

RISC



COMMITMENT TO
COMMUNITY

Community Meeting
Wednesday
March 11, 2020
6:00 pm
Roberts Fire Hall

Roberts Hwy 212 Improvement & Safety Committee

RISC Mission

Committed to advocating for the Roberts community's needs and requests for a safe, functional and aesthetic result from MDT's Hwy 212 re-construction improvements.



RISC Actions

- Held 14 meetings.
- Met with MDT and CCCs.
- Wrote letters to MDT and CCCs.
- Designed brochure.
- Developed website riscmt.com.
- Polled Roberts community.



RISC
Roberts Hwy 212 Improvement & Safety Committee

General Delivery
Roberts, MT 59070

January 3, 2020

Bill Bullock
Carbon County Commissioner
P.O. Box 887
Hot Springs, MT

Request by RISC

Dear Commission,

As you are now 121st the year Montana Dept of Transportation

First, we are at 121st anniversary of nearly 20 years that Hot Springs not incorporated, informed, as be representation alternatives for

Next, for the our December RISC's mission

To ask 212 (a) official

The primary pu on behalf of RISC is, Nov. 1, formal commi) Comm.

RISC
Roberts Hwy 212 Improvement & Safety Committee

General Delivery
Roberts, MT 59070
elbowa@gmail.com

January 29, 2020

Glen Oppel, VP Gov't Affairs
Strategies 200
338 East IP Avenue
Helena, MT 59601

RISC Action Update for MDT Regarding Hwy 212 Re-construction Project

Dear Glenn,

RISC feels it's time we update you with some of our recent discoveries, perspectives and forward movement. We've been meeting regularly and just concluded RISC's 11th meeting since our inception in early November. We remain steadfast in our requests of change and are eager to see what MDT has to offer to its governing proposal. We are also communicating regularly with Carbon County Commissioner Bullock. Meanwhile we are actively distributing the attached brochure and questionnaire to the community at large and developing a search list of owner-stated concerns/issues for the purpose of a thorough walk through with MDT and Commissioner Bullock prior to construction re-commencing.

Ditches vs Veteran Memorial Crosses/Top Signs:

We are pleased to say that Mr. Kevin Christensen of MDT has acknowledged that a closed ditch option is forthcoming for Roberts. A closed ditch option allows placement of the Veterans Memorial within a safe area in which the public, families of veterans and the media will be able to admire, walk around, take photos, etc. However, the Roberts volunteers that hold the Veterans Memorial display request the future option of adding memorials on both sides of the highway. Please keep in mind the phone conversation with Mike Gendhart in which you and MDT requested that all the Veterans memorials along the school track will need to move and start on the south side of Maple Street. With that said, adding future crosses with flag top and pushing existing crosses south toward the West Birch Road. MDT coming back with a closed ditch option and Bill Eaton's viewing of how Sanford Langer cleaned out the Roberts West Drainage ditch to divert storm runoff around Roberts, we are confident that the west ditches be placed in the same manner as the east side. Gravel spill boxes can be added in low lying areas and tied to the drainage system in the area of the Church of the Rockies and Chuck Taylor's, which are going to be problematic and possibly raise legal issues for MDT in the future based on three owner's observation in fact.

Reduced Speed Limit to 35 MPH:

RISC has officially requested that Carbon County Commissioners (CCC) initiate a speed study request of MDT. Commissioner Bullock has assured RISC of the CCC's support for this request per the project's

Page 1 of 2

VIZO ZERO
zero velocity signage

Montana Department of Transportation
Billings Driver Office
600 Main Street
Billings, MT 59104-4437

Steve Bullock, Governor
Markus F. Tinsley, Director

12/11/2019

Subject: Meeting with RISC - 12-3-2019

Dear RISC:

I wanted to thank the members of the Roberts Improvements and Safety Committee (RISC) for taking time out their busy schedules to meet with MDT staff, Kirk Spalding with Sanderson Stewart, and our Public Involvement Lead, Glenn Oppel last Tuesday, December 3, 2019. We felt that the communication

I did appreciate demonstrated we can work projects that

Regarding o is requesting formulate an implementation requests, an enhance the following on of this year. We plan on

I wanted to r impact on th program and minimize the We will get i remains a c

Lastly, after that could be investigated need to pro Commission (recommended) with Carbon's general spec

Thank you for your recent email inquiring about meeting again to further discuss your requests for design changes to the Roberts project.

First, we are looking to turn your request

Request isn't a concern. Robust Change would future c

We go with back

Thank you

Ted Th Dated: 4/26/20

copies

Steve Bullock, Governor
Markus F. Tinsley, Director

Montana Department of Transportation
Billings Driver Office
600 Main Street
Billings, MT 59104-4437

Steve Bullock, Governor
Markus F. Tinsley, Director

01/03/2020

Subject: 12-19-2019 email

Dear RISC:

Thank you for your recent email inquiring about meeting again to further discuss your requests for design changes to the Roberts project.

First, we are looking to turn your request

Request isn't a concern. Robust Change would future c

We go with back

Thank you

Ted Th Dated: 4/26/20

copies

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Markus F. Tinsley, Director

Montana Department of Transportation
Billings Driver Office
600 Main Street
Billings, MT 59104-4437

Steve Bullock, Governor
Markus F. Tinsley, Director

02/28/2020

Subject: January 29, 2020 Letter

Dear RISC,

We are in receipt of your recent letter dated January 29, 2020 regarding previous and new requests by the Roberts Improvement and Safety Committee (RISC) for design changes to the Roberts project.

Ditches vs Veteran Memorial Crosses

As we committed to do, MDT has had some discussions about how to best accommodate the Roberts Veterans Memorial program while also keeping with the intent of the hydraulic design of the project, among other considerations. After much thought and analysis, MDT is proposing to modify the drainage ditch on the east side of the highway through the town of Roberts. The modification would consist of installing a pipe in the ditch between West Birch Street and Maple Street to create a closed system with inlets. The ditch would be regulated over the pipe to provide cover and create a regularly flat area for the memorials. A shallow roadside drainage ditch would remain to capture roadside drainage and convey it to the inlets.

In addition to the piped ditch on the east side of the highway, MDT is proposing to fill in the short ditch section at the southwest corner of the Birch Street intersection with the highway (near the church) and install an steel structure in its place.

Speed Limit

It is noted that the RISC has officially requested the Carbon County Commissioner's (CCC's) initiate a speed study and the CCC's support for the request upon completion of the project. MDT concurs that this is the appropriate course of action. However, it would be premature to request a temporary speed limit reduced speed zone since the project is still under construction.

Two-Way Left-Turn Lane

The two-way left-turn lane (TWLTL) has been designed into the project in accordance with best engineering practices. We respectfully disagree with RISC's comment of the FHWA studies and white papers. MDT recommends a TWLTL be considered where access density is 50 approaches per mile or greater (Chapter 31 2.1.1.3 of the Road Design Manual). From the southern beginning of the TWLTL at Sta 649+00 to Maple St. at 680+40, there are 35 approaches. This equates to a density of 60.6 approaches/mile, far exceeding the threshold of 50. Just on the west side there are 24 approaches, equating to 41.5 approaches/mile.

