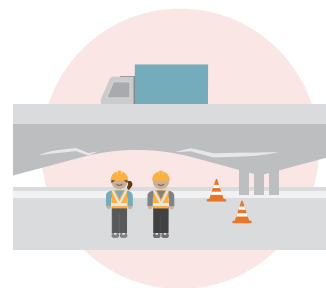
### Safety Improvements and Enhanced Crossings

improve multimodal operations and connections



### Roadway Extensions

provide increased connectivity to existing and growing areas



### Bridge or Crossing Improvements

replace aging structures and add bridges and crossings to increase connectivity for all modes

# CONNECTING MISSOULA

The Recommended Scenario includes 71 projects that best meet the Missoula Connect goals:

- |    |  |    |  |
|----|--|----|--|
| 21 | Complete Streets                         | 11 | Safety Improvements and Enhanced Crossings |
| 20 | Urban Active Transportation Improvements | 4  | Roadway Extensions                         |
| 12 | Shared-Use Paths and Trail Extensions    | 3  | Bridge or Crossing Improvements            |

The projects included in the Recommended Scenario are all eligible for federal, state, or local funds, and there may be other funding sources available in the future (see Chapter 8 for more information). The Recommended Scenario also includes committed projects, which are those that have funding allocated within the current 5-year Transportation Improvement Program (federal funds) or the City's or County's Capital Improvement Programs (local funds). Committed projects include multimodal improvements on Higgins Avenue, reconstruction of Russell Street, as well as the Sx<sup>w</sup>tpqyen (pronounced S-wh-tip-KAYN) BUILD Grant roads.

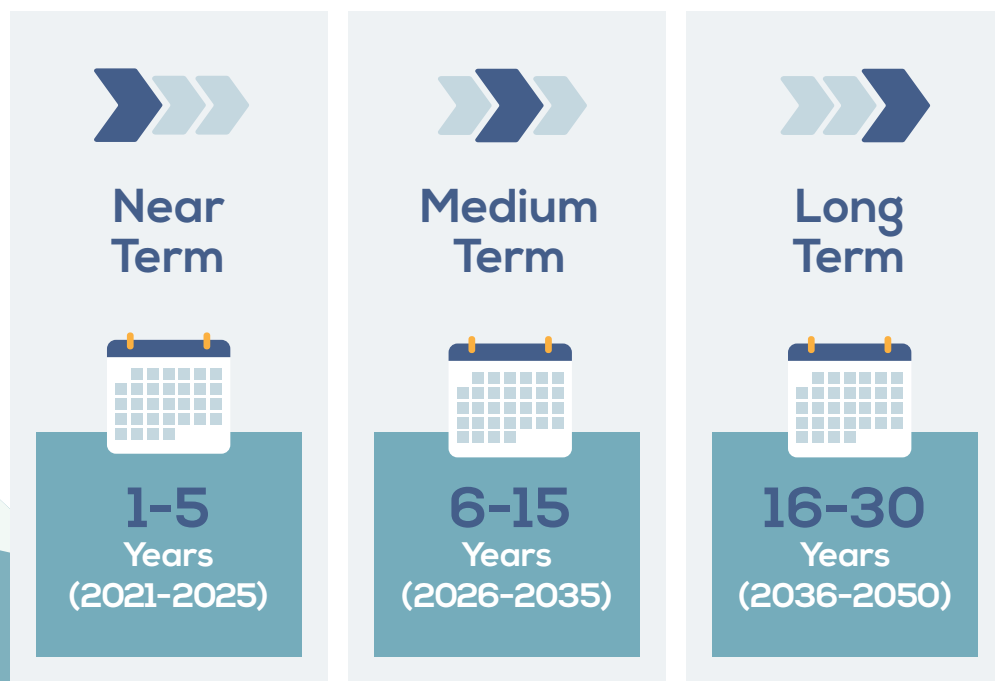
All projects that are not included in the Recommended Scenario are considered "illustrative." The list of illustrative projects is used to supplement the recommended projects and provides the region with flexibility to seize opportunities that may arise. Illustrative projects can become recommended projects, and vice versa, through future evaluation and consideration.

The following pages provide more information about projects recommended for the Missoula area. You'll also find project spotlights, which give additional information about specific projects. More detailed information about the recommended and illustrative projects, including expanded descriptions, is available in Appendix H.

Together, the projects in the Recommended Scenario are the blueprint for improving Missoula's transportation system over the next 30 years. As the region advances these projects, careful attention to environmental and equity impacts is critical. The community will be involved in further review as projects move forward.

## Project Priority

The recommended projects will be implemented in order of priority as funding allows. The following sections describe the recommended projects in more detail, including the total project cost and potential phasing.





ID	TYPE	CATEGORY	PROJECT NAME	TO	FROM	TOTAL PROJECT COST
127*	—	Roadway Extensions	Russell Street Reconstruction	Multiple	Multiple	\$47,200,000
41*	—	Active Transportation	Ivy/Franklin Neighborhood Greenway	S 3rd St	Plymouth St	\$1,106,700
44*	—	Active Transportation	Burton Neighborhood Greenway	Stoddard St	Riverfront Trail	\$206,690
55*	—	Active Transportation	Westside Area Mobility Enhancements	Multiple	Multiple	\$1,836,000
101*	—	Complete Streets	Higgins Ave Multimodal Improvements	Broadway St	Brooks St	\$2,157,940
152*	●	Safety	Russell St and Fairview Ave Crossing Improvements	-	-	\$153,000
182*	—	Complete Streets	Eaton St Sidewalk/Complete Streets Improvements	7th St	South Ave	\$1,530,000
183*	—	Complete Streets	Turner St/Worden Ave/ N 5th Complete Street	Scott St	Orange St	\$1,020,000
128*	—	Bridge	Bitterroot River Crossing (South Ave Bridge - MacClay Bridge)	South Ave	River Pines Rd	\$18,488,500
130*	—	Roadway Extensions	BUILD Grant Roads - Wye/Mullan Plan Collector Routes	Multiple	Multiple	\$29,788,710
180*	—	Active Transportation	BUILD Grant Trails - Wye/Mullan Plan Collector Routes	Multiple	Multiple	\$3,429,000
129*	—	Roadway Extensions	US 93: North of Desmet Interchange	Waldo Rd	Evaro Rd	\$10,351,100
107	—	Complete Streets	Front/Main 2-Way Conversion and Multimodal Improvements	Madison St	Orange St	\$3,994,960
121	—	Complete Streets	South Ave Complete Street and Shared-Use Path	36th St	Reserve St	\$4,459,930
42	—	Active Transportation	4th St Neighborhood Greenway	Schilling St	Toole Park	\$417,470
37	—	Active Transportation	Sherwood Neighborhood Greenway	Russell St	Pine St	\$111,220
39	—	Active Transportation	Gerald Neighborhood Greenway	4th St	South Ave W	\$108,040
36	—	Active Transportation	Grant St Neighborhood Greenway	3rd St	North Ave W	\$107,130
13	—	Active Transportation	3rd St Bike Lane Extension	Ash St	Higgins Ave	\$3,320
106	—	Active Transportation	Mount/S 14th Ave Bike Lane	Reserve St	Higgins Ave	\$10,270
79	—	Active Transportation	Russell St Bike Lanes	Railroad	Broadway St	\$3,370
137	●	Active Transportation	Stephens Bike Lane Intersection Improvements	Stephens Ave	Mount Ave	\$76,500

\* Committed Projects have multiple funding sources, including discretionary funds allocated by the MPO. Other sources are federal grants, MDT-programmed federal funds, utility fees, and select project-specific sources.

# MDT Maintenance & Safety Projects

In addition to the committed projects shown as near-term Missoula Connect priorities, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has funds dedicated to maintenance and safety priorities in the Missoula District. MDT will complete the following projects in the next five years:



## Maintenance Projects

- ✓ Interstate Epoxy Striping
- ✓ Missoula to Bonner (I-90)
- ✓ Bonner Interchange East
- ✓ Reserve Street
- ✓ US-93 North of I-90 Interchange
- ✓ Pulp Mill Road Slope Stabilization
- ✓ Old MT 200 Retaining Wall Repair
- ✓ West Broadway to Old Highway 10
- ✓ Steel Bridge Rehabilitation (Corrosion 1)
- ✓ South 5th and 6th Street
- ✓ Clements/3rd/Speedway/Deer Creek
- ✓ Broadway Street and Toole Avenue
- ✓ US-93 Pavement Preservation Missoula to Lolo

In addition to these near-term projects, MDT may have additional funds available for maintenance projects. Appendix H includes placeholders for these MDT-programmed funding sources: Interstate Maintenance (IM); National Highway (NH); Bridge Program (BR); Urban Pavement Preservation (UPP); Montana Air Congestion Initiative (MACI); and Surface Transportation Off System (STPX) / Surface Transportation Program Secondary (STPS) / State Funded Construction (SFCN).



## Safety Projects


- ✓ Railroad Crossing at Deschamps Road
- ✓ Missoula County Safety Improvements
- ✓ Stephens and Orange Safety Improvement
- ✓ Missoula HT Median Cable Rail
- ✓ Russell Street Lighting
- ✓ Mary Jane Boulevard and Broadway Street Intersection
- ✓ US-93 Lolo to Florence Safety Study

In addition to these near-term projects, MDT may have additional funds available for safety projects. Appendix H includes placeholders for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds programmed by MDT.



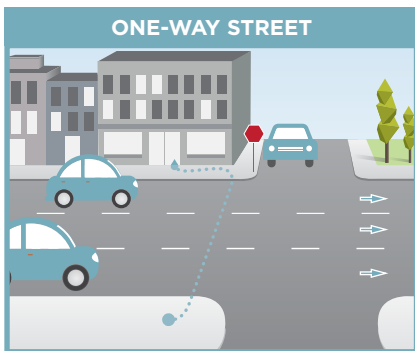


## FRONT/MAIN TWO-WAY CONVERSION AND MULTIMODAL IMPROVEMENTS

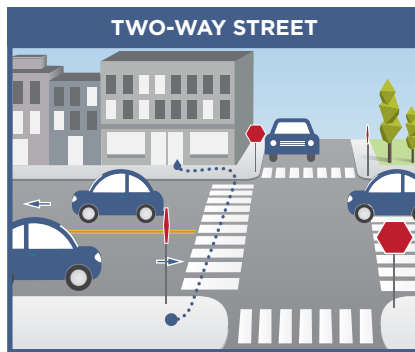
Project Number	Cost	Phase
107	\$3.99M	 Near-Term

### Complete Streets

Converting two one-way streets—called a “couplet”—to two-way streets improves circulation, lowers speeds, and reduces out-of-direction travel. Allowing two-way travel also provides enhanced access to businesses along each street and can reduce congestion downtown.



- Traffic Safety**  
Faster traffic speeds and fewer signalized intersections
- Business Access**  
Frustrating; circle back to your destination and turning delays
- Emergency Services Access**  
Only one direction for entry
- Economic Development**  
Limited visibility and unforgiving if you pass business
- Bicycle Access**  
Limited network
- Walking Access**  
High speeds make it difficult to cross street



- Traffic Safety**  
Slower traffic speeds and more signalized intersections
- Business Access**  
Customer-friendly; less unnecessary circulating traffic
- Emergency Services Access**  
Double direction for entry
- Economic Development**  
Double the storefront visibility
- Bicycle Access**  
2-way demand met in safer, traffic-calmed environment
- Walking Access**  
Predictable crossings in traffic-calmed environment

The Front Street and Main Street two-way conversion, which will convert the one-way couplet to two-way travel on both Front Street and Main Street, has been considered for years. In 2015, the Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) conducted a feasibility study and in 2019, the Downtown Missoula Master Plan (DTMP) identified the Front and Main Conversion as a priority project. In April 2021, the MRA awarded an engineering contract to help move toward a “shovel ready” design.

In addition to reconfiguring the auto travel lanes, the project will provide enhanced pedestrian crossings, new bicycle facilities, and improved

parking. These improvements are expected to decrease vehicle miles traveled, provide more direct paths through downtown, enhance safety for people using all travel modes, and promote economic vitality.



## RESERVE STREET AREA PROJECTS (MULLAN ROAD TO I-90)

Phases



Near-Term



Medium-Term

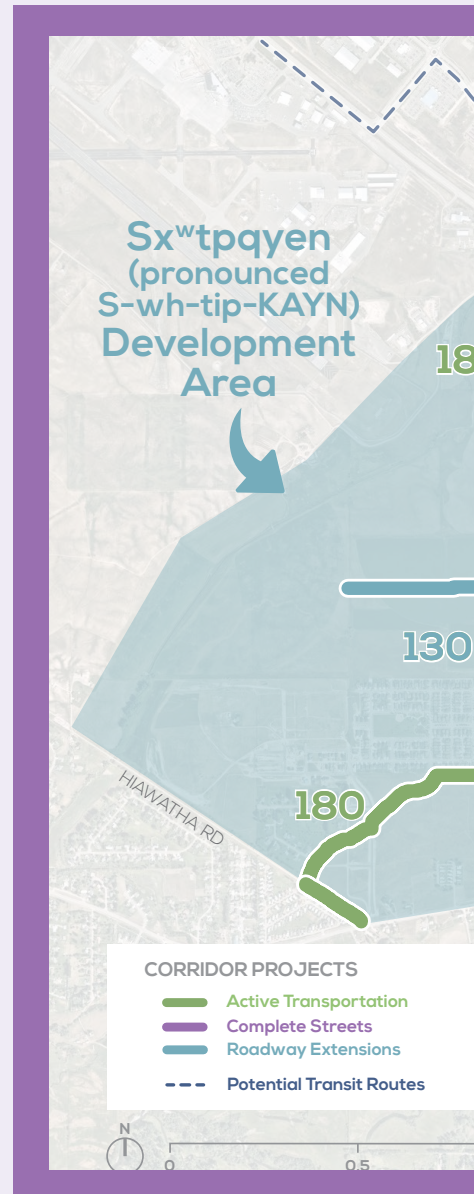
Complete Streets

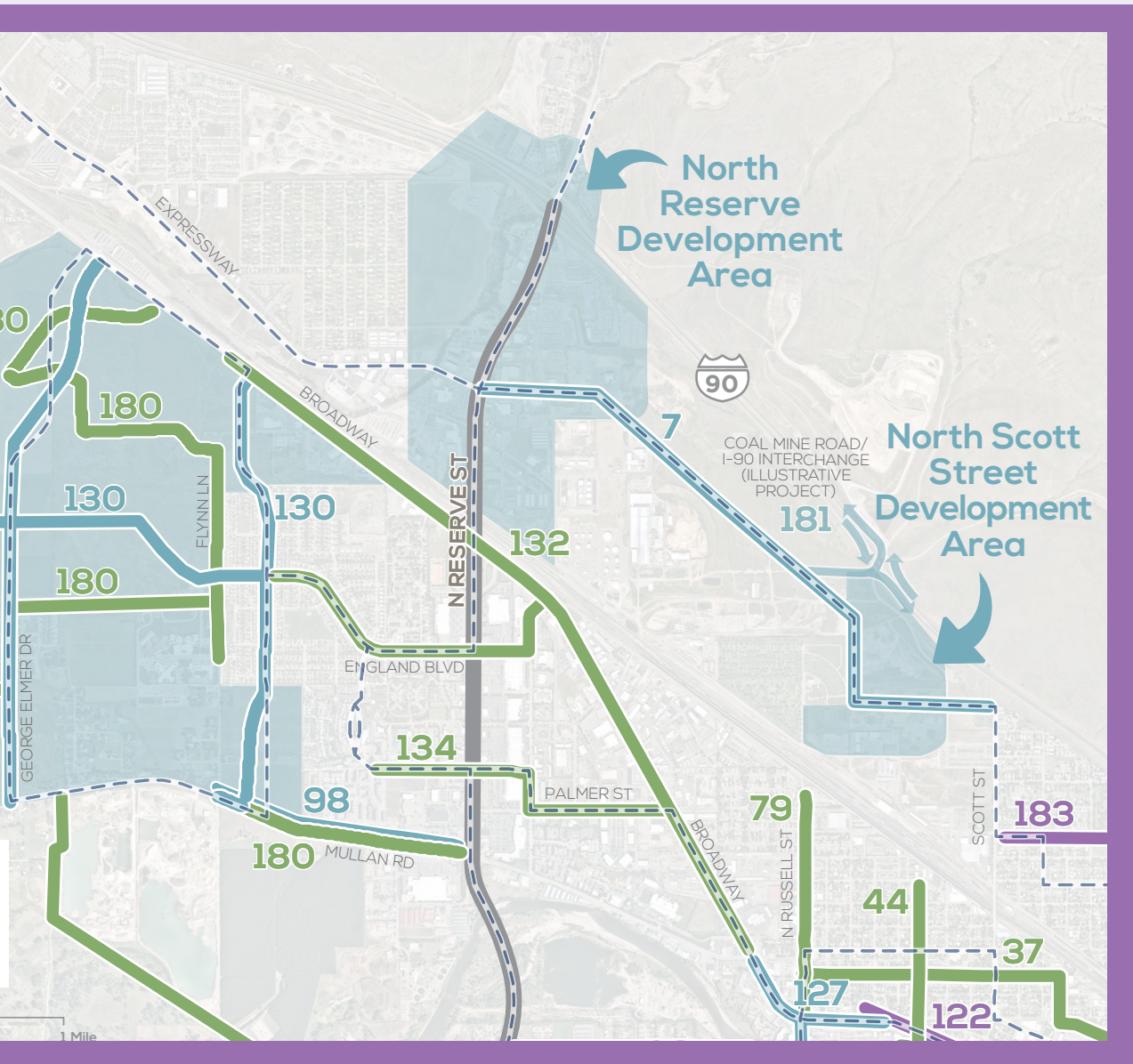
Active Transportation

Roadway Extensions

The Reserve Street corridor (U.S. Highway 93) serves Missoula area residents as well as people living in adjacent counties, making it a regionally significant road. The proposed land use changes for the North Reserve/Scott Street Urban Renewal District and the Sx<sup>w</sup>tpqyen (pronounced S-wh-tip-KAYN) Area are expected to significantly change travel patterns on the northern part of Reserve Street. New housing and more jobs will increase transportation demand along Reserve Street and on perpendicular roads, such as England Boulevard, creating challenges at existing intersections. As land use changes progress, changes to the roadway—including protected bike lanes, right-turn pockets, and signal upgrades with intelligent transportation system (ITS) capability—will be needed.

The proposed land uses at the northern end of Reserve Street will require connections to the North Reserve/Scott Street area and to the regional system. Multimodal facilities, including complete streets improvements, high-quality transit stops, and intersection improvements must be built along with new housing and commercial development. Improvements such as the Howard Raser Drive complete street and the I-90 interchange at Coal Mine Road are examples of the added connectivity necessary to accommodate our future growth in the area.







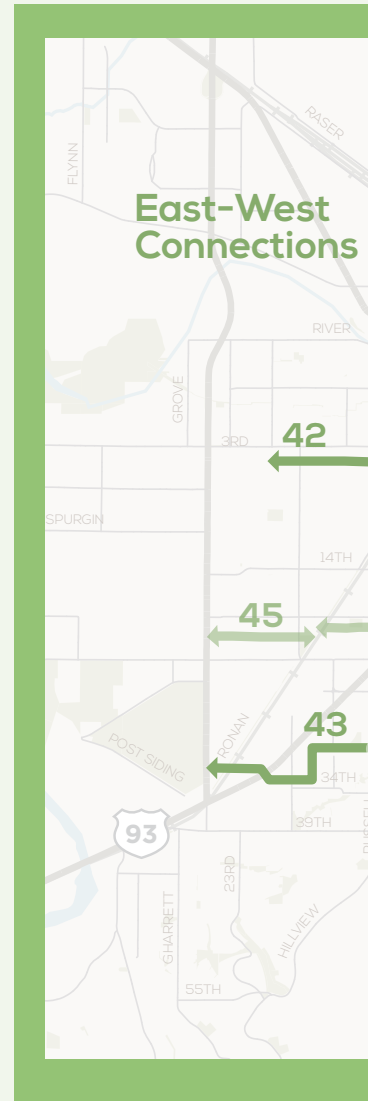
## NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAYS

### Active Transportation

Neighborhood Greenways are residential streets, close to main roads, with relatively low vehicle volumes and speeds that support the comfort and safety of people who bike, walk, and roll. To build upon existing opportunities for biking and walking and to close gaps in the commuter trail, sidewalk, and on-street bike systems, the City of Missoula mapped a citywide Neighborhood Greenway system as part of the 2016 Bicycle Facilities Master Plan.

