

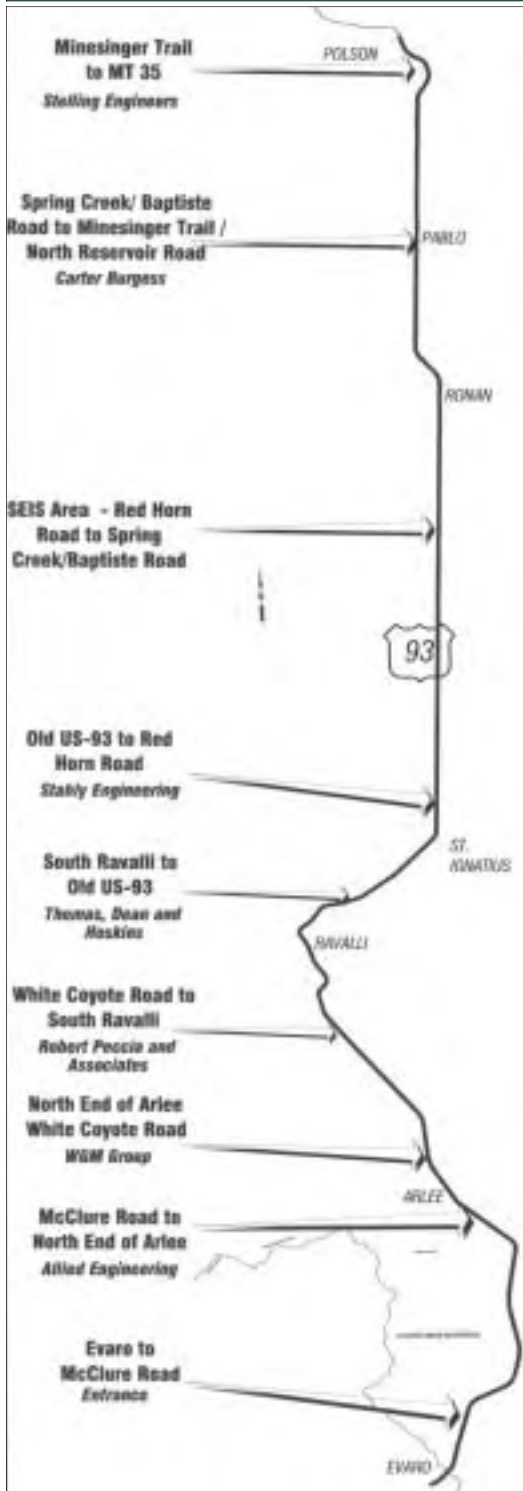


U.S. Highway 93 Design Management & SEIS

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<http://www.skillings.com/US93>

Corridor Design Map



Status of Design Work

Design is rapidly progressing on the eight projects between Evaro and Polson. Seven of the eight design firms have submitted alignment and grade plans for review.

Once alignment and grade plans are approved, the design firms will then begin the detailed design work needed for construction plans. The majority of the firms are presently scheduled to have construction plans ready by the end of 2003.

You may have noticed survey crews and geotechnical crews at work over the summer. The geotechnical crews have rigs that look like well drilling trucks, which they use to explore soil types and depths. Road designers need soils information to help determine what type of pavement will work best in that terrain.

You may see more surveying along the highway in the coming months to gather additional information for design. Geotechnical crews will also be exploring possible sources for fill dirt and gravel to be used during actual construction.

Construction Sequencing

Although design work will produce eight separate projects, some segments may be combined to make construction more efficient and economical.

Letting of one or more construction projects may begin as early as 2004. A more detailed construction schedule will be developed as contracts are awarded in proportion to funding availability. The project team has committed to having two-lane traffic flowing at all times. This will also influence construction scheduling.

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Crews on Roadway



"Give em a brake"



The Spirit of Place

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Project Contacts

Loran Frazier
District Administrator
MT Dept of Transportation
PO Box 7039
Missoula, MT 59807-7039
Phone: (406) 523-5800
Toll-free: (888) 231-5819

Joel Marshik
Chief Engineer
MT Dept of Transportation
2701 Prospect Ave
Helena, MT 59820
Phone: (406) 444-7632

Dale Paulson
Program Dev. Engineer
Federal Highway
Administration (FHWA)
2880 Skyway Drive
Helena, MT 59602
Phone: (406) 449-5303

Lewis YellowRobe
Transportation Planner
Confederated Salish and
Kootenai Tribes
PO Box 278
Pablo, MT 59855
Phone: (406) 675-2700

Skillsings-Connolly, Inc.
Public Involvement Office
1317 US 93 South, Ste. A
Ronan, MT 59864
Phone: (406) 676-2500

Missoula Office
2685 Palmer Street Suite C
Missoula, MT 59808
Phone: (406) 541-7877
Phone: (866) 498-3687

Skillsings-Connolly Staff
Gerald Smith
Project Manager
Phone: (866) 498-3687

Ron Moeckel
Project Engineer
rmoeckel@skillsings.com
Phone: (800) 454-7545

Thad Dickson
Public Involvement
tdickson@skillsings.com
Phone: (800) 454-7545

SEIS Alternatives

After carefully considering a range of environmental issues, public comments, and other factors, the Project Oversight Group (POG) formally eliminated the east and west alignment alternatives in the Ninepipe area from further study.