MDT further indicates that density volumes are a significant factor in the consideration of a TWLTL (Chapter 31 2.1.1.3 of the Road Design Manual). If mid-block access is significant, then a TWLTL will be advantageous under any traffic volume level. On existing 4-lane roadways, a TWLTL is desirable for AADT's greater than 5,000 per day (design year AADT). AADT is Average Annual Daily Traffic measured in vehicles per day.



RISC Actions cont'd

riscmt.com



commitment to community

RISC Roberts hwy 212 Improvement & Safety Committee



ABOUT
US

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RISC
MEMBERS

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GET
INFORMED

[| READ MORE |](#)



GET
INVOLVED

[| READ MORE |](#)

OUR MISSION

Committed to advocating for the Roberts community's needs and requests for a safe, functional and aesthetic result from MDT's Hwy 212 re-construction improvements.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Help your community by joining us on **Wednesday, March 11th** at 6 pm at the Roberts Fire Hall to provide feedback for the Montana Department of Transportation and Carbon County Commissioners.

Latest News

RISC members are advocating for the community of Roberts, MT with these key ideas in mind:

- * Lower the speed limit through Roberts to 35 MPH for community and visitor safety.
- * Remove the center lane, leaving thru-traffic where it currently is and leaving the existing wide shoulders as a buffer on both sides for buggies, bikes, farm vehicles, businesses and pedestrians.
- * Fill in the open ditches on both sides of the highway with buried drainage culverts to facilitate pedestrian walkways, safety, aesthetics and access to




Roberts group take issue with MDT plans

By Alastair Baker
News Editor

The on-going Highway 212 re-construction through Roberts is bringing anything but solace to this small rural community as repeated requests by citizens to the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) to reconsider the reconstruction plans are being stoned walled.

Such is the frustration of the townspeople that a group has formed under the banner, Roberts HWY 212 Improvement & Safety Committee (RISC) to voice those concerns.

RISC is requesting three main things from MDT regarding safety, functionality, and overall aesthetics. The group is asking for MDT to throw out the plan for a two way left turning lane proposed through the town and to keep the speed limit at 35 MPH.

A turning lane in Roberts will reduce the existing wide shoulders, presently at 11 feet each, to 4 feet on the westside and 6 feet on the eastside. "Think about it, one nice wide shoulder and one skinny shoulder," said Frank Jarvenpaa, RISC member.

Above, the present design idea by MDT for Highway 212 through Roberts and below the concept by the Roberts HWY 212 Improvement & Safety Committee.

ed that many of the buggies are just made of flimsy wood and are frequently travelled in by the entire family and to Glenn Oppel, the outreach consultant to-MDT, RISC have requested that the Carbon County Commissioners ini-

Courtesy RISC



Complete our online survey at <http://www.riscmt.com/RISCsurvey>

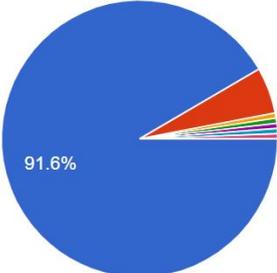
CARBON COUNTY NEWS feature article written by Mr. Alastair Baker and published on Thursday, March 5th, 2020.

Roberts Community Survey

109 paper surveys
+58 online surveys

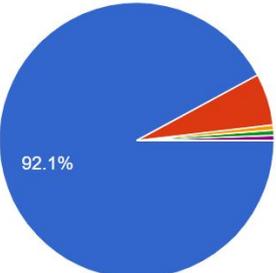
167 total surveys

Lower the speed limit.



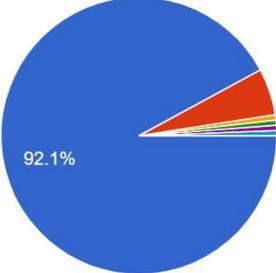
91.6%
Agree

Remove the center turn lane.



92.1%
Agree

Fill in the open ditches on both sides of the highway with buried drainage culverts.

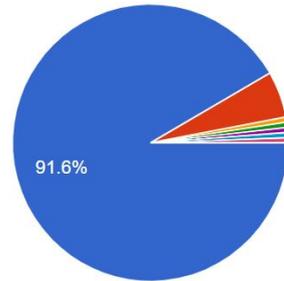


92.1%
Agree



Lower the speed limit through Roberts to 35 MPH for community and visitor safety.

Lower the speed limit.



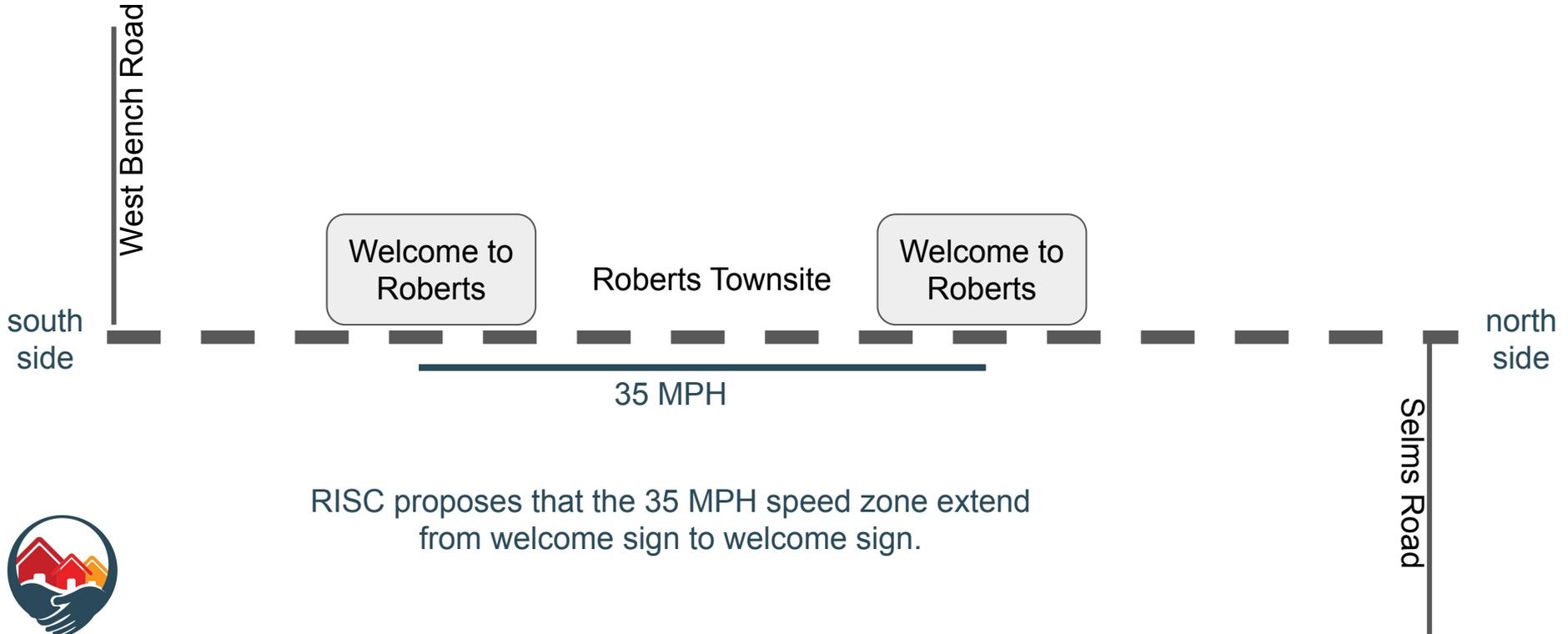
91.6%
Agree



Roberts is a community,
not a speed bump on
the way to Red Lodge.