The 15 projects highlighted here expand on the existing network of Neighborhood Greenways and represent a handful of the greenway projects included in Missoula Connect. These nine recommended greenway corridors, three illustrative intersection safety improvements, and two illustrative greenway corridors will improve east-west and north-south connections and support daily travel for many Missoula residents. Once completed, the expanded network will directly connect seven neighborhoods with low-stress routes suitable for people of all ages and abilities.

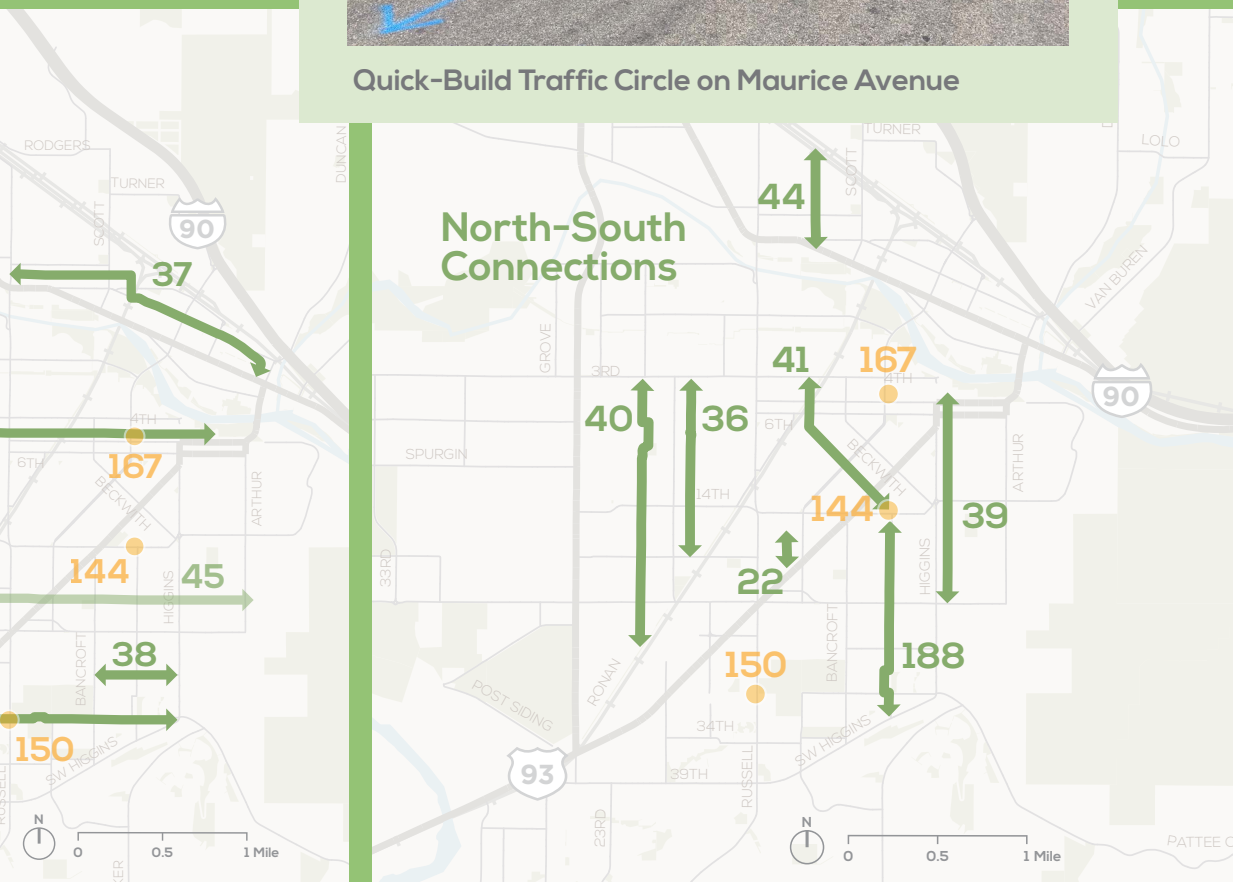
The Neighborhood Greenways in Missoula Connect include pavement markings, permanent traffic calming at minor intersections, and safety enhancements at major crossings. As the City and MPO work to complete the Neighborhood Greenway network with permanent infrastructure, the City will use quick-build traffic calming and pavement markings to establish the routes as quickly as possible.







Quick-Build Traffic Circle on Maurice Avenue



**PROJECTS**

- Active Transportation
- Safety

Illustrative projects shown with transparency

Greenways will improve both east-west and north-south connections.


Illustrative Projects: 45, 144, 150, and 167.



ID	TYPE	CATEGORY	PROJECT NAME	TO	FROM	TOTAL PROJECT COST
40	—	Active Transportation	Schilling Neighborhood Greenway	3rd St	Benton Ave	\$440,440
188	—	Active Transportation	Park Neighborhood Greenway	Plymouth St	SW Higgins Ave	\$559,440
43	—	Active Transportation	Pattee Creek Neighborhood Greenway	S Higgins Ave	Reserve St	\$328,010
22	—	Active Transportation	Regent St Greenway	Mount Ave	Kent Ave	\$108,970
38	—	Active Transportation	Benton Neighborhood Greenway	Higgins St	Bancroft St	\$110,690
49	—	Active Transportation	Reserve St Protected Bike Lanes	US Hwy 93	S 3rd St	\$135,470
95	—	Active Transportation	Milwaukee Trail Lighting	Reserve St	Catlin St	\$378,000
3	—	Active Transportation	Kiwanis Park Trail Widening	Ron's River Trail	Front St	\$280,890
72	—	Bridge	Bitterroot Trail Bridge at Clark Fork River	McCormick Park /Ogren Field	Broadway St	\$3,780,000
192	—	Complete Streets	Hwy 200 Complete Street	Highton St	Staple St	\$7,560,000
114	—	Roadway Extensions	Johnson Street Extension	South Ave	Brooks St	\$2,635,200
118	—	Complete Streets	Curtis St Complete Street	S 3rd St	River Rd	\$2,160,540
119	—	Complete Streets	River Rd Complete Street	Reserve St	Russell St	\$2,909,170
103	—	Complete Streets	California St Complete Street	S 3rd St	River St	\$5,400,000
86	—	Active Transportation	Hwy 200 Shared-Use Path	Tamarack Rd	Staple St	\$3,548,420
122	—	Complete Streets	Broadway Complete Street	Van Buren St	Toole Ave	\$6,220,800
60	—	Active Transportation	Ron's River Trail Extension	Burton St	Orange St	\$997,210
191	—	Bridge	Hwy 200 Railroad Bridge Replacement	Easy St	Highton St	\$15,120,000
82	—	Active Transportation	Ron's River Trail Widening, Reconfiguration, and Relocation	Madison St	Orange St	\$2,160,000
84	—	Active Transportation	Bitterroot Trail Lighting	Reserve St	Milwaukee Trail	\$1,728,000
164	●	Safety	Shakespeare St and Otis St Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$81,000
146	●	Safety	Owen St and Broadway St Enhanced Crossing	-	-	\$324,000
52	—	Complete Streets	N 2nd St Complete Street	Madison St	A St	\$2,246,870
141	●	Safety	Catlin St and 3rd St Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$216,000
53	—	Active Transportation	Northbank Riverfront Trail	Easy St	Van Buren St	\$2,503,940
4	—	Complete Streets	Levasseur St Complete Street	Clay St	Dead End	\$320,130
132	—	Active Transportation	Broadway Protected Bike Lanes	Mullan Rd	Mary Jane Blvd	\$592,360
134	—	Active Transportation	Union Pacific and Palmer Protected Bike Lanes	Clark Fork Ln	Broadway St	\$4,320,000
170	●	Active Transportation	Clements Rd Intersection Improvements	Multiple	Multiple	\$216,000

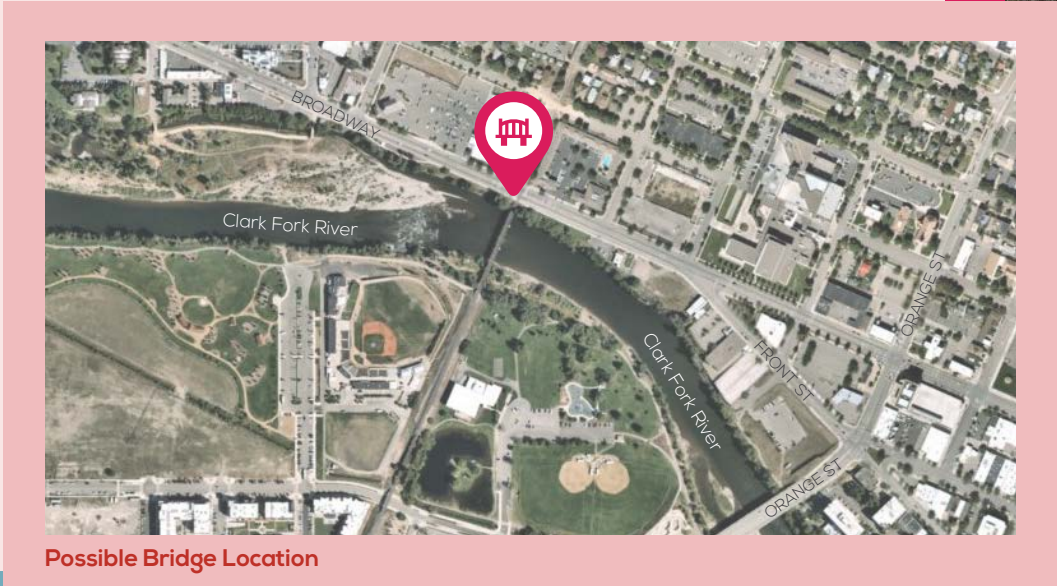


## BITTERROOT TRAIL BRIDGE AT CLARK FORK RIVER

Project Number	Cost	Phase
72	\$3.78M	 Medium-Term

### Bridge

The proposed shared-use path connection over the Clark Fork River on the Bitterroot rail trestle provides an important link from the Heart of Missoula to the existing commuter trail network south of the river. This area has significant potential for redevelopment but currently lacks a dedicated bicycle/ pedestrian river crossing. As the project moves forward, design would be closely coordinated with Montana Rail Link, as use of railroad right-of-way can be challenging, and further analysis is necessary to assess feasibility of using the existing trestle structure. Connecting the Riverfront Triangle to the McCormick recreation area is an alternate crossing option that offers the same connection without using the existing rail trestle.







Existing Montana Rail Link Trestle



## JOHNSON STREET EXTENSION AND COMPLETE STREET CONNECTION

Project Number

114

Cost

\$2.64M

Phase



Medium-Term

Roadway Extension

Complete Streets

The Southgate Mall is currently surrounded by vacant land awaiting redevelopment. The area's roadway network lacks an established grid, and connections are limited due to the railroad. The Johnson Street Extension and Complete Street Connection will improve transportation access and help spark housing and commercial development in this area.

This project connects South Avenue to Brooks Street along the east side of the railroad tracks and builds on other investments like the Mary Avenue extension. It creates access to vacant land southwest of the mall and provides new infrastructure to support multimodal transportation options for future development. The connection will also help to streamline transit services, provide connections to the Bitterroot Trail, improve access to Montana Rail Link (MRL) Park, and relieve traffic on the Brooks corridor by providing alternative routes from the signal at Dore Lane and Brooks to the signal at South Avenue.

This transformative project achieves multiple goals: it facilitates sustainable infill development; promotes multimodal transportation; increases network connectivity for all modes, including autos; and builds on previous investments.



Existing Johnson Street Conditions







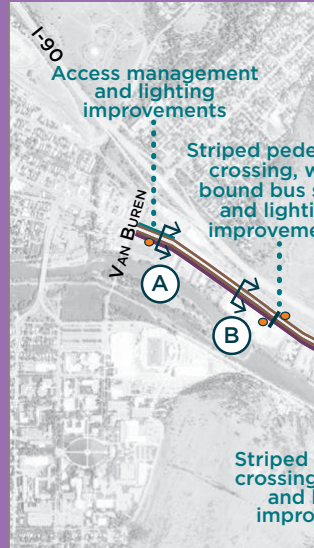
## EAST MISSOULA/HIGHWAY 200 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

Complete Streets	Active Transportation	Bridge
------------------	-----------------------	--------

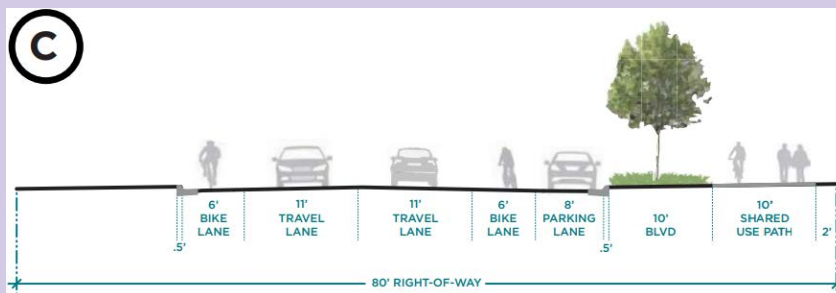
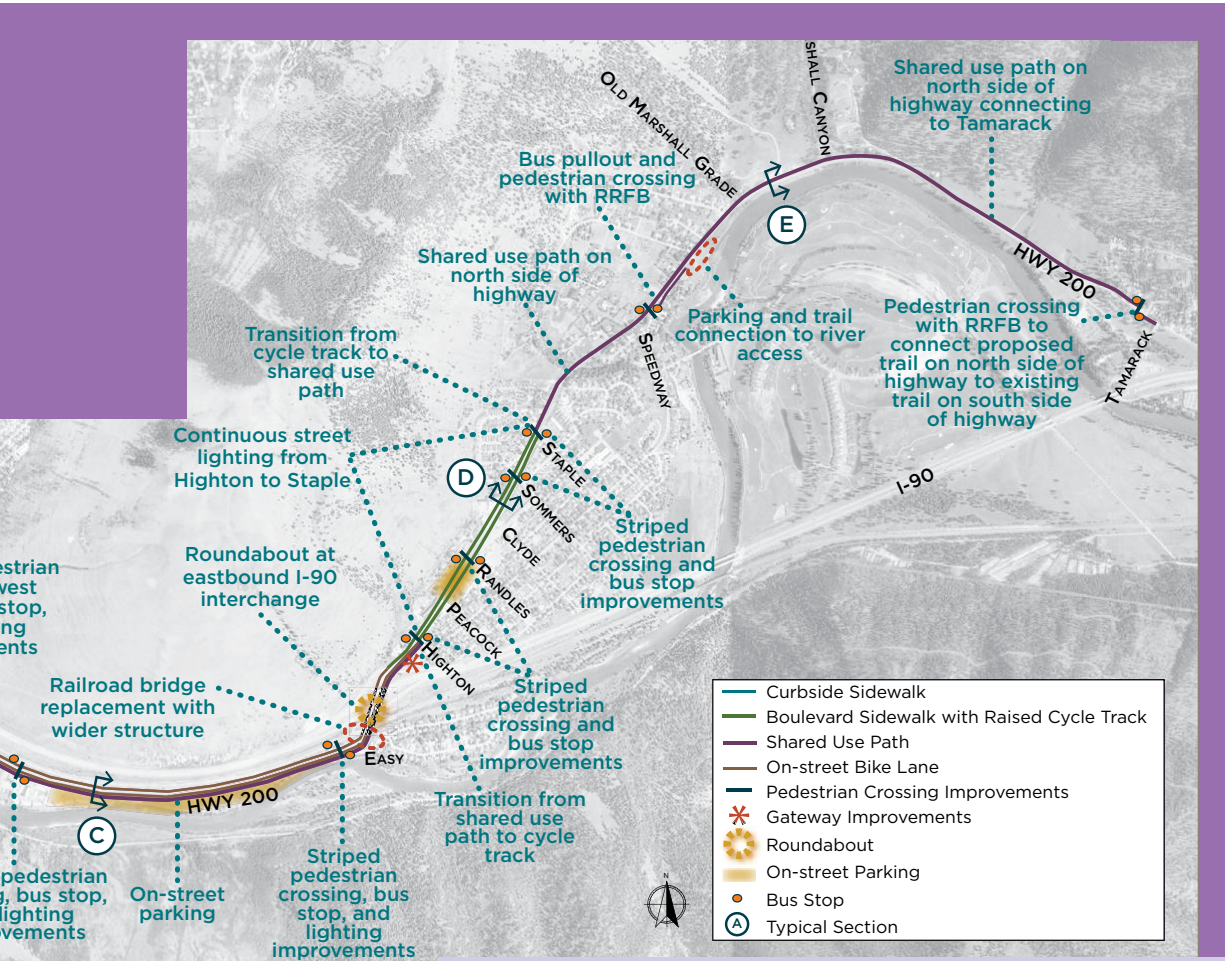
Project Numbers	Cost	Phase
53, 86, 191, 192	\$27.73M	Medium-Term

Safety improvements along the East Missoula/Highway 200 Corridor have been included in the Missoula region’s Long-Range Transportation Plan since 2012. Adopted in Spring 2021, the East Missoula/Highway 200 Corridor Plan builds on previous planning and community engagement to provide comprehensive guidance for corridor improvements. The plan identifies projects that improve safety for all travelers, improve roadway operations and access management, and expand multimodal options from Van Buren Street to Tamarack Road. The most significant project included in the plan is the railroad underpass near the I-90 interchange. Expanding the constrained underpass will provide space for improved multimodal facilities. These include shared-use paths, bike lanes, cycle tracks, pedestrian crossings, and improved bus stops.

