

## Reserve Street Community Input Forum – Frequently Asked Questions

### Land Use and Traffic

**Q: Will more traffic lights regulate flow of traffic more efficiently?**

A: Timing is really the issue rather than the number of signals. Think of an EMS vehicle, ambulance/police car, with signal preemption. The more signals, the bigger disruption to the flow of traffic. Signal coordination, however, can help improve traffic flow under some conditions. Coordination means that signals throughout the network are working together to ensure blocks of vehicles travel efficiently through signals.

**Q: Who is in charge of landscaping maintenance? – specifically dead trees along road over the Milwaukee Overpass.**

A: Maintenance of landscaping along Reserve Street is a combination of City and Montana Department of Transportation, who work in partnership to ensure trees, shrubs and other landscaping remain in good condition.

**Q: Is it a good policy to vacate easements to provide density?**

A: Planning for growth means identifying development locations and patterns that support a compact, walkable, and connected urban environment. Greater development density is a key component to supporting efficient multi-modal transportation systems. Establishing the land use and transportation systems necessary for multi-modal travel will be vital for accommodating new residents and the trips they will need to take for jobs, services and recreation. In Missoula, the foundation for both land use and transportation planning is underway.

**Q: Is it feasible to require rooftop utilization such as solar panels or rooftop garden/ greenspace?**

A: Although not in the scope of transportation planning, this is an innovative idea that could be incorporated into other community plans and regulations.

**Q: Would there be an advantage to a “box store” shuttle/ trolley service to keep people from needing their cars to travel between stores?**

A: The goal is to have a transportation system that fosters an environment where people can leave their cars at home, this idea could provide relief to congestion until our community reaches that goal.

**Q: Where does funding come from for Reserve Street related projects?**

A: While the Montana Department of Transportation maintains and has jurisdiction along the Reserve Street corridor, funding for future projects will come from various Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration sources. Other state and local funding sources could also be used to improve the corridor. Generally speaking, money for transportation projects comes from a combination of gas taxes, impact fees from new development, and local property taxes. More in-depth information on transportation revenue sources can be found in the [Long Range Transportation Plan](#).

**Q: Why is higher density housing approved without proper ingress and egress access?**

A: All new development projects are reviewed for many factors, and appropriate transportation infrastructure is a key component of good development. Sometimes, development happens after infrastructure is in place. A good example is the Mullan area BUILD grant that will be constructing a road system in the area west of Reserve St between Mullan Rd and W Broadway. Other times, improvements to transportation systems need a certain level of development to cover the cost of necessary infrastructure. Intersection improvements like new traffic signals are one example.

**Q: How many vehicles per day travel on Reserve Street?**

A: Traffic counts vary on the Reserve Street corridor. Generally, the Annual Average Daily Traffic ranges between 30,000 – 40,000. View Montana Department of Transportation's interactive traffic map: [https://mdt.mt.gov/publications/datastats/traffic\\_maps.shtml](https://mdt.mt.gov/publications/datastats/traffic_maps.shtml)

**Q: How are automated electric vehicles being considered?**

A: Autonomous vehicles (AV) are an exciting and evolving transportation opportunity. The MPO is actively looking at ways to incorporate emerging AV technology and infrastructure into the Long Range Transportation Plan.

**Q: Is there collaboration with Bitterroot Valley to address Reserve Street?**

A: Missoula and Ravalli Counties coordinate a carpool service. The Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association/ IRide Vanpool provides transportation options to minimize traffic, reduce parking congestion, protect our environment, and improve our quality of life. Learn more at [mrtma.org](http://mrtma.org).

**Q: When was the last time a traffic light study was done on Reserve Street?**

A: The last time signals were studied for coordination was about 8 or 9 years ago. This is longer than typically desired, however signals studies work best when they look at all signals in coordination across the City. One reason a new study is on hold is due to the Russell Street construction, which will likely impact traffic volumes on both Russell and Reserve St. Signal coordination will be an important tool in improving traffic flow on Reserve Street, as well as other streets in Missoula.

**Q: Can more bus routes be created?**

A: Mountain Line is actively seeking additional public and private funding opportunities to expand service into the evening and on Sundays and ultimately adjust and create new routes. Learn more about Mountain Line's future plans in the Missoula Urban Transportation District Strategic Plan. In addition, transit within the Reserve St/Mullan Road/Broadway area is being considered as part of the Mullan Area Master Plan. You can find information about that planning process here [www.mullanareamasterplan.com](http://www.mullanareamasterplan.com)

**Q: What is being done to address the 25% of the Missoula workforce that commutes into town for work?**

A: Missoula, Lake, and Ravalli Counties coordinate a carpool service through the Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association/ IRide Vanpool, which provides transportation options to minimize traffic, reduce parking congestion, protect our environment, and improve our quality of life. Learn more at [mrtma.org](http://mrtma.org). Missoula In Motion provides carpool resources and a map with Park and Ride locations throughout the Missoula area at <https://www.missoulainmotion.com/carpool-1>.