Speed Zone: 35 MPH

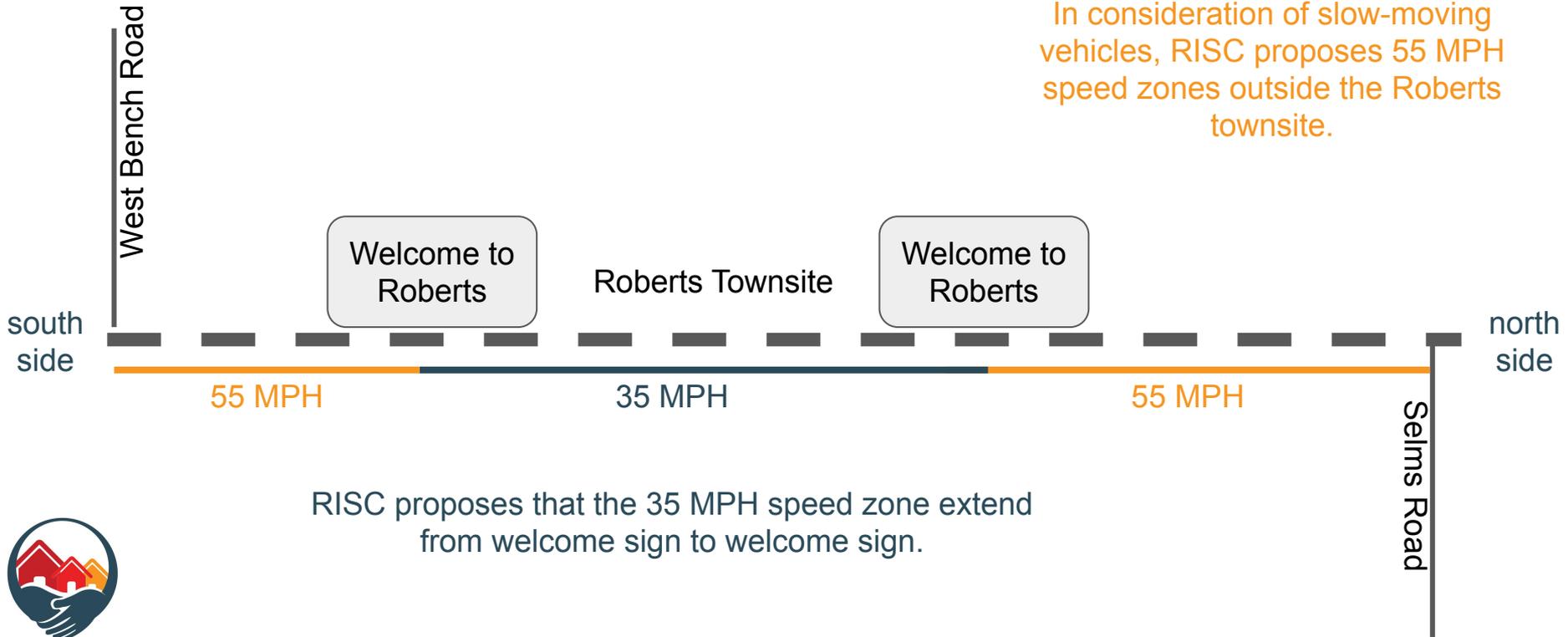


RISC proposes that the 35 MPH speed zone extend from welcome sign to welcome sign.



Speed Zone: 35 MPH + 55 MPH

In consideration of slow-moving vehicles, RISC proposes 55 MPH speed zones outside the Roberts townsite.



MDT Speed Study Methodology

THE 85TH PERCENTILE

Decisions about rational speed limits are based in part on something called a speed study. During the speed study, data is collected at select locations along the roadway. This data is then analyzed to identify *the 85th percentile*—the speed at which 85 percent of the people drove at or below during ideal conditions.

The 85th percentile speed is typically used as a starting point for setting a rational limit and is considered to be the maximum safe speed for that location.



Source: MDT website,
<https://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionz/ero/roads/speedlimits.shtm>.



Since most people drive---when there are no hazards to their own safety---at or a little above the posted speed limit, it is unlikely that a speed study in Roberts would result in anything other than maintaining a speed limit of 45 MPH which favors the drivers but not the community. Also, Montana Code requires that the county fund the speed study. So the speed study would be a waste of time and a waste of Carbon County taxpayer money.



Critics of the 85th Percentile Rule

Recently, there have been critiques of the 85th percentile rule which challenge the notion that the 85th percentile speed is the safest operating speed, noting there is “no strong evidence” that traveling at this speed will result in lower crash involvement rates (National Transportation Safety Board [NTSB], 2017).

Critics of the rule challenge the concept of setting a legal standard based on existing behavior. A writer from the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia cheekily compares this method to a parent a setting a diet for their children based on what most children eat voluntarily (Oreo cookies instead of greens), and a 2005 Los Angeles Times article compares this to the IRS collecting taxes based on what 85 percent of people are willing to pay (LoBasso, 2017; Vartaberian, 2005). (See Page 20)

Source: [Fast, Furious & Fatal: An Assessment of Speed-Setting Methodology in California](#), by Ribeka Toda.

We consider the 85th Percentile Rule to be not applicable for use in Roberts.



The 85th percentile methodology assumes that drivers are “reasonable and prudent,” and behaving in a way that is reasonable and prudent for themselves as individuals will result in improved outcomes for society. However, Norwegian road safety researcher Rune Elvik studied the rationality of drivers in speed choice and found that it is not “objectively” rational, meaning the speed choices of people driving are not optimal from a societal perspective (Elvik, 2010). He found that drivers underestimated the increase in safety risks associated with increased speed, underestimated impact speed in situations where braking is necessary to reduce crash severity, and that drivers had different thresholds for speeds they consider to be safe to drive. With these findings, Elvik concludes that speed limits should be set based on speeds that are optimal for society and not based on methodologies like the 85th percentile rule that are based on drivers’ speed choices. (See Page 21)



MDT Response to Speed Limit Issue

Reduced Speed Limit to 35 MPH:

RISC has officially requested that Carbon County Commissioners (CCC) initiate a speed study request of MDT. Commissioner Bullock has assured RISC of the CCC's support for this request once the project is complete. We're confident the study will support this reduction with ample justification. **We are also requesting that the CCCs subsequently request a temporary special speed reduction per Montana Code Annotated 61-8-309 (d) on the basis that a complete and formal study is being requested.** As a point of interest, are you aware of the number of speeding tickets that the County Sheriff and MHP have recently written in the construction zone due to our request for more patrol? It's significant. The point is that speed through Roberts is a problem and will no doubt prove itself to be so during a formal study. We've also discovered significant criticism of the 85th Percentile Rule among traffic planning researchers and we're prepared to challenge its basis, if necessary.