Preferred Highway 200 corridor improvements



Preferred Highway 200 alternative includes a new parking lot within MDT right-of-way and a shared-use path connection to Sha-Ron fishing access

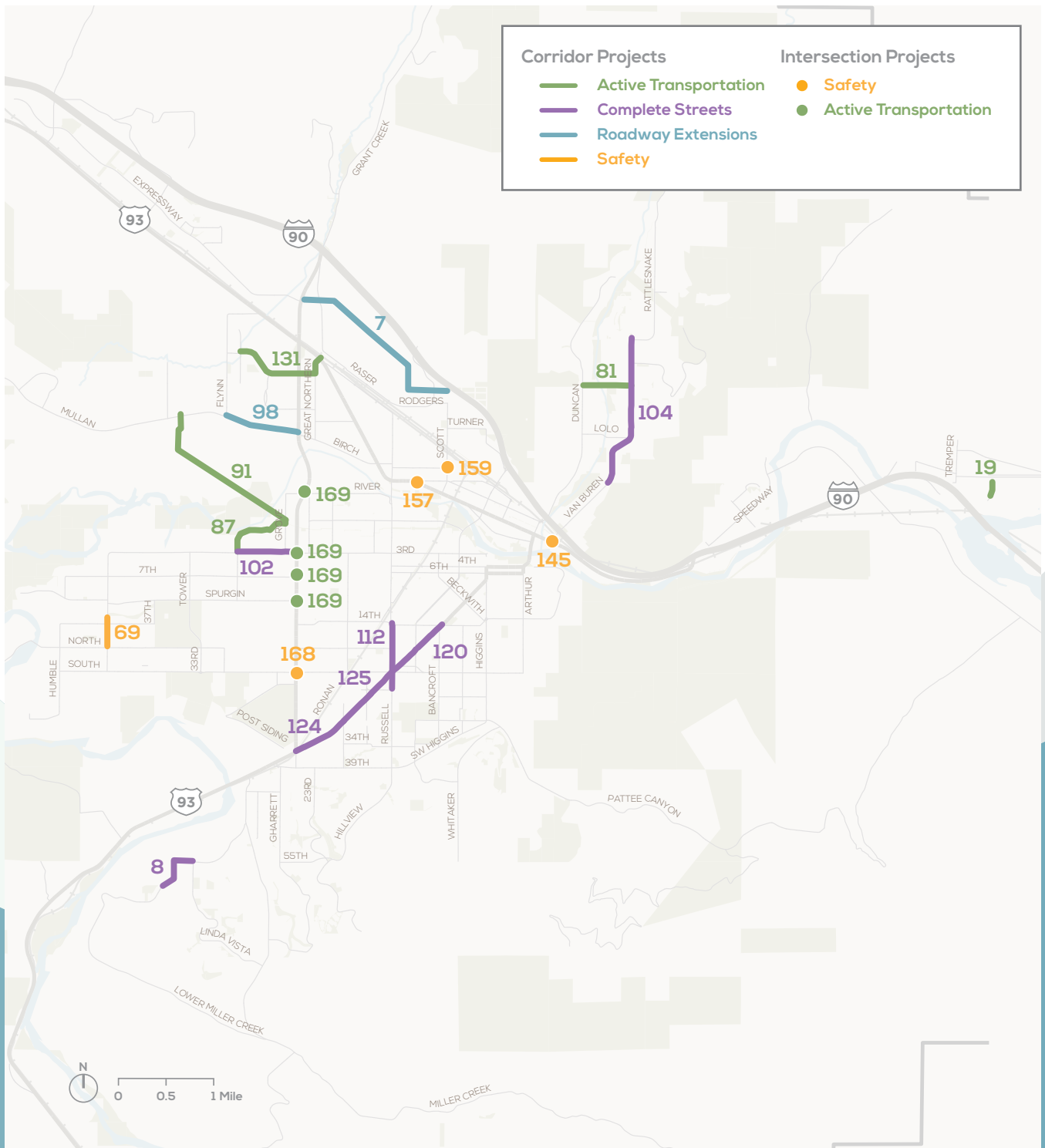


East Broadway street configuration with shared-use path (looking east)

Source: 2021 East Missoula Highway 200 Corridor Plan




# LONG-TERM PROJECTS



ID	TYPE	CATEGORY	PROJECT NAME	TO	FROM	TOTAL PROJECT COST
98	—	Roadway Extensions	Mullan Rd Complete Street	Mary Jane Blvd	Reserve St	\$3,652,870
169	●	Active Transportation	Reserve St Intersection Improvements	Multiple	Multiple	\$526,500
125	—	Complete Streets	Brooks St Complete Street and Transit Improvements	Stephens Ave	Paxson St	\$35,100,000
124	—	Complete Streets	Brooks St Complete Street and Transit Improvements	Paxson St	Reserve St	\$23,400,000
102	—	Complete Streets	S 3rd St Complete Street	Hiberta St	Reserve St	\$2,324,490
120	—	Complete Streets	Brooks St Complete Street	Stephens Ave	Mount Ave	\$1,313,540
104	—	Complete Streets	Rattlesnake Dr Complete Street	Creek Crossing	Missoula Ave	\$6,104,880
91	—	Active Transportation	Milwaukee Trail River Crossing	Mullan Rd (via Schmidt Rd)	Grove St	\$9,966,070
8	—	Complete Streets	Lower Miller Creek Rd Complete Street	Linda Vista Blvd	Bigfork Rd	\$1,984,320
7	—	Roadway Extensions	Howard Raser Ave Complete Street	Old Grant Creek Rd	Scott St	\$9,397,640
131	—	Active Transportation	England Blvd Protected Bike Lanes	Mary Jane Blvd	Great Northern Ave	\$4,043,520
112	—	Complete Streets	Russell St Complete Street	Fairview Ave	Mount Ave	\$2,575,870
145	●	Safety	E Broadway St and N Van Buren St Intersection Improvements	—	—	\$526,500
157	●	Safety	California St/Toole Ave/Broadway St Intersection Improvements	—	—	\$526,500
87	—	Active Transportation	Hawthorne School to Milwaukee Trail Shared-Use Path	S 3rd St/Hawthorne School	Grove St	\$1,269,260
168	●	Safety	South Ave and Reserve St Intersection Improvements	—	—	\$175,500
159	●	Safety	Philips St and Scott St Intersection Improvements	—	—	\$526,500
19	—	Active Transportation	W Riverside and 1st St Shared-Use Path	US 200	W Riverside Dr	\$410,890
69	—	Active Transportation	Clements Rd Shared-Use Path	North Ave	Mount Ave	\$518,840
81	—	Active Transportation	Mountain View Drive Multimodal Improvements	Duncan Dr	Rattlesnake Dr	\$412,210



## HOWARD RASER COMPLETE STREET AND I-90 INTERCHANGE

Project Number	Cost	Phase
7	\$9.40M	 Long-Term

### Roadway Extension

Creating new street connections that serve all modes is critical for growth and to support the sustainable movement of people and goods in the Missoula region. Extending Howard Raser Drive between North Reserve Street and Scott Street increases network connectivity in an area experiencing rapid residential and commercial redevelopment. This new complete street connection will help relieve pressure on existing corridors, such as Reserve Street and Brooks, and allow the City to guide development in areas ripe for growth.

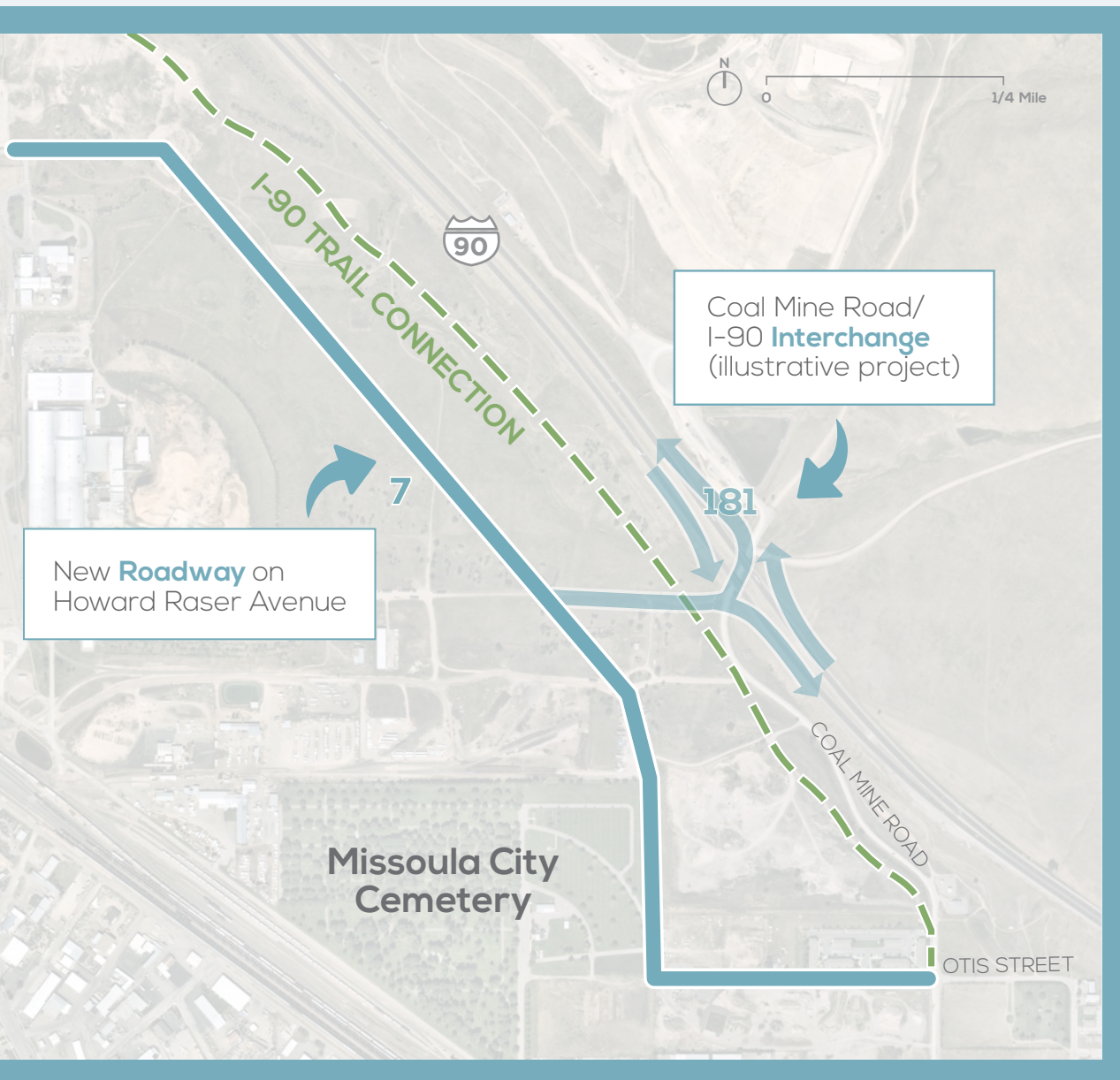
Today, access to the North Reserve/Scott Street neighborhood is limited to the Scott Street bridge, Orange Street underpass, I-90 at Orange Street, and the pedestrian bridge connecting Owen Street to the Northside. The Howard Raser connection provides another outlet for multimodal travel to North Reserve Street, which means better access to jobs, services, and recreation opportunities like the Grant Creek Trail.

Future improvements could also include a new I-90 interchange at Coal Mine Road, providing commercial, freight, and other transportation access from the interstate to this area. These improvements would reduce the transportation impacts on existing neighborhoods, like the Northside, and divert heavy truck traffic away from residential streets.

In addition to providing new travel paths, these connections would lessen strain on other facilities in the network, accommodate growth in the area, and, as multimodal complete streets, help Missoula move toward our mode split goals.









## BROOKS STREET COMPLETE STREETS AND TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS

Project Numbers Cost

124, 125 \$58.5M

Phase



Long-Term

### Complete Streets

Brooks Street is the spine of Midtown Missoula and the most direct route between Downtown and the Bitterroot Valley. Maintaining Brooks Street as a strong, vibrant transportation and commercial corridor is important to Missoula businesses, adjacent neighborhoods, the entire Missoula region, and the State of Montana.

Today, the corridor is ripe for investment and redevelopment. But heavy traffic volumes, numerous driveways, high crash rates, and limited pedestrian and bicycle facilities mean that Brooks Street is not functioning as the community resource it needs to be. This vital corridor is ready for a transformation that can guide sensible and proactive redevelopment, reallocating the right-of-way to accommodate the needs of all travelers while serving the access needs of adjacent land uses.

The Brooks Corridor Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Infrastructure Study, completed in May 2020, identifies the transportation infrastructure needed to transform Brooks Street into a destination corridor with vital development nodes in the heart of Midtown Missoula. The study proposes a single, center-running bus rapid transit (BRT) lane on Brooks Street, with center-platform stations. It includes two traffic lanes in each direction, new sidewalks, raised cycle tracks on both sides of the street, controlled left-turn lanes, street trees, pedestrian-scale lighting, and other amenities. The center-lane BRT station platforms would be extended to provide pedestrian refuge areas to make crossing Brooks Street safer and more comfortable. The areas near BRT stations would become focused development nodes.



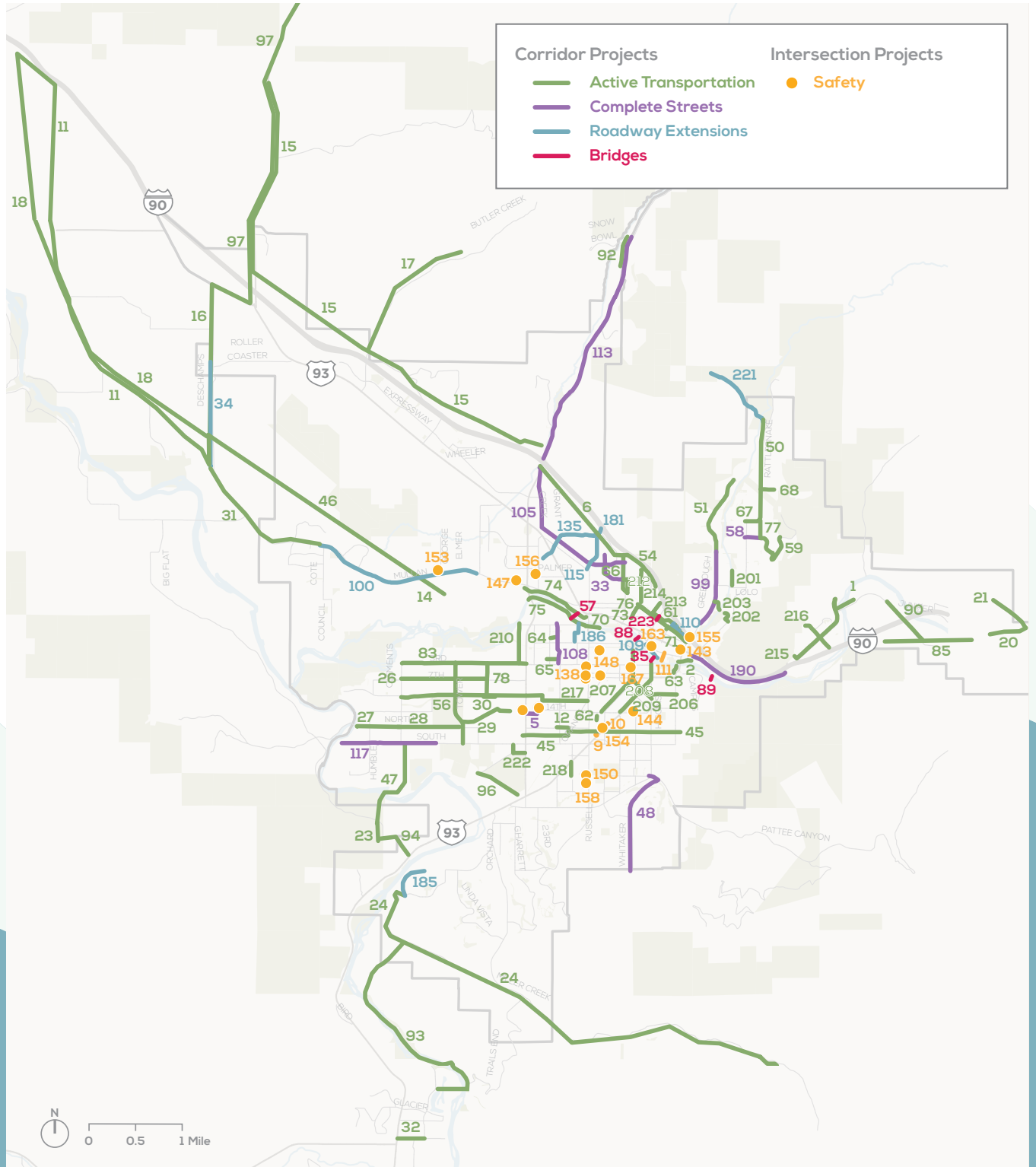


The vision for the Brooks Street Corridor includes center-running BRT and improved pedestrian and bicycle accessibility

Source: Brooks Street Corridor Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Study



# ILLUSTRATIVE PROJECTS



ID	TYPE	CATEGORY	PROJECT NAME	TO	FROM	TOTAL PROJECT COST
1	—	Active Transportation	Deer Creek Rd/Speedway Ave Trail	Canyon River Rd	US Hwy 200	\$718,450
2	—	Active Transportation	Northside Riverfront Trail Extension	Madison St	Van Buren St	\$750,000
5	—	Complete Streets	Burlington Ave Complete Street	Margaret St	Reserve St	\$543,150
9	●	Safety	Brooks St and Regent St Enhanced Crossing	-	-	\$125,000
10	●	Safety	Brooks St and Holburn St Enhanced Crossing	-	-	\$125,000
12	—	Active Transportation	North Ave Bike Lanes	Johnson St	Bitterroot Trail	\$5,550
14	—	Active Transportation	Mullan Rd Connection Trail	Mullan Rd	Schmidt Rd	\$424,360
15	—	Active Transportation	I-90 Trail (Alternative 2)	Grant Creek Rd	Oliver Rd	\$11,777,150
16	—	Active Transportation	Deschamps Ln Shared-Use Path	Laflesch Ln	Bruin Ln	\$4,397,400
17	—	Active Transportation	Butler Creek Rd Trail	Angus Ln	Covenant Rd	\$3,271,740
18	—	Active Transportation	Great American Trail	Loiselle Ln	Deschamps Ln	\$7,948,590
20	—	Active Transportation	West Riverside Trail	Anaconda St	Cowboy Trail Rd	\$1,143,380
21	—	Active Transportation	Cowboy Trail Rd Shared-Use Path	Cowboy Trail Rd	Hellgate Lions Park	\$988,270
23	—	Active Transportation	Blue Mountain Rd Trail	Forest Hill Ln	Future Bridge	\$425,390
24	—	Active Transportation	Miller Creek Shared-Use Path (Lower Miller Creek Connection)	Linda Vista Blvd	Bear Run Creek Rd	\$13,041,040
26	—	Active Transportation	7th St Shoulder Improvements	Clements Rd	Tower St	\$952,030
27	—	Active Transportation	North Ave Shoulderway Improvements	Clements Rd	Edward Ct	\$480,590
28	—	Active Transportation	North Ave Trail Connection	37th Ave	Tower St	\$1,424,950
29	—	Active Transportation	Mount Ave Trail Connection	27th Ave	Tower St	\$1,190,130
30	—	Active Transportation	Spurgin Rd Trail Connection	Hibertha St	Maverick Ln	\$263,190
32	—	Active Transportation	Lewis & Clark Dr Shared-Use Path	Hwy 93	Lakeside Dr	\$625,810

ID	TYPE	CATEGORY	PROJECT NAME	TO	FROM	TOTAL PROJECT COST
34	—	Roadway Extensions	Deschamps Ln Re-Surfacing	Rollercoaster Rd	Mullan Rd	\$1,275,000
35	—	Bridge	Higgins Pedestrian Bridge	Ron's River Trail	Milwaukee Trail	\$6,000,000
45	—	Active Transportation	Kent/Central Neighborhood Greenway	Maurice Ave	Reserve St	\$1,212,490
46	—	Active Transportation	Milwaukee Trail Extension	Deschamps Ln	Mullan Rd	\$5,759,610
47	—	Active Transportation	Fort Missoula to McClay Shared-Use Path and Bridge	Blue Mountain Rd	South Ave	\$2,216,360
48	—	Complete Streets	Whitaker Dr Complete Street	Ben Hogan Dr	Higgins Ave	\$5,716,820
50	—	Active Transportation	Rattlesnake Dr Shared-Use Path	USFS Trailhead	Tamarack St/ Fox Hollow	\$1,579,270
51	—	Active Transportation	Duncan Dr Shared-Use Path	Duncan Dr Trailhead	Mountain View Dr	\$1,883,540
54	—	Active Transportation	Northside Greenway Connector	Scott St	Northside Park	\$1,083,390
56	—	Active Transportation	Spurgin Rd Shared-Use Path	Clements Rd	Reserve St	\$4,805,290
57	—	Bridge	Mullan Rd Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge	Monroc	Cooper St/ Riverfront Trail	\$8,000,000
58	—	Active Transportation	Lincoln Hills Dr Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements	Rattlesnake Dr	Applehouse Ln	\$188,910
59	—	Active Transportation	Lincoln Hills Dr Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements	Contour Ln	Applehouse Ln	\$612,300
61	—	Active Transportation	Northside 1st St Shared-Use Path	Madison Ave	Northside Pedestrian Bridge/ Grand Ave	\$1,076,400
62	—	Active Transportation	Strand Ave to Burlington Ave Shared-Use Path	Strand Ave	Burlington Ave	\$91,540
63	—	Active Transportation	Madison St Underbridge to Arthur St Shared-Use Path	Southside Riverfront Trail	S 5th St E	\$170,820
64	—	Active Transportation	Inverness Pl Shared-Use Path	Inverness Pl cul-de-sac	N Johnson St/ Montana St	\$140,650
65	—	Active Transportation	Johnson St Shared-Use Path Connection	Johnson St	Curtis St	\$270,860
66	—	Active Transportation	Northside Shared-Use Path Connection	Defoe St	Otis St	\$898,960
67	—	Active Transportation	Rattlesnake Dr Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities	Tamarack St/ Fox Hollow	Creek Crossing Rd	\$500,470
68	—	Active Transportation	Tamarack St Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements	USFS Trailhead	Rattlesnake Dr	\$148,930
70	—	Complete Streets	River Rd Complete Street	California St	Russell St	\$688,620
71	—	Active Transportation	Pedestrian Undercrossing Connecting Downtown to Northside	Railyard/B St/N 1st St	Higgins Ave	\$29,340