A variety of lane configuration alternatives along the existing highway have been identified for study in the *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)*. The number of alternatives is significantly more than originally anticipated. The project team, in an effort to ensure a comprehensive consideration of environmental impacts on this particularly sensitive area, is exploring over 20 alternatives. The Flathead Resource Organization's alternative has been included for evaluation.

SEIS Field Studies

As part of the environmental process, numerous field studies are being conducted to gather information about environmental impacts. Some recent studies include:

- ◆ **Rare Plant Inventory:** The rare plant inventory was conducted in July. The report has been completed and received by Herrera Environmental. The information will be used to help the alternative development process, and will be published in the SEIS.
- ◆ **Economic Analysis:** Dr. Gregg Davis conducted his fieldwork for the economic analysis of Ronan during August. The report is currently being finalized and should be available before the end of the year.
- ◆ **Wetlands:** Wetlands are currently being delineated in conjunction with the preliminary engineering efforts. Fieldwork has also been conducted to verify aerial photogrammetry for environmental and conceptual design purposes.

The field reports will be used to help the project team document and evaluate the impacts of each alternative. The results of the impacts will be published in the final SEIS document.

SEIS Public Involvement Update

Open houses were conducted in Ronan on May 14-15, 2002. These meetings were productive in soliciting comments from stakeholders.

Over 75 people attended the open houses and viewed large maps and displays, which gave conceptual examples of the current alternatives being considered in Ronan. In addition, 50-foot long maps of the Ninepipe area provided people with the opportunity to look at issues throughout the study area and ask questions and express concerns about particular locations.

Neighbors shared concerns about how safety, crosswalks, and speed would be affected under the various Ronan design alternatives. People also weighed in on the couplet, four-lane with center turn lanes, and four-lane with landscaped median concepts. The various alternatives were about equal in popularity among participants.

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SEIS Public Involvement Update Cont.

Comments from the Ronan open houses were summarized and provided to the City of Ronan to ensure ongoing communication with city officials. City officials are also listening to the local community and passing concerns on to the design team.

The next public hearing is anticipated around summer 2003.

The feedback received throughout the environmental process is an integral part of the project development and decision-making process. Although future meetings are expected, if you have a project question, comment, or concern in the meantime, please call or email Gerald Smith, PE or Thad Dickson at (406) 541-7877, toll free (866) 498-3687, or tdickson@skillings.com.

US 93 Public Involvement Update

Public meetings continue throughout the Evaro to Polson corridor as the design firms work to refine their designs. Recent meetings in Arlee allowed citizens to view detailed maps and plans and provide comments on issues like access, safety, and speed.

Additional meetings in the Ravalli and Polson areas have been held to share plans and solicit citizen input. The design firms rely on community feedback to help them produce designs that address community needs.

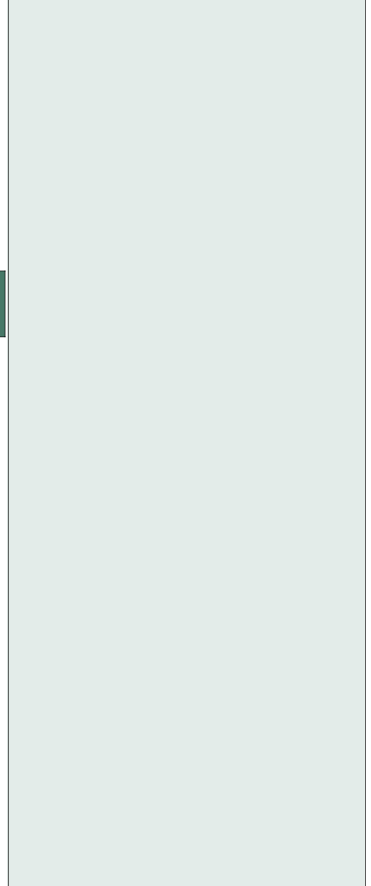
For more information and to view an interactive map of the US 93 corridor, please visit our website at www.skillings.com/US93

US 93 Corridor Project Committee News

The Technical Design Committee (TDC) reviews technical matters related to design, permitting, and regulatory requirements and reports to the Project Oversight Group (POG). The TDC is currently convening bi-weekly in an effort to expedite decisions on technical matters involving the design work on US 93 and the SEIS.

The POG reviews recommendations made by the TDC, and provides oversight, leadership, and guidance for the project. The POG currently meets quarterly. The last meeting was held 11/15/02. POG members include representatives from FHWA, MDT, and CSKT (see sidebar on page 2).

The Interdisciplinary/Advisory Committee (IDT/AC) team meets as needed to discuss and resolve issues specifically related to the SEIS. The next meeting will likely be in the spring of 2003.



Montana Department of Transportation



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PO BOX 7039

MISSOULA MT 59807-7039



US 93 Project News Inside



A northeasterly view of the Mission Mountains as US 93 curves up Ravalli Hill