RISC
Request
1/29/2020
←

MDT
Response
2/28/2020
→

Speed Limit

It is noted that the RISC has officially requested the Carbon County Commissioner's (CCC's) initiate a speed study and the CCC's support for the request upon completion of the project. MDT concurs that this is the appropriate course of action. However, **it would be premature to request a temporary special reduced speed zone since the project is still under construction.**

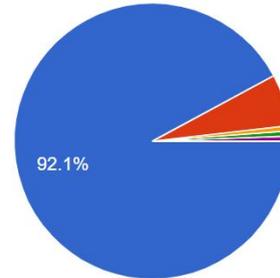
A speed study would work in Roberts if the posted speed limit were 35 MPH during the speed study, but the speed study would still be a waste of Carbon County taxpayer money.



Remove the center turn lane, leaving thru-traffic where it currently is and leaving the existing wide shoulders as a buffer on both sides for buggies, bikes, farm vehicles, businesses, and pedestrians.

Roberts has opposed the center turn lane since at least 2013.

Remove the center turn lane.



92.1%
Agree



Roberts Community Foundation Master Plan

2013

Streetscape and Circulation

Overview

Streetscape is defined as the design, appearance, and character of the public and private spaces that facilitate the mobility of pedestrians and vehicles. Circulation is a measure of the convenience, efficiency, and safety of moving through the street network on any mode of transportation.

Transportation Project History

A Community Transportation Enhancement Project (CTEP) was completed in 200X to enhance non-motorized transportation. After several input sessions, the community and project designers developed a goal to promote safer pedestrian mobility by encouraging pedestrian activity in town rather than on or near the highway. The project constructed sidewalks at key pedestrian routes along First Street and enhanced Highway 212 crossings.

The Roberts community has also coordinated with Montana DOT on a proposed Highway 212 reconstruction project through town. The project intends to enhance storm water infrastructure and redesign traffic lane configurations to enhance vehicle mobility. The current DOT design proposes a two-way left turn lane through Roberts, reconstructed drainage culverts, and a redesign of the intersection at Cooney Dam Road and Highway 212.

The community has formerly approached DOT with a design alternative that includes the removal of the two-way turn lane, in which case there may be additional space for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and larger,

more visible pedestrian crossings on Highway 212. Slowing down traffic through town is a goal of the community. If a two-way left turn lane will potentially increase vehicle speeds, such a design would work against the community's long-term goals.

Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalks have been improved on First, Maple, and Oak Streets. Sidewalks also exist around the post office, on the frontages of First and Cedar Streets, and around various private establishments. This patchwork of sidewalk, curb, and gutter creates an incomplete pedestrian network through town.

Although some crosswalks were enhanced, pedestrian crossings on Highway 212 continue to be a chief concern of the community. The design alternative offered by the community includes a shared pedestrian and bicycle space on one side of the highway.



CTEP sidewalk improvement project



Roberts Community Foundation Master Plan

2013

Streetscape and Circulation

Overview

Streetscape is defined as the design, appearance, and character of the public and private spaces that facilitate the mobility of pedestrians and vehicles. Circulation is a measure of the convenience, efficiency, and safety of moving through the street network on any mode of transportation.

The community has formerly approached DOT with a design alternative that includes the **removal of the two-way turn lane**, in which case there may be additional space for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and larger,

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Pedestrian Facilities

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at Cedar Streets, and around various private establishments. Sidewalk, curb, and gutter creates an incomplete through town.

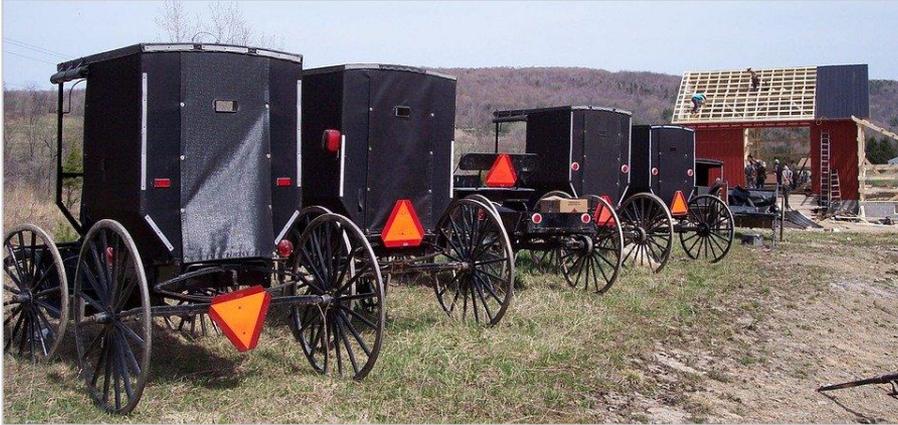
walks were enhanced, pedestrian crossings continue to be a chief concern of the community. The community includes a shared of the highway.



Roberts has opposed the center turn lane since at least 2013.



Why we need lower speeds & wide shoulders.



We don't want a fatality!

Car Plows Into Amish Horse-Drawn Buggy, Killing 3 Children

It was the second fatal collision of its kind in the state this summer. Such accidents are also common in Pennsylvania, New York and other states with large Amish communities.

Source: THE NEW YORK TIMES,
September 19, 2019.



Three children were killed and a fourth was injured on Wednesday when a car crashed into their horse-drawn buggy in Eaton County, Mich., about 20 miles west of Lansing. Nick King/Lansing State Journal, via Associated Press

About 20 miles west of Lansing, Michigan



MDT Response to Turn Lane Issue

Two Way Left Turning Lane (TWLTL):

The Committee requests documentation from MDT of the Federal specification and corresponding MDT justification that the existing TWLTL design is necessary and/or 'required'.

RISC has been researching the TWLTL concept and relative Federal Highway Administration studies and white papers. Factors include left turn percentage and the driveway density from the roadway. The TWLTL appears to only be justified with lower Average Daily Traffic (ADT) with higher left turning percentages and fewer driveways per mile. Traffic studies also are only effective in calculating traffic averages if conducted over a 9-12 month period, not just during peak (nice weather) traffic volume. For a TWLTL to be justified, it's recommended that a minimum of 10,500 -16,200 vehicles per day (vpd) is met, depending on the left turn percentage. Clearly, there is not a high left turn percentage in Roberts based on average vehicles per day through town. In addition, 'left turn lanes help eliminate the conflict between high speed through traffic (45 mph or higher) and vehicles slowing to turn'. As far as an accident study coming into play and what MDT presented as justification in its 12/2/19 correspondence and the face to face meeting with RISC on 12/3/2019, several of those accidents would not technically be warranted as being part of the calculation. Accidents that need to be taken into account are rear end collisions and side swipes, both of which were extremely low (5 relevant accidents at most in the 10-year study period stated, only one of which was a rear end collision).

With actively seeking to lower the Speed Limit to 35 MPH, the TWLTL is unwarranted at this time. It can be installed at a later date if population, business and traffic volume warrants. **During our 12/3/19 meeting, MDT stated that we could try the TWLTL for a couple of years and if we didn't feel there was ample justification, or it was hazardous, we could petition the CCCs to have it removed. We are requesting the opposite. If it can be petitioned to be removed, it can also be petitioned to be installed, whether it be by the Community, the CCCs or MDT.**

RISC
Request
1/29/2020



MDT
Response
2/28/2020



Two-Way-Left-Turn-Lane

The two-way-left-turn-lane (TWLTL) has been designed into the project in accordance with best engineering practices. We respectfully disagree with RISC's discernment of the FHWA studies and white papers. MDT recommends a TWLTL be considered where access density is 50 approaches per mile or greater (Chapter 31.2.1.1.a of the Road Design Manual). From the southern beginning of the TWLTL at Sta 649+90 to Maple St. at 680+40, there are 35 approaches. That equates to a density of 60.6 approaches/mile, far exceeding the threshold of 50. Just on the west side there are 24 approaches, equating to 41.5 approaches/mile.