ID	TYPE	CATEGORY	PROJECT NAME	TO	FROM	TOTAL PROJECT COST
73	—	Active Transportation	Northside Bikeway	RUX Trail	Toole Ave/ Bitterroot Trail	\$1,678,730
74	—	Active Transportation	Northbank Riverfront Trail	Reserve St	Russell St	\$1,614,750
75	—	Active Transportation	Southbank Riverfront Trail Extension	Reserve St	Russell St	\$1,532,240
76	—	Active Transportation	Westside Greenway Trail	Owen St	Bitterroot Railroad Spur Line	\$390,500
77	—	Active Transportation	Lincoln Hills Shared-Use Path	Rattlesnake Ct	Lincoln Hills Dr	\$400,370
78	—	Active Transportation	Hiberta St Bike Lanes	Spurgin Rd	S 3rd St	\$2,500
85	—	Active Transportation	Kim Williams Trail Extension and Bridge	Milltown State Park	Kim Williams Trail End	\$8,998,070
88	—	Bridge	Riverfront Triangle Non-Motorized Bridge	Riverfront Triangle	McCormick Park	\$8,000,000
89	—	Bridge	Missoula College Non-Motorized Bridge	Missoula College	Kim Williams Trail	\$8,000,000
90	—	Active Transportation	Kim Williams Trail Connector	Canyon River Rd	Bandmann Trail	\$1,179,580
92	—	Active Transportation	Grant Creek Trail Phase II	Snowbowl Rd	Mellot Ln	\$1,000,000
93	—	Active Transportation	Miller Creek to Lolo Trail Connection	Lolo/Lakeside Dr	Lower Miller Creek Rd	\$5,685,540
94	—	Active Transportation	Blue Mountain Rd Shared-Use Path	Bitterroot Trail	Blue Mountain Recreation Area	\$866,190
96	—	Active Transportation	Post Siding Rd Shared-Use Path	Old Hwy 93	Fort Missoula Rd	\$1,036,000
97	—	Active Transportation	People's Way Trail Phase I	Evaro	I-90	\$11,875,410
99	—	Complete Streets	Duncan Dr/Greenough Dr Complete Street	Mountain View Dr	Minckler Loop	\$3,850,200
100	—	Roadway Extensions	Mullan Rd Widening	Cote Ln	Flynn Ln	\$10,692,240
105	—	Complete Streets	Old Grant Creek/Cemetery Rd/Rodgers St Multimodal Improvements	Shakespeare St	Howard Raser Ave	\$6,800,000
108	—	Complete Streets	Johnson St Extension and Complete Street	River Rd	S 3rd St	\$2,060,520
109	—	Roadway Extensions	Carousel Dr Reconfiguration	Front St	Higgins Ave	\$1,674,160
110	—	Roadway Extensions	Railyard St Grid Construction	Ryman St	Madison St	\$2,312,460
111	●	Safety	Clay St Streetscaping and Intersection Control	-	-	\$200,000
113	—	Complete Streets	Grant Creek Rd Complete Street	Snowbowl Rd	I-90	\$12,170,860
115	—	Roadway Extensions	Russell St Extension	New I-90 interchange	Railroad St	\$55,000,000

ID	TYPE	CATEGORY	PROJECT NAME	TO	FROM	TOTAL PROJECT COST
116	—	Complete Streets	E Broadway St/Hwy 200 Complete Street	Contour Ln	Applehouse Ln	\$8,157,410
117	—	Complete Streets	South Ave Complete Street	Hanson Dr	36th St	\$4,779,100
135	—	Roadway Extensions	England Blvd Extension	Latimer St	I-90	\$70,000,000
138	●	Safety	Russell St and 4th St Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$200,000
139	●	Safety	Russell St and 7th St Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$200,000
140	●	Safety	14th St and Eaton St Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$450,000
142	●	Safety	Russell St and 6th St Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$200,000
143	●	Safety	Madison St and Front St Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$450,000
144	●	Safety	Park St and Mount Ave Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$125,000
147	●	Safety	Clark Fork Ln and Mullan Rd Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$450,000
148	●	Safety	California St and River St Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$450,000
150	●	Safety	Russell St and Ernest Ave Enhanced Crossing	-	-	\$200,000
153	●	Safety	George Elmer Dr and Mullan Rd Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$450,000
154	●	Safety	Brooks St and Stephens Ave Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$125,000
155	●	Safety	Greenough Dr and Vine St Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$200,000
156	●	Safety	Great Northern Ave and Palmer St Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$450,000
158	●	Safety	McDonald Ave and Russell St Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$450,000
163	●	Safety	Ryman St and Front St Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$450,000
165	●	Safety	6th St and Ronan St Enhanced Trail Crossing	-	-	\$125,000
166	●	Safety	14th St and Mount Ave Intersection Improvements	-	-	\$75,000
167	●	Safety	4th St and Orange St Enhanced Crossing	-	-	\$200,000
83	—	Active Transportation	S 3rd St Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities	Clements Rd	Hiberta St	\$2,862,610
181	—	Roadway Extensions	Coal Mine Road/I-90 Interchange	I-90	Howard Raser Dr	\$15,000,000
31	—	Active Transportation	Mullan Rd Shared-Use Path	Deschamps Ln	Cote Ln	\$3,304,450
33	—	Complete Streets	Scott St Area Complete Street	Otis St	Turner St	\$1,920,000
185	—	Roadway Extensions	Christian Dr Extension	Old Bitterroot Rd	Lower Miller Creek Rd	\$2,512,000



ID	TYPE	CATEGORY	PROJECT NAME	TO	FROM	TOTAL PROJECT COST
186	—	Roadway Extensions	Wyoming Connector	River Rd	Wyoming St	\$1,366,800
6	—	Active Transportation	North Reserve/Scott St I-90 Trail Connection	Grant Creek Rd	Scott St	\$2,525,490
190	—	Complete Streets	East Broadway Complete Street	Van Buren St	Easy St	\$5,600,000
46	—	Active Transportation	Milwaukee Trail Extension	Deschamps Ln	Mullan Rd	\$5,759,610
11	—	Active Transportation	Mullan Rd - Frenchtown Trail	Deschamps Ln	Hamel Rd	\$13,062,050
201	—	Active Transportation	Wylie Neighborhood Greenway	Lolo St	Wylie Ave	\$5,000
202	—	Active Transportation	Jackson /Holly Neighborhood Greenway	Van Buren St	Monroe St	\$5,000
203	—	Active Transportation	Alvina Path Neighborhood Greenway	Duncan Dr	City Dr	\$5,000
206	—	Active Transportation	University Neighborhood Greenway	S Higgins Ave	Arthur Ave	\$305,000
207	—	Active Transportation	Rollins Neighborhood Greenway	W Florence St	Mount Ave	\$105,000
208	—	Active Transportation	Florence/Cottonwood Neighborhood Greenway	River St	Plymouth St	\$305,000
209	—	Active Transportation	Myrtle/Woodford Neighborhood Greenway	S 3rd St W	Mount Ave	\$105,000
210	—	Active Transportation	Grove Neighborhood Greenway	S 3rd St W	River Rd	\$5,000
212	—	Active Transportation	Waverly Neighborhood Greenway	Turner St	Defoe St	\$5,000
213	—	Active Transportation	Grand Neighborhood Greenway	N 1st St	N 5th St	\$5,000
214	—	Active Transportation	Holmes Neighborhood Greenway	Charlo St	Phillips St	\$105,000
215	—	Active Transportation	Speedway Neighborhood Greenway	Highton St	Hwy 200	\$6,250
216	—	Active Transportation	Sommers Neighborhood Greenway	Discovery Way	Sommers St	\$5,000
217	—	Active Transportation	Spurgin Rd/12th Neighborhood Greenway	S Reserve St	Bitterroot Branch Trail	\$105,000
218	—	Active Transportation	Garfield/Agnes Neighborhood Greenway	Ernest Ave	Brooks St	\$5,000
219	-	Transit	Passenger Rail Depot	-	-	TBD
220	-	Transit	Relocated Mountain Line Facility	-	-	\$30,000,000
221	—	Roadway Extensions	Sawmill Gulch Rd Roadway Improvements	Woods Gulch Rd	Russian Joe Rd	\$1,600,000
222	—	Active Transportation	South Ave to Bitterroot Trail Connection	Old Fort Rd	Reserve St	\$1,706,000
223	—	Bridge	Orange Street Tunnel Rehabilitation	N Orange St	Railroad Tracks	\$11,000,000



## ILLUSTRATIVE PROJECTS

# MULLAN ROAD – FRENCHTOWN TRAIL, MULLAN ROAD SHARED-USE PATH, AND MILWAUKEE TRAIL EXTENSION

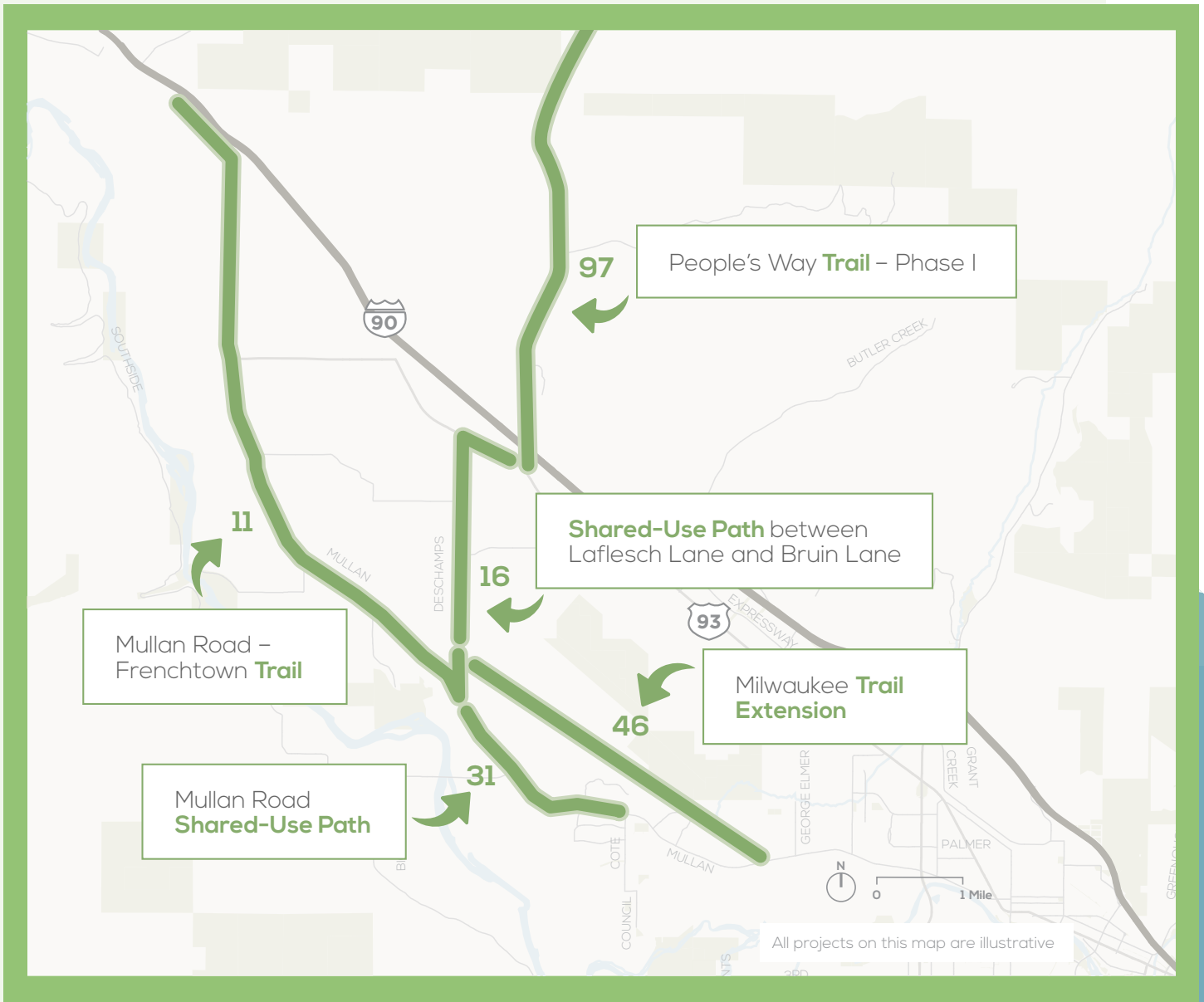
### Active Transportation

Missoula is a global destination for long-distance cycling adventures. The Mullan Road – Frenchtown Trail and Mullan Road Shared-Use Path are part of a cross-country bicycle route called the Great American Rail-Trail, which connects the coast of Washington State to Washington, DC. Additionally, Frenchtown is a rapidly growing community west of Missoula; to support better connections and non-driving options for its residents, improved active transportation facilities are essential.

The Milwaukee Trail Extension specifically improves active transportation connectivity for residents in several growing areas of our region. The most significant growth is planned in the Sx<sup>w</sup>tpqyen (pronounced S-wh-tip-KAYN) Neighborhood Development, with 6,000 to 10,000 new homes. The trail extension—along with the BUILD Grant, North Reserve Street, and England Boulevard projects, as well as future widening of Mullan Road—will address transportation connectivity challenges in this area and promote economic development.

Another important connection identified as part of the Montana Department of Transportation’s West of Missoula-Northwest project is a shared-use path between Deschamps Lane and Pulp Mill Road. This project helps to meet Missoula Connect’s regional equity goals by linking more urban areas with more rural parts of Missoula County. It is also an important interim connection for the Great American Rail Trail; however, the County and the MPO will need to work together to identify funding for the path.

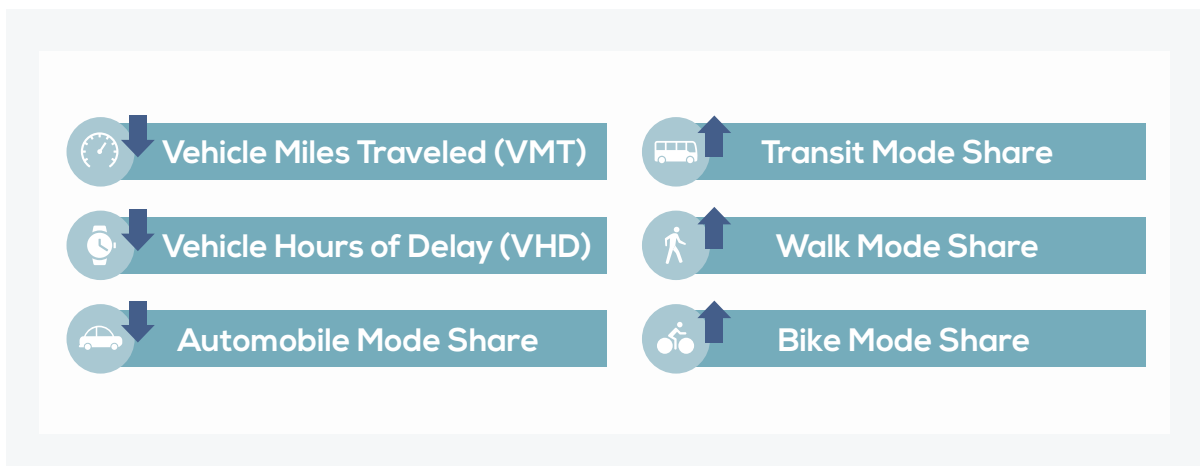
The Mullan Road – Frenchtown Trail, Mullan Road Shared-Use Path, and Milwaukee Trail Extension projects provide critical active transportation connections between northwestern Missoula County and the Heart of Missoula.



# OUTCOMES OF THE RECOMMENDED SCENARIO

The MPO and the Missoula Connect project team used the regional travel demand model and select off-model analyses to assess the likely outcomes of the Recommended Scenario. Similar to the approach we took with the three transportation network scenarios described in Chapter 5 and Appendix E, we coded the Recommended Scenario into the regional model and analyzed it against the Business as Usual growth scenario for 2050. Although there were two growth scenarios included in the initial analysis, we selected Business as Usual for the final model run to produce more conservative results.

The metrics analyzed by the regional model are shown below. The arrow next to the metric indicates whether it increases or decreases with the Recommended Scenario.



When compared to the 2050 base network—which is the expected transportation network in the Missoula region without the improvements identified in Missoula Connect—the Recommended Scenario is expected to shift some auto trips to walking and biking trips. Regional VMT and VHD would also decline slightly. However, if the Recommended Scenario is compared to today's transportation network, the shifts toward transit and active transportation are much more significant, as are the reductions in VMT and VHD. More information about the modeling results for the Recommended Scenario is available in Appendix F and Appendix G.

Because the Recommended Scenario is a blend of the New Connections, Enhanced Connections, and Regional Equity Scenarios, it has benefits across the Missoula Connect goals. The graphic below shows anticipated outcomes of the Recommended Scenario.

## Recommended Scenario Outcomes

### MISSOULA CONNECT GOALS



**Improve safety and promote health to enhance quality of life**



**Advance sustainability and climate resilience to protect natural resources and address climate change**



**Expand mobility choices to improve efficiency and accessibility for people and goods**



**Connect and strengthen communities to create a more equitable region**



**Maintain assets and invest strategically to boost economic vitality**



- Safety
- Health
- Parks Access



- Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Non-Driving Trips



- Connectivity
- Accessibility
- Delay



- Equity
- Affordability
- Support for Growth



- Good Repair
- Cost Effectiveness
- Economic Development

LESS SUPPORTIVE ◀ ◯ ◯ ◯ ▶ MORE SUPPORTIVE

# Chapter 7

# Recommended Programs and Policies

## BEYOND CAPITAL PROJECTS


Capital improvements—like new bicycle and sidewalk connections—are only part of what is needed to implement the vision of Missoula Connect. Non-capital programs and policies recommended in this chapter will help Missoula deliver on the commitment to a transportation system that prioritizes more options for getting around the region. These programs and policies can improve people’s awareness of transportation choices, prioritize investments, and help to achieve Missoula’s mode split goals. The Missoula MPO could initiate some of these recommendations, but successful implementation will require strong partnerships with other agencies and community organizations. For example, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) would be a critical partner for programs or policies that affect State-maintained roadways.

The following pages explain each recommended program and policy, as well as key partnerships and the recommended priority for implementation. The key partners are not intended to be comprehensive; rather, the identified partner is the entity with which the MPO should work to advance the first steps. The spotlights featured in this chapter are programs and policies that are particularly important to improve transportation in the Missoula region in the next few years.





# RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT MATTERS	FIRST STEPS	KEY PARTNER	PRIORITY
Safe Routes to School	Provides prioritization process and funding for safety improvements, education, and encouragement efforts near schools.	A Safe Routes to School program prioritizes safety for some of the Missoula region's most vulnerable travelers, encourages walking and biking to school, and improves health outcomes for children.	Build on existing promotional and route-mapping efforts to prioritize schools for safety improvement funding.	Missoula County Public Schools	Ongoing with Near Term additions
					
Safe Routes for Seniors	Improves access to services and enhances pedestrian safety and comfort for older adults through infrastructure and other supports.	A Safe Routes for Seniors program prioritizes safety for some of the Missoula region's most vulnerable travelers, improves access to services, and encourages physical activity among older adults.	Engage with community-based organizations and non-profits to understand senior mobility challenges.	Missoula Aging Services	Medium Term
Safe Routes to Transit	Identifies and implements safety improvements—supported by education and encouragement efforts—that connect to transit stops and hubs.	Some transit stops in Missoula are difficult to access, especially for people walking or biking.	Prioritize transit stops and hubs for funding.	Missoula Urban Transportation District	Medium Term



## Advance Transportation Equity

Equity is distinct from equality—an equity-based approach to transportation planning and project delivery focuses investments in areas that have been historically underserved or marginalized. This approach targets resources in the areas where they are most needed rather than providing the same amount of transportation investment everywhere. An equity-based approach provides new social and economic opportunities for people with lower incomes, Indigenous populations and people of color, older adults, children, people with limited English proficiency, and people with disabilities.