Missoula's efforts to create a complete multi-modal transportation system will ensure that adequate capacity can be maintained to accommodate people commuting from outside of town. The more people that choose to bike, walk or take the bus within the City, the more room there is on our streets for people who have to drive without requiring costly roadway expansions.

**Q: Why are federal dollars not being utilized for an outer belt, like Kalispell?**

A: A bypass around Missoula would cost hundreds of millions of dollars and the river, flood plains, and private property cause additional cost burdens. This cost would consume nearly all of our region's transportation dollars for the next several decades, and studies from around the country indicate that creating bypasses or road widening projects do little over time to reduce congestion. More cost effective options to address congestion include providing quality transit service, safe and comfortable bicycle facilities, and to create a development pattern that allows people to choose different modes of transportation. The Montana Department of Transportation has no plans for a future bypass.

**Q: Has mass transit, like in Europe, been considered?**

A: Transportation options of all sorts are discussed, studied, and planned for, however funding constraints limit the implementation of infrastructure and programs. An example is the Missoula Urban Transportation District Urban Streetcar study, the document can be found here: [https://www.mountainline.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Missoula-Streetcar-Final-Report\\_Dec-2012-2.pdf](https://www.mountainline.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Missoula-Streetcar-Final-Report_Dec-2012-2.pdf)

Mass transit also requires much higher development densities than exist within most of Missoula. In order to support the cost and ridership needs, Missoula will need to provide more opportunities for infill and higher density development along with good mixes of uses to support walkability.

### Transportation Safety

**Q: Is there enforcement for driving in bike lane, blocks before traffic lights?**

A: Driving in the bike lane is not legal in Missoula. However, enforcement requires resources from our Police Department that may not be highest priority. As with all traffic violations, Police will enforce when noticed. Police will also respond to enforcement needs at specific known problem locations if resources allow.

**Q: How many deaths have there been on Reserve Street since 1990?**

A: Unfortunately, our crash records only go back to 2007, so we don't know the precise number. However, we do know that there continue to be safety challenges that can lead to fatalities, both for drivers and people walking or biking. Missoula has a strategy to address these issues, the Community Transportation Safety Plan. A good example of an improvement that came out of good planning is the center barrier installed between Mullan Rd and River Rd. We will continue to identify areas of increased risk and design solutions to address those needs.

**Q: How can police and emergency vehicles get past congested traffic to come to aid of accidents, fire, or medical needs?**

A: Road use education and technology both aid in assisting emergency vehicles navigating traffic and arriving at their destination as safely and quickly as possible. Individuals of all modes should be especially attentive when emergency vehicle lights can be seen or sirens can be heard. Traffic signals also allow pre-emption by emergency response vehicles.

**Q: Do we have traffic cameras on traffic lights?**

A: No, the State of Montana passed House Bill 531 in 2009 which prohibits the use of red light cameras. Devices attached to traffic signals are sensors to detect traffic.

**Q: How can wide lanes, resulting in speeding traffic, be addressed?**

A: Many streets in Missoula, including Reserve Street, are under the jurisdiction of the Montana Department of Transportation and must meet road width standards. The MPO is actively working with MDT to address these concerns from the community.

**Q: Countdown signals result in drivers to speed up to beat the light, what is a positive reason for pedestrian countdown signals?**

A: Although drivers speeding up to make it through a light is an unintended outcome of pedestrian countdown timers, they communicate to pedestrians how much time they have to safely cross the street.

**Q: Why has it taken so long to address un-signalized intersections on Mullan Road?**

A: The intersections along Mullan Road and West Broadway are being addressed in the Mullan Area Master Plan and the BUILD grant planning. Check out <https://www.mullanareamasterplan.com/> for opportunities to get involved with the Mullan Area Master plan and visit [www.mullanbuild.com](http://www.mullanbuild.com) for more information on improvements that will be completed with the BUILD grant funding.

**Q: Reserve has 3 possible agencies to enforce speed limits, is that one reason there is not sufficient enforcement?**

A: Speed enforcement is done as resources and police priorities allow. There are many competing needs for our law enforcement, one of which is traffic safety.

**Q: How can we make biking safer?**

A: Safety is number one priority for the MPO, in addition to improving bicycle facilities throughout the community, education and outreach are key components of bicycle safety. [The](#)

[Missoula Community Transportation Safety Plan](#) addresses changes in safety concerns, crash trends, and mitigation strategies. [The Bicycle Facilities Master Plan](#) outlines a detailed strategy and project list for improving bicycling in Missoula. Learn more about transportation safety education and outreach at [missoulainmotion.com](http://missoulainmotion.com).