MDT further indicates that traffic volumes are a significant factor in the consideration of a TWLTL (Chapter 31.2.1.3 of the Road Design Manual). If mid-block access is significant, then a TWLTL will be advantageous under any traffic volume level. On existing 2-lane roadways, a TWLTL is desirable for AADT's greater than 5,000 per day (design year AADT). AADT is Average Annual Daily Traffic measured in vehicles per day.

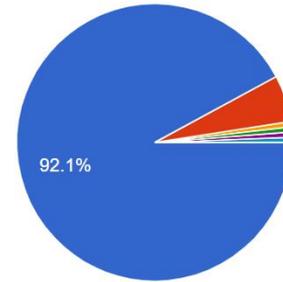
Within the project limits, the projected AADT for 2035 was 4,470 vehicles per day (vpd). Given this project was constructed just last year, and MDT projects have a 20 year design life, the effective design year would be 2039, and therefore the projected traffic approximately 4,950 vpd. This volume is very close to the 5,000 vpd mentioned above, and with the density of accesses, it further substantiates the implementation of a TWLTL.



Fill in the open ditches on both sides of the highway with buried drainage culverts to facilitate pedestrian walkways, safety, aesthetics, and access to the Veteran memorials.

Roberts asked for curbs and gutters. Instead we now have canyon-sized ditches.

Fill in the open ditches on both sides of the highway with buried drainage culverts.



92.1%
Agree



Roberts Community Foundation Letters

2000



July 6, 2000

Dear Gentlemen at the Department of Transportation,

The Roberts Community Foundation was recently the recipient of a grant from the Community Transportation Enhancement Program this past year and had a project in the works for a walkway and lighting along Highway 212 as it traverses through the town of Roberts, Montana. We have now learned that you have a project for widening this highway in 4-6 years, and the area you would expand over would cover the project we had planned. We have, therefore, had to change the direction of our project because of your plans.

We are very concerned about the safety of our citizens traveling along this currently unlit section of the highway which has only narrow pits along the sides. We would like to request that in your planning you would please include curbs, gutters, a sidewalk and lighting. This is definitely a safety issue for this community.

We will redirect our CTEP funding to do safety and beautification work to complement your project on streets connecting to your project. The architect who is doing the CTEP project planning for us is working on a master plan to this effect.

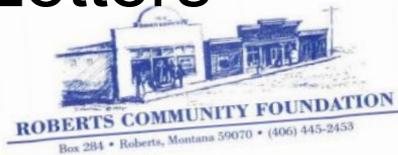
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this request, please contact the Roberts Community Foundation at 406-445-2453. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elta Bertolino Ayre
Chairperson



2008



December 13, 2008

Tom Martin
MDT Environmental Services
2701 Prospect Ave
Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Dear Sir:

I recently was made aware of the MDT's view regarding widening Highway 212 through the town of Roberts, Montana, regarding curbs, etc. In your statements regarding the project through Roberts it states that curbs, gutters, etc. would not be addressed due to a recent project by the Roberts Community Foundation and CTEP to run a sidewalk a block away from the highway.

I am enclosing a duplicate of a letter I submitted to your department in July of 2000, regarding this CTEP project the Roberts Community Foundation was pursuing. We had originally planned to put a walkway and lighting along the highway through Roberts because of extreme concern about the safety of citizens who walked along there to school, the post office, the store, etc. In the planning stages of this project, we were made aware that the MDT was going to be expanding the highway in the next 4-6 years and would be going over the top of the project we had planned. That meant a waste of the resources and funding we had acquired to do this project. In light of that news, the Foundation, county commissioners and architect we were working with, redirected that CTEP money to put in a sidewalk along the Main Street of Roberts and built it to abut the future sidewalk we had asked the MDT to consider. This was an \$84,000 project, but was in NO WAY meant to deter the MDT from improving the areas along Highway 212.

Because of the urgency of the safety issues for our community members walking along the highway, we went ahead and funded the installation of 7 street lights along that highway area. There had been a young boy hit by a car while crossing the highway because it was so dark, he was not obviously visible to the driver.

The Roberts Community Foundation, again, reiterates to the MDT and architects working on this highway expansion, our desire to have curbs, gutters, a walkway along Highway 212, and to maintain our lighting project along this area as well. Roberts is an unincorporated community under the governance of our County Commissioners. Any improvements or beautification projects that have occurred in our community these past 12 years have been accomplished with help from the Foundation. Our purpose is to improve the quality and safety of the community for our citizens. We feel that these improvements along Highway 212 through Roberts are necessary, a project we had initiated, but abandoned because of your expansion project. We believe it would be important for the town of Roberts that these improvements be made along the highway through town and ask you to include them in your planning of this project. Not only would this improve the safety of our citizens, it could be designed to help control the flood waters we experience with spring storms, and perhaps people would slow down driving through town because they would have more of an impression of being in a town and not just driving through the country side!

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. We look forward to hearing your response to our concerns and request.

Sincerely,

Elta Bertolino Ayre
Vice Chair

MDT Environmental Assessment (2008)

west
side

east
side

The
conceptual
diagram from
2008 shows
no ditch on
the west side.