Advancing transportation equity to create equitable systems can increase affordability, improve access to jobs, education, and services, and improve overall quality of life in several ways. Outcomes of an equity-based approach can include the following:

- Reducing adverse human health and environmental impacts associated with transportation projects, particularly capacity projects that generate additional air pollution
- Improving access to grocery stores, healthcare services, greenspace, Invest Health Neighborhoods, and other community amenities
- Enhancing economic opportunities by improving access to jobs and job training programs
- Advancing accessibility by applying universal design principles and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design requirements to ensure our improvements increase safety and comfort for people with disabilities
- Promoting affordable and sustainable mobility options such as riding a bike or taking the bus
- Ensuring equitable engagement practices throughout all phases of project planning, design, and delivery

### Equality



### Equity








Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2017)

The MPO has taken an equity-based approach to prioritizing projects, programs, and policies in Missoula Connect. As funding becomes available, the MPO can continue to prioritize how resources are used in ways that advance transportation equity.

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT MATTERS	FIRST STEPS	KEY PARTNER	PRIORITY
<b>Expanded Transportation and Health Campaign</b>	Enhances the existing education campaign that helps people understand the connection between transportation and health.	Promoting physical activity through walking and biking may help lower obesity rates in adults and children.	Leverage existing Invest Health campaign and identify additional priority areas for health messaging.	Missoula City-County Health Department	<b>Ongoing with Medium Term additions</b>
<b>Transit Amenities Program</b>	Improves transit stops and the customer experience by adding amenities, such as bus shelters, benches, trash receptacles, and schedules (or real-time information).	Stop amenities help to ensure that transit stops and stations in the region provide a high-quality, comfortable, and safe experience for transit riders.	Collaborate with Mountain Line to identify additional priority stops.	Missoula Urban Transportation District	<b>Ongoing</b>
					
<p>Source: Mountain Line</p>					
<b>Mobility Hubs Program</b>	Integrates public and private mobility services to enhance the customer experience and expand transportation choices. Includes multimodal connections, high-quality amenities, and frequent transit service.	Mobility hubs present an opportunity to design and integrate sustainable transportation options to enhance connectivity across the region. Hubs can complement transit-oriented development and areas of higher density, but they are also important in less urban settings, such as park-and-rides.	Develop a hub typology and kit of parts to support a pilot program.	Missoula Urban Transportation District; Missoula Parking Commission	<b>Near Term</b>

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT MATTERS	FIRST STEPS	KEY PARTNER	PRIORITY
Bike Share	Provides a fleet of bikes for public use.	Bike share could help Missoula residents and visitors access key destinations without a car.	Assess and select bike share model (e.g., dockless or station-based).	Missoula in Motion; Missoula Parking Commission; University of Montana	 <b>Near Term</b>
				<i>New York's Citi Bike program is one of the most successful in the nation, with over 100 million rides taken on the system.</i>	
	<p>Source: Gotham Gazette</p>				
Expanded Regional Vanpool or Microtransit Program	Provides flexible, on-demand transit services for more areas of the region. Works well in more rural or outlying areas that have lower demand and cannot support fixed-route bus service.	The Missoula region is large and includes rural and lower density areas that have few options for travel besides driving. This program would provide affordable, non-drive-alone options for more parts of the region.	Identify priority areas for expanded vanpool or microtransit service and establish principles for a financially sustainable program.	Missoula Urban Transportation District; Missoula Ravalli TMA	 <b>Ongoing with Medium Term additions</b>
Employer Shuttle Program	Identifies opportunities to partner with employers to sponsor shuttles or other shared-ride programs to connect employees to jobs.	A significant amount of the region's vehicle travel is commute travel. This program would provide affordable non-driving options to major employment sites.	Identify potential employers based on size, employee mode share, and interest.	Missoula in Motion	 <b>Medium Term</b>

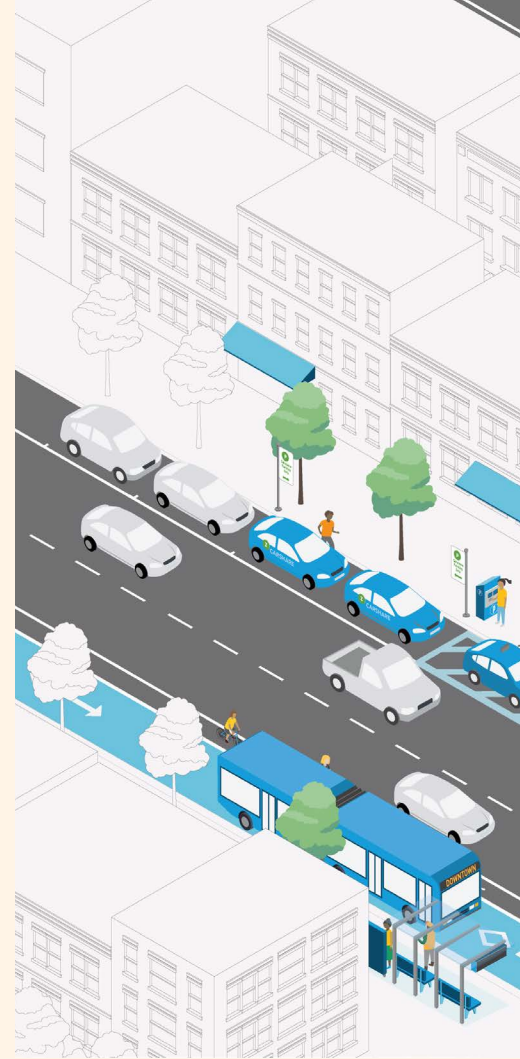


## Create a Mobility Hubs Program

Serving as a community anchor, a mobility hub is a welcoming environment that connects multimodal transportation options and supportive amenities. Built on a backbone of transit routes, mobility hubs offer a safe, comfortable, convenient, and accessible space to seamlessly transfer between travel modes. Mobility hubs can help to reduce emissions, increase affordability, and enhance connections across the region, while seamlessly integrating public and private mobility services.

Mobility hubs are important in many different contexts, from a dense, transit-oriented development to a more suburban or rural park-and-ride. Wherever they are located, mobility hubs should be tailored to the needs of the people and communities they serve. A mobility hub in downtown Missoula, for example, would have different design features than a mobility hub at the Dornblaser Park and Ride. A traveler might find a mix of the following features at mobility hubs throughout the Missoula area:

- Bus shelters and waiting areas
- Real-time traveler information
- Secure bike parking
- Shared bikes and scooters
- Dedicated car-share parking
- Loading zones for pick-up and drop-off
- Charging stations for electric vehicles and bikes
- High-quality walking and biking connections
- Amenities such as lighting, street furniture, wayfinding, and kiosks







Source: Nelson\Nygaard MTC Regional Mobility Hub Report

To create a Mobility Hubs Program, the MPO should first develop a typology of mobility hubs based on land use and travel characteristics. After identifying the different types of hubs that are right for the region—such as rural, neighborhood, and downtown hubs—the second step is to determine which elements and amenities are best for each type of hub. This “kit of parts” might include those shown in the graphic above as well as community-designed features. With the typology and kit of parts in hand, the MPO could then establish a set of regionally significant mobility hubs for a pilot program.



## Build a Great Transit System

Transit is the backbone of a strong multimodal transportation system, and a high-quality transit system plays a critical role in creating a more equitable, affordable, and connected region. Mountain Line completed a Strategic Plan in 2018 to guide the growth of transit in Missoula by balancing three principles: improving service, informing future development, and using fiscal resources responsibly.

As our region grows, it's important that Mountain Line can continue getting people to work, taking students to school, and providing options to help seniors and people with disabilities remain independent and active.

In November 2020, Missoula voters approved a significant mill levy increase that provides the resources needed to deliver on key Mountain Line and community priorities. Additionally, the MPO allocates a portion of the region's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding to support transit operations and bus purchases, as well as vanpool service.

To build a great transit system for the Missoula region, the MPO will support Mountain Line in advancing the following initiatives:

- Enhancing the **Zero-Fare Program** by providing more service for Mountain Line's growing ridership



- Supporting the conversion to a **Zero-Emissions Fleet** by making Mountain Line more competitive for state and federal grants



Source: Mountain Line

- Implementing **Bus Stop Improvements** to add new signs, shelters, seating, amenities, and accessibility upgrades

- Increasing **Bus Frequency** on heavily used routes, including providing all-day service on Route 4

- Expanding **Senior and Paratransit Service** to longer hours and more days of the week



Source: Mountain Line (TOP, RIGHT)



- Expanding the **Hours of Service**, with weekday service beginning at 6 AM and Saturday service beginning at 9 AM and running as late as 11 PM on some routes
- Providing **Sunday Service** for the first time, starting at 9 AM and running until 9 PM on some routes
- Relocating Mountain Line's **Central Operations Facility** to provide more space to support expanded services



Each of these initiatives builds on the work Mountain Line is already doing to create a more sustainable region and provide reliable transportation options for Missoula area residents. Mountain Line's 2022 Strategic Plan Update presents an opportunity to do even more to integrate transit and land use planning, to support areas of new growth, and to expand the bus system to create stronger local and regional connections.



PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT MATTERS	FIRST STEPS	KEY PARTNER	PRIORITY
<b>Pavement Maintenance and Asset Management Program</b>	Provides a system to continuously gather information about pavement condition and make maintenance decisions to manage transportation facilities to a consistent standard.	There are hundreds of miles of roads in need of maintenance and very limited funds available. Taking care of the region's roads and trails with properly timed preservation activities is more effective and efficient than reactive repair.	Develop a "Fix-It First" policy to guide the region's asset management programs.	Public Works & Mobility; County Public Works	<b>Ongoing with</b>  <b>Near Term additions</b>
<b>Prioritized Snow Removal and Street Sweeping Routes</b>	Establishes a network of priority bikeways, walkways, and local roads for street sweeping and snow clearing in the winter.	Prioritization and scheduling are key to supporting a yearlong bikeway program. Keeping primary bikeways and routes leading to schools and business districts clear of snow provides the best access to the greatest number of people.	Identify priority bikeways, walkways, and local roads, focusing on connections to bus stops.	Public Works & Mobility; County Public Works	<b>Ongoing</b>
					
<p>Source: City of Missoula</p>					
<b>Neighborhood Greenways and "Safe and Healthy Streets"</b>	Expands existing Neighborhood Greenways program by advancing implementation through partnerships, signs, and do-it-yourself partial closures of local streets to through traffic.	Neighborhood Greenways provide important space for people to be active, and they have become more important during COVID-19. Expanding the network would further encourage active travel.	Publish Neighborhood Greenways toolkit for community members through the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program, including approval requirements.	Public Works & Mobility; County Public Works	<b>Ongoing with</b>  <b>Near Term additions</b>



## Enhance the Region’s Approach to Asset Management

Asset management—the maintenance, preservation, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement of transportation infrastructure—is vital to ensure the ongoing performance and long-term viability of the Missoula region’s existing and future transportation network. The City and County of Missoula, through the Departments of Public Works & Mobility and Parks & Recreation, have existing maintenance programs that are funded annually. These include a sidewalk gap replacement program that requires sidewalk infill with development projects and offers cost-sharing for adjacent property owners, ongoing maintenance (e.g., sweeping, snow removal) of biking and walking facilities, and a spot maintenance program to make smaller-scale roadway repairs on an ongoing basis.

To advance the region’s approach to asset management and ensure that pavement and other transportation infrastructure is maintained at an appropriate level, the City and County could adopt a “Fix-It First” policy. In developing long-term transportation priorities, the life-cycle cost of new capital investments is sometimes overlooked. A Fix-It First approach prioritizes the maintenance of roadway facilities over adding new facilities or expanding existing roads. Critical maintenance activities to preserve and enhance existing infrastructure include chip seal/crack sealing, resurfacing, and reconstruction.

The City has begun to align its maintenance and capital improvement projects, ensuring that all Public Works & Mobility projects can do double or triple duty. By incorporating complete street design elements and utility upgrades when constructing new or reconstructing existing streets, the region can get greater benefit out of each maintenance project and continue to expand the Missoula area’s multimodal networks. When the City or County undertakes standard roadway maintenance activities, they should continue to consider opportunities to repair existing sidewalks, restripe crosswalks and bike lanes, and address gaps in the sidewalk or on-street bicycle network, if funds are available.



Source: Missoulian

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT MATTERS	FIRST STEPS	KEY PARTNER	PRIORITY
<p><b>Traffic Calming and Speed Management Program</b></p>	<p>Provides consolidated resources and design concepts to guide implementation of neighborhood and arterial traffic calming.</p>	<p>Improving conditions for walking, bicycling, and the use of public transit requires reducing vehicle speeds and designing streets to support safe, convenient, and comfortable travel for people using all modes.</p>	<p>Build on Neighborhood Greenways and Neighborhood Traffic Management Program efforts to create a toolbox of safety countermeasures.</p>	<p>Public Works &amp; Mobility; County Public Works</p>	<p>Ongoing with  <b>Medium Term additions</b></p>
					
<p>Source: City of Missoula</p>					
<p><b>Residential Slow Streets Program</b></p>	<p>Implements an education and outreach campaign paired with simple signs to encourage drivers to observe the speed limit.</p>	<p>Between 2013 and 2017, there were 462 collisions in Missoula that involved people walking or biking. While a relatively small percentage of the number of collisions, people walking and biking are the most vulnerable travelers. Lower speeds translate to less severe injuries in the event of a collision.</p>	<p>Collaborate with neighborhood and community councils to create an education and outreach campaign.</p>	<p>Missoula Office of Neighborhoods; Public Works &amp; Mobility</p>	<p> <b>Medium Term</b></p>
					
<p><i>Seattle's Slow Streets program encourages drivers to adhere to lower speed limits as part of the city's Vision Zero program.</i></p>					
<p>Source: Seattle Department of Transportation</p>					



## Facilitate Safe Crossings of Freight Rail Network

Montana Rail Link (MRL) is a Class II freight railroad headquartered in Missoula with more than 900 miles of track from Billings to Spokane, WA. More than 25 freight trains pass through Missoula in an average 24-hour period, with more trains switching and assembling in the railyards between the Northside and Downtown. This amount of rail activity creates considerable delays and safety concerns for key at-grade crossings, such as the Spruce Street/Madison Street intersection. To address these issues, the MPO and its partners can work with MRL to develop safer railroad crossings throughout the region. With the implementation of enhanced safety measures, the region could also explore instituting “quiet zones” that limit the use of train horns in residential areas. Safety improvements could include the following:

- **Advanced Obstacle Detection:**





Image processing technology monitors boom gate conditions, alerts engineers to the presence of trapped objects, monitors movements in real-time, and summons first-responders in the event of an emergency.



Source: Missoulian

- **Real-Time Equipment Status:** Data acquisition systems alert operators if there are malfunctioning warning devices such as barriers, motors, lights, and alarms.
- **Grade Separation:** Separates the roadway from the railroad through above- or below-grade improvements to reduce conflicts. Requires special consideration of comfort and safety for people walking, rolling, and biking, especially if aerial walkways or tunnels are required.

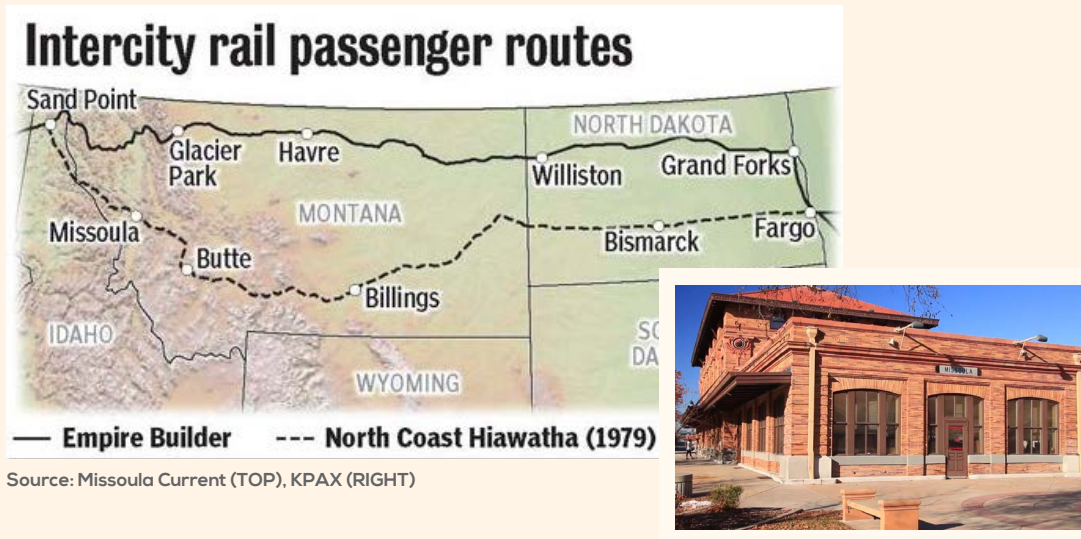


PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT MATTERS	FIRST STEPS	KEY PARTNER	PRIORITY
<b>Pilot Demonstration Program</b>	Provides an opportunity to test and iterate using low-cost materials or temporary solutions. Offers an avenue for public engagement and real-time feedback on new design treatments or programs.	The Missoula region has a history of innovative transportation projects, but it can be difficult to advance them quickly due to funding and staff capacity. A pilot program supports rapid implementation and helps people understand new approaches to street design before they are permanent.	Develop a demonstration program toolkit that identifies requirements, materials, and opportunities for pilot projects.	Public Works & Mobility	 Near Term
				<i>Smart Growth America's "Safe Streets Academy" helps cities build skills in safer street design through on-the-ground demonstration projects.</i>	
<b>Low Impact Planting Program</b>	Adds native vegetation, like trees, plantings, or shrubs, along roads, trails, and other public spaces. Encourages new development to expand landscaping plans using native vegetation.	Street trees and landscaping help buffer people on the sidewalk from traffic in the roadway. Vegetation also helps to manage stormwater, removes pollutants, and provides shade.	Identify priority improvement areas from other plans.	Public Works & Mobility; Parks & Recreation	 Ongoing with Medium Term additions
<b>Community Carshare</b>	Provides carsharing options for lower-income travelers and all residents through a community-supported model based on public-private partnerships.	Car ownership is expensive. To increase affordability and provide greater access to opportunity, a carshare program gives people access to a vehicle for short periods of time at affordable rates.	Identify potential private partners and funding sources for a pilot program.	Missoula in Motion; Missoula Parking Commission; University of Montana	 Near Term



## Support Future Passenger Rail

Until 1979, the Missoula region was served by the North Coast Hiawatha passenger rail route, which provided an important connection from points east and west. There has been ongoing advocacy to bring passenger rail back to southern Montana, and the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) was established in 2020, following a joint resolution by 12 counties. Authorizing the BSPRA increases the likelihood of critical federal support and funding for passenger rail, although competition for resources remains stiff.



The MPO supports the Authority's efforts, as bringing passenger rail back to the region aligns with input from residents in the 2019 Missoula Area Transportation Survey, feedback gathered through Missoula Connect, and the economic health objectives in the City of Missoula's Growth Policy. The MPO will continue to attend meetings and coordinate with BSPRA to articulate the connection between passenger rail and the goals of Missoula Connect. The MPO can also play an important role in ensuring that any future station investments integrate with the local transit system and the region's multimodal networks.

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT MATTERS	FIRST STEPS	KEY PARTNER	PRIORITY
<p><b>Freight and Goods Delivery Management</b></p>	<p>Re-envision goods delivery and other freight services to improve efficiency, reduce environmental impacts, and improve safety for people walking and biking.</p>	<p>Providing goods delivery by sustainable modes, such as e-cargo bikes, can reduce demands on loading spaces and the transportation network. Moving away from diesel vehicles reduces greenhouse gas emissions and increases sustainability.</p>	<p>Create an inventory of existing freight routes and on- and off-street commercial loading zones.</p>	<p>Montana Department of Transportation, Motor Carriers of Montana; Missoula Parking Commission</p>	<p><b>Long Term</b></p>
					
<p><i>UPS launched electric cargo tricycle delivery in Seattle in 2019 to improve efficiency and reduce their environmental impact.</i></p>					
<p><b>Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and Signal Coordination</b></p>	<p>Supports efficient traffic operations through communication systems that provide real-time feedback to monitor and manage roadways, coordinate signals, and disseminate dynamic messaging to travelers.</p>	<p>Implementing ITS can reduce traffic congestion, optimize infrastructure investments, provide roadway performance data, and promote more sustainable travel options.</p>	<p>Conduct a system-wide signal coordination and optimization study.</p>	<p>Public Works &amp; Mobility; County Public Works; Montana Department of Transportation</p>	<p><b>Medium Term</b></p>





## Support Airport Groundside Access

Commercial passenger air service is provided through Missoula International Airport, located northwest of downtown Missoula. The airport served a record year-over-year number of passengers for more than a decade pre-COVID, with regularly scheduled flights by Alaska Airlines, Allegiant Air, American Airlines, Delta, and United Airlines providing direct service to major hubs throughout the Rockies, West Coast, and Midwest. The airport is also home to Neptune Aviation, one of the world's premier aerial firefighting companies, as well as seasonal operators.

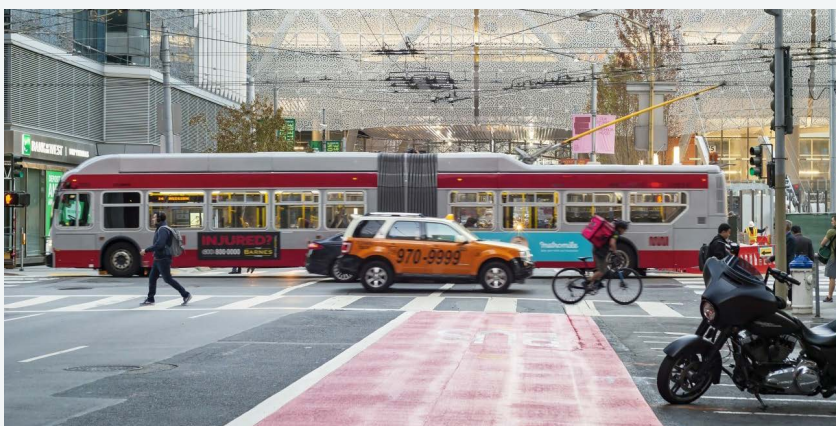


Source: Port of Seattle

Missoula International Airport is critical to Western Montana's economy and quality of life, providing the primary means of access to national and international destinations for residents, business travelers, and visitors. The airport is slated to complete a \$70 million expansion in 2022 that will provide more gates for aircraft and world-class facilities for passengers. To support the expansion and the goals of Missoula Connect, the MPO and its partners should continue to collaborate with the Airport to ensure multimodal access through options such as long-term bicycle storage, trip-planning information screens, and enhanced transit facilities.




# RECOMMENDED POLICIES

POLICY	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT MATTERS	FIRST STEPS	KEY PARTNER	PRIORITY
<p><b>Emerging Mobility Guiding Principles</b></p>	<p>Establishes a unified set of locally defined, values-based principles for emerging mobility in the Missoula region. Forms the foundation of new policy and regulations guiding the region's response to or deployment of emerging mobility services.</p>	<p>An effective approach to emerging mobility requires a strong foundation rooted in community goals and oriented around addressing specific needs. Establishing guiding principles provides a consistent framework for evaluating and guiding decisions, policies, and actions related to emerging mobility services.</p>	<p>Develop an Emerging Mobility Playbook to articulate draft principles for regional discussion.</p>	<p>Public Works &amp; Mobility</p>	<p><b>Near Term</b></p>
<p><b>Transit First Community</b></p>	<p>Requires that decisions regarding the use of public streets and sidewalks prioritize public transit, pedestrians, and people on bicycles. Encourages transit improvements focused on priority corridors and areas of growth, including potential transit-oriented development sites, consistent with the Our Missoula Growth Policy.</p>	<p>Transit is an economically and environmentally sound alternative to transportation by private vehicle. Prioritizing transit-supportive improvements on public streets and sidewalks, especially in areas of growth, can encourage transit ridership.</p>	<p>Outline potential policy with Mountain Line.</p>	<p>Missoula Urban Transportation District; Community Planning, Development, &amp; Innovation</p>	<p><b>Medium Term</b></p>



Source: San Francisco County Transportation Authority

*San Francisco's Transit-First Policy was adopted in 1973 and guides the development of major infrastructure projects.*

POLICY	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT MATTERS	FIRST STEPS	KEY PARTNER	PRIORITY
<p><b>Zero-Emission Fleet Conversion</b></p>	<p>Expands the use of electric vehicles and alternative fuels such as hydrogen and biofuels, especially in City and County fleets. Builds on MUTD's resolution to convert Mountain Line's fleet to all-electric by 2035.</p>	<p>Improving air quality is good for our region, and battery-electric buses reduce annual CO2 emissions by 77% and annual NOx by 71% compared to diesel buses. Shifting City and County fleets away from fossil fuels increases sustainability of local government operations.</p>	<p>Identify potential funding sources to support additional bus and fleet conversion.</p>	<p>Missoula Urban Transportation District; City of Missoula; Missoula County</p>	<p>Ongoing with  <b>Medium Term additions</b></p>
					
<p>Source: Missoulian</p>					
<p><b>Expanded Development and Traffic Impact Analysis Requirements</b></p>	<p>Expands requirements for developers to conduct multimodal traffic impact analyses and implement sidewalks, bike lanes, and/or transit stops as part of the new development process, including addressing nearby intersections and critical connections to existing facilities.</p>	<p>Building on the existing impact fee program, the City and County could establish expanded requirements for multimodal analysis and facility construction. Securing private funding for projects that address intersection and crossing improvements and make connections to nearby facilities can create a more complete multimodal network.</p>	<p>Identify desired outcomes of expanded requirements.</p>	<p>Community Planning, Development, &amp; Innovation</p>	<p> <b>Near Term</b></p>



## Prepare for Emerging and Autonomous Technologies

Technology and new mobility services provide us with exciting tools and opportunities to enhance the role of transportation in achieving our region’s sustainability, connectivity, accessibility, and equity goals. Articulating guiding principles for emerging mobility can help to direct how new mobility services and technologies come online in the region. A strong policy framework will ensure these new technologies align with the goals of Missoula Connect. When investments are focused on our core transportation networks—like safe and connected walking, rolling, and biking systems, fast and reliable transit, well-managed parking, and “smart” signals—emerging mobility and public mobility services can complement one another.

### Emerging Mobility...



Is **technology-enabled** mobility and freight



Enables **shared- and owner-operated** mobility



Is built on **information infrastructure**



**Connects** public transit and active transportation networks



Supports **travel behavior change**



Responds to **policy direction**

### Emergent Modes and Services



The Missoula Connect Emerging Mobility Playbook will outline key areas of action for advancing emerging mobility to help address regional challenges. The Playbook will identify near- and medium-term opportunities for the Missoula region to advance our goals by approaching emerging mobility strategically. Specifically, the region can:



Take immediate steps to **Set the Foundation** by connecting with the community and rooting principles for emerging mobility and new technologies in local values.



**Take Action** in defining and prioritizing mobility needs that might be solved through new mobility pilots, including by connecting with peers who have experimented with partnerships and business models.



**Apply Lessons** by establishing a framework to evaluate pilots according to goals and iterate with community and industry partners.

The MPO, the City, and the County have somewhat limited authority over private mobility providers and emerging technologies. Many policies, practices, and requirements are established by the federal government. However, the Missoula region is already taking steps to prepare for the future of mobility, including autonomous vehicles, by developing a high quality and well-maintained transportation system. Missoula Connect includes recommendations to build on the region's efforts by:

- **Providing dedicated space** for people walking, rolling, and biking to free roadway space for vehicles and buses and increase safety in preparation for autonomous vehicles.
- **Implementing Intelligent Transportation Systems** and coordinating signals, including using technology that supports connected and autonomous vehicles, to prepare our transportation network for new technologies.
- **Conducting basic roadway maintenance**, including restriping lanes, shoulders, and crosswalks with high-visibility paint, to upgrade our existing systems to meet the needs of both traditional and emerging modes of transportation.
- **Advancing programs and policies** described in this chapter, such as Emerging Mobility Guiding Principles, Community Carshare, Bike Share, and Mobility Hubs.



## Encourage Compact Growth

Targeting compact growth in areas that have good transit service, mixed-use development, and transportation network connectivity is the responsibility of local jurisdictions. A compact approach to development provides more people with access to more resources and opportunities without having to travel far. This creates time savings, reduces congestion, and provides more options to walk, bike, and ride transit.

To support the existing regional “focus inward” approach promoted by the Our Missoula Growth Policy, Missoula Connect identified two growth scenarios as part of the capital project evaluation process: Business as Usual Growth and Strategic Growth (see Chapter 5 and Appendix D for more information). Strategic Growth maintained the same growth rates as Business as Usual but directed additional households toward areas with more existing services. To encourage inward growth and infill development, the Missoula region should continue to implement, enhance, or expand existing policies, such as the following:



### A Place to Call Home: Meeting Missoula’s Housing Needs

The City’s Housing Policy creates a cohesive approach to minimize barriers and provide financial incentives to promote the production and preservation of diverse, healthy, and safe homes that all Missoulians can afford. The Housing Policy also integrates transportation as a key component of affordability, calling for alignment of funding for transportation improvements with Missoula’s affordable housing goals.

#### A PLACE TO CALL HOME: MEETING MISSOULA’S HOUSING NEEDS







## Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Regulations

In October 2020, the Missoula City Council adopted revisions to the City's zoning code for ADUs. The revisions provide more flexibility in the types of ADUs that can be constructed to diversify housing options and increase affordable housing in the region. The ADU policy changes also make it possible to increase infill development in areas that currently have a wide range of transportation options available.



## Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Policy

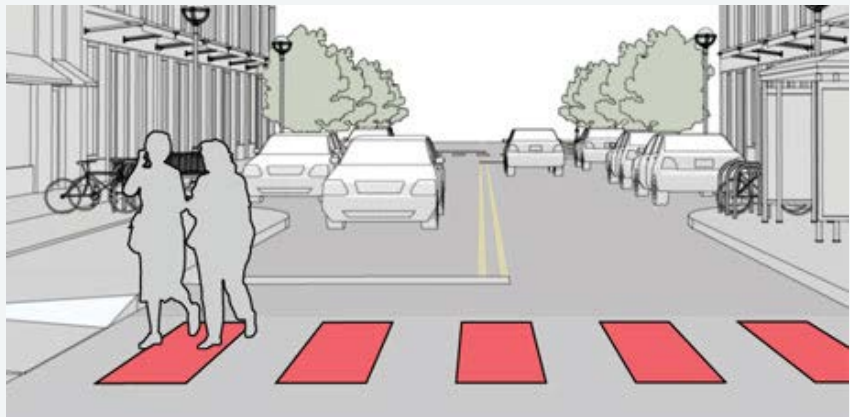
The region has explored options to support TOD, including along the Brooks Corridor. Establishing a TOD Policy in conjunction with a Transit First Policy and a Mobility Hubs Program could further the Missoula area's commitment to dense, compact development by focusing growth around major transit stations to maximize access to frequent, high-quality bus service.



## Supportive Zoning and Implementation Tools


There are many tools the Missoula region could consider to streamline and coordinate the development process and encourage compact growth. For example, a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) combines various regulations—such as traditional zoning and subdivision regulations, design guidelines, sign regulations, and stormwater management guidelines—into one document to ensure consistency and clearly communicate requirements. Updating zoning and regulatory tools to implement outcomes identified in the City and County Growth Policies is essential for guiding development towards the desired compact growth, and for supporting other goals such as TOD or adoption of Transportation Options plans.

POLICY	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT MATTERS	FIRST STEPS	KEY PARTNER	PRIORITY
<p><b>Street Typology and Street Design Guidelines</b></p>	<p>Establishes street types based on functional classification and land use, providing a more nuanced approach to managing the transportation system. Dictates priority design elements and sets standards for facilities by street type.</p>	<p>Not every arterial street serves the same function in the transportation network or needs the same types of facilities. Street types and design standards articulate what matters and guide implementation for both public and private projects based on local context.</p>	<p>Create a framework for categorizing and assigning street types.</p>	<p>Public Works &amp; Mobility; Community Planning, Development, &amp; Innovation</p>	<p><b>Near Term</b></p>
<p><b>Downtown Parking and Curbspace Management Plan</b></p>	<p>Identifies strategies to better manage downtown parking. Creates a system that increases the efficiency and utilization of the existing parking supply and other transportation options.</p>	<p>Managing and pricing parking can support the region's mode share goals and ensure optimal use of existing facilities. As new travel options are available, including expanded ride-sharing and shared-mobility services, demands for curb space will increase, requiring a thoughtful approach to managing this important resource.</p>	<p>Work with Missoula Parking Commission to develop a need statement for a parking and curbspace management plan.</p>	<p>Public Works &amp; Mobility; Missoula Parking Commission</p>	<p><b>Medium Term</b></p>



Source: Nelson\Nygaard

*Grand Rapids, MI created the "Vital Streets Plan" to establish street types and identify design standards for every city street.*

POLICY	DESCRIPTION	WHY IT MATTERS	FIRST STEPS	KEY PARTNER	PRIORITY
<p><b>Transportation Options Policy</b></p>	<p>Builds on Missoula in Motion’s work to leverage transportation investments in Missoula. Requires employers to meet a target mode split and provide options for non-drive-alone travel.</p>	<p>Expanding the regulatory arm of Missoula in Motion is another way to reduce vehicle trips and help to manage congestion. A Transportation Options Policy could amplify investments identified in Missoula Connect by linking private development to programmatic initiatives in addition to infrastructure.</p>	<p>Establish the desired elements of a Transportation Options Policy.</p>	<p>Missoula in Motion; Community Planning, Development, &amp; Innovation</p>	<p> <b>Near Term</b></p>



Source: Missoula in Motion

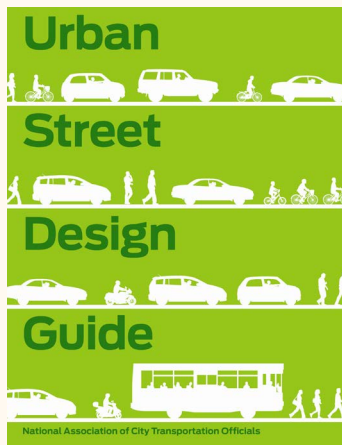
<p><b>Vision Zero Policy</b></p>	<p>Builds on the Missoula Community Transportation Safety Plan (CTSP) and MDT’s Vision Zero initiative to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries in the Missoula area over 10 years. Addresses safety through coordinated engineering, enforcement, and education efforts.</p>	<p>Approximately 81 people are seriously injured and more than seven are killed each year in traffic collisions in the Missoula area. Adopting a Vision Zero Policy means recognizing traffic-related deaths and serious injuries can be prevented.</p>	<p>Adopt an explicit Vision Zero Policy.</p>	<p>Public Works &amp; Mobility</p>	<p> <b>Near Term</b></p>
----------------------------------	---	---	--	------------------------------------	---



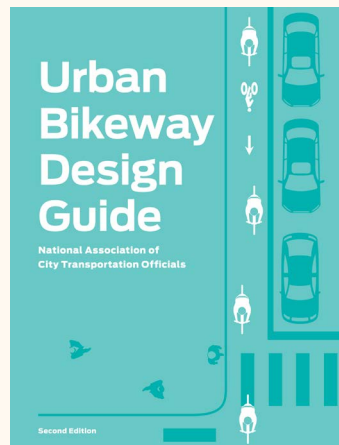
## Create Street Design Guidelines

Street design guidelines describe recommended elements, dimensions, materials, and urban design treatments for all facilities in the right-of-way, including travel lanes, bicycle facilities, on-street parking and curb zones, landscape and amenity zones, sidewalks, and frontages. Street design guidelines are based on an established street hierarchy and typical cross-sections for different types of streets, with an important connection to a street's adjacent land uses. They also establish standards for intersection design, crossings, corner radii, lighting, and transit facilities.

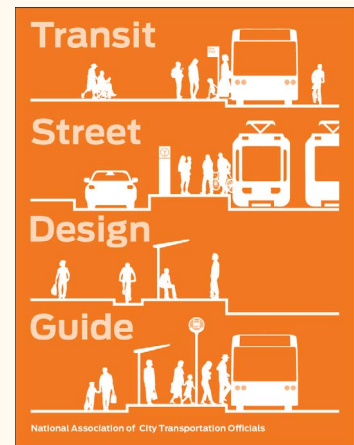
Guidelines should be crafted to reflect local priorities and current and future land use contexts while also considering emerging research, engineering standards, and best practices. Tools like form-based codes can help to link street design guidelines and land uses, as was done in the Sx<sup>w</sup>tpqyen (pronounced S-wh-tip-KAYN) Neighborhoods Master Plan and Form-Based Code. Nationally recognized resources that can be used to establish street design guidelines include:



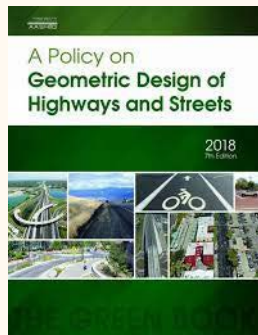
**NACTO Urban  
Street  
Design Guides**



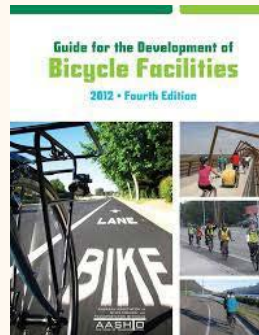
**NACTO Urban  
Bikeway  
Design Guide**



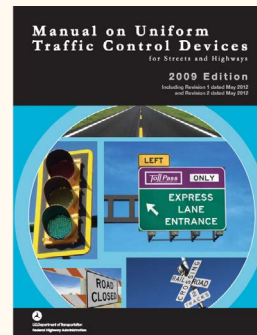
**NACTO Transit  
Street Design  
Guide**



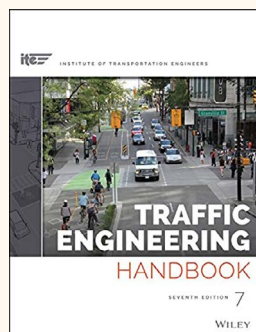
**AASHTO Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (the "Green Book")**



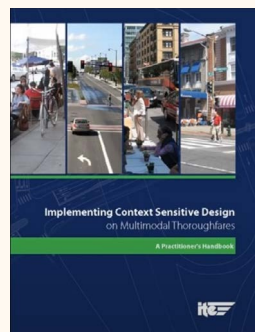
**AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities**



**FHWA Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)**



**ITE Traffic Engineering Handbook**



**ITE Implementing Context Sensitive Design on Multimodal Thoroughfares**



## Establish an Expanded Transportation Options Policy

Transportation Options strategies help to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips and reduce congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, and demand for parking. Missoula has a robust Transportation Options Program, Missoula in Motion, that focuses on encouraging people to use sustainable transportation options. To further these efforts, the MPO can partner with the City of Missoula to establish requirements for developers and employers to invest in transportation options. This effort could also assess the City's existing parking code to ensure future developments that provide transportation options investments do not oversupply off-street parking.

The MPO should take the following approach to develop an expanded Transportation Options Policy:



### Stakeholder Interviews

Solicit input from internal and external stakeholders such as City Development Review & Inspections, Missoula in Motion, MR TMA/iRide Vanpool, Mountain Line, and the Missoula Parking Commission, as well as large local employers, developers, and property managers.



### Inventory of Existing Policies

Inventory existing documents and policies related to transportation options and development review in the Missoula area, including mode share targets and parking requirements. Collect regulatory implementation best practices and conduct interviews with peer cities that have successfully implemented transportation options policies.





## Issues & Opportunities

Identify technical and political issues and next steps that need to be addressed to develop and implement transportation options requirements.