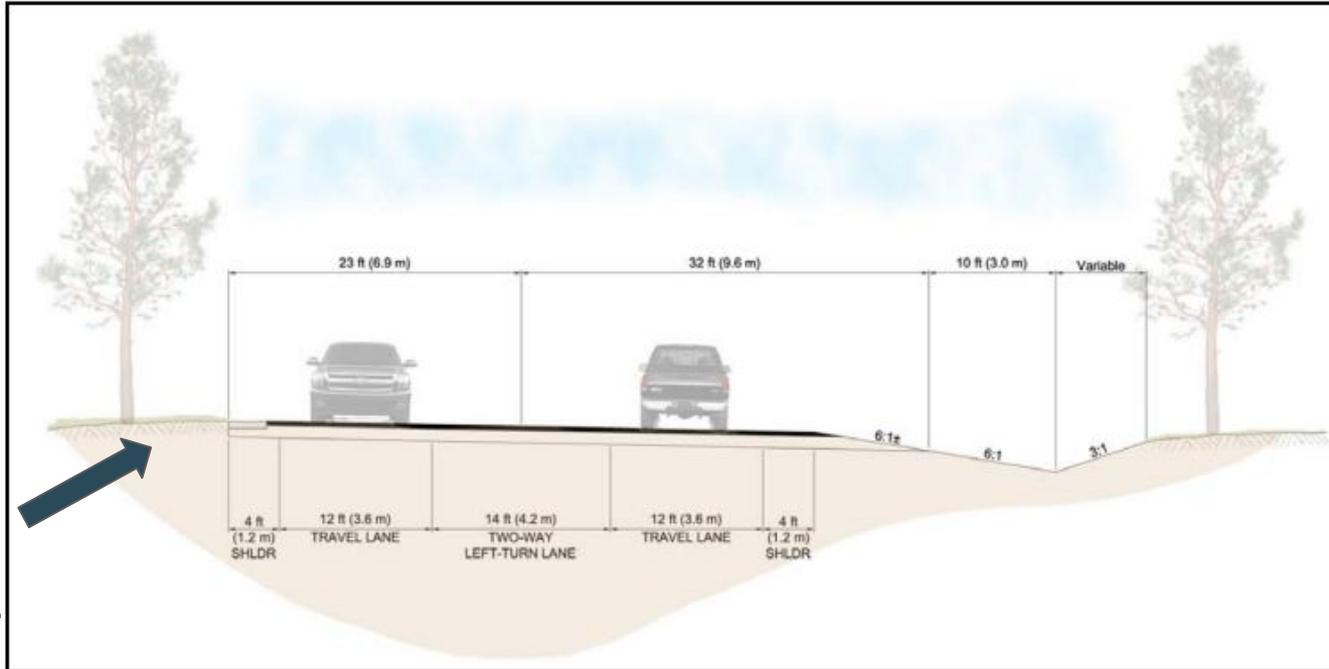


Figure 2-17, South End of Roberts to East Maple Street

**Note: This is a conceptual figure based on the preliminary (approximately 30 percent) design that is available at this early stage of the design process. As the design process continues and as additional avoidance, minimization, and mitigation strategies are evaluated, potential impacts may change slightly.*



Roberts West Drainage



The west ditch may not be needed due to the new Roberts West Drainage.

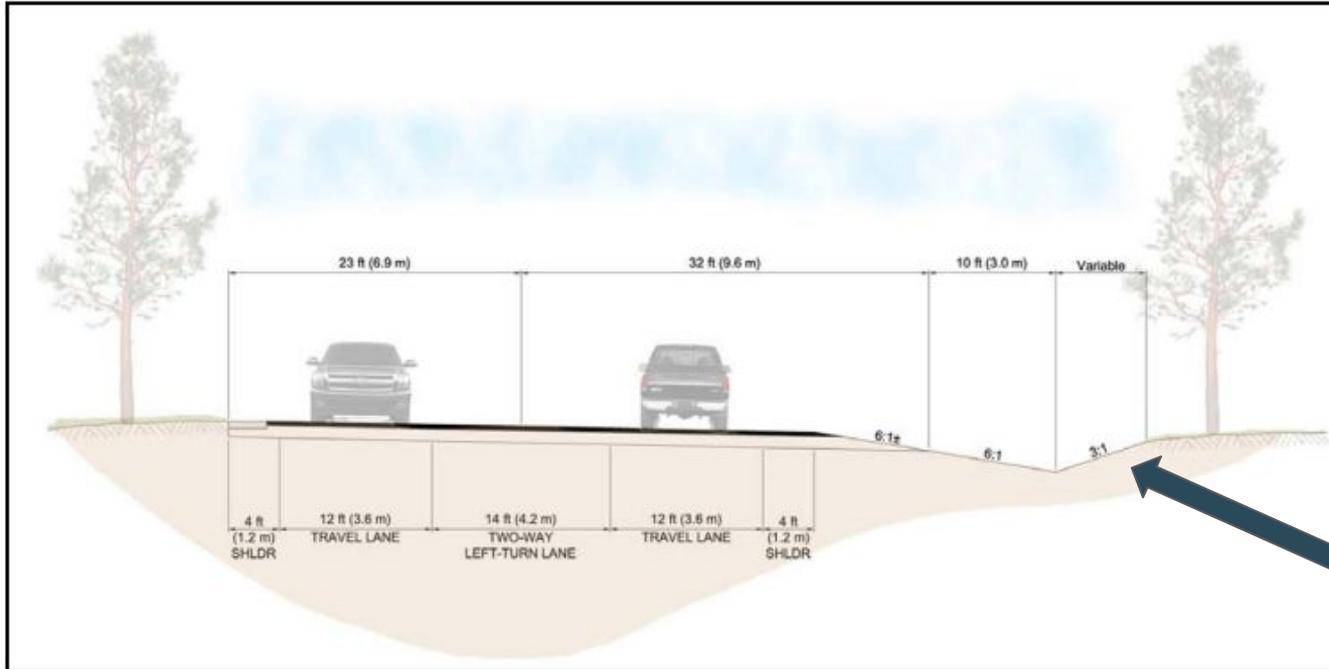
MDT should reassess the drainage needs.

Why didn't MDT construct this ditch west of Roberts in the first place?



MDT Environmental Assessment (2008)

west
side



east
side

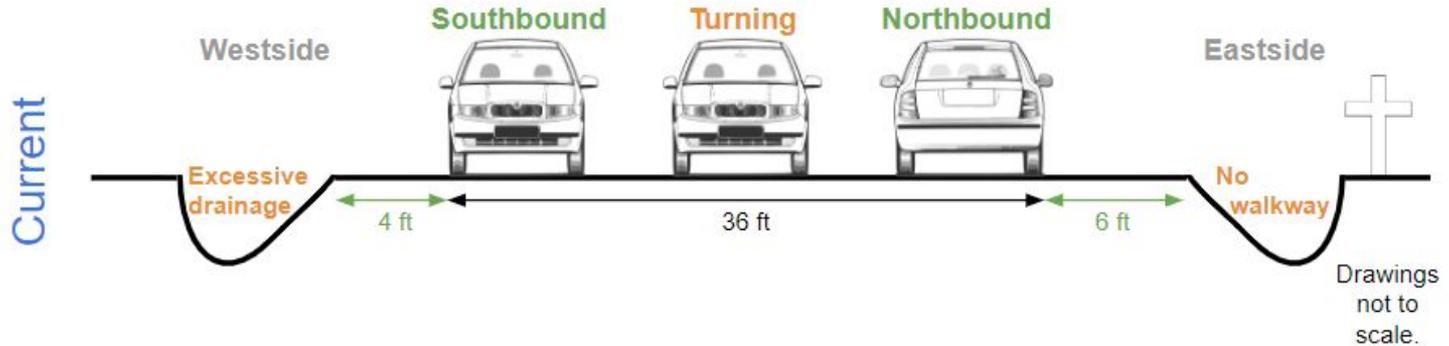
The conceptual diagram from 2008 shows only a shallow ditch on the east side.

Figure 2-17, South End of Roberts to East Maple Street

**Note: This is a conceptual figure based on the preliminary (approximately 30 percent) design that is available at this early stage of the design process. As the design process continues and as additional avoidance, minimization, and mitigation strategies are evaluated, potential impacts may change slightly.*



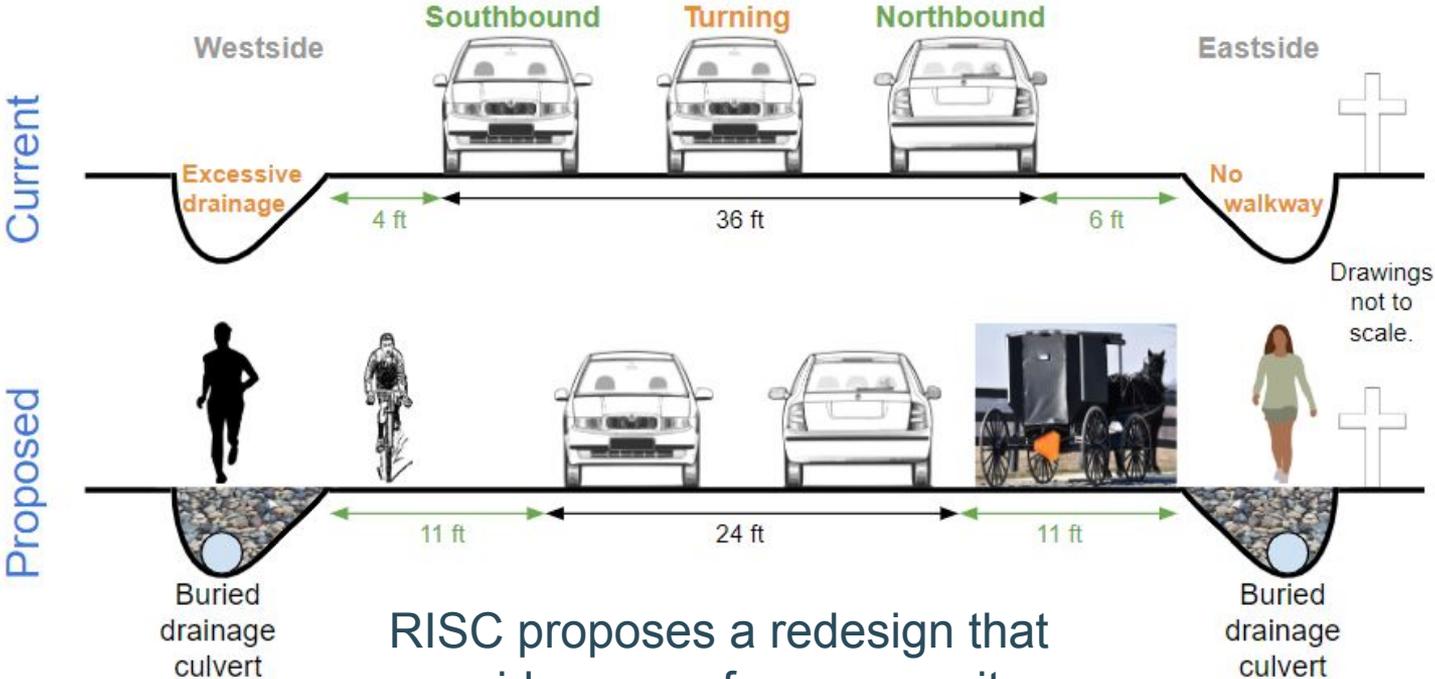
The ditches seem excessive.



With deep ditches on both sides and three lanes of traffic, Hwy 212 through Roberts is devoid of community.



Roberts needs room for community.



RISC proposes a redesign that provides room for community.



This was Roberts before...



...and this is Roberts now.



How can we honor our Veterans?



MDT Response to Ditches Issue

Ditches vs Veteran Memorial Crosses/Dog Tags:

We are pleased to say that Mr. Kevin Christensen of MDT has acknowledged that a closed ditch option is forthcoming for Roberts. A closed ditch option allows placement of the Veteran memorials within a safe area in which the public, families of veterans and the media will be able to admire, walk around, take photos, etc. However, the Roberts volunteers that facilitate the Veteran Memorials display request the future option of adding memorials on both sides of the highway. Please keep in mind the phone conversation with Mike Gebhardt in which you and MDT requested that all the Veteran memorials along the school track will need to move and start on the south side of Maple Street. With that said, adding future crosses with dog tags and pushing existing crosses south nearly to West Bench Road, MDT coming back with a closed ditch option and Bill Felton's viewing of how Sanford Lanager cleaned out the Roberts West Drainage ditch to divert storm runoff around Roberts, we are requesting that the west ditches be filled in the same manner as the east side. Grated spill boxes can be added in low lying areas and tied into the drainage system in the area of the Church of the Rockies and Chuck Naylor's, which are going to be problematic and possibly raise legal hassles for MDT in the future based on those owner's observation so far.

MDT
Response
2/28/2020



RISC
Request
1/29/2020



RISC is grateful for MDT's proposal to modify the east side, but we continue to ask, "What about the west side?"

Ditches vs Veteran Memorial Crosses

As we committed to do, MDT has had some discussions about how to best accommodate the Roberts Veteran Memorials program while also keeping with the intent of the hydraulic design of the project, among other considerations. After much thought and analysis, MDT is proposing to modify the drainage ditch on the east side of the highway through the town of Roberts. The modification would consist of installing a pipe in the ditch between West Birch Street and Maple Street to create a closed system with inlets. The ditch would be regraded over the pipe to provide cover and create a relatively flat area for the memorials. A shallow roadside drainage ditch would remain to capture roadside drainage and convey it to the inlets.

In addition to the piped ditch on the east side of the highway, MDT is proposing to fill in the short ditch section at the southwest corner of the Birch Street intersection with the highway (near the church) and install an inlet structure in its place.



Next Steps

RISC has reached the limits of local MDT authority.

➡ Time to seek help from state leaders.

You can help

- Write a letter to MDT and cc the state leaders.
- Encourage others to do the same.



Spring
is nearly
upon us.



Roberts is almost
out of time.



Questions?



Source: Community Master Plan, Roberts Community Foundation.



Y-Stop at Cooney Road



The reconstructed road around the Y-Stop makes it more difficult for delivery trucks to navigate the Y-Stop and more difficult for Mr. Sanford Langager to reach the south side of his property.



Y-Stop at Cooney Road cont'd

Y-Stop at Cooney Road

There has been several discussions about this intersection. The owner of the Y-Stop was at our meeting on 1/23/2020. She expressed concern and difficulty in delivery trucks and customers navigating around the pumps, especially customers that have trailers, which is common in this rural community. Sanford Langager (neighbor to the Y-Stop) has witnessed several vehicles turning around in his yard when one pump is being occupied and has to do a 180 degree turn to get to the other pump. Delivery trucks have same issues. Mr. Langager is further inconvenienced traveling to and from his shop to his barn and out-buildings, which he needs to do regularly with his heavy equipment as a course of his business operation. In order for him to accomplish this, he technically needs to turn left crossing on-coming traffic onto Hwy 212 and then left again crossing on-coming traffic turn at the new Cooney Road intersection, again much of this is with heavy equipment. His other option is to drive thru the Y-Stop business property, which is not acceptable, safe or courteous for the Y-Stop or community. RISC is requesting MDT to take another look at this and consider filling that west ditch back in and re-pave that area back to original design, move the bollards down the Old Cooney Road just beyond the Y-Stop and install a guard rail around the corner of the New Cooney Road prohibiting thru traffic behind Y-Stop to the old Cooney Rd approach. This re-design would facilitate needed auto and truck maneuverability ingress/egress at the Y-Stop, eliminate Langagers need to utilize Hwy 212 with regular left turns against traffic to re-access his once accessible contiguous piece of property. Both of these properties are recognizing a notable decline of property value with MDT's current design. Neither property feels the existing design was reasonably disclosed to them prior to being visibly obvious and near completion.