## Criteria & Requirements

Develop scenarios that demonstrate how the City can update existing code, policies, and programs to include new transportation options requirements. Scenarios may vary in scale and intensity of triggers (e.g., geography, size, land uses) and requirements to illustrate potential ways that transportation options strategies can be implemented.



## Recommendations & Actions

Develop an addendum to Missoula Connect that details how and when transportation options requirements may be triggered. This may include recommended policies and regulations for new development (including size, location, or other triggers identified throughout the process). It may also include recommendations to require that employers of a certain size or geography provide transportation options and may identify how parking can be integrated into transportation options requirements or incentives. The plan should also detail needed code or policy updates, the mechanisms to implement them, a performance monitoring approach, and budget and staffing requirements.

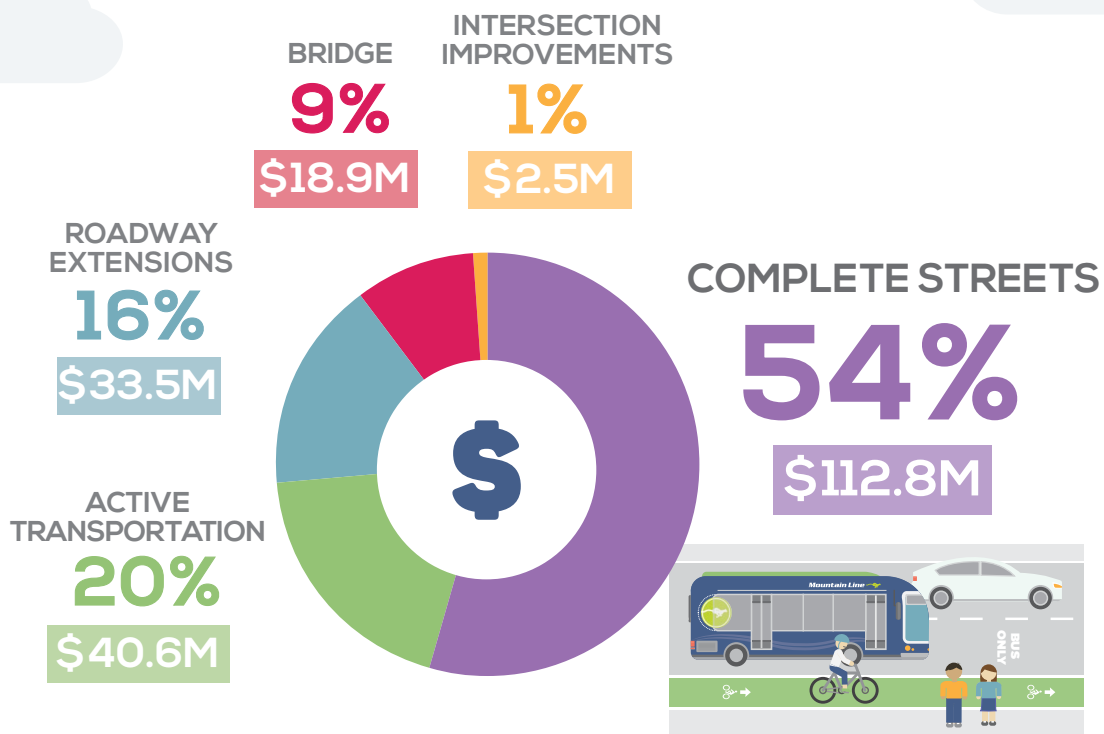
# Chapter 8

# Funding the Plan

Fully realizing the Missoula Connect vision will take substantial investment over the next 30 years. Implementing the recommended projects and programs will require funding from federal, state, and local sources. The Missoula Connect financial plan includes a combination of traditional and non-traditional (or potential) funding sources. Traditional sources have funded past transportation projects and have more predictable future funding levels. Non-traditional sources are not as predictable and may not be available, but they can be critical in filling funding gaps and can expand the region's available resources.

The total plan cost for the 71 recommended capital projects in Missoula Connect is \$208.3 million through 2050. The "plan cost" is only the portion of the project costs that is programmed in the long-range plan. Committed projects have other funding to cover their full cost. Approximately \$113 million of the total—more than half—is for complete streets projects that will improve connectivity for all modes. The breakdown of costs by project type is shown on the next page. All Missoula Connect projects, regardless of the project type, benefit everyone traveling through our region. Active transportation projects, for example, can free roadway space for people driving or taking the bus. And safety projects make our transportation system safer no matter how you choose to travel.





**There is an additional \$2.4 million of discretionary funds available to support programs identified in Chapter 7.**










We developed project costs using existing estimates—from the MPO’s Transportation Improvement Program, the City of Missoula’s Capital Improvement Plan, and the Montana Department of Transportation’s (MDT) capital programs—and custom estimates based on recently completed transportation projects in the region.

Costs represent the total amount of funding that will be needed to plan, design, and build a project. However, many of the Missoula Connect projects are not yet fully scoped or designed, so these are planning-level cost estimates rather than engineered estimates. To account for future year costs, an inflation factor of 0.75% per year to the midpoint of each timeframe was applied to all projects based on how they are programmed within the 30-year LRTP horizon.

# COST BY PHASE

Beyond the \$210.8 million in discretionary sources programmed by the MPO, MDT programs federal funds for highway capital projects in the region as well as maintenance projects on state roads (e.g., bridge rehabilitation and pavement preservation). The near-term funds allocated by MDT are assigned to the “TIP Committed” projects shown on page 51 and in Appendix H.








In addition to the funding that goes toward maintenance and preservation projects, MDT also programs National Highway (NH) funds, Bridge Program funds, Transportation Alternatives funds, and many other funding sources that are critical for different types of projects in the Missoula region. For more detail on these funds, see Appendix I. Additionally, the region receives Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding to provide Mountain Line service and support programs like Missoula in Motion.

	 <b>Near-Term</b> (2021-2025)	 <b>Medium-Term</b> (2026-2035)	 <b>Long-Term</b> (2036-2050)	<b>TOTAL</b>
	\$36.2M	\$67.4M	\$106.8M	\$210.4M
 LRTP Recommended Capital Projects	\$36.2M	\$67.4M	\$106.8M	\$210.4M
 MDT Allocated Capital Projects	\$64.9M	\$102.7M	\$165.6M	\$333.2M
 Maintenance and Preservation	\$48.4M	\$107.0M	\$174.2M	\$329.6M
 Transit Service and Capital Cost	\$75.7M	\$133.4M	\$216.0M	\$425.1M
 Programs	\$1.7M	\$3.7M	\$6.0M	\$11.4M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$226.9M</b>	<b>\$414.2M</b>	<b>\$668.6M</b>	<b>\$1.3B</b>

# PROJECTED REVENUE

Fully funding our recommended Missoula Connect projects and programs will require a wide variety of funding sources. With federal, state, and local funds combined, the MPO has an estimated \$210.8 million in “discretionary” revenue available to fund LRTP projects by 2050. (“Discretionary” funds are those not otherwise committed and are available for the MPO, City, or County to program.) However, federal and state funding sources are not guaranteed and are constantly in flux.

The \$210.8 million is what we can reasonably expect to have available to program for local priority projects, and it is the amount we used to set the “fiscally constrained” recommended project list. But beyond the 71 recommended projects, there are more than 100 projects included in Missoula Connect’s “illustrative” project list. While these are important projects, there are not enough funds currently available to include them within the fiscally constrained list of recommended projects.

	FEDERAL & STATE	LOCAL	TOTAL
 <b>Near-Term</b>	\$13.5M	\$22.8M	 <b>\$36.3M</b>
 <b>Medium-Term</b>	\$20.5M	\$46.9M	 <b>\$67.4M</b>
 <b>Long-Term</b>	\$31.1M	\$76.0M	 <b>\$107.1M</b>
<b>2021-2050</b>	<b>\$65.1M</b>	<b>\$145.7M</b>	 <b>\$210.8M</b>

# Federal and State Transportation Funding Sources

The Missoula MPO's role is to help direct federal funds to projects identified in Missoula Connect. Federal funding comes through MDT from two primary sources: the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). FHWA funds are disseminated through the National Highway Performance Program—which includes Interstate Maintenance, National Highway, and the National Highway System Bridge Program—as well as four statewide programs:



## Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)

Program funds support projects that reduce transportation-related emissions.



## Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

Part of MDT's Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan, HSIP funds infrastructure-related highway improvements, including striping, intersection upgrades, and roadway realignment.



## Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Funds are used for the construction, planning, and design of on- and off-street pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trail projects, and other improvements supporting safe travel for non-auto modes.



## Surface Transportation Program (STP)

Urban STP funds are used primarily for resurfacing or reconstructing existing roadways, including associated bicycle and pedestrian facilities, on Montana's Urban Highway System.

Each year, the Missoula MPO receives an allocation of STP and CMAQ funds. Their use is authorized by the MPO's Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee (TPCC). Beyond funding infrastructure projects, these funds support transit service, operations, and bus purchases and non-capital programs and maintenance activities, such as transportation options (through Missoula in Motion), vanpool, and street sweepers.



# Local Funding Sources

Although federal funds for transportation projects have increased over the last decade, the increase has not kept pace with the demand for funding and project cost inflation. This leaves jurisdictions to fill the gap in available funding with local sources. The Missoula Connect revenue projections include local funding sources to provide a more complete picture of the region’s available transportation resources.

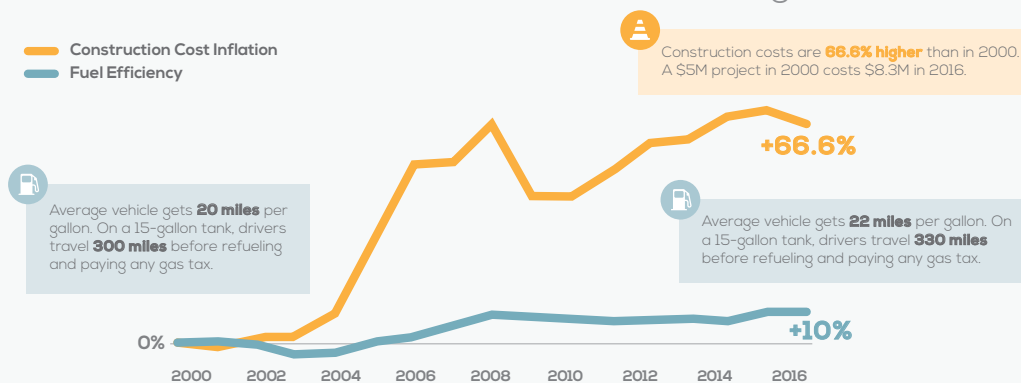
The Missoula region typically uses a variety of local sources to fund transportation projects. The City and County gas taxes fund roadway maintenance, as does road improvement district funding. Tax increment financing (TIF) from Missoula’s Urban Renewal Districts (URDs) is used to capture property taxes generated in these areas, as well as property value increases related to a particular investment. These funds are often dedicated to transportation projects within the URD boundaries.

In November 2020, Missoula voters approved an increase to the Missoula Urban Transportation District (MUTD) mill levy. This will fund additional bus service, including more frequent Mountain Line service, full weekend service, and more service for seniors and people with disabilities.

Missoula County’s 2-cent local option gas tax was approved by voters in early 2020 and put in place in September 2020. In April 2021, the Montana State Legislature passed a bill to repeal local jurisdictions’ ability to levy a gas tax, removing the local option fuel tax from the funding toolbox.

While gas taxes can be an important source of transportation revenue, revenues have been declining over the past decade. Nationally, gas taxes have demonstrated diminishing returns due to inflation and the increased fuel efficiency of light vehicles sold in the United States in the last 15 years. Additionally, there are more electric and hybrid vehicles in the market each year, and people’s driving habits are changing.

## Two Trends Have Eroded Gas Tax Purchasing Power



Source: IETP Analysis of data from the Federal Highway Administration

# ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES ALLOWED BY STATE LEGISLATION

To fully implement the transportation projects and programs identified in Missoula Connect, the MPO—in coordination with the State, the City of Missoula, and Missoula County—will need to seek additional funding sources. Some of these sources, such as grants and stimulus or recovery funds, are available but highly competitive. Others would require local action to begin or expand their use, such as additional impact fees or property taxes. The revenue sources described on the following pages are currently permitted for use by Montana State legislation.

## Grants

The U.S. Department of Transportation will seek authorization of a new federal transportation bill in fall 2021. The department also manages discretionary grant programs that provide major funding to transportation projects, although they are increasingly competitive. Among these are the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Program and the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Transportation Discretionary Grants Program (formerly BUILD).

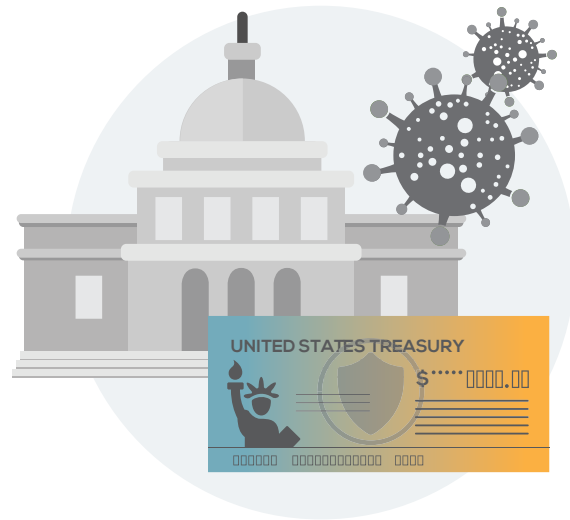


The 2021 INFRA grant program targets transportation projects of national and regional significance that address climate change and environmental justice, with available funding of nearly \$900 million. The 2021 RAISE program has \$1 billion available to fund signature multimodal projects that advance safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership. Projects that improve racial equity, reduce the impacts of climate change, and create good-paying jobs will be prioritized. Project awards will vary but can reach \$25 million.

The Missoula region was awarded a \$13 million BUILD grant in 2019 for roadway improvements and trail connections between the Sx<sup>w</sup>tpqyen (pronounced S-wh-tip-KAYN) Neighborhoods Master Plan area and Broadway. The application was a joint effort between the City of Missoula, Missoula County, and various community and commercial organizations, including the Chamber Commerce and the Missoula Organization of Realtors. Together, they were successful in conveying the critical need to support future growth and to resolve current traffic and environmental challenges west of the North Reserve district.

## Stimulus and Recovery Funds

In March 2021, President Biden signed into law the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Under this legislation, \$350 billion will be provided as payment to U.S. territories, states, and local and tribal governments as assistance for municipal budgets depleted by COVID-19. Of the amounts that will be provided to states and local governments, states will receive \$219.8 billion and local governments will receive \$130.2 billion. Transit agencies will receive another \$30.5 billion. Projects included in Missoula Connect may be eligible for these funds.



## Special Improvement Districts (SIDs)

SIDs are assessments secured by special property taxes in a defined area when there is a strong relationship between benefit and assessment (e.g., sidewalks in a specific neighborhood). SIDs can be initiated by the City or County or petitioned by property owners. Costs from the creation or maintenance of infrastructure in the district are distributed across the properties that benefit.



## Impact Fees

Impact fees are assessed on developers to fund improvements that will address project impacts on transportation, water, and sewer infrastructure within a designated area. The revenue provides the funding needed to accommodate new development without taxing other property owners in the area. In March 2021, the City of Missoula, with County support, adopted special impact fees to address funding gaps for the Sx<sup>w</sup>tpayen (pronounced S-wh-tip-KAYN) Neighborhoods Master Plan project.



## Property Taxes

These are taxes assessed on the value of a property. City and County portions of property taxes are used primarily to fund local services such as road maintenance, bridges, courts, and public safety. Local property taxes made it possible for Mountain Line to offer 15-minute Bolt! service on several high-demand routes.



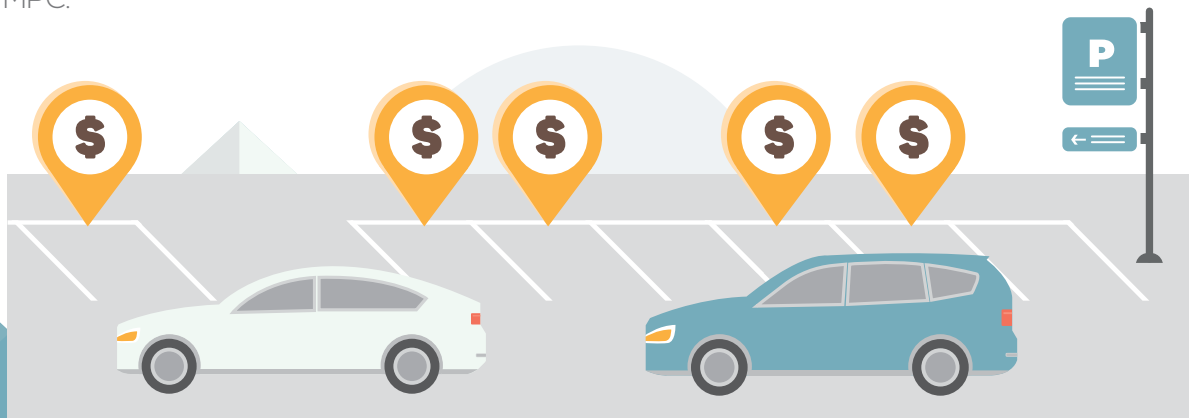
## Bonds

Bonds are issued by the State of Montana or other jurisdictions to finance infrastructure that has “a long useful life,” such as transportation projects. Bonds issued by a municipality have a set return on investment, and investors purchase the bonds to help fund transportation projects. Bonds can help to smooth the financial impact of expensive projects by providing upfront capital, allowing the jurisdiction to repay the bond over a set amount of time. Our region has passed several bond measures in the past two decades to fund community priorities, including the construction of the Missoula Public Library and local park operations.



## Parking Fees

Municipalities can fund improvements, including transportation projects, through parking revenues. Parking benefit districts—sometimes called mobility benefit districts—are a common type of benefit assessment district that uses parking meter revenue to invest in services and infrastructure. Parking benefit districts are often established in conjunction with a business improvement district. The revenue from parking meters contributes to the budget assessments from members of the district to fund specific projects or programs. The Missoula Parking Commission (MPC) works with government, businesses, and residents to provide and manage parking and parking alternatives. Any changes to parking fees or the use of parking revenues would require action by the MPC.



## Hotel and Visitor Tax

A hotel tax is charged to travelers when they rent a room at a hotel, inn, or other lodging for a short time. Currently, Montana charges a combined lodging sales-and-use tax with 4% deposited into the State general fund and 4% deposited into several special revenue funds, the largest of which is used by the Department of Commerce for tourism promotion. The State could expand the use of these funds to transportation projects and programs, which could provide additional revenues for MDT and the City of Missoula and Missoula County.



## Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships involve a private entity, such as a local business owner, working with a public agency to fund a project (e.g., bus stop shelters, sidewalk maintenance, circulator shuttles that serve specific areas). For instance, business improvement districts can administer a grant or loan program to fund public infrastructure that serves the needs of businesses and promotes economic development. The City of Missoula, the Missoula Redevelopment Agency, and the Missoula Economic Partnership are working together to advance the Scott Street Project, which would create permanently affordable homes and address the infrastructure needs of the Northside neighborhood.





# ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES IN OTHER MUNICIPALITIES

This section describes funding sources for transportation projects and programs that are used in other municipalities and states. Most of these options, which are not currently allowed by Montana State legislation, would require significant outreach to develop support, followed by State-level action. These sources are not provided as recommendations for funding Missoula Connect—they are simply other sources the Missoula Connect project team has encountered in other jurisdictions.

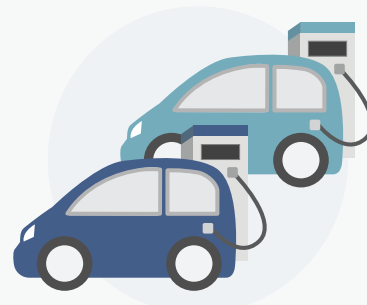
## Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) or Road Usage Charge (RUC)

Instead of paying a per-gallon gasoline tax, drivers pay to use roads based on how many miles they drive. VMT and RUC programs have been piloted in Oregon and Hawaii and are under discussion in states across the U.S. as a replacement for declining gas tax revenues.