MDT
Response
2/28/2020



RISC
Request
1/29/2020



Y-Stop at Cooney Road

The Y-Stop intersection improvements recently constructed were evaluated carefully in the Environmental Assessment (EA), and removal of the old Cooney Dam Road approach with Hwy 212 and relocation of Cooney Dam Road north of the Y-Stop were the preferred treatment for a variety of reasons. As documented in the EA and the project's Traffic Report, the pre-construction configuration of Cooney Dam Road with Hwy 212 formed a very undesirable skewed alignment. The skewed approach limited sight distance for the motorist trying (very awkward turn of the neck required) to look to their left. The intersection was slightly offset from E Maple which is also undesirable for those that need to traverse across Hwy 212 to Maple to either go to the school or other destinations on Maple Street. Further, having the county road access so close to the Y-Stop access is also undesirable, as they affect each other's ability to see oncoming traffic prior to entering onto Hwy 212. Another issue was the higher speed left-turning vehicles onto Cooney Dam Road due to the slight angle adjustment needed to make the left-turn. All of these factors put children crossing the old Cooney Dam Road approach at a higher risk as they traverse to and from the crosswalk that provides safe access across Hwy 212 to and from school. The owner of the Y-Stop had indicated she issues haul permits and trucks come down Cooney Dam Road to her business to get their permits. This is why it was important to extend Cooney Dam Road to the current location, so trucks can park, go get their permits, and get onto Hwy 212 around the south end of the pumps.



Crosswalks and Signage

Crosswalks and Signage:

RISC is requesting a third crosswalk be added. Placements should be at Maple St, Oak St and Cedar St.

This conclusion and request is based on significant discussion and input from the Roberts School representatives regarding both historical and current (natural) flow of both adult and school age pedestrians. We are also requesting Amish signage at both ends of the Roberts Corridor.

RISC
Request
1/29/2020



RISC advocates for the strategic placement of a third crosswalk.

MDT
Response
2/28/2020



Crosswalks & Signage

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Devices, FHWA, and other federal guiding documents have similar requirements and guidance on where and when to install crosswalks. This study by FHWA <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/04100/04100.pdf> [fhwa.dot.gov] found that there is essentially no difference in terms of safety between a marked or unmarked crosswalk on a 2-lane roadway when they are not at a signalized or stop-controlled intersection.

This project completed a pedestrian study in 2013 and found that the two locations in the plans are the most appropriate. Conversations with the Superintendent of Schools (at the time) also indicated these locations were appropriate. The Cedar Street location is approximately 350-feet from the one proposed at Oak Street. Also, during the original 2013 pedestrian study, no pedestrians were observed in the a.m. school crossing period and only five in the p.m. at Cedar Street. It is suggested that after construction is complete and during regular school session and favorable weather conditions, a new study be completed.

There are no specific MDT criteria for determining warrants for horse and buggy signs. However, given the recent influx of Amish families to the area we agree this could potentially improve safety on the highway near Roberts.



Water Drainage to Irrigation Ditches

Water Drainage to Irrigation Ditches:

The drainage thru town and into the irrigation ditches will need to be signed off by the owners in which the ditches serve and pass through. This has been a point of concern numerous times. Originally the design was to route this water immediately to Rock Creek and not thru irrigation ditches. RISC requests that MDT come prepared with an aerial visual of the overall Roberts area storm drainage when it presents its alternatives to the community at large, including Mr. Langager's West Roberts Drainage Ditch enhancement running South-North under the West Bench.

RISC
Request
1/29/2020



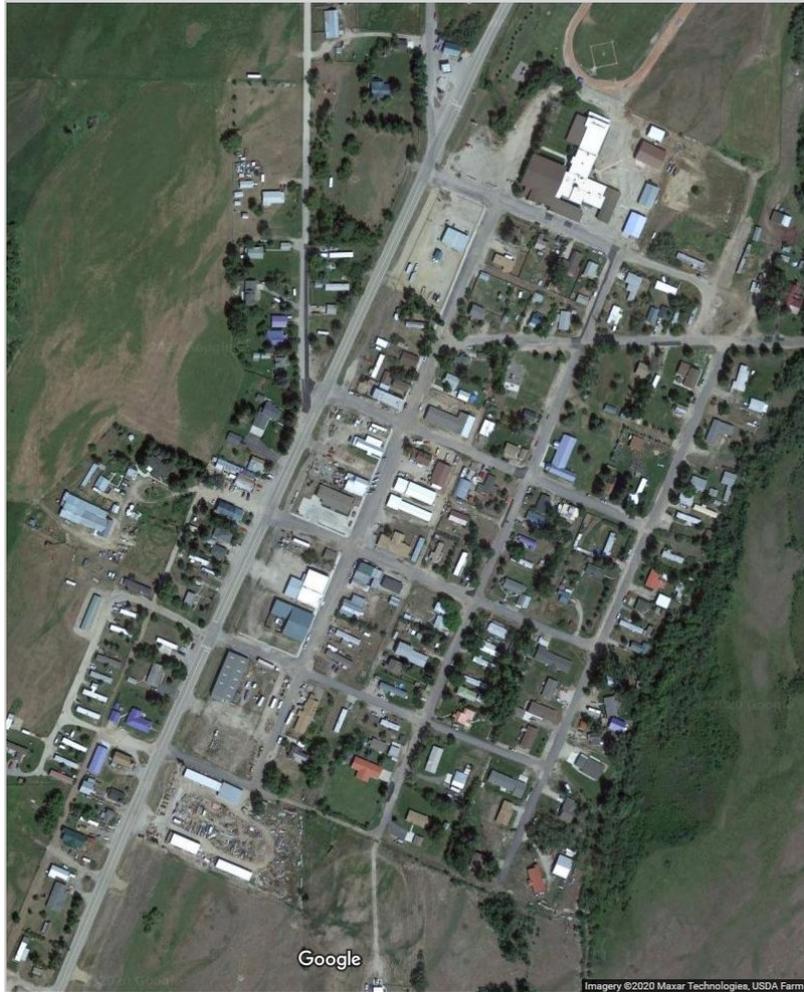
MDT
Response
2/28/2020



Water Drainage to Irrigation Ditches

The drainage through town and into irrigations ditches is simply perpetuation of pre-existing conditions. MDT has worked with ditch owners during the project to improve the pre-existing conditions by limiting the volume of flow into the ditches to prevent them from exceeding capacity and overtopping.









Shown above are the stormwater routings.
Why is stormwater routed east under Hwy 212 in two locations
only to be routed back to the west side?



Raising the Speed Limit is Not Allowed.

Montana Code Annotated 2019

61-8-309. Establishment of special speed zones and temporary special reduced speed limits -- engineering and traffic investigation.

(b) If a local authority requests the department of transportation or an engineer, as provided in subsection (1)(c)(i), to conduct an engineering and traffic investigation based on the belief that a speed limit on a highway under the jurisdiction of the department of transportation is greater than is reasonable or safe, **the commission may not increase the speed limit under consideration as a result of the investigation.**

(c) (i) A local authority may request at its own expense that an engineering and traffic investigation be completed by a licensed professional engineer selected from a list compiled and approved by a committee as provided in subsection (1)(c)(ii).

https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0610/chapter_0080/part_0030/section_0090/0610-0080-0030-0090.html