## Fleet Pricing or Vehicle Weight Charging

Charging fees for certain fleet or vehicle types, including heavy vehicles, is an approach that jurisdictions are exploring to help cover the costs of roadway maintenance. For example, many electric vehicles are heavier than gas-powered vehicles, and a weight charge could help to offset the loss of gas tax revenues attributed to more fuel-efficient vehicles.



## Tourist Local Option Sales Tax

In Montana, a local option sales tax (the “Resort Tax”) is allowed in 10 high-tourist areas. Expanding the use of this tax—and structuring it to ensure that out-of-state tourists are contributing to the roads and public services they access during their visits—could be an option for future exploration.



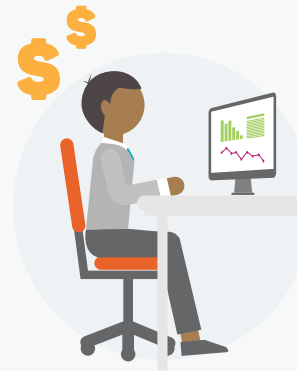
## General Excise Tax

Unlike sales taxes, a general excise tax is levied on businesses’ gross income from wholesale goods, services, and rents. The State of Hawaii’s general excise tax is the state’s largest source of public revenue and helps to fund transportation projects and programs.



## Local Income Tax

Local income taxes are paid by those who live in a jurisdiction and are used to complement or replace other local revenue sources, like property, sales, or lodging taxes. Income taxes are the least regressive taxing mechanism and can be used to fund many types of projects and programs.



## Employee Head Tax or Large Business Payroll Tax

A head tax charges every employer of a certain size a flat dollar amount for each worker they employ. The City of Seattle used a \$25 employee head tax for two years to fund sidewalk and street maintenance, although it was highly controversial and was repealed during the 2008 recession. Seattle has also explored a large business payroll tax, which would charge large employers a graduated percentage tax on salaries well above the local median income.



## Tolling or Congestion Pricing

States across the U.S. toll major highways and bridges, and many cities and regions are beginning to explore congestion pricing. Both tools are intended to help manage demand and generate revenue. Drivers pay a fee, which may change based on time of day or congestion levels, for using a specific roadway, bridge, or area.



## Carbon Tax

A fee or tax on producers or users of large amounts of carbon-based fuels is an approach to reducing the use of fossil fuels and generating funds for sustainable transportation projects. Boulder, Colorado approved a carbon tax in 2006 as part of the city's Climate Action Plan. The tax generates approximately \$1.8 million per year.

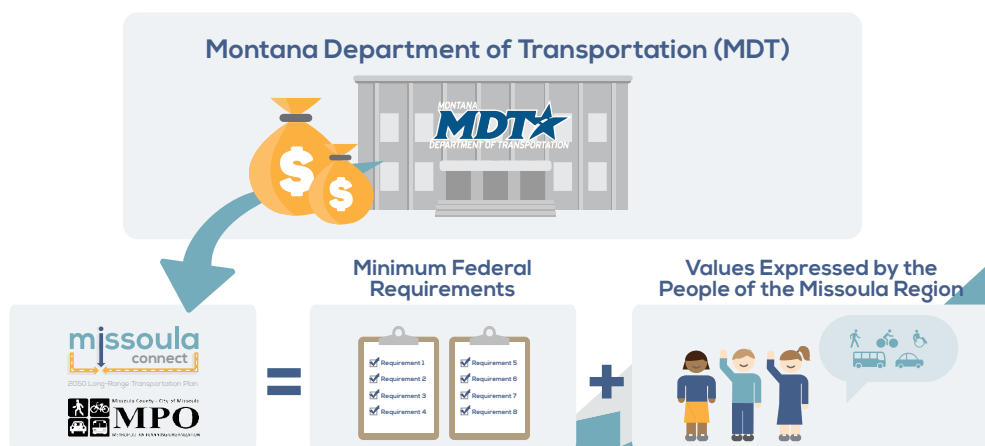


# Chapter 9

# Measuring Success

Missoula Connect sets a vision for Missoula’s transportation future. But how can we ensure that progress is being made toward that vision? How will we know if we’re achieving our regional mode share goals, as well as our goals of safety and health, sustainability and resiliency, connectivity, equity, and vibrancy? This chapter describes performance measures for Missoula Connect, which the MPO will use to track progress, provide transparency and accountability, and report on the long-range plan’s outcomes.

To receive transportation funding from the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program or any federal formula programs, the Missoula MPO must evaluate the performance of the region’s transportation system using federally established metrics. The Missoula Connect performance measures outlined below are consistent with the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) requirements for long-range transportation plans. But to fully capture the region’s priorities, Missoula Connect includes performance measures for each of the plan goals. This expanded set of measures will help us assess both the overall transportation system and specific project performance.



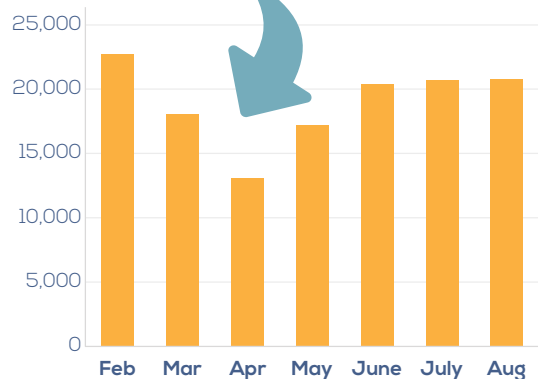
# MODE SHARE TARGET

Missoula Connect maintains consistency with the region’s 2016 Long-Range Transportation Plan by carrying forward the adopted mode share and trip reduction targets. As noted in the 2016 plan, the mode share goal solidifies the region’s policy direction and encourages investment in active transportation and transit. The Missoula region’s “Ambitious” mode share goals focus on providing people with better travel options and shifting some trips away from driving.

- Reduce drive-alone commute share by **34% by 2045**
- 3X** bike and walk shares and **4X** transit share **by 2045**
- Reduce drive-alone commute trips by **20,000 by 2045**
- Achieve a **small increase** in carpool and work from home

Since 2016, our drive-alone rate has remained constant, and carpool, walk, and telecommute shares have stayed mostly the same. Trips by transit and bicycle have both increased slightly, by about 1%. In 2020, travel patterns shifted dramatically due to COVID-19 and the state’s stay-at-home order. Nationally, vehicle miles traveled decreased significantly, with our region showing similar trends. Those unusual patterns supported our overall targets, but as vaccination rates have increased, so has individual travel. Our challenge in the years ahead will be to permanently shift some trips to walking, biking, and transit trips and to increase telecommuting, rather than temporarily changing behavior due to a global pandemic.

**42%** Drop in average daily vehicle traffic volume on the Orange St Bridge between February 2020 and April 2020



# PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance measures are a tool to describe how investments in our regional transportation system are helping to advance Missoula Connect’s goals. They are useful in monitoring progress toward the region’s desired outcomes, such as improved access to jobs and services and enhanced transit and active transportation connections to lower-income neighborhoods.

Federal legislation, such as the FAST (Fixing America’s Surface Transportation) Act and MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century), directs states to use a performance-based approach to manage the transportation system. A performance-based planning and programming approach can improve project and program delivery, inform decision-making, keep staff focused on priorities, and provide greater transparency to the public. It helps states, MPOs, counties, and cities understand whether the projects they are implementing are serving their goals and demonstrates how the transportation system is performing over time.

## Consistency with State Targets

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is required to establish State targets in line with Federal performance management reporting requirements. The Missoula MPO supports MDT’s targets for safety, pavement and bridge condition, system performance, freight, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) performance measures. The MPO also supports the transit performance targets and measures established by the Missoula Urban Transportation District (MUTD).


The MPO plans and programs projects that contribute toward relevant targets for each performance measure and reports on them through the Transportation Improvement Program. Appendix J provides more information about the current MDT targets.

### Montana State Performance Dashboard



Source: US DOT Federal Highway Administration










The MPO will use the performance measures outlined in this chapter to monitor progress toward Missoula Connect goals and federal targets (the latter are indicated with a ). Federal targets focus on safety, infrastructure condition, reliability, and emissions reductions. The targets related to Missoula Connect’s goals are more holistic, as the regional goals capture equity, sustainability, connectivity, and economic development in ways that go beyond federal requirements. In many cases, the local targets are measures of actions the MPO is or will be taking to help achieve federal targets and our regional goals.

The simple framework included in Missoula Connect will help us better align transportation investment decisions with tangible and measurable benefits. The progress on these metrics—which will be reported annually on the MPO’s website—should trend in the direction indicated by the arrows in the tables on the following pages.



## GOAL 1 Improve safety and promote health to enhance quality of life

MEASURE	METRIC	TARGET TRAJECTORY
Eliminate traffic-related fatalities and reduce serious injuries from traffic collisions	Number and rate of serious and severe injuries and fatalities from collisions 	
	Number of projects completed within ¼ mile of a high-collision corridor or intersection (as defined in the Community Transportation Safety Plan)	
Increase physical activity by making walking and biking convenient modes of travel	Total and annual lane miles of bicycle facilities constructed	
	Total and annual blocks of sidewalk constructed	
	Number of projects completed within ½ mile of a public recreation facility, park, playground, or trail	
Enhance active transportation linkages to lower-income neighborhoods	Number of projects completed in an Invest Health neighborhood or a low-to moderate-income census tract	



## GOAL 2

### Advance sustainability and community resilience to protect natural resources and address climate change

MEASURE	METRIC	TARGET TRAJECTORY
Reduce transportation-related air emissions	Total greenhouse gas emissions from ground transportation 🔄	⬇️
	Total vehicle miles traveled	⬇️
Protect or enhance natural or cultural resources	Number of projects completed that improve or enhance multimodal access to sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places	⬆️
	Acreage of land designated for agricultural preservation on which projects are built	⬇️
Minimize sediment, nutrients, and litter entering surface water	Number of projects completed that incorporate green stormwater infrastructure features or best practice approaches to managing run-off	⬆️



## GOAL 3

### Expand mobility choices to improve efficiency and accessibility for people and goods

MEASURE	METRIC	TARGET TRAJECTORY
Increase the number of available mobility options	Percent of people who take transit, walk or roll, bike, and share rides for all types of trips	⬆️
Optimize the reliability and connections in our transportation system	Person hours of delay 🔄	⬇️
	Link-node ratio 🔄	⬆️
Improve freight and transit movement	Rate of transit on-time performance	⬆️
	Number of projects completed that close a gap, remove a barrier, or improve transit operations within ½ mile of a Mountain Line or UDASH stop	⬆️
	Freight corridor travel time 🔄	⬇️



## GOAL 4

### Connect and strengthen communities to create a more equitable region

MEASURE	METRIC	TARGET TRAJECTORY
Improve access to schools, jobs, parks, essential services, affordable and senior housing, and basic life needs	Number of projects within a 15-minute walk or bike ride to schools, job centers, parks, major institutions, or essential services	↑
	Percent of households with direct transit connections to job centers	↑
Engage with and invest in historically disadvantaged areas and in neighborhoods that have been adversely impacted by transportation decisions	Number of transit projects completed in an Invest Health neighborhood or a low- to moderate-income census tract	↑
	Average household housing and transportation costs	↓
Integrate land use and transportation planning to support infill development and responsible growth	Number of projects completed in high suitability locations as determined by the City and County Growth Policies	↑



## GOAL 5

### Maintain assets and invest strategically to boost economic vitality

MEASURE	METRIC	TARGET TRAJECTORY
Bring existing infrastructure and transit assets into a state of good repair	Percent of lane miles of pavement in good condition 🔄	↑
	Percent of lane miles of pavement in poor condition 🔄	↓
	Percent of bridges in good condition 🔄	↑
	Percent of transit assets in a state of good repair 🔄	↑
Balance cost-effective, implementable projects with high-impact projects	Number of Missoula Connect near-term projects completed	↑
Support access to businesses and commercial and industrial centers to enhance economic recovery and growth	Number of projects completed within an Urban Renewal District	↑

# Chapter 10

# Taking the First Steps

Missoula Connect is a long-term plan to improve the sustainability and resiliency of our transportation system. It identifies the projects and programs that are needed over the next 30 years to make it safer, easier, and more convenient to travel in the Missoula area. But not everything in the plan needs to take 30 years! There are many projects that will be built in the next 10 years, and there are programs and policies that can roll out in the next five years.

To help get things started, here are key actions that can move forward immediately to begin making the changes you're hoping to see. Some of them have first steps completed, and others are less developed. However, these actions are critical to our success. While many of these will require support beyond the MPO, we present near-term actions the MPO can help the City, County, State, and community partners to implement.



## Position for Major Infrastructure Funding

Many of the region's most critical projects—including Brooks Street, the Front/Main Two-Way Conversion, multimodal improvements to the Higgins Avenue corridor, and the East Broadway/Highway 200 Complete Street—will take decades of local funding to realize. Projects that are “shovel ready” are good candidates for federal grants, such as the RAISE Grant and potential funding through the FAST Act Reauthorization. The MPO and its partners should identify one or two priority projects and advance design as quickly as possible to prepare for 2022 funding opportunities.



## Advance the Neighborhood Greenway Network

Building out the neighborhood greenway network is one of the fastest and most cost-effective ways to make Missoula’s low-traffic streets safe and comfortable places to walk, run, bike, scoot, and roll. While seeking funding for permanent greenway improvements like speed humps and vertical traffic circles, the MPO and its partners should advance implementation of the network by using quick-build treatments like painted traffic circles, pavement markings, and signs and wayfinding.

## Develop Regional Freight and Rail Plan

Major national trucking and freight rail routes that traverse the region provide economic benefits but also generate negative impacts such as noise and pollution. The MPO and its partners should develop a plan, based on the 2017 Montana Freight Plan, that identifies regional freight priorities and solutions. This could be done in conjunction with the anticipated update to the Montana State Rail Plan, which also presents an opportunity to advocate for bringing passenger rail back to the state.



### Upcoming MDT Priorities

Beyond the projects included in the MPO’s Transportation Improvement Program, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has other priorities within the Missoula District. MDT will advance the following projects and studies in the coming years:



- **Pavement Preservation:** Missoula to Lolo
- **Safety Study:** Lolo to Florence
- **Intersection Study:** Lolo to Florence
- **Montana Freight Plan Update**
- **Montana State Rail Plan Update**

## Pilot a Community Carshare Program

A carshare program provides access to a vehicle for short periods of time at affordable rates, reducing the need for a personal vehicle. Some service providers offer carshare using electric vehicles to enhance sustainability. The MPO should explore options for a community-supported carshare program through a partnership with a private or non-profit organization. The program should be designed to provide options for all residents of the region, including people with lower incomes.



## Create Street Design Guidelines

Street design guidelines provide technical standards for transportation facilities and urban design treatments within the context of street classifications and adjacent land uses. By developing and adopting street design guidelines, including guidelines for transit-priority streets, the MPO and partner agencies can ensure that future roadway and reconstruction projects reflect the principles of complete streets and advance regional goals. As a first step, the MPO could expand the Thoroughfare Standards developed as part of the Sx<sup>w</sup>tpqyen (pronounced S-wh-tip-KAYN) Neighborhoods Master Plan for use throughout the city and region.



## Optimize Signal Timing on Key Corridors

Signal timing optimization synchronizes traffic signals on a corridor so that private autos, freight vehicles, and buses can travel through multiple signals without stopping, reducing congestion. While signal timing is traditionally used as a strategy to support the efficient movement of vehicles, it can also be designed to support people walking, biking, and riding transit. The MPO should work with the Montana Department of Transportation and other partners to optimize signal timing on priority corridors in the region, such as the Reserve Street and Brooks Street corridors.







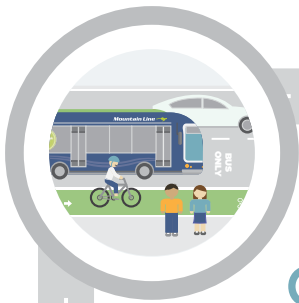
## Adopt Guiding Principles for Emerging Mobility

As new mobility services and technologies come online, the Missoula region has an opportunity to shape the conversation with mobility providers in line with the goals of Missoula Connect. Creating values-driven principles for emerging mobility can provide a useful and consistent framework to steer the region's response to or deployment of emerging mobility services. The MPO should finalize and publish an Emerging Mobility Playbook to guide the region's efforts, integrating future mobility services as extensions of the transit network.



## Establish an Expanded Transportation Options Policy

Transportation Options policies and programs provide travelers with choices and set development standards that reduce motorized vehicle trips, demand for parking, and carbon emissions. To build on the Transportation Options programs offered by Missoula in Motion, the MPO and its partners should launch a study to explore large employer and developer Transportation Options requirements. The MPO should also create an action plan for necessary code updates and supportive programmatic investments, including investments in transit service and amenities.



## Complete Higgins Avenue and Brooks Corridor Plans

Transforming Higgins and Brooks into fully multimodal and safe streets is vital for the economic, physical, and social health of the region. The MPO and City should advance these projects quickly, with an eye toward securing funding for design and construction in the next five years. The plan for Higgins should incorporate safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian facilities that support all ages and abilities, improved transit access, and enhanced traffic operations at all intersections. The City should continue to advance the Brooks BRT Corridor through evaluation of right-of-way and environmental impacts; coordination with businesses, property owners, and MDT; environmental compliance analysis; and pursuit of RAISE and FTA Small Starts funding.

## Address Maintenance Needs of New Infrastructure

While many residents of the Missoula area are enthusiastic year-round pedestrians and cyclists, walking and biking through the winter requires that sidewalks, bike lanes, shared-use paths, and trails are maintained in all types of weather. New facilities, such as protected bike lanes, should be designed with snow removal equipment in mind to support winter maintenance. For example, providing a flush painted buffer on a bike lane or path makes snow removal easier. Removable barriers such as flexible posts or rubber curbing should be placed in storage prior to the winter snow season. The City and County should also adopt supportive maintenance procedures, including policies that prohibit storing snow in bike lanes and prioritizing connections to transit for early snow removal.



## Develop a Mobility Hub Toolkit

Mobility hubs present an opportunity to design and integrate sustainable transportation options to enhance regional connectivity. Using the Mountain Line network as the backbone of the mobility hub system in the region, the MPO should develop a typology of mobility hubs based on land use and travel characteristics. After identifying the different types of hubs that are right for the region, the MPO can create a toolkit that prioritizes elements and amenities for each type of hub. Both actions would support creation of a pilot mobility hub that could be used to launch a Mobility Hubs Program.



## Bring Passenger Rail Back to the Region

There has been ongoing advocacy to bring passenger rail back to southern Montana, and the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) was established in 2020, following a joint resolution by 12 counties. Authorizing the BSPRA increases the likelihood of critical federal support and funding for passenger rail, although competition for resources remains stiff. The MPO will continue to support the Authority's efforts and coordinate with BSPRA to articulate the connection between passenger rail and the goals of Missoula Connect.



### Upcoming Mountain Line Priorities



Improving and expanding transit service in the Missoula region is critical to achieve our goals of equity, affordability, and sustainability. Mountain Line will advance the following in the next few years:

- Continue zero-emissions fleet expansion
- Relocate central operations facility
- Implement expanded service hours supported by the mill levy
- Begin the 2022 Strategic Plan Update

# Conclusion

# Moving Forward

There is much work to be done to achieve the Missoula region's transportation vision, but there is a strong foundation on which to build. By working together, addressing current challenges, and thinking creatively about the future, we can make the Missoula Connect vision a reality.

We will create a safer, healthier, more sustainable transportation system, one that supports people of all incomes, ages, and abilities and provides multimodal options for those who need them most. We will build out our transit and active transportation networks to create a more equitable and vibrant region, connecting our residents to the people and places they need to go. And we will work collaboratively to make progress toward our mode share goals, combining investments in critical complete streets infrastructure projects with programs and policies that help to change behavior and create a more vibrant Missoula.

But the MPO can't do this alone. Missoula Connect was created by and for the people of the Missoula region. We will implement this plan in partnership with the City of Missoula, Missoula County, the State of Montana, and the residents of our region. Together, we will connect Missoula and move toward our transportation vision.





missoula  
connect

2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